

UK migration policy post Brexit: making the case for FM

A sustainable migration policy is important for the FM profession given the already significant skills gap and the number of European Economic Area (EEA) nationals who are employed in the sector (an estimated 24% of the workforce).

Following the result of the EU referendum, the then Prime Minister invoked Article 50(2) of the Lisbon Treaty. As a consequence, the future status of many EEA nationals living and working in the UK became unclear.

After the 2017 General Election we called for the immediate guarantee of the right to remain for EEA nationals already contributing in the UK and the development of a flexible migration system that would allow continued access to appropriate levels of labour from the EU and beyond. This would help our members to manage the ongoing challenge of filling vacancies across the skills spectrum.

In December 2018 the Government outlined its post-Brexit immigration policy in a [White Paper](#). It proposed ending low-skilled immigration; a move which will clearly have profound consequences for the workplace and facilities management profession.

We have consulted with our members on how future migration policy could be shaped in the best interests of the sector and their views have fed into our engagement with Government on:

- 1) The Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) call for evidence on the economic and social impacts of the UK's exit from the EU and on how the UK's immigration system should be aligned with delivery of the Government's Industrial Strategy
- 2) The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (HAC) inquiry on immigration policy

In each submission we stressed that any new immigration system must be evidence-based and take account of the skills needs of the wider British economy, whilst also recognising the unique requirements of our profession. We emphasised that addressing the skills gap requires a multi-faceted approach and that a flexible migration policy needs to be part of the solution, alongside lifelong learning and upskilling the UK's workforce in order to reduce future dependency on migrant labour.

We also called on the Government to work in partnership with the workplace and facilities management sector to implement cross-departmental policies which support the wider domestic skills and productivity agenda. In addition, we pointed out that the wider societal impact of the loss of access to EEA nationals should not be underestimated, given that many are employed as front-line workers in public sector areas such as healthcare. We will continue to make the case for the most suitable migration policy for the workplace and FM profession and will keep members informed of relevant events relating to Brexit so that you can prepare in the best possible manner.

