

Utilities Industry Workforce Planning and Overseas Recruitment Guide for HR Managers



PERMITS **2** WORK

Getting it right from the start



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Who are Permits2Work

Founded in 2001, Permits2Work are leading UK immigration specialists, providing personal and corporate clients with professional advice and legal support. Whether you're a business seeking to bring in overseas talent, or a family looking to settle in the UK, you can trust our experts to guide you through the complexities of the immigration procedure. We have a proven track-record of making successful visa applications and appeals and have been winning cases on behalf of our clients ever since our foundation.

The utilities industry in the UK is struggling with a skills shortage at a time when the industry is on the up. Even with the government's STEM initiative in schools, not enough students will be through the education system in time to meet the current shortfall. In addition to growing workforce issues, such as pending loss of significant talent, rapidly ageing infrastructure and trends in energy technologies, utilities companies also face changes in consumer behaviour, regulations and delivery models that dramatically affect how they are structured.

All of these issues - and the emergence of new competitors - demand a dramatic rethinking of your utility workforce and of where you go to find the talent and skills you need.

Since the talent pool in the UK is drying up, how will your organisation adapt and where will you look?

We have highlighted, below, a simple overview to identify the shortfalls and spread the net of recruitment:

Strategy:

1. Model plausible scenarios (how will you react to the talent drain?)
2. Re-vision scenarios with new technology and skills
3. Create forecast models (how many new positions will need to be filled?)

Sourcing:

1. Assess current workforce skills against newly modelled, critical job roles
2. Advertise the positions in accordance with the Home Office guidance (this is critical if you can't find the necessary skills and need to look at international candidates), unless an exemption applies or the role is a recognised shortage occupation
3. Contact Permits2Work for a free assessment to discuss your requirements and manage the Tier 2 visa application process on your behalf (skilled workforce only)

Performance:

1. Align business requirements with behavioural outcomes for each role & career path
2. Support industry standards for careers paths and job role competencies

Learning & Development:

1. Design learning programmes for internal talent
2. Create applied and informal learning for generational knowledge transfer

Succession:

1. Identify critical positions/people for bench strength for future needs
2. Create a succession plan for filling critical positions
3. Validate twice-annually against changing industry, technical and workforce profiles

Repeat the process!

The Tier 2 System

Recruiting talent from overseas needn't be difficult as long as you seek expert advice from the start. The Home Office Tier 2 system enables UK employers to sponsor non-EEA nationals from outside the resident workforce to fill particular jobs which otherwise cannot be filled because of the skills shortage at this time.

If you have a sponsor licence in place already, the Tier 2 categories that you can use may include:

General (new hire)

This category is for skilled employment which cannot be filled by a settled worker. This also includes roles which are in national short supply (shortage occupations).

Intra-Company Transfer (existing employees)

This category is for existing employees who are required to transfer to the UK for short or long-term projects for which it would be inappropriate to recruit from within the UK.

The UK entity must be linked to the overseas branch through common ownership. This category promotes the transfer of knowledge and skills within international companies.

There are 4 sub-categories of Intra-Company Transfer:

Long Term Staff;

Skilled and experienced workers with at least 12 months direct previous employment within the organisation. 5 years and 1 month maximum stay (unless the person earns more than £155,300).

Short Term Staff;

Skilled and experienced workers with at least 12 months direct previous employment within the organisation. 12 months maximum stay.

Graduate Trainee;

Recent graduates coming to the UK as part of a structured programme. With at least 3 months direct previous employment within the organisation. Cannot be used to fill long term posts. 12 months maximum stay.

Skills Transfer;

Existing employees with no prior experience, required to come to the UK to gain or impart skills and knowledge. 6 months maximum stay.

Each subcategory has different qualifying criteria and conditions attached to them. It is important that this is factored into any strategic planning process, so that you can ensure resources are managed efficiently.

This is a specialist area of advice. Eligibility and the points-based system can be confusing, which is why Permits2Work works in partnership with some of the UK's largest utility companies to manage this process effectively