

Heritage and Immigration Brexit Briefing

The Heritage Alliance

The Heritage Alliance is England's biggest coalition of heritage interests, bringing together well over 100 mainly national organisations supported by over 7 million members, friends, volunteers, trustees and staff. From historic buildings and museums to canals, historic vehicles and steam railways, the Heritage Alliance's diverse membership owns, manages and cares for the vast majority of England's historic environment.

There are significant numbers of non-UK EU citizens that work in the heritage sector in England in a variety of capacities, and UK companies and citizens who work in heritage in other EU countries. This two-way exchange of expertise and labour is extremely important to the sector.

Restrictions on access to EU labour form part of a wider picture of the potential impacts Brexit may have on our world-leading sector unless measures to mitigate adverse impacts are put in place. For instance, last year Historic England published a EUCLID report on the impact of Brexit on heritage sector funding. That report found that Heritage focused or related projects in England received a minimum of £450m in EU funding in the period from 2007-2016, and this is likely to be an underestimate. The Arts Council has released its own EUCLID report more recently on the impact of leaving the EU on the cultural sector (heritage excluded) which found that the EU contributed £345m to the arts, museums and creative industries in England between 2007-16, equating to £40m each year. Over a ten-year period, the figures taken together would approach £1 Billion in England alone. This research demonstrated that the heritage sector is especially vulnerable to a loss of EU funding, the effect of which will be compounded by a lack of access to EU labour unless measures are put in place to avoid this happening.

We carried out a survey to add to the evidence we already hold on how immigration restrictions might affect the heritage sector. A further 37 organisational responses were received, which highlight rather starkly the potentially damaging effect of a visa regime based on salary levels. Respondents were from both inside and outside the Heritage Alliance's membership and ranged from local groups and businesses through charities, commercial units to museums and national organisations. Most responses came from buildings, architecture and archaeology sectors. The key finds of this report are set out at Annex 1 and include:

- Around 30% of respondents employ over 30% of non-UK EU nationals;
- 22% of respondents employ over 60% non-UK EU nationals. Respondents also noted that they employ additional EU nationals as subcontractors;
- In contrast to the figures for EU nationals, 89% of respondents employ less than 10% of non-UK nationals from outside the EU;
- Over 55% of respondents say that a restriction on access to EU workers would negatively affect their organisation. One respondent noted that posts in their organisation might have otherwise remained unfilled;
- If a salary level of £30,000 were required as minimum for a visa for EU nationals over half of respondents report that over 50% of the jobs in their organization would not

meet this criterion, with 46 % saying that this salary requirement would affect over 60% of their job roles.

- Over three quarters of respondents anticipate their workload increasing in the future, exacerbating an existing skills gap, with well over half of respondents believing that the UK does not have enough labour at present to meet this increased need without access to EU nationals;
- Many tourism-based heritage organisations rely on some form of foreign seasonal staff. An initial survey by Historic Houses showed that 25% of their members indicated that they employed 5 or more EU nationals in the businesses on their properties. For 18% of respondents to our survey, seasonal workers made up 10-30% of their total workforce.

Our key asks for Government are to ensure:

- continued access to skilled labour from EEA countries;
- exemptions for accredited heritage experts and academics;
- any new visa system should allow the UK to export its archaeological, buildings conservation and museum expertise and, where necessary import skills from the EEA where they are not available in the UK;
- any new visa system should not be dependent on income levels;
- swift access to visas or the research equivalent of a diplomatic passport;
- Government commitment to support training and apprenticeships in the UK;
- Construction-related occupations facing high demand, including heritage craft and building skills (e.g. stonemasonry) and archaeology, placed on the UK Shortage Occupations List; and
- Free movement of accredited archaeologists and other heritage specialists across the Irish Border.

Why thinking about heritage in relation to immigration matters:

- The historic environment is geographically diverse, spreading the benefits of skills, jobs, investment and engagement across the UK, in rural and urban environments;
- Heritage can provide social cohesion, rootedness and identity;
- Heritage drives beneficial change (e.g. regeneration that embraces character and authenticity and which creates places where people want to live, work and spend leisure time);
- Heritage creates economic value through the export of skills and products as well as through its contribution to inbound tourism;
- Time is needed to develop and put in place measures that replace and improve on those resulting from EU funding and regulation. This needs to be planned for;
- There are shortages of some heritage skills and arrangements may be needed to ensure continued access to key skills. It may be impossible, and will certainly be very time consuming, to fill current and future shortfalls solely from within the UK.

Construction

Labour Force Survey statistics show 12.6% of construction workers were born outside the UK and 5.7% were born in EU accession countries (Eastern European countries who joined after 2004). We know that in London and the South East, the percentage of the workforce made up of EU nationals is considerably higher and closer to 50%. Given the severity of the skills shortages we already face, the retention of these workers is a critical concern for the industry.

Repair and maintenance of historic buildings directly generated [£9.6bn](#) in construction sector output in 2015. Historic/ traditional (pre-1919) buildings require a labour force with traditional skills. There are c5.5million traditional buildings in England. The 2012 spend (latest calculated figures) was £3.8billion, down from £5.3 billion in 2008. Over the last 10 years the skills gap to meet demand has ranged from about 85,000 to 110,000, with a significant proportion of the gap related to contractors using traditional materials. There is an ageing demographic in the traditional heritage skills workforce.

We will continue to need to draw on skilled labour from EU countries. Further developing training measures and apprenticeships within the UK is another way to help meet this need but this would require both a commitment to investment and time for the skills to be developed. Construction, including heritage craft skills and archaeology, should be placed the UK Shortage Occupations List.

