



Council of Ministers Update Report On Inward Migration

June 2025

1 Foreword

To the President of Tynwald, and the Hon Council and Keys in Tynwald assembled.

The world of 2025 presents a complex and dynamic external environment that shapes labour markets globally. Increased global mobility and intensified competition for skills have created widespread shortages at both the high and low ends of the skills spectrum. This global context places significant pressure on economies everywhere to secure the skilled labour needed to sustain economic growth and development.

For the Isle of Man, these external forces are particularly impactful. With deaths exceeding births, the Island's population faces a natural decline without any element of inward migration. Simultaneously, labour shortages persist across most economic sectors, leaving many vacancies unfilled and so attracting workers becomes increasingly important.

In this competitive global landscape, attracting skilled workers through inward migration plays a vital role in providing skills that the labour market may not have access to, and replace workers leaving the labour market. Without continued inflows of skilled individuals, the Island risks stagnation and an inability to adapt to evolving economic demands. In this context, the Council of Ministers recognises the strategic importance of inward migration to the Isle of Man to maintain economic growth, support the delivery of public services, and meet the needs of the current and future population.

However, the Council of Ministers also recognises that inward migration must be managed so that the level of inward migration meets, but does not exceed, that necessary to support the Island.

The Council of Ministers acknowledges that measures and policies covering those that are relocating to the Island under immigration control (visa routes), and those not subject to immigration control (broadly British and Irish citizens) are not always the same. Different systems and factors apply depending on how a person relocates to the Island. Each has its own challenges and there are wider factors that affect the approach to them.

The UK's immigration policy is a key influence our Island's immigration policy, and that policy is fast evolving. Isle of Man migration policy must therefore also evolve and be increasingly agile in responding to emerging risk. A key focus of this report is therefore updating our immigration routes and framework. Operational insights and ongoing policy development have highlighted the need to address key risks whilst attracting the right type of workers to the Island.

Mindful of this, the Council of Ministers intends to prioritise the safety and security of the Island, whilst ensuring that overall, inward migration adds to the economy and society, and those coming to live on Island can support themselves. This means, whilst recognising the need to attract workers, we will continue to do so safely and sustainably.

Taking all this into account, this report presents a realistic forward work programme on inward migration. Development of inward migration policy to date has and will continue to be guided by overarching policy principles agreed by the Council of Ministers, set out in chapter 2.1.

The aim of this report is to update on work undertaken since October 2024, to explain the forward work programme, and to inform democratic debate and deliberation on this important issue for our Island.

Glossary

Not Subject to Immigration Control – those who do not need to apply for a visa or permission to enter or stay, which includes British and Irish Citizens, also those holding Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR/Settled Status)

Subject to Immigration Control – those who require a visa or permission to enter or stay, or if their visa/permission is subject to restrictions (i.e. all other nationalities and passport types)

Immigration – The process for those subject to immigration control (i.e not British or Irish Citizens) to obtain an immigration permission to visit, study, work or settle.

Entry Clearance – The first stage of the Immigration process, an immigration permission allowing a successful applicant to enter the UK and the Isle of Man (and, dependent on the visa type, reside in the IoM) for a set period.

Further Leave to Remain (FLR) – An extension of permission to reside in the Island beyond the initial Entry Clearance period.

Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) – The final stage of the Immigration process (normally available after 5 years continuous residency), issued with no conditions or time limit, after which the individual can apply for citizenship.

Dependants – those who are in the same household/family unit as someone who is a visa holder.

Common Travel Area (CTA) – An arrangement between the UK, Ireland, Isle of Man and the Channel Islands to allow for freedom of movement within the British Isles for citizens of member jurisdictions.

Inward Migration – Movement of people into the Isle of Man to reside, either from the CTA or via the immigration system.

Outward migration – Movement of people leaving the Isle of Man to reside elsewhere (the departure of residents to another country).

Migration – Movement of people relocating from one place to another. In this report, it does not refer to internal migration (moving from one part of the Isle of Man to another).

New resident – Any individual moving to or from the Island to reside, regardless of whether their country of origin or destination is inside or outside the Common Travel Area.

Economically Active – Those in, or seeking, paid employment or self-employment.

Economically Inactive – Those not in, and not seeking, paid employment or self-employment.

Dependency ratio – The number of people under 16 years old and the number of people above retirement age as a percentage of the working age population.

Resident Labour Market Test (RLMT) – A test to demonstrate that there are no suitable and available Isle of Man Workers or settled workers¹, necessitating either a Work Permit or a Worker Migrant visa.

Isle of Man Worker – A person who satisfies the definition of an Isle of Man Worker as prescribed in the Control of Employment Act and, therefore, does not require a work permit to take up employment in the Isle of Man. Who qualifies as an Isle of Man Worker is available here.²

¹ A settled worker is defined in Appendix W and includes British or Irish Citizens and those who hold Settled Status, <https://www.gov.im/categories/travel-traffic-and-motoring/immigration/immigration-rules-and-associated-policy/>

² IoM Government, [Isle of Man Worker Definition](#)

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Appendix 3 – [Student Loan Forgiveness, Pragmatix Advisory Limited](#)

Appendix 4 – [Alternative Healthcare Charges, Pragmatix Advisory Limited](#)

Appendix 5 – [Management of Migration Information, Pragmatix Advisory Limited](#)

Appendix 6 – [Streamlining the Relocation Experience, Pragmatix Advisory Limited](#)

Appendix 7 – [Supporting Integration, Pragmatix Advisory Limited](#)

2 Summary

In July 2024, the [Council of Ministers Report on Inward Migration Incentives and Disincentives](#) was published to the Register of Tynwald Business. In October 2024, Tynwald received the report and resolved:

"...that the Council of Ministers should update by way of Statement in January 2025 and should submit to Tynwald a further report, with recommendations, in time for a debate at the May 2025 Sitting." ³

This report aims to provide an update on work undertaken since October 2024, to explain the forward work programme, and to inform democratic debate and deliberation on this important issue for our Island.

2.1 Principles

This report contains recommendations on inward migration policy principles that together guide this Government's inward migration policy. Council of Ministers invites Tynwald to receive this report and approve the following recommendations;

1. *The Isle of Man Government recognises the need to continue to pursue appropriate inward migration measures to attract workers to the Island to meet our economic needs, alongside investment in upskilling Isle of Man workers and supporting more Isle of Man residents into work.*
2. *In doing so, the Isle of Man Government' should continue to*
 - a. *Maintain security of the Island and the integrity of the Common Travel Area as a top priority, continuing to adapt in response to evolving risks and seeking to minimise abuse of the system.*
 - b. *Prioritise Isle of Man workers*
 - c. *Respond to the needs of employers where skills cannot be found on Island*
 - d. *Welcome those coming to the Isle of Man to work through the work permit system and immigration visa routes, when employers cannot find the skills they need on Island*

³ Tynwald Votes and Proceedings, PP 2024/0119, P.12,
<https://www.tynwald.org.im/spfile?file=/business/vp/VP/2024-PP-0119.pdf>

2.2 Next steps

The key actions arising from this report are:

Revising our immigration visa routes

Alongside ongoing investment in operational improvements, policy development will be progressed in the following work packages:

Work package 1

Phase 1 of this work is live now and encompasses crucial changes to increase the security and appropriateness of our immigration routes. In particular, work is being prioritised on:

1. Increasing minimum salary requirements
2. Progressing an Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS)
3. Aligning the Island's student visa route to the UK's simplified student visa route.
4. Regulation of Immigration Advisors.

Work package 2

Phase 2 focuses on a review of worker migrant routes, including but not limited to, the following potential changes:

1. Employer sponsor licensing for work visas
2. Eligible job roles and related salaries
3. Worker Migrant dependants & maintenance levels
4. Aligned changes to Work Permits (not immigration policy but a related migration control that requires cohesion)

Work package 3

A large programme of work is then required to simplify all other immigration routes not already contained in work packages one or two, to align with the policy direction set out above.

Immigration policy is a complex area, but at a high level the changes set out mean that the Isle of Man is tightening and will continue to tighten immigration visa routes over the next three years. In order to safeguard our system from abuse, some of these changes will mean increased financial and administrative responsibilities for employers and applicants – but the Island will have more control. The changes are however phased, and their impact individually and collectively will be monitored, and policy can and will be adjusted if needed.

Incentivising inward migration

In line with our commitment to put Manx workers first, Government will develop a pilot 'Welcome Home' package to encourage Manx workers overseas to return to take up employment and settle back in the Isle of Man.

Alongside, we will continue to review our attraction campaigns and overall offer to workers not subject to immigration control (broadly, from across the CTA), aligned to our inward migration principles.

Disincentivising inward migration

Overall, given the sustained need for additional labour, Government's position remains to approach disincentives carefully. We recognise that the supply of skills into the Isle of Man could be affected by planned tightening of immigration controls (see above). As such, the introduction of further disincentives is not considered appropriate at this point in time.

While disincentives are not proposed to be introduced *now*, it is sensible to be prepared. Government will keep under review the potential to extend a charge for access to healthcare services to new residents not subject to immigration control (broadly, from across the CTA). As well, work will start on a set of financial disincentives and changes to legal controls that could be implemented at short notice. This could include measures relating to work permits, immigration visa routes, or access to healthcare and housing.

