



Isle of Man Government



Department of Trade & Industry

NEWS RELEASE

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DTI increases scrutiny of Work Permits in changing Labour Market

New work permit applications for administrative jobs that do not require specialist qualifications or experience will come under greater scrutiny with immediate effect due to the availability of Isle of Man workers, the Department of Trade & Industry has announced.

On 16 February, the DTI issued a news release that new applications for work permits for some skills in certain sectors where there is a clear availability of Isle of Man workers are now under greater scrutiny as the Island sees a rise in unemployment. (It is important to emphasise that this relates to applications for new permits; renewals to existing permits will continue to be considered in the normal manner.) At that time, the Department announcement related to non-specialist jobs in construction, retail and wholesale distribution plus hospitality sectors. Today's announcement is a logical extension of this policy change based on the current data for both the unemployed and job vacancies held by DTI's JobCentre.

Minister for Trade and Industry Hon David Cretney MHK commented:

"It is my intention to make sure that the work permit system operates in the best interest of our economy and our people. As a small nation we will often need to import labour where specialist skills or experience are required and I will not step in the way of economic growth and diversification. However, we must recognise that the legislation requires us to protect local workers by ensuring they are offered employment for which they are qualified, suitable and available to undertake.

We are all aware that a number of key sectors have experienced redundancies over recent months. I am keen to ensure that local workers have every opportunity of obtaining and retaining employment across all sectors of the economy.

Today's announcement is another prudent step to achieve this goal. It is intended to give a clear message to employers regarding which new work permit applications are likely to be acceptable. It is also intended to encourage unemployed individuals to actively pursue the job vacancies that are available. I want to emphasise that, while unemployment is rising, DTI's JobCentre has over 550 job vacancies currently, so there are still opportunities available and my Department will work hard to help individuals find the right opportunity.

At the same time, I recognise that our economy requires many highly specialist staff, many of whom we must attract from other jurisdictions and I will ensure my Department continues to facilitate permits for such valuable contributors to our economy. I will continue to review this situation closely to ensure we achieve the right balance for our economy and our community."

ENDS

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Notes:

Decisions on the granting of Work Permits is the responsibility of the Minister of Trade & Industry who sets policy and delegates powers to the Work Permit Committee, a panel who have extensive experience of the local employment market and wider personnel practices. The Department collates information regarding the current labour market, using resources at the JobCentre, DHSS and Economic Affairs, which is passed in regular reports to the Work Permit Committee, to assist in the decision making process.

The Control of Employment Act provides that work permits are required for those non Isle of Man workers seeking employment from states within the European Economic Area (EEA). To be granted a permit the employer (or the applicant if self-employed), must demonstrate that there are no suitable and available Manx workers for the vacancy. For individuals from outside the EEA, the DTI has powers to grant and enforce UK overseas work permits.

The Department has enforcement responsibility for the Control of Employment Act and other employment legislation, with inspectors ensuring that employers are meeting their obligations in areas such as minimum wage and employment contracts as well as work permits. The inspectorate resources were increased last year following a decision to place greater emphasis on the enforcement functions of the Department.