



## Visiting and working - hope for change?

Fundamental change to UK immigration law is an annual occurrence. 2022 will be no different, with several new visa routes announced which are designed to assist businesses to meet their labour mobility needs and attract high performing talent; the Global Business Mobility visa, the Scale-Up visa and the High Potential Individual Visa.

However, I am mostly interested in the prospect of reform of the visitor's rules following the recommendation made by the Migration Advisory Committee in their report of October 2021, to explore how the visit visa rules could be adapted to facilitate time-limited, essential work travel to the UK, introducing some much-needed flexibility.

The visit rules currently cater for a strictly limited number of paid activities, and some business activities. I've seen increasing enquiries from organisations who need a worker to come into the UK for a very short period to undertake a role which they are paid for but which isn't catered for under the visit rules. There often isn't an easy solution outside of formal sponsorship which can be administratively burdensome for a short engagement.

This problem has been given increased focus with the end of free movement from the EU. Indeed it can be confusing for visitors, who are often able to utilise e-gates without speaking to a Border Force Officer and will have little formal notification of what they can and cannot do here. Some clarity and flexibility would be welcome. The Migration Advisory Committee will normally receive a specific commission to examine reform of the immigration rules. If you are finding the immigration rules aren't providing sufficient flexibility for your business, it's really worthwhile to engage with calls for evidence. I have direct experience of providing submissions to the MAC and it is possible to influence policy with a well-crafted evidence led submission. Interesting times ahead.