Better management information

Better management information is recognised as vital to enable better monitoring of migration changes and faster policy responses to emerging trends. Action has been commissioned to develop a migration dashboard, expand data collection, and over time, increase the frequency of publishing migration data.

Arrival into the Isle of Man

Key operational improvements to take forward the research and options work completed in recent months are:

1. A project to define and deliver improvements to new resident arrival in the Isle of Man, where simplification of the relocation experience can increase efficiency and deliver a better user experience.
2. Scoping an employer portal to simplify employer management of Work Permits and Confirmation of Employment certificates.

In parallel, the Housing and Communities Board (HCB) will consider potential ways to support integration of new residents, engaging with relevant community organisations.

3 Introduction and Context

In July 2024, [the Council of Ministers Inward Migration Incentives and Disincentives Report](#) was published on the Tynwald Register of Business. The July 2024 Report, as an interim output, highlighted proposals options on the management of inward migration in the short term to respond to current pressures and concerns, and potential options in the longer term.

In October 2024, Tynwald received the report and resolved "*...that the Council of Ministers should update by way of Statement in January 2025 and should submit to Tynwald a further report, with recommendations, in time for a debate at the May 2025 Sitting.*"⁴

Since the debate in October 2024⁵, three workstreams have been taken forward to progress work relating to inward migration.

1. Operational improvements to the immigration system, to reduce risks;
2. Revising immigration visa routes;
3. Inward migration incentives, disincentives, and future systems and processes.

Detail on operational improvements to the immigration system, and revising immigration via routes can be found in chapter 4. Inward migration incentives, disincentives and future systems and processes can be found in chapter 5.

A further statement was given at the May 2025 Tynwald sitting by the Minister for the Cabinet Office, outlining the high-level approach to workstream 2 – revising immigration routes. This report is now published to complete the requirements of the October Tynwald resolution, building on the output from those three key workstreams above.

Policy work relating to inward migration has been led by Cabinet Office with, a number of reports were commissioned from two specialist consultants. BridsonHalsall Advocates Limited conducted a comprehensive assessment of the Isle of Mans key immigration routes⁶. Pragmatix Advisory Limited produced a series of policy papers⁷ aimed at advancing the options identified in [the Council of Ministers Inward Migration Incentives and Disincentives Report](#).

In this report, 'inward migration' means the movement of any person into the Isle of Man to reside, regardless of their nationality. This includes UK and Irish nationals. The term 'new

⁴ Tynwald Votes and Proceedings, PP 2024/0119, P.12,
<https://www.tynwald.org.im/spfile?file=/business/vp/VP/2024-PP-0119.pdf>

⁵ Tynwald Court Hansard, Item 6, p.164,
<https://www.tynwald.org.im/spfile?file=/business/hansard/20202040/t241016.pdf>

⁶ The 'Isle of Man and UK Immigration Gap Analysis' produced by BridsonHalsall Advocates Limited be found at Appendix 1

⁷ The detailed policy papers produced by Pragmatix Advisory Limited can be found Appendices 2 – 7.

resident' refers to any individual moving to the Isle of Man, again regardless of their nationality, and so including UK and Irish nationals. 'The July 2024 report' refers to the Council of Ministers Inward Migration Incentives and Disincentives Report⁸.

3.1 Inward Migration - Policy context

The **Economic Strategy** aims to create and fill an additional 5,000 jobs across new, enabling and key sectors by 2032. Since 2021, the economy has shown promising growth in both jobs and employment⁹.

However, increased global competition for skills and demographic challenges continue to strain the labour market. The unemployment rate remains low at 0.7%, as of April ¹⁰, and vacancies continue to significantly outstrip the number of jobseekers in many sectors. These shortages are particularly acute in essential sectors such as health and care services. Inward migration plays a vital role here, where a significant proportion of new arrivals are employed in healthcare roles, helping to address critical workforce gaps.

Demographically, the Isle of Man faces challenges. The Island has a higher dependency ratio and an ageing population. There is a natural population decline due to a persistent imbalance between births and deaths. In 2024, 907 deaths were recorded—the highest in 25 years—compared with only 485 births, widening the gap between births and deaths and accelerating the demographic shift. This trend is expected to have considerable consequences for both the Island community and its economy.

To support economic resilience and achieve long-term growth targets, the Island must increase its working-age population through balancing training initiatives for residents and supporting residents into various sectors, alongside attracting skills from outside the Island. While it is vital to train and upskill residents for available roles, these measures alone are not sufficient. Without any inward migration, many jobs in the Island will remain unfilled, while maintaining current levels of the working age population will become increasingly difficult. Recognising this, the Island Plan 2025/2026 under the Strategic Priority 'The Economy',¹¹ identifies inward migration as essential to meet labour market demands. It outlines the necessity of maintaining some level of inward migration alongside resident workforce development efforts.

⁸ Isle of Man Government, Council of Ministers Report on Inward Migration Incentives & Disincentives 2024,

<https://tyrwald.org.im/index.php/spfile?file=/business/opqp/sittings/20212026/2024-GD-0070.pdf>

⁹ Statistics Isle of Man, 'Quarterly Economic and Statistical Update', Local Economy Tab, [Isle of Man Government - Economy](#)

¹⁰ Statistics Isle of Man, Isle of Man Labour Market Report April 2025, (Cabinet Office, May 2025), <https://www.gov.im/media/1388787/april-2025-labour-market-report.pdf>

¹¹ Isle of Man Government, Our Island Plan 2025/2025 Update, p.6. <https://islandplan.im/media/4f2fkqzs/island-plan-2025-26.pdf>

Given these realities, the Isle of Man must pursue strategic, controlled, and needs based inward migration that secures the Island's future. These policies should also, as emphasised in the Island Plan¹², be proportionate and responsive, so that overall inward migration adds to our economy and society.

3.2 Data – understanding where we are now: 2025

A long-term view on inward migration trends was given in Chapter 2¹³ of the July 2024 report. Since then, further detail has been extracted from the available data to enable a greater evaluation of job roles and salaries of new residents, which has informed consideration of the proposals contained elsewhere in this document.

3.2.1 Population & Demographics

[The Isle of Man Population Report 2024](#) highlights a number of ongoing trends:

- Deaths continue to exceed births and this is a defining demographic issue for the Isle of Man, representing a natural decline in the population.
- Despite this, the overall population is growing, slowly – which can be attributed to inward migration. The population estimate for the end of the first quarter of 2024 is 84,523, representing an increase of 454 people since the 2021 Census. This reflects population growth of approximately 159 people per year over the period covered.
- The most recent estimate of inward migration to and from the Isle of Man, between the 2021 Census and the end of the first quarter of 2024, indicates inward migration of 5,694 people and outward migration of 4,419 residents, resulting in a population increase of 1,285 people. This increase of approximately 159 people per year highlights the rate of inward migration continues to be eroded by the ongoing natural decline, resulting in slower overall population growth.

Figure 1 below shows the significance of these points. The overall net change (natural change plus net migration) demonstrates that despite the negative natural population change, inward migration has helped maintain an overall increase in the Island's population which highlights the crucial role of inward migration in offsetting natural decline and sustaining the Island's population levels in the short to medium term.

¹² Isle of Man Government, Our Island Plan 2025/2025 Update, p.32.

<https://islandplan.im/media/4f2fkqzs/island-plan-2025-26.pdf>

¹³ Isle of Man Government, Council of Ministers Report on Inward Migration Incentives & Disincentives 2024, p.10,

<https://tyrwald.org.im/index.php/spfile?file=/business/opqp/sittings/20212026/2024-GD-0070.pdf>

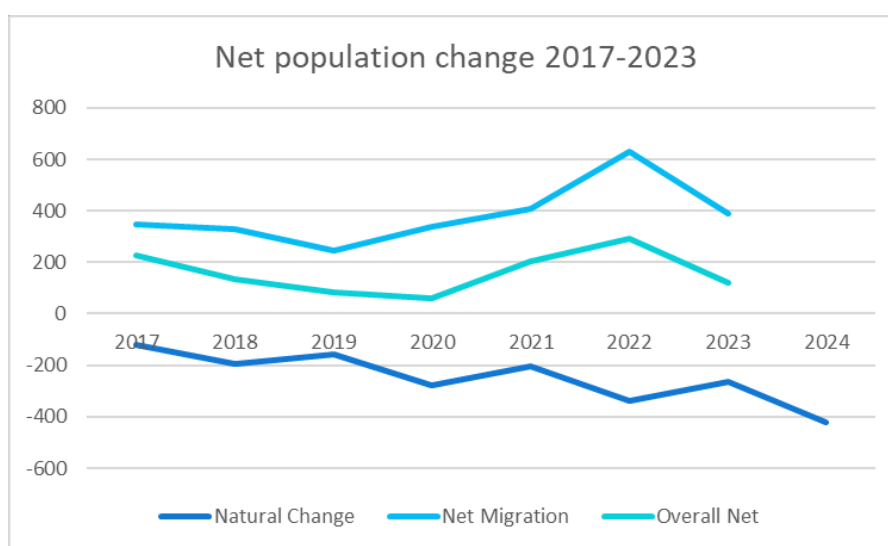


Figure 1 – Net population change on the Isle of Man¹⁴

The trend identified in the July 2024 report, that inward migration lowers the average age of the Island's population, has continued. The average age of individuals taking up residency on the Isle of Man is 39 years old, with approximately 58% of these new and returning residents being younger than this age upon arrival¹⁵. This contrasts with the average age of 44 years old for the overall population at the time of the most recent census.

