



## Customs and Immigration Service

### Report

To: Minister for Home Affairs

Submitted By: Senior Manager Immigration Policy

Date: 05 May 2023

Subject: Changes to the Work Permit Policy

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#### Purpose of Report

To enable the Minister for Home Affairs to approve changes to the work permit policy by:

- Introducing a new temporary 12-month work permit route for the sea-going fishing industry which can be renewed annually for a maximum period of 3 years. This would be followed by an absence period equal to the amount of time spent in the Island.
- Include Occupation Code 5119 for Fishing Trades in the work permit policy for skilled occupations.

#### Background

Work Permits are a requirement under the Immigration (Work Permits) (Jersey) Rules 1995 and as such employers are required to apply for a work permit for those individuals who require immigration permissions to enter and remain in Jersey for work.

The Work Permit Policy sets out the criteria that must be met by employers applying to recruit skilled workers in Jersey on a temporary or longer-term basis.

In April 2023, the Jersey Customs and Immigration Service (JCIS) received a request from Wheelhouse Limited requesting an amendment to the temporary fishing industry work permit route.

The fishing industry route has featured in the work permit policy since 2019 and enabled the sector to employ overseas employees in Jersey for periods not exceeding 6 months. This was extended to periods not exceeding 9 months in 2021 at the request of the sector to accommodate changes to fishing practices.



Post Brexit & COVID, Wheelhouse Limited have diversified, no longer operate seasonally with their vessel now operating all year around, and require 4 crew to be able to go to sea. The crew need to be highly skilled and are required to have at least 4 years sea fishing experience and qualifications in sea survival, first aid, firefighting, crane operating, and boat handling.

The business has attempted to find suitably qualified employees within the Common Travel Area, but the industry is tough, and they have struggled to find and keep suitably qualified and motivated crew.

Having met with Wheelhouse Limited this is an industry in decline and they are desperately trying to keep it alive and make it profitable. They were keen to point out that fishing is part of Jersey heritage and they do not want to see this disappear. The business is investing in the industry and supporting local hospitality and fishing business while looking to new markets and diversifying. Wheelhouse Limited operate a processing facility in St Mary and have recently been granted permission to build staff accommodation on site which will be suitable for up to 8 employees.

Wheelhouse Limited are requesting that consideration is given to introducing a 12-month work permit for the sea-going fishing industry which can be renewed annually up to a maximum period of three years.

In addition, JCIS have identified that occupation code 5119 for Fishing Trades is eligible for UK skilled employment but not covered in the Jersey work permit policy. Including this option within the policy would encourage the training and development of existing work permit employees with a view of moving them onto skilled work permits.

### **Recommendation**

JCIS recommend that a 12-month renewable work permit route should be introduced for the sea-going fishing industry aligned with the 12-month route available for hospitality. This route will not be available to the foreshore fishing industry which will still have access to the 9-month work permit route.

Additionally, JCIS recommend that occupation code 5119 for Fishing Trades is added to the work permit policy for skilled occupations.