

UNISON

Submission to Migration Advisory Committee

UNISON is the largest public services union in the UK representing 1.3 million members across a range of public services.

We have already made submissions to the MAC regarding tier 2 highly skilled migration. MAC has now been asked to comment on two additional points regarding tier 2 migration.

1. Is there an economic case for restricting tier 2 to shortage occupations only?

UNISON is of the view that the current criteria applied to tier 2 are appropriate and that no further restrictions are warranted.

The economic downturn does not increase the skill base. More skilled workers may however come onto the labour market by virtue of restructuring and redundancy, but they will access tier 2 jobs before migrants do because of the current restrictions on migrants filling posts from non shortage occupations. There is no justification for any further restrictions.

2. What is the Committee's assessment of the economic contribution made by the dependants of the points-based system migrants and their role in the labour market?

UNISON strongly believes that there should be no restriction on the existing right of dependents to come to this country and work.

For many migrants working in the UK is only viable if they have their family with them. Otherwise that family would have to be supported back home in the sending country where they may not be able to find work. While on the other hand the contribution that dependents make to household income in this country may be crucial. This view is supported by the anecdotal evidence of our members.

Perhaps even more importantly there would be a social cost to separating the family. UNISON believes that the right to a family life is a basic human right.