Figure 2 below shows that the Isle of Man is attracting people of a younger profile, particularly in the 30-44 age groups. This is crucial for supporting the economy and addressing workforce needs through growing the working age population which can result in higher contributions to the National Insurance Fund and through taxation. The data also shows that more people over the age of 50 are leaving the Island than moving to it. Younger residents may have lower demands on the Island's health and care services; than people aged 50 and over.

¹⁴ Statistics Isle of Man, 'Isle of Man Population Report 2023', October 2023, <https://www.gov.im/media/1380987/isle-of-man-population-report-2023-updated-061123.pdf> & Statistics Isle of Man, 'Isle of Man Population Report 2024', February 2025, <https://www.gov.im/media/1387381/20250203-population-report-030225.pdf>

¹⁵ Statistics Isle of Man, 'Isle of Man Population Report 2024', February 2025, p.4 <https://www.gov.im/media/1387381/20250203-population-report-030225.pdf>

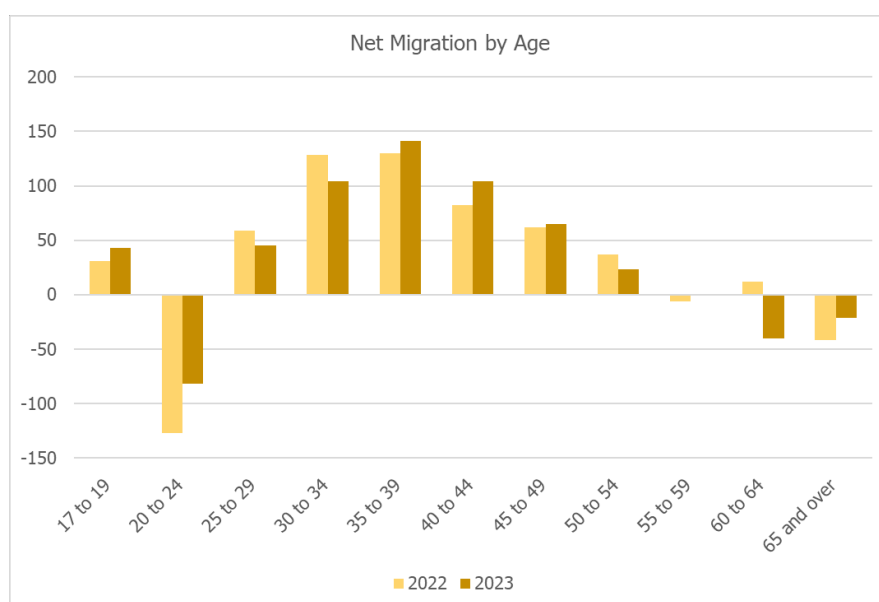


Figure 2– Net migration by age¹²

The medical and health, catering and entertainment, education, retail, and tourist accommodation sectors together provided employment for a significant proportion of new and returning residents in employment: in 2023, these five sectors are estimated to have employed 34% of new and returning residents arriving on the Island. The medical and health sector accounted for 17% of new and returning residents, continuing to be a driver of inward migration, which is consistent with the data presented in the previous Population Report for 2023¹⁶.

3.2.2 Labour market data

As highlighted in the introduction, the unemployment rate remains low at 0.7% as of April 2025. There are consistently more vacancies than job seekers, with vacancies being almost double the number of unemployed in April 2025¹⁷.

The latest Isle of Man Business Environment & Conditions Survey Report (2024) highlighted that difficulties recruiting staff have been reported as a problem by a large number of businesses. In total, 43% of businesses on the Isle of Man state that they have encountered such difficulties, which is higher than the corresponding figures for the UK (33.2%). The most frequently reported reasons were a lack of suitably qualified applicants, and for nearly 15% of businesses, a lack of applications in general¹⁸.

¹⁶ Statistics Isle of Man, 'Isle of Man Population Report 2023', October 2023, <https://www.gov.im/media/1380987/isle-of-man-population-report-2023-updated-061123.pdf>

¹⁷ Statistics Isle of Man, Isle of Man Labour Market Report April 2025, Cabinet Office, May 2025, <https://www.gov.im/media/1388787/april-2025-labour-market-report.pdf>

¹⁸ Statistics Isle of Man, Isle of Man Business Environment & Conditions Survey Report 2024, (Cabinet Office April 2025), p.5, <https://www.gov.im/media/1388494/bec-survey-report-2024.pdf>

3.2.3 Work Permits

As highlighted in the July 2024 Report, Work Permit data can give an indication of those who migrate to the Island for the purposes of work from the CTA¹⁹, although some inconsistencies in the data mean that caution must be taken in its interpretation²⁰.

An analysis of the raw Work Permit data shows that in 2024, there has been a broad increase in the number of new registrations to the highest level of 2060, up from 1365 the previous year and higher than the 'post Covid bounce' in 2022. As one person can have more than one Work Permit, the number of new 'person' registrations is the most accurate measure of economically active inward migration from the CTA.

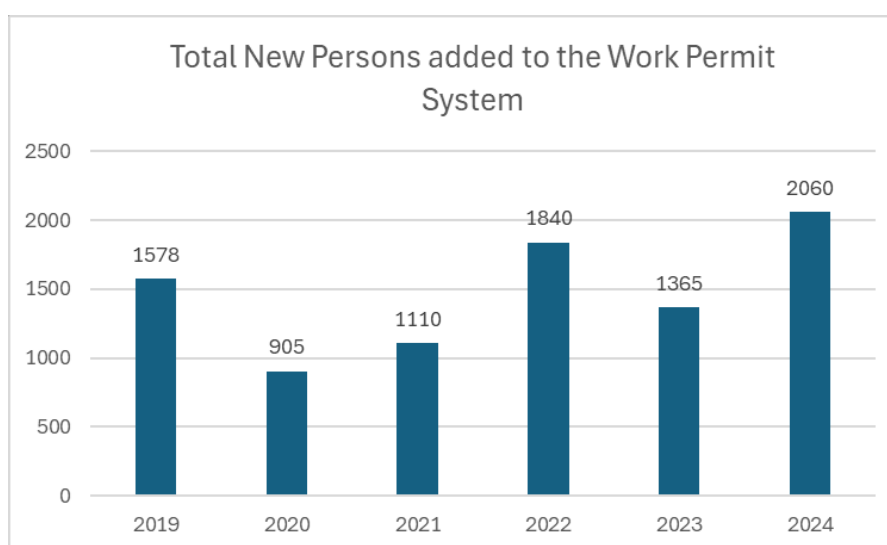


Figure 3 – New persons added to the Work Permit System by year²¹

The increase in new persons added to the Work Permit System is a positive trend, but comes with some caveats. In particular, work permits reflect people coming to work in the Isle of Man only, which could be for a temporary work project, rather than relocation to the Island. As well, while the population data indicates the numbers moving to the Island who do not take up employment are relatively low, there is no mechanism currently to capture that data accurately.

¹⁹ Within the CTA meaning those not subject to immigration control, i.e. broadly British and Irish Citizens. If an individual is a citizen from a country within the Common Travel Area (CTA), they are free to reside in the Island immediately and with no restrictions, although they will require a Work Permit if they wish to obtain employment (unless an Isle of Man Worker or employed in an exempt sector).

²⁰ This information is not the primary purpose of the database, so there may be 'error's' when using the data for the purposes of understanding inward migration. For example, one person may require a work permit, but undertake a brief unit of work and leave, and never relocate to the Isle of Man in any real sense. As well, the information does also not include individuals on a visa where notification of exempted status is not required.

²¹ Raw data from the Work Permit System. It includes those who do claim an automatic exemption.

4 Revising immigration visa routes

This chapter provides an update on the Government's strategic direction on visa routes. Our approach as an Island to visa routes is a key workstream within our overall approach to inward migration. This update sets out policy development under way, and the principles guiding it.

It should not be taken for granted that the programme of policy work set out here will reflect every item agreed by Council of Ministers and/or brought to Tynwald for detailed debate. The areas being examined are being released now to afford transparency on the suite of work being undertaken.

This area of work is complicated and must balance the needs of our economy with the aspirations of our community. Policy development will be in phases over the short to medium term to ensure appropriate consideration is given to each individual policy decision and then consider this in the context of wider development of this complex area.

The work permit system is not part of the immigration system, but we recognise the importance of the two working together. Accordingly, policy development on the work permit system, including the consideration of a uniform work permit and immigration 'key employment' list is being coordinated to ensure alignment as appropriate and to determine what efficiencies could be achieved. In the meantime, operational improvements are being scoped to deliver a more streamlined process and more efficient back-office administration, delivering faster processing times and reducing pressure on staffing.

4.1 Operational improvements to the immigration system

People's experience of the immigration system, whether as employers or as those coming to the Isle of Man via immigration (visa) routes, is affected by the operation of the system as much as by overarching policy. Significant progress has been made in this area over the last 12 months.

Processes and procedures have been streamlined, and more rigour has been applied to the Confirmation of Employment process to ensure compliance with immigration rules. Additional compliance measures have been put in place to enhance the system's integrity.

Visa turnaround times are now set out on the immigration website, with the actual turnaround times closely monitored to ensure service levels are maintained²². Government Technology Services has supported these improvements, updating IT systems, improving data recording and reporting functionality to assist in the processing of applications.

²² Isle of Man Government, Immigration, <https://www.gov.im/immigration>

The Digital Passport, Immigration and Nationality Services (DPINS) Programme is working to align services to the United Kingdom including but not limited to electronic visas, Electronic Travel Authority, and Authority to Carry Scheme.

4.2 Immigration data snapshot

Recent data²³ in figure 5 below shows that the number of Entry Clearance visas issued from April 2023 until March 2025 contained a high proportion of visas issued for the purposes of work, either directly, or indirectly including dependants.

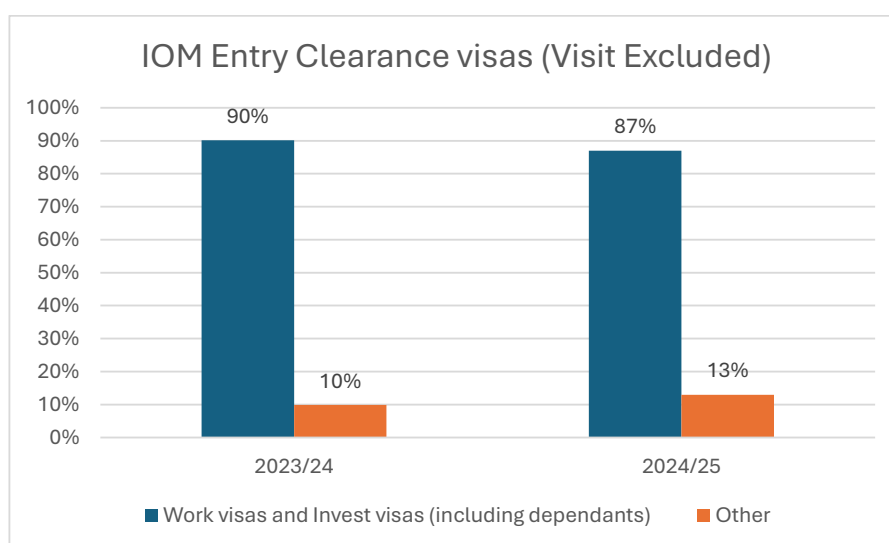


Figure 5 – Passport, Immigration and Nationality Office operational data for entry clearance visas issued: 01/04/2023 – 31/03/2024 and 01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025

Previous data presented in the July 2024 report showed the age distributions since 2019 to March 2024 and highlighted that:

- It is predominantly younger people who obtain Entry Clearance through the visa routes.
- There are very few applications from those aged 55+.
- The large number of children being granted Entry Clearance highlights the prevalence of young families relocating to the Island via a visa route.

This trend has continued this year, with the most recent data showing that 20% of people coming to the island on visa routes are below the age of 16, 78% are below the age of 40 and 87% are below the age of 45.

²³ Recent data in this section refers to raw data from the Passports, Immigration and Nationality Division of Treasury

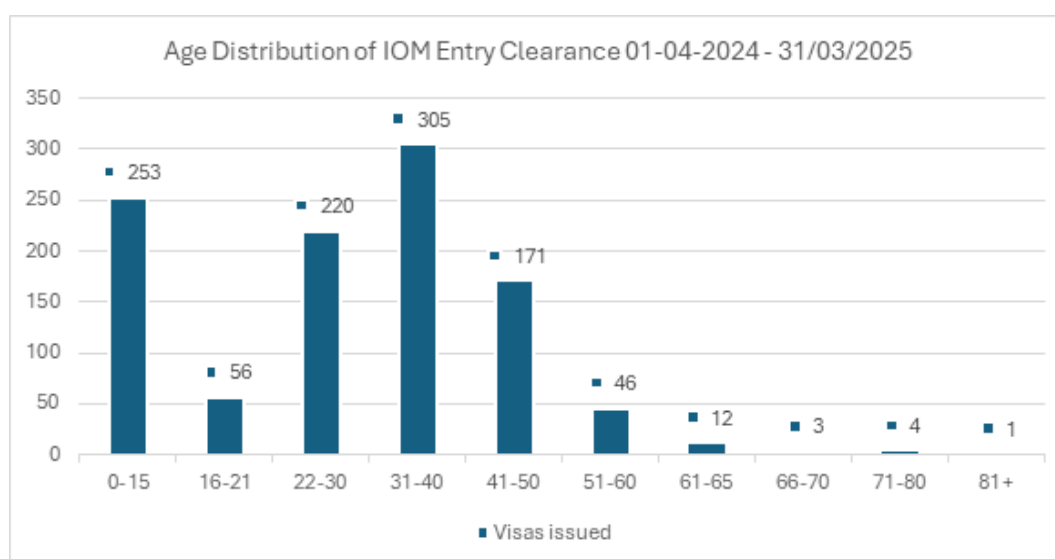


Figure 6 – Age distribution – Entry Clearance Visas issued by age 01/04/2024 - 31/03/2025.²⁴

Figure 6 above shows that the peak is in the 31-40 age group, and the large number of 0–15 year-olds are likely to be child dependants of Worker Migrants from the various age groups.

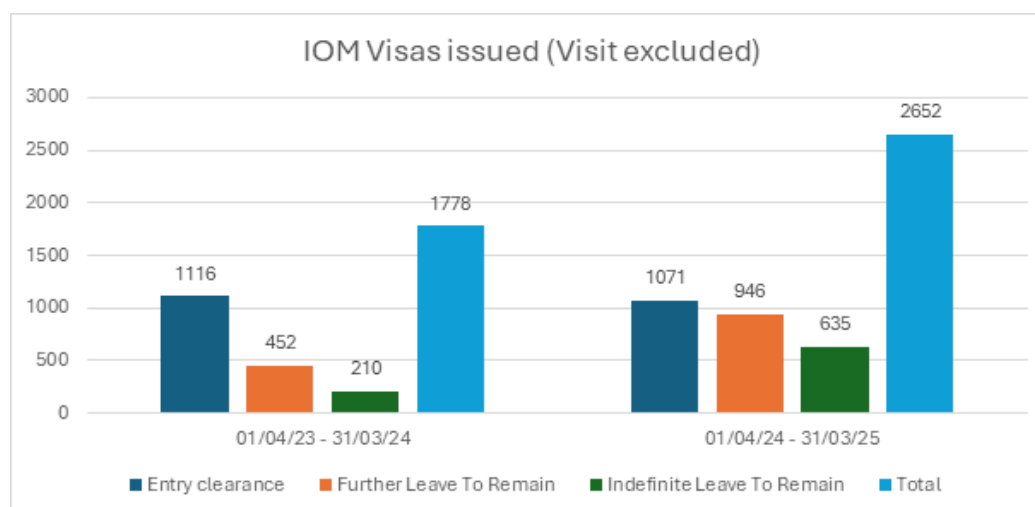


Figure 7 – Visas issued for Entry Clearance, Further Leave To Remain and Indefinite Leave To Remain²⁵

Figure 7 above compares total visas issued over the two-year period, showing an increase from 1,778 to 2,652. The table highlights the majority of the increase in total visas issued over the period relates to in-country visas (i.e., further leave to remain or indefinite leave to remain) rather than an increase in entry clearances. The increase in in-country applications

²⁴ Taken from raw immigration data

²⁵ Taken from raw immigration data

could be a sign of visa holders choosing to make the Isle of Man their long-term home indicating increased retention in the longer term. Monitoring over the next few years should establish whether this is a trend; the scale of in-country applications in 2024-25 could also reflect a one-off bounce from Entry Clearance visa holders extending their stays.

4.2.1 Salary levels

Worker Migrant visas issued between 04/2024 and 03/2025 show that:

- 48% are earning £20,000-29,999
- 40% are earning £30,000-59,999
- 12% above £60,000

Nearly half of those coming to the Isle of Man in 2024-25 through the Worker Migrant route came to take jobs at salaries lower than £30,000. This clearly indicates sustained demand in the labour market for workers at this level, especially from the health and care and hospitality sectors. Overall, some of the most common jobs taken up via the Worker Migrant route in 2024-25 were: care workers and home carers, nurses, chefs, and chartered and certified accountants, as highlighted in the figure 8.

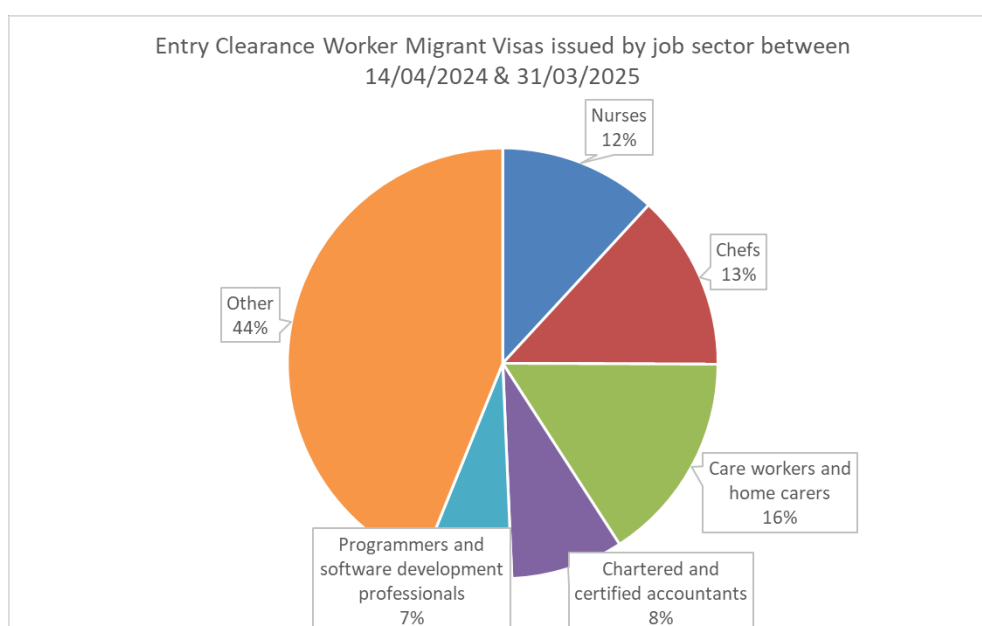


Figure 8 - Entry Clearance Worker Migrant Visas issued by job sector between 14/04/2024 & 31/03/2025

4.2.2 Dependants

Figure 9 below shows a similar increase in total work visas issued²⁶ (work visas, including dependants), rising from 928 in 2023-24 to 894 in 2024-25. The balance between visa holders and dependants has however changed: there has been a c. 37% increase in dependants in 2024-25 compared with 2023-24, and a decrease of work visas issued of c. 25%. As Figure 10 shows, approximately 46% of the dependants were adult dependants, who are also eligible to work. At the current time, however, it is not possible to know how many adult dependants do go on to join the Isle of Man workforce. This increase in dependant arrivals requires ongoing monitoring, and will be a factor in the planned review of Worker Migrant routes (see below).

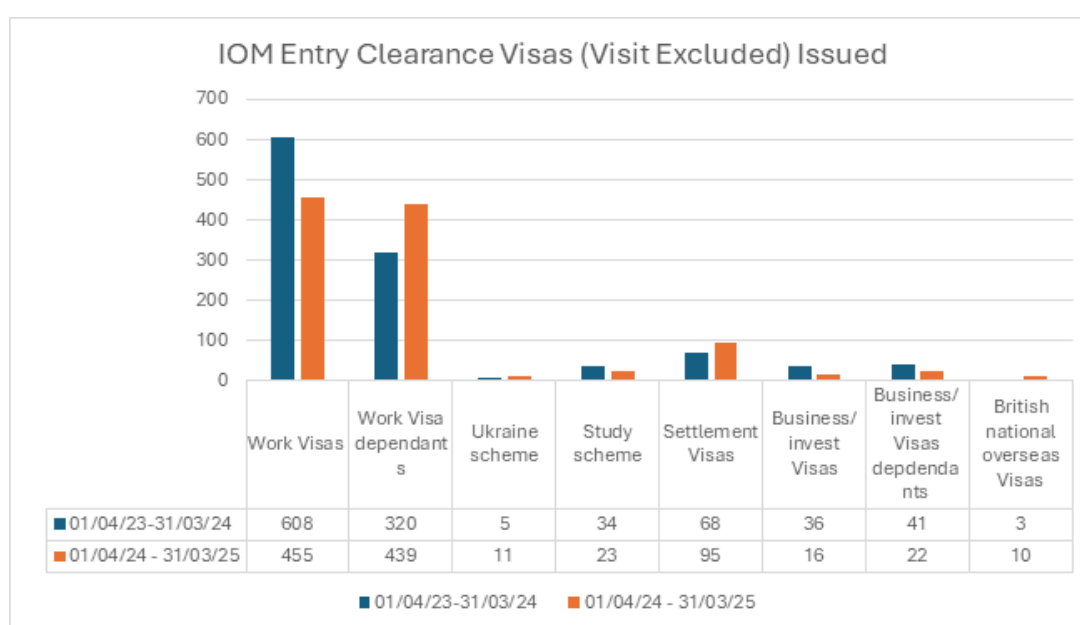


Figure 9 – IOM Entry Clearance Visas (Visit Excluded) by visa category²⁷

²⁶ Work Visa includes Worker Migrant Visas, Representative of Overseas Business & Domestic Workers, Tier 5 (Temporary Worker)

²⁷ Taken from raw immigration data

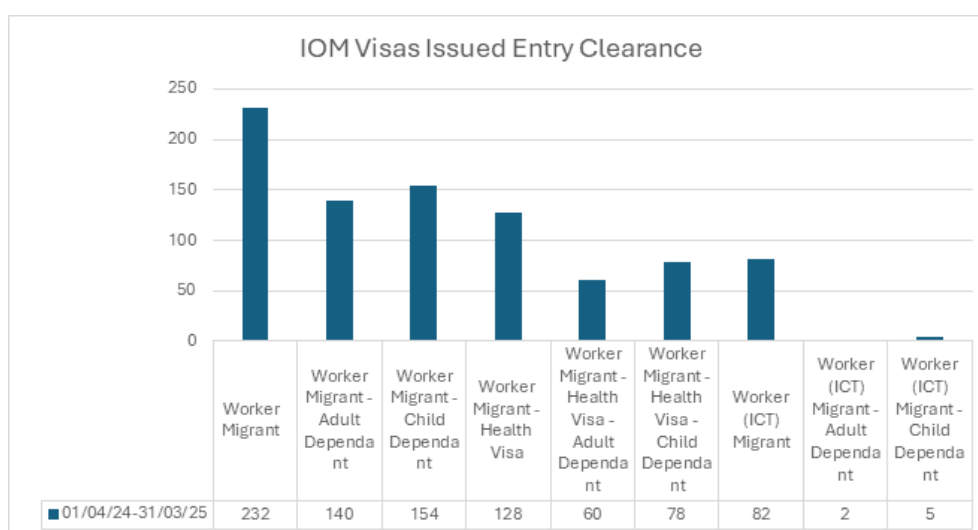


Figure 10 – IOM Entry Clearance Visas issued – specific work visa categories and dependants²⁸

4.3 Policy principles and approaches

The immigration framework is designed to manage immigration and uphold the Island's border security obligations within the CTA. The immigration system also plays a key role in supporting economic growth, addressing sector shortages and reducing demographic challenges. The importance of aligning visa routes with those of the UK to protect the security and integrity of the CTA, facilitate legitimate travel, and support the digitisation of the Passport, Immigration and Nationality Service is recognised. At the same time, the Island's economic differences need to be accommodated.

A strategic review by a local advocate has been underway since last Autumn to undertake an assessment of the Island's key visa routes. The aim was to consider the degree of alignment of the Isle of Man visa routes with the equivalent UK routes, to identify options and determine necessary variations to the set of visa routes into the Isle of Man that support our economy and society, and meet the conditions of the CTA. The independent report²⁹ is not a statement of Government policy nor does the government endorse the contents of it.

4.3.1 Policy principles

The Council of Ministers has agreed the principles for immigration policy which is being used to guide the policy development.

²⁸ Taken from raw immigration data

²⁹ [Appendix 1 - The 'Isle of Man and UK Immigration Gap Analysis' produced by BridsonHalsall Advocates Limited](#)

Immigration policy must ensure the security and integrity of the Common Travel Area, balanced with our longstanding and ongoing need to attract workers, crucial to sustaining areas of our economy.

All policy principles set out under inward migration detailed in chapter 1 are relevant for over overall immigration policy. These will guide the review of visa routes to sit under the auspices of the Island's economic strategy that will be used to assess and guide future decision making.

To adhere to these policy principles will require aligning the Island's visa routes to the UK as far as possible, whilst tailoring them to meet the Island's economic needs. For our visa routes, we are applying the principles set out in the box below:

Principles³⁰

1. **Prioritising security** across all routes and ensure the integrity of the Common Travel Area, continuing to adapt and make changes to reduce the risk of abuse of the system or of people.
2. **Responding to the needs of employers** where skills cannot be found on Island
3. Continuing to strengthen joint-working and intelligence sharing across agencies so that our system is increasingly **robust, secure, and adaptive to changing risks**.

4.3.2 Why align to UK visa routes?

Greater alignment of the Isle of Man's visa routes to those of the UK has multiple benefits which include:

- Ensuring we meet our obligations as a member of the Common Travel Area (CTA) and our international obligations, maintaining our reputation and standing in the global community.
- Reducing the likelihood of our immigration system being abused or used as a backdoor to the UK, through greater consistency of approach.
- Alignment of operational policies and procedures strengthening the immigration system.

Operationally, alignment also brings benefits, including the ability to refer to UK legislation and guidance, rather than developing our own which can be resource-intensive and complex and has to be monitored and updated.

³⁰ These principles align with the overall principles for inward migration set out in Chapter One, tailored to the immigration system.

The DPINS programme of strategic work has been established to ensure the Island keeps pace and integrates with the UK's digital immigration system and infrastructure. This is essential to ensure the Island is strengthening border security, maximising upstream intervention, and ensuring seamless travel at UK borders. This integration simplifies processes and enhances efficiency, making it easier for potential visa applicants and administrators to navigate the system.

Simplifying visa routes, as recommended by the UK Law Commission, is another key step in this transformation, streamlining procedures and reducing bureaucratic hurdles. While alignment with UK policies, guidance and systems provides a solid foundation, the Isle of Man's requirements are not precisely the same as the UK's. We therefore need to make sure that economic routes in particular respond to our own labour market needs, and our community. The UK system is, naturally, designed for a much larger jurisdiction and some aspects of its approach may not be proportionate for the Isle of Man. All these factors need to be considered as we progress greater alignment and define the adaptations that will work for us.

All the policy approaches described in this document are related to legal migration. Illegal migration, of any form, will not be allowed or tolerated.

4.3.3 Approaches to aligning visa routes

Council of Ministers will adopt the following **approaches** to visa route alignment, which prioritise security, and the integrity of the Common Travel Area.

1. Sustain alignment to the UK on routes that have limited potential economic impact: visitor, study and family routes.
2. Alignment on economic routes with adjustments to address the Island's economic and social needs.
3. Introducing an immigration health surcharge ensuring a financial contribution to the Islands health system.
4. Proportionate new regulation and compliance measures across employers, immigrants and advisors.
5. Reducing differences with the UK immigration system that could increase the risk of abuse.

Approach 1: Alignment on visitor, study and family routes

The Isle of Man's immigration system already has significant alignment with the UK when it comes to visitor, study, and family visa categories. This streamlines the process, making it easier for individuals to visit, study, or join their families on the Island. However, it is crucial to continuously monitor and adapt to any updates or changes made by the UK to ensure that the Isle of Man's policies remain current and effective, and that any changes work for our Island. Ongoing alignment not only facilitates smoother transitions for visa holders but

also helps the Island maintain its commitment to providing a welcoming and supportive environment for all.

Approach 2: Alignment on economic routes with adjustments to address the Island's economic and social needs

The Isle of Man aims to maintain and increase the proportion of economically active residents by attracting workers to fill labour shortages across all economic sectors, where employers' needs cannot be met on-island. Specifically, continue to attract overall a workforce with a younger profile closely monitoring and managing the overall proportion of (non-working) dependants immigrating to the Island.

Approach 3: Introduce an immigration health surcharge ensuring a financial contribution to the Islands health system

The Island maintains a health and care system which, like the UK, is free at the point of access. This is different from other members of the CTA such as Ireland, Jersey, and Guernsey. We need to ensure that those coming to the Island immediately contribute towards funding the health service. This will also more closely match UK policy.

Approach 4: Proportionate new regulation and compliance measures across employers, visa applicants and immigration advisors

Ensuring the immigration system is used appropriately is a challenge that needs to be addressed. Further procedures need to be put in place to protect visa applicants and ensure employers and advisors act responsibly.

Approach 5: Reducing differences with the UK immigration system that increase risk of abuse

Where the Isle of Man immigration system differs from the UK immigration system there is a potential risk that the difference can be exploited by criminal organisations. As a member of the CTA the Island has a duty to address these risks wherever possible.

These principles and approaches apply as UK immigration policy stands today; as changes are proposed and then introduced by the UK to their own immigration rules and routes, we will of course assess their implications for the Island.

4.4 Summary of policy development and phasing

Detailed policy work is under way as set out below. Analysis will be presented to the Council of Ministers, which will determine the specific approach on each immigration route.

To provide certainty to businesses and the public, we will be phasing this work over the next 24-36 months. These policy changes are significant, to visa applicants, employers and our

community. Therefore, the proposals will require targeted engagement and full assessment before final decisions can be made. Targeted engagement in relation to changes to the Island's Worker Immigration routes are factored into the timeline and aim to commence from October this year.

4.4.1 Work package 1

Work is under way now on the first work package, and encompasses crucial changes to increase the security and appropriateness of our visa routes. In particular, work is being prioritised on:

1. Increasing minimum salary requirements to more closely align with the Isle of Man living wage: the direction of policy has been approved, and the Immigration team is progressing Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules.
2. Design development for the introduction of the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS): the introduction of an IHS has been announced the design and development work is underway. All changes will be introduced with an appropriate lead-in period and extensive communications.
3. Aligning the Island's student visa route to the UK's simplified student visa route.
4. Regulation of Immigration Advisors. To ensure that those providing immigration advice and services are qualified to do so.

4.4.2 Work package 2

Phase 2 focuses on a review of Worker Migrant routes, to align with UK as far as possible but tailored to meet the Island's economic needs. These areas require consultation and an assessment of impacts, costs and benefits before final decisions can be made. Engagement with stakeholders will commence from October 2025, so that the direction of travel on immigration policy in this area is understood and informed. This will include, but not be limited to, the following potential changes to economic routes:

1. Re introduce sponsor licensing. This will build on the Confirmation of Employment process currently in place. The ability to sponsor individuals under the immigration system should be privilege, not a right. Significant trust is placed in sponsors, we must ensure sponsors comply with immigration and wider Isle of Man law, and not behave in a manner that is not conducive to public good. To achieve this a level of duties will be placed on employers. We will streamline this system to ensure that it is not overly burdensome for responsible sponsors, but robust enough to ensure that those who attempt to circumvent the system are identified and prevented from doing so.
2. Eligible job roles and related salaries. This will look at the roles eligible for work visas and the minimum salaries in these roles. It is vital that visa holders are not used to provide cheaper labour, undermining our workforce.

3. Worker Migrant dependants & maintenance levels. This will include a review of the level of funds required to support dependants.
4. Aligned changes to the current Work Permits system (not immigration policy but a related topic that requires cohesion).

4.4.3 Work package 3

There is a large programme of work then required to simplify all other visa routes not already contained in phases one or two, to align with the policy direction set out above. The immigration rules are complex difficult to navigate for customers and caseworkers alike.

As part of this two to three year work package, simplification of the Immigration Rules is an objective included within the Customs and Immigration 25/26 plan to create a rolling programme of works to deliver the update and simplification of the Isle of Man Immigration Rules aligning to the UK as far as possible.

4.5 Work Package 1

This work package is under way and contains changes that have been prioritised, informed by the work of the cross-government Strategic Immigration Group. Below, the first two major changes are explained in detail.

4.5.1 Increasing the Minimum Salary Requirement

As previously referenced in this chapter, it is essential that those coming via an immigration route to the Island to work can earn enough money to be able to support themselves and their dependants, as those who relocate to the Island do not have recourse to public funds to support them for the first five years of their residence.

At present, the minimum annual salary a Worker Migrant can earn is £20,800, and this figure has not changed since 2018. Whilst the Island's minimum wage legislation applies to all those working in the Island as an hourly rate, those working fewer hours per week (around 32.5 hours) would still be earning an annual salary close to the figure last updated in 2018. In this time, it is recognised that costs of housing, energy, and basic commodities have risen, therefore it is right that the minimum annual salary requirement should also rise to ensure that all workers earn enough to support themselves when working in the Isle of Man.

In May 2025, the Minister for the Cabinet Office announced, on behalf of the Treasury Minister, the intention to increase the minimum salary requirement to £25,447.50 from 1 October 2025, which more closely reflects the Island's living wage rate. This will aim to ensure that those coming to the Isle of Man to work through our immigration system are paid enough to be able to support themselves whilst here.

4.5.2 Introducing an Immigration Healthcare Surcharge

The UK Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) was introduced to ensure that temporary visa applicants contribute fairly to the NHS services available to them during their stay in the UK. The IHS is a fee levied on those who apply for a visa to stay in the UK for more than six months. The charge allows these individuals to access NHS services at no additional cost, similar to UK residents. The implementation of the IHS aims to alleviate any financial burden on the NHS and promote fairness by mandating that those who benefit from the healthcare system also support its funding.

The IHS is calculated based on the length of the visa being applied for, with the amount set aiming to strike a balance between fairness and deterrence of 'jurisdiction shopping' (i.e., exploitation of the immigration system, whereby individuals choose jurisdictions with lower healthcare charges – potentially also as a gateway to the UK). By requiring the charge to be paid upfront, the IHS is a relatively simple process for both visa applicants and the government, ensuring that contributions are collected efficiently and that access to healthcare is not compromised.

The UK first introduced an IHS of £200 (£150 for children or students and their dependants) in 2015, to be paid by all visa applicants for the years until they achieve settled status and become free from immigration control. Since 2024, the amount charged has risen to £1,035 and £755 respectively, which aims to reflect the average cost of a visa applicant to the UK health service.

The issue of an Isle of Man Immigration Healthcare Surcharge was raised in December 2023, when Tynwald resolved "That a range of incentives and disincentives, including an immigration healthcare surcharge, should be considered by the Council of Ministers in the context of the Economic Strategy and the Tynwald Select Committee report on Population Rebalancing and a report submitted to Tynwald by the last day of July 2024." ³¹

The Cabinet Office Minister provided Tynwald members with an update in May 2025, stating "this Government will be bringing forward an Order in Council to Tynwald in July to enable the introduction of an Immigration Health Surcharge, modelled on the UK charge". The Treasury Minister will be presenting this to Tynwald Court in parallel to the debate on this report.

Introducing the enabling Order in Council allows for implementation of the Isle of Man IHS should Tynwald approve it.

Work has been underway to understand the potential impacts of, and operational requirements for, an Immigration Healthcare Surcharge. It is proposed that the Isle of Man IHS is modelled on the UK's but adapted to our economic and operational context. Key policy considerations under analysis include:

³¹ Tynwald Votes and Proceedings, PP2023/0143, December 2023, P.14
<https://www.tynwald.org.im/spfile?file=/business/vp/VP/2023-PP-0143.pdf>

- Alignment of the fee structure: we will mirror the amount charged, and the number of years it is charged for, to ensure the Island is not seen as a cheaper 'back door' to obtain entry to the UK
- The range of exemptions required to respond to the Isle of Man's needs. The decision to introduce an Isle of Man IHS was informed by a commissioned impact assessment, which continues to inform ongoing policy finalisation – see Appendix 2.

As the coverage of the Isle of Man IHS is not yet finalised, projecting anticipated revenue is difficult. Previous forecasts, based on the UK charging model and exemptions, have suggested that an IHS could generate anywhere between £1.4m-£4m per annum³², whilst longer-term estimates suggest this could total £107m revenue over 15 years³³. Should more exemptions be applied these figures would decrease. Consideration will also be given to ringfencing the revenues received from the IHS.

On behalf of Council, the Cabinet Office Minister committed to the introduction of an Immigration Healthcare Surcharge by the end of the 2025/26 financial year. Through the associated Order in Council, the necessary legislative provisions can begin to be implemented whilst the details, including the range of exemptions, can be brought forward through secondary legislation.

4.6 Isle of Man and UK Immigration Gap Analysis Report

Cabinet Office procured an independent gap analysis to inform the strategic direction of immigration policy development. It is contained in Appendix 1 and has been a key source of insight alongside cross-departmental engagement and wider policy research, which have all informed the principles, approaches and work packages set out above.

This independent gap analysis report is published here for transparency and to inform ongoing debate regarding visa routes. As an independent report, it should not be interpreted as statement of Isle of Man Government policy. As for all policies relating to immigration, the context also evolves quickly; this report was drafted prior to the UK Immigration White Paper, and some parts of the analysis and proposals are therefore slightly out of date.

4.7 Next steps

Immigration policy is a complex policy area, but at a high level the changes set out mean that the Isle of Man is tightening and will continue to tighten immigration visa routes over the next three years. In order to safeguard our system from abuse, some of these changes will mean an increase in financial and administrative responsibilities on employers and

³² Isle of Man Government, Council of Ministers Report on Inward Migration Incentives & Disincentives 2024, p.32

<https://tynwald.org.im/index.php/spfile?file=/business/opqp/sittings/20212026/2024-GD-0070.pdf>

³³ Appendix 2 – [Immigration Healthcare Surcharge Impact Assessment, Pragmatix Advisory Limited](#), p.40

applicants – but the Island will have more control. The changes are however phased, and their impact individually and collectively will be monitored, and policy can and will be adjusted if needed.

Policy development will be progressed in work packages as set out above. We will aim to communicate in more detail on the form and timing of policy changes, and listen to all interested parties to inform detailed policy development. Further stakeholder engagement is planned to start in October. Crucially, specific legislative proposals and significant investments will then be brought to Tynwald, as appropriate, along with regular updates.

5 Inward migration incentives, disincentives and future processes

5.1 Introduction

The July 2024 report outlined key options for the management of inward migration in the Isle of Man. It presented proposals that were split into short-term, responding to current key pressures and concerns, and potential options in the longer term. The July 2024 report was an interim output and since then there has been further exploration of the options:

Key short-term proposals and actions:

- Land Registry Fee – exploration of the feasibility of a new financial disincentive
- Review of current incentives – review of the current bundle of incentives aimed at encouraging workers to the Isle of Man

Further options / longer term:

- Other options to incentivise workers to relocate/remain in the Isle of Man – Student loan repayments
- Consideration of further fiscal disincentives – scoping on the value of requiring new residents to hold private health insurance and/or stipulating a temporary healthcare charge on new residents from within the CTA, mirroring or similar to the immigration healthcare surcharge
- Streamlining the relocation experience
- Better management information on the volume and characteristics of inward migration
- Single registration system for all residents

This chapter focuses on those specific options outlined in the July 2024 Report.

5.2 Incentives

Since the publication of the July 2024 report, the Isle of Man Government has reviewed and amended several existing incentives for inward migration.

5.2.1 Revised Department for Enterprise schemes

The Enterprise Support Schemes were relaunched on 1 April 2025 following a review which included stakeholder feedback. This includes the former Employee Relocation Incentive, Graduate Role Incentive and Seasonal Worker Incentive.

As a result of this review, relocation incentives have been streamlined into one set of guidance covering both permanent and temporary staff. The eligibility for permanent roles for the incentive has been broadened, employers can now apply for any role where the

gross salary is £25,000 or above (previously this incentive was only available for key sectors). The amount available through a grant has simultaneously increased to 25% of the total net salary (previously 20%), capped at £10,000. Incentives are paid retrospectively after the employee's first year, ensuring relocation benefits and economic contributions are fulfilled before payment. Employers must advertise the role locally first and meet all eligibility criteria as defined in the guidance. This is a clear example of enabling employer-led incentives for inward migration, which can be put towards a relocation package for the individual and their family, for instance.

Feedback collected during the consultation period with both industry and the Executive Agencies has noted that this expansion of the incentive package will be crucial in supporting Island-based employers to hire the skills they need, which are not readily available here, increasing the economically active population and driving economic growth. Eligibility for the incentive does not alter the requirement for the relevant requirements to be met in respect of either work permits or visas.

In the 2024/2025 year, offers were made to support the relocation of 75 roles with the total amount committed in grants being £526,400. The annual benefit estimated to be recouped through exchequer benefit for these 75 roles is £814,359 p.a. The Employment Incentives are made available through the Financial Assistance Scheme and the Enterprise Support Division have an annual budget for two years following the review of all schemes. As part of this budget, it is estimated that just under £1.8m will be allocated through Employment Incentives which in turn will support 190 new roles annually. The return on investment is expected to be 100% within 6 months, with an estimated annual return on investment of £3.6m.

5.2.2 Revised National Insurance Holiday Scheme

The 2025 Budget brought changes to the National Insurance (NI) holiday incentive. The NI Holiday Scheme commenced on 6 April 2019 and allowed for a one-off refund of National Insurance, up to a maximum of £4,400, to new and returning residents. In the 2025 Budget, the Treasury Minister announced a narrowing of the NI holiday incentive. From 6 April 2025 the NI Holiday Scheme is now only available to an Isle of Man student who, on or after 6 April 2019, successfully completes a full time course of education outside the Island for a university first degree, a Higher National Diploma (or comparable course) or a postgraduate course and who, after completing that course, returns to the Island to live and work within 5 years.

The NI Holiday Scheme was originally designed broadly to attract new workers to the Island as well as encourage previously Manx-resident students to return. Upon review in the past year, the Treasury determined there was insufficient evidence that the NI Holiday Scheme was a deciding factor in people relocating to the Island and so, coupled with the challenge of rising costs and a desire to protect the Manx National Insurance Fund, a decision was taken to reduce the scope of the NI Holiday Scheme and reserve it for returning students (as per criteria above).

The table below summarizes the total refunds paid since the scheme's inception, highlighting the scheme's financial impact to date³⁴:

Year	Refunds
24/25	£1.9M
23/24	£1.6M
22/23	£1.6M
21/22	£0.9M
20/21	£0.8M
19/20	£0.6M
Total refunds to date	£7.4M

There is no specific budget allocated for the scheme, as expenditures are drawn directly from the National Insurance Fund. Due to transitional provisions, expenditure for the current year is expected to be similar to last year's. Thereafter, costs should decrease to approximately £200,000 per year, reflecting payments to returning students only.

5.2.3 Analysis of student loan repayment scheme options

The July 2024 report identified student loan repayment as a potential incentive to attract recent graduates to the Isle of Man, particularly Manx-resident students. Targeting graduates through incentives aims to help address both demand in the labour market and contribute to rebalancing the Island's demographics by attracting a younger workforce.

Currently the Department for Education, Sport and Culture (DESC) *as an employer* offers a loan repayment scheme for graduate teachers. While data shows that out of 51 recipients of the scheme, 82³⁵ per cent are still employed by DESC, there is as yet limited data available on how the incentive is helping to retain teachers, and long-term impacts.

Cabinet Office therefore commissioned some initial work to explore the value and viability of a student loan forgiveness incentive to encourage graduates to return/relocate to the Island. The policy aim underpinning the idea of a student loan incentive would be to increase disposable income and make relocation (returning home) more appealing.

The Pragmatix paper, found at Appendix 3, explores options for a student loan forgiveness incentive and examines global examples of student loan incentives, showing their effectiveness depends on targeting specific sectors, regions, or criteria, as seen in Canada and Norway. Some jurisdictions, such as Latvia, had limited success in reversing outward migration. Generally, the paper found that financial incentives work best when combined with policies targeting specific needs, such as labour shortages or rural development.

Three options for student loan forgiveness were explored in the paper:

³⁴ Data taken from the Treasury

³⁵ Raw data from the Department of Education, Sport and Culture

1. *Targeting Specific Occupations (Manx-residents only)*: this option is based on the current DESC scheme for teachers. However, it explores providing a similar scheme for Manx residents returning to the island, who work in specific occupations with high job vacancies, aiming to attract and retain talent in critical sectors.
2. *Targeting Specific Occupations (non-Manx-residents)*: this extends the first option to non-Manx residents, attracting talent to critical sectors. A cap on non-Manx applications or a reserved percentage for Manx-resident graduates could help balance the benefits.
3. *Added Cost for Those Who Do Not Return (Interest-free Loan Scheme)*: this option includes interest-free loans to Manx students who stay or return to the Isle of Man, with interest charges for those who leave.

There are challenges associated with each option³⁶. Estimating costs is difficult, in part due to the lack of detailed data on the occupations and educational backgrounds of people migrating between the ages of 20 and 29.

A 2023 survey³⁷ indicated that 27% of off-Island graduates might return with a loan forgiveness programme, but housing and relocation support were preferred. This preference could be due to the lower tuition fee burden on Manx resident students studying off-Island, suggesting that a student loan forgiveness scheme may not have as significant an impact on their decision to return. Extending the scheme to non-Manx graduates may have a greater impact due to their higher tuition fee burden, making the Isle of Man more attractive to skilled workers from abroad – but would represent a significant cost.

In sum, policy research to date continues to suggest that a student loan scheme could be an effective additional incentive, as part of an overall offer, to attract former-Manx-resident graduates - and possibly others - to return to take up higher economically valuable jobs in the Isle of Man. Such a scheme would however require careful design, should be inter-related with wider policy on student loans and grants, as well as consider fairness for those who stay on-island, and further evidence of cost-benefit would be required. The completed paper will be considered as this work progresses, detailed below in section 5.2.4, and alongside efforts to improve data quality - essential for the development, monitoring, and evaluation of what could represent a significant future investment in a student loan forgiveness or repayment scheme.

It is perhaps useful to flag that individual employers can however offer a scheme similar to DESC's loan repayment scheme at any time. In addition, policy research has pointed to shorter-term measures that can also be progressed and are discussed below.

³⁶ Appendix 3, Page 22-24 of paper by [Pragmatix Advisory Limited - 'Managing migration: student loan forgiveness](#)

³⁷ University College Isle of Man & Locate Isle of Man, Graduate & Young Professionals Survey 2023, (unpublished).

5.2.4 Next steps

Over the past year, incentives to encourage inward migration into the Isle of Man have been revised and are now more targeted. Ongoing monitoring is required to assess their effectiveness. Our research indicates that further analysis is also needed to determine the cost-effectiveness of a potential student loan incentive scheme as identified in the July 2024 report.

Demand in the labour market however remains strong: the Island needs more workers, and there is particular appetite to incentivise the attraction of higher skilled professionals. The Government therefore proposes to prioritise the following next steps:

A 'welcome home' package for returning Manx workers

First, as Cabinet Office Minister David Ashford MBE MHK stated in Tynwald in May this year, this Government's position is to prioritise Manx workers. Alongside supporting Island residents, more can be done to attract those who have moved away to consider returning to the Island to work. People aged 20 to 34 constituted 47% of those leaving the Isle of Man in both 2022 and 2023³⁸. This demographic cohort is often seeking career advancement or educational opportunities not readily available locally.

Any decision to move home is inherently personal, and shaped by multiple factors. There are actions in the wider Island Plan and Economic Strategy to address some of those factors that we know are important, including improving the availability of housing and a better childcare offer. Nonetheless, drawing on survey information from 2023³⁹ and 2024⁴⁰, as well as the professional insight of Locate Isle of Man and others, there is clear potential for a "welcome home" campaign and package to encourage the working Manx diaspora to return home.

Exploratory work has begun on a package of incentives to reduce barriers and make it easier for former residents to move home to take up jobs. The Cabinet Office, in collaboration with the Treasury and the Department for Enterprise, will explore options for a potential 'Welcome Home' package, including an assessment of associated costs and the impact of targeted financial incentives. As part of this work, the previously completed paper on student loan forgiveness will be reviewed to determine its effectiveness as a potential component of the broader package. The aim is to develop and complete detailed proposals for a pilot scheme by April 2026.

³⁸ Statistics Isle of Man, 'Isle of Man Population Report 2024', February 2025, <https://www.gov.im/media/1387381/20250203-population-report-030225.pdf>

³⁹ University College Isle of Man & Locate Isle of Man, Graduate & Young Professionals Survey 2023, (unpublished).

⁴⁰ Locate Isle of Man, Young Professional Employment Market Survey 2024 (unpublished)

Attraction of workers from within the CTA

Second, it is recognised that the necessary tightening of criteria in the immigration system (see chapter 4) may increase Isle of Man employers' appetite to attract workers from within the Common Travel Area (CTA) – the United Kingdom, Ireland and the Channel Islands.

Locate Isle of Man is already actively working in this area. Recent campaigns targeting attraction of workers from the UK with specific skills and sectors, in collaboration with employers, have included:

- Engineering (public/private sector campaign)
- Financial and Professional Services (public/private sector campaign)
- Nursing, Pharmacists, Occupational Therapists, Ambulatory Services (Manx Care)
- Secondary teachers (DESC)

Furthermore, the Locate Strategy 2025-2027⁴¹ has four core work streams: Skilled Workers, Graduates and Young Professionals, Entrepreneurs, and High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs).

Within its programme of activities, Locate also has a dedicated University Awareness and Attraction Programme, through which it plans to partner with ten UK universities over the next three years. The program's goal is to better engage off-island students and raise awareness of the opportunities available in the Isle of Man, encouraging young professionals to return or relocate.

The schemes offered by the Department for Enterprise (DfE), alongside Locate's efforts, combine to support employers in attracting necessary talent and this remains an important area of focus. However, given upcoming expected changes to the immigration system, — and the potential increased interest in attracting workers from within the CTA, — we will urgently review, as a strategic priority, our attraction and offer to CTA workers, and the potential value of expanding both general and targeted campaigns to attract workers from within the CTA.

Both short-term measures, recognising the situation today, and longer-term measures will be considered.

5.3 Disincentives

Data today shows that the need for workers in the Isle of Man has remained at about the same level over the past two years. The unemployment rate in April 2025⁴² was 0.7%, with vacancies almost double the number unemployed (607 vacancies to 319 registered unemployed). The Isle of Man is thus in a position where it aims to attract eligible workers,

⁴¹ Locate Isle of Man Strategy, 2025 - 2027

⁴² Statistics Isle of Man, Isle of Man Labour Market Report April 2025, (Cabinet Office, May 2025), <https://www.gov.im/media/1388787/april-2025-labour-market-report.pdf>

and their families, to come to live, work and thrive as part of our Island community through our work permit and immigration systems.

The July 2024 report noted that disincentives may however be necessary to discourage or prevent economically *inactive* individuals from relocating to the Island as one part of rebalancing towards a younger, working-age population. Two key options were discussed and the Council of Ministers committed to examining them in full:

1. Further limiting access to housing via an additional Land Registry fee, aimed at deterring economically inactive migrating buyers from purchasing property.
2. Charging for access to healthcare: examination of options to draw a financial contribution to health and care services from new arrivals.

Work has progressed on both, and updates are provided below.

It is worth noting again that the Population Report 2024⁴³, published earlier this year, shows that over the age of 55 marginally more people are leaving the Island than moving here. While age ranges are not a direct indicator of economic activity, this evidence provides some confidence that there is not a long-term wave of economically inactive inward migration into the Island. This pattern will however continue to be monitored, recognising that economic conditions in other jurisdictions in the CTA can prompt greater interest in relocation to the Island.

5.3.1 Land Registry Fee

In July 2024, the Council of Ministers' report set out that there was no evidenced need to introduce legislative control of access to the housing market – via an updated Residency Act, for example. The report did recognise that such legal control may become a valuable tool at a future date. This remains the Government's position.

The July 2024 report however noted a short-term risk that potential economic changes in the United Kingdom could increase the attractiveness of the Island and lead to a possible wave of economically inactive people seeking to relocate. The idea of a new Isle of Man Registry fee, like that introduced for Non-Residents, was outlined; it would create an additional cost to purchase for those households who contain neither Isle of Man Workers, nor those who hold a valid work permit, automatic work permit, or exemption. A commitment was made to examine the feasibility of such a fee rapidly.

The Department for Enterprise explored this option in collaboration with the Treasury in Autumn 2024. Several issues were identified with using the Land Registry Fee for this purpose. The outcome determined that utilising the Land Registry Fees to further disincentivise the relocation of non-economically active new residents was unlikely to be an

⁴³ Statistics Isle of Man, Isle of Man Population Report 2024, February 2025, <https://www.gov.im/media/1387381/20250203-population-report-030225.pdf>

effective tool. Anecdotally there is evidence that many new residents rent before purchasing a property when they first arrive. Therefore, when they do buy, they would be considered residents, which reduces the intended impacts of any fee.

The number of new residents who would be charged is relatively small, and the Land Registry has no investigatory powers or resources to validate that appropriate fees & duties have been honestly declared. Therefore, it was decided not to progress this policy option further.

When exploring this option, it was noted that policymakers had to rely on proxy data to provide indications of current trends, such as enquiry statistics from Locate Isle of Man. Whilst such proxy data proved useful, this policy assessment further highlighted the priority of improving migration data.

Going forward, the Housing and Communities Board (HCB) will monitor housing demand created by inward migration as one factor affecting the housing market. The HCB will continue to improve data collection, highlight changes in the market, and consider policy responses.

5.3.2 Charging for access to healthcare

Currently, access to NHS services is free in the Isle of Man immediately upon confirmation of residency. The Government confirmed its commitment to introducing an Immigration Health Surcharge in May, and this is discussed further in chapter 4.

In parallel, and as set out in the July 2024 report on inward migration, it is recognised that introducing a charge only for those coming to work in the Isle of Man via immigration visa routes could at first glance, be perceived as imbalanced.

Accordingly, over the past year, options to charge new arrivals into the Isