



Immigration and the Maritime Sector

Maritime UK seeks a balanced approach to building and sustaining the talented workforce we need for long-term success - one which combines investment in home-grown talent with continuing recruitment from overseas to complement and supplement that home-grown talent.

We are a very international sector. We need to employ the very best if we are to compete successfully across the world, and we want to ensure that a lot of our jobs go to Brits.

Our aim is to have a talented and diverse workforce in every part of the sector, driving business growth, inspired to join us by a professional careers campaign, and well-trained to use their talents to the full.

To achieve our goal, we adopt a twin-track approach:

- 1. Support the new Maritime Skills Commission to invest in home-grown talent, through developing a stronger pipeline of future colleagues, supporting life-long learning opportunities for current colleagues, and improving the diversity of the sector so that it is seen as truly open to all.*
- 2. Remain open to global talent who can help the sector to prosper.*

Our commitment to home-grown talent is clear in the extensive work we have been doing to grow the range of apprenticeships available, and the number offered by employers, in our newly-increased capability to promote careers through our Maritime Careers Taskforce, and in the imaginative work done by our Women in Maritime Taskforce, soon to be enhanced as a broader Diversity Taskforce.

The sector's commitment to apprenticeships is high, and growing

In the last three years the maritime sector has:

- created 9 wholly new apprenticeships, including our first three graduate apprenticeships, with another half dozen new opportunities in the pipeline
- refreshed 7 more existing apprenticeships, in some cases making radical improvements
- pushed the opportunity well beyond traditional skill areas to secure apprenticeship funding for those who are re-training for second careers, for example as harbourmasters, pilots or surveyors
- more than doubled the number of people employed as apprentices

However, we must complement that commitment to home-grown talent alone with continued access to talent from overseas.

In part that is because of the sheer scale of employment of overseas labour in parts of the maritime sector, amounting to many tens of thousands of people. Any significant or precipitate disruption to that current reality would be very damaging.

Employment of overseas labour in the maritime sector is very substantial

For example:

- 55% of the 67,000 certificated officers in the Merchant Navy, serving with members of the UK Chamber of Shipping, are overseas nationals, according to the Department for Transport's 2019 Seafarer Statistics. The proportions rise to 75% for uncertificated officers (who primarily work in hospitality roles) and 81% for ratings.
- 25 to 30% of employees in maritime law, insurance, shipbroking and classification societies are foreign nationals, according to a 2019 estimate by Pricewaterhouse Coopers for Maritime London.
- 15% of the jobs in the UK's fishing fleet are held by employees from overseas, according to a 2018 estimate by the Sea Fish Industry Authority.

In some cases maritime companies, like those in many other sectors, recruit overseas because they cannot find the people they need in the UK. We will continue to work with those companies to train and attract Brits for those roles where we can, but we are unlikely to see big changes in the foreseeable future.

And in some cases, companies actively prefer to employ people from overseas; we must keep those doors open. International businesses will not succeed in the fiercely-competitive global marketplace if they do not have an international workforce, and if they cannot move employees around between their offices across the world as those employees gain experience and responsibility.

That flexibility matters as much for Brits experiencing opportunities overseas, whether in the superyacht world or in professional services, as it does in reverse.

The balance between employing home-grown talent and talent from overseas is struck differently in different parts of the maritime sector, but in every case there is a balance. As the Government seeks to shape its new immigration policy we ask it to work with us on the basis that striking the right balance is the best way for the maritime sector to prosper.

January 2020