

## **The changing face of UK immigration**

The next 12 months will see significant changes to the way you manage the recruitment and employment of overseas nationals. Along with the introduction of a new five-tier points based immigration system, the Government will also place renewed emphasis on the responsibilities of all employers who recruit from the foreign labour market.

### **What are the key changes?**

The most visible change will see the majority of the current UK immigration routes streamlined to fall within one of five new visa tiers:

- Tier 1: Highly skilled individuals to contribute to growth and productivity.
- Tier 2: Skilled workers with a job offer to fill gaps in the UK labour force.
- Tier 3: Limited numbers of low-skilled workers to fill specific temporary shortages.
- Tier 4: Students.
- Tier 5: Youth mobility and temporary workers (including working holidaymakers), allowed to work in the UK for a limited period to satisfy primarily non-economic objectives.

The implementation of these tiers is expected to start with Tier 1 in January 2008, with Tier 2 following closely behind.

### **Sponsorship and increased employer responsibility**

The new system will bring an end to the UK Work Permit Scheme as we currently know it. Going forward, employers will themselves become sponsors - a measure designed to increase employer responsibility and ensure that they take full responsibility for their workers' compliance under the new system. The process of becoming a sponsor will require employers to complete a registration process, after which they will be granted permission to recruit from the foreign labour pool.

One of the most significant impacts on employers will be the enforcement of severe penalties for those found to have employed foreign workers without following the correct procedures. Penalties will range from fines through to restrictions placed on the offending employer's entitlement to employ foreign nationals.

### **How will the changes affect you?**

To date the Government has not been forthcoming with the public release of detailed guidance regarding the latest changes. As a result we have seen the emergence of a vast amount of conflicting information from a variety of unofficial sources, the majority of which has left employers confused about what the changes will mean for them.

Over the past 12 months Visalogic has been fortunate to have been involved in a series of ongoing consultations and discussions with key industry organisations regarding the proposed initiatives. If you would like to find out more about the changes and learn precisely what impact they will have on your business, contact Visalogic.

### **As members of Westminster licensee Association, Visalogic's services to other participating members include the following:**

- Free consultations and ad-hoc advice
- Regular updates on the latest UK immigration changes
- Dedicated account management and same day response services
- Competitive, transparent fee structure
- Free in-house immigration compliance training
- Secure online application tracking

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