Business Immigration Update

AUTHOR / KEY CONTACT

Edward O'Brien
Partner

Edward.OBrien@LA-Law.com
01202 786148

Yesterday, the Government announced plans to make significant changes to immigration laws and rules. These changes will likely come into force in Spring 2024, so those sponsoring overseas workers or thinking about doing so will need to start putting plans in place to comply with the new rules.

Changes to immigration rules – sponsoring overseas workers

The key changes are as follows:

- The minimum salary for a skilled worker visa will rise to £38,700 from £26,200.

Those looking to sponsor workers under the skilled worker route must ensure that the salary for the role meets the new minimum threshold. It is not yet clear whether the Government will require the salaries for all skilled workers to increase to at least £38,700 in Spring 2024 or if it will only apply to new and renewed visas. If it is the latter, businesses considering sponsorship may wish to act before the new rules come into force to take advantage of the current lower salary threshold.

Recruiting care staff from overseas – Health and Care visas

Care providers will be pleased to note that the increase to the salary threshold will not apply to Health and Care visas.

- The number of dependants that those granted Health and Care visas can bring to the UK will be cut.

It still needs to be determined whether the number of dependants will be limited or cut completely or what will happen to dependants already in the UK. The new rules will mean that recruiting care staff from overseas will be more challenging, so providers should prepare to face longer recruitment times and a shallower recruitment pool.

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Shortage occupations

- The 20% reduction to the wage threshold for shortage occupations will be scrapped and replaced with a new Immigration Salary List, which will set out a general threshold discount.

This will make recruiting overseas workers, even those in shortage occupations, more difficult and expensive. The shortage occupation list is also likely to be reviewed, and the number of occupations will be reduced.

The Government is expected to provide further clarity and detail on these changes in the coming months. In the meantime, if you have any questions about how these changes may affect your business or plans to sponsor overseas staff, please get in touch with our Business Immigration team by emailing online.enquiries@la-law.com.

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