

Post-Brexit immigration system welcomed by staffing specialist

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Following the publication of the Home Office's new policy statement on the post-Brexit points-based immigration system, a leading engineering recruiter has welcomed the fact that access to talent from overseas won't be severed after Britain leaves the EU – but warned that more needs to be done to address ongoing skills shortages.

Under the new rules, the general salary threshold for 'skilled workers' will be lowered from £30,000 to £25,600 in line with Migration Advisory Committee recommendations. In addition, if an applicant earns less than the threshold – but no less than £20,480 – they may still come to the UK if they are offered a job on the government's shortage occupation list (SOL). Roles on the current list include civil engineers, electrical engineers and mechanical engineers amongst others.

Commenting on the new rules, Lewis Richards, Director of WR Engineering, said:

"While there were concerns that the end of free movement of labour would severely exacerbate talent shortages which are already prevalent across the engineering sector, news that the salary threshold will be significantly lower for SOL occupations will offer some welcome relief for the clients we work with.

"However, with a recent study from EngineeringUK suggesting that the sector will need an additional 186,000 skilled recruits each year until 2024 in order to ease talent shortages, relying on immigration alone will not solve the impending skills crisis.

"The new points-based immigration system may keep the wolves from the door for now. However, long-term, individual businesses must explore how they can best attract the next generation of professionals to the sector, and retain and upskill their existing employees, to ensure that their talent pipelines are resilient to future demand."

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Jake Galland
BlueSky PR
Jake@bluesky-pr.com
T: +44 (0)1582 790 090