Archaeology

There is a shortage of heritage skills for development-led work in the UK and while there are efforts to address these shortages would be made worse by restricting the number of EEA nationals able to work in the UK. The sector has struggled to respond quickly enough to an increased demand for archaeologists following on from the skills losses experienced during the recession. It continues to experience difficulties in planning for its future skills needs for a number of reasons including fluctuating market conditions. [A 2016 Historic England study](#) found that the sector is already working at or near capacity as evidenced by existing skills shortages. There aren't enough archaeologists now to meet predicted future demand and we need an increase in capacity building, supplemented by continued access to skilled non-UK EU archaeologists, to meet the need. There are over 40 major infrastructure projects planned across the UK over the next 17 years.

The latest State of the Market for Archaeological Services report, completed by Landward Research on behalf of HE, ClfA and FAME gives the following figures relating to the nationalities of UK-based staff. 15% of people working in UK applied archaeology in 2017 are non-UK EU citizens; a further 2% of the archaeological workforce are neither from the UK nor the EU. This is a significant figure, which will need to be carefully monitored as future demand for skilled archaeologists to work on major infrastructure projects such as HS2/ A303 is expected to rise significantly over the next 15 years.

	Archaeological Market Survey 2017	
	March 2017	
British (UK subjects)	1744.05	83%
Nationals of other EU states	305.6	15%
Nationals of other countries (non-UK, non-EU)	40.2	2%
total	2089.85	

n=45

At the time of the *Profiling the Profession 2012-13* survey, the last time comparable data were gathered, 3% of the entire archaeological workforce's countries of origin were European Union states (other than the UK). A further 4% of the workforce in 2013 were originally from countries in

the rest of the world. This suggests that demand for EEA skills has increased significantly in the last 5 years.

To illustrate: workforce numbers on A14 road project indicate c. 20% field staff from overseas. HS2 enabling works programme had an assumption that organisations in the supply chain could/would look to recruit EU and other overseas archaeologists as part of their strategy. If labour movement is restricted, home grown talent will become increasingly important. We will need to create and fund new routes to skills. Some new routes are already being created but employers may need support in their use. Some of the requirements around the Trailblazer apprenticeships make it difficult for SMEs to engage and the lack of predictability in the market is a real factor for employers who will need to commit to minimum 12 month contracts for apprentices. Diminished focus on arts subjects in the school curriculum (and stopping subjects such as archaeology A-level) is counter-intuitive in this context.

Archaeology is recognised as a construction skill by the Construction Skills Certification Scheme. In order to ensure economic growth, we will require common solutions for construction and archaeology. The size of the workforce we need in the UK fluctuates considerably in line with the construction cycle and pulling in EU archaeologists is one way that employers cope with the peaks in demand.

Free movement of archaeologists and other accredited heritage specialists across the Irish Border is of particular importance as cross-border working is the norm.

Conservation

An interesting example given by a Heritage Alliance Member shows that all 6 of their painting restorers are Italian where skills are plentiful and currently work is less available. Other organisations cite the fact that crucial members of staff who are EU nationals are intimately acquainted with our planning system – which takes time to develop – making them indispensable and difficult to replace.

Any future restriction in the number of EEA workers must consider forthcoming large heritage and infrastructure projects supported by the Government which will further increase the UK's shortage of skills. These not only include the archaeology projects listed above, such as HS2, road building projects including upgrades to the A303 at Stonehenge and the Government's drive for more housebuilding, but also large conservation projects such as the restoration of Buckingham Palace, Westminster Palace, Wentworth Woodhouse and Clondon Park which will increase demand for already scarce heritage skills.

Skills exchange

If a visa system were developed in the future, it would need to work both ways. **Exemptions for accredited experts and academics in the field should be considered.**

We want to be able to export our archaeological, buildings conservation, and museum expertise. We may also need to import significant training from Europe as we have in electrochemistry, acoustic emission and reflectance FTIR (surface measurement technique based on reflective properties) applied to cultural heritage when the knowledge was absent in UK. One particular challenge could arise if movement across borders is dependent on income levels. Conservation and archaeological expertise are not necessarily highly paid but are highly skilled. This needs to be taken into account in the design of any visa regime.

The UK has, and can make more of, its world leadership in conservation and heritage science skills. Access to heritage science specialists/researchers will be an important issue for the UK. Swift access to visas or the research equivalent of a diplomatic passport would help. Bilateral agreements between countries are of limited value as it would be difficult to identify any one country in preference to another in the European context. A sectoral approach to free movement is what is needed to support heritage science.

Research

Freedom of movement for researchers is crucial. Bilateral agreements with individual countries would have limited value to heritage science research. A sectoral approach would protect the acknowledged leadership that the UK has in heritage science and other areas.

Horizon 2020 and its predecessor schemes have invested significant sums of money in transnational historic environment research. The share of funding obtained by English research institutions over the last ten years is at c£90m. If this funding was lost it is likely that research would take place outside of, or exclude the UK from partnerships and access to these skills may be lost.

Seasonal labour

Many tourism-based heritage organisations rely on some form of foreign seasonal staff. A recent provisional Historic Houses Association survey showed that 25% of their members indicated that they employed 5 or more EU nationals in the businesses on their properties.

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Full Brexit Briefing: <http://www.theheritagealliance.org.uk/tha-website/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Brexit-and-Heritage-Briefing-FINAL-with-Royal-Society-Report.pdf>

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