



Migration Advisory Committee recommends that racing roles be added to the Shortage Occupation List

Six vital roles in the horseracing and breeding industries have been recommended to be added to the Shortage Occupation List (SOL), following the Migration Advisory Committee's (MAC) [review](#) of the SOL.

Despite significant efforts to increase pay in yards and studs to make roles more attractive, the racing and breeding industries currently face a shortage of around 2,000 employees, with significant employment challenges post-Brexit. The British Horseracing Authority (BHA) – with support from the National Trainers Federation (NTF) and The Thoroughbred Group – submitted evidence to the MAC outlining racing and breeding's case for adding six roles to the SOL: racing groom, stallion handler, stud groom, stud hand, stud handler, and work rider.

The MAC has recommended that all six jobs be added to the SOL. In its report, the MAC recognised the *“high skill requirements for these roles,”* as well as the current shortages and the industry's historic reliance on migrant workers. They also noted that vacancies at racing yards and studs have grown by more than double the UK average between 2016/17 and 2022/23, which highlights the difficulties faced by the industry.

The decision to include the six vital jobs on the SOL follows an extensive political campaign by the BHA, NTF and the Thoroughbred Group to mobilise MPs across Westminster to support the need for the roles to be included on the revised list.

British racing relies on top global talent to ensure the right level of expertise and skill to maintain world-class standards. The inclusion of the six roles on the SOL will allow British trainers and stud farms to recruit the best available international talent, boost the number of British-bred racehorses, and further ease pressure on existing employees which is contributing to retention challenges faced by the industry.

The Home Secretary has received a copy of the report. After consideration, the Home Office will publish an official response to the MAC's recommendations in due course.

Julie Harrington, CEO of the BHA, said: “British racing welcomes today's decision by the MAC. While we continue to develop career paths and opportunities for people seeking to get into racing and breeding, it remains the case that these industries still need to recruit highly skilled workers from overseas to plug significant workforce gaps.

“Adding these roles to the SOL will, if approved by Government, allow us to continue recruiting the very best international talent and give us the much-needed extra capacity to train and develop our home-grown talent.”

Paul Johnson, CEO of the NTF, said: “We are very pleased to see the MAC recommend the addition of a number of roles including Work Rider and Racing Grooms to the SOL. This will provide a significant boost to the sport's efforts to address the ongoing staffing challenges that we face. We hope that the Government will support these recommendations that will make a real difference to the viability of trainers' businesses.”

Claire Sheppard, CEO of the TBA said: “The TBA welcomes the recommendation of the MAC to include three vital equine care roles in British thoroughbred stud farms within the SOL. The inclusion of the stud hand, stud groom and stallion handler categories recognises the challenges that employers within



the thoroughbred breeding sector are currently facing in recruiting domestically for these specialist and skilled positions.

“These roles are vital in enabling studs to continue to deliver world leading health and welfare standards and produce racehorses that excel on the global stage, supporting employment in the rural economy and underpinning the racing industry’s £4.1 billion annual economic impact.”

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The MAC is an independent, non-statutory, non-time limited, non-departmental public body that advises the government on migration issues.
2. The MAC recommendations are subject to approval from the Home Secretary.