

Media Release

Date: 11 November 2020

Committee for Home Affairs amends population policy to support seasonal workers

The Committee *for* Home Affairs intends to promote the flexibility of the population management regime to support the changing needs of the business community and demonstrate that Guernsey is competitive and open for business.

Despite the Island's success in containing the spread of Covid-19, the situation around the world continues to have a significant impact on some sectors. As we go into the winter months and many countries are battling with a resurgence of the virus, those individuals holding a Short Term Employment Permit working a 9/3 pattern (nine months 'on', three months 'off') may be facing similar challenges to that which existed when the Island went into lockdown in March.

The Committee *for* Home Affairs has therefore agreed that, as an additional support measure for businesses, a holder of a Short Term Employment Permit working a 9/3 pattern approaching their three month break, does not have to leave the Island.

This has been a difficult year for many businesses. The ongoing impact of travel restrictions, combined with the uncertainty surrounding Brexit, makes planning for the future a challenge. The Committee recognises the important role it can play by ensuring the policies under its control support industry.

Part of this is about raising awareness of the flexibility of the population management regime. For example, the regime has established policies in place to support individuals on Short and Medium Term Permits who are approaching their five year cap, where their employer wants them to remain working. This was introduced to mitigate one of the challenges arising as a result of the UK leaving the EU, ensuring that the ability to retain good staff did not become an added complication for businesses planning for the future.

Currently anyone due to reach their five year cap before February 2021 may apply for a one year extension - in some sectors this can be extended for two years.

Deputy Rob Prow, President of the Committee *for* Home Affairs, said:

‘As a Committee we have listened to the business community and recognise that positive changes are needed today if we are going ensure that those industries hit the hardest by the unprecedented events of the past year have the opportunity to recover.

‘As we go into winter, it is hoped that this change in policy will not only acknowledge the valuable role that seasonal workers play in our community, but also allow businesses to retain skilled and experienced staff and allow them to plan, with a little more confidence, for the future.

‘The population management regime was designed to be flexible and responsive to the changing economic needs of the Island. The Committee *for* Home Affairs intends to work with political colleagues and industry to exploit this flexibility to “turn on” and “turn off” policies that will support not just the recovery of individual businesses, but the economy as a whole and demonstrate that, as an Island, we are open for business.’

Individuals and employers are encouraged to contact the population management office for advice about how to take advantage of existing policies so that they can continue to live and work in the Island.

Ends

Notes to Media

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