



Environment, Food
and Rural Affairs
Committee

Lizzie Wilson
CEO
National Pig Association
By email

11 February 2026

Dear Lizzie

In December, I wrote to the Home Office regarding the wider implications of planned changes to Skilled Worker visas on several labour-dependent sectors. The Department's recent response has set out its position in relation to occupations previously eligible under specific immigration routes, including butchers and other key roles in the pig sector.

The Home Office notes that, when the Migration Advisory Committee last reviewed butchery roles, it recommended against including them on the shortage occupation list, citing the need for the industry to address issues such as uncompetitive pay and unsociable working hours. The Department further states that the Government does not intend to grant exceptions for individual sectors and that industries should instead focus on developing a sustainable workforce strategy by improving skills, training, pay and working conditions.

The Department also highlights that, while the Skilled Worker changes mean there is no longer a specific visa route for butchers, individuals already in the UK on visas that permit general work rights, such as dependants and Youth Mobility Scheme participants, are free to work in the sector where employers are able to attract them. The full Home Office response can be read [here](#).

The Committee remains concerned about whether these changes will affect the availability of skilled labour in the sector and whether employers have had sufficient time and support to transition to the new arrangements. We are therefore writing to seek your views.

Could you let us know what impacts, if any, you expect from the removal of the skilled visa route for butchers and related roles? Does this change pose a risk to the sustainability of your sector's workforce? Have you had adequate time to plan and transition to the new arrangements? Finally, are existing visa routes that provide general work rights suitable for meeting your sector's labour needs?

House of Commons
Palace of Westminster
Westminster
SW1A 0AA

efracom@parliament.uk
020 7219 1119
Social: @CommonsEFRA
www.parliament.uk/efracom

I would be grateful to receive your responses to these questions by Monday 23 February.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Alistair Carmichael." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Alistair" is followed by a space and then "Carmichael." The word "Carmichael" has a long, horizontal stroke extending from the end of the word.

Alistair Carmichael MP
Chair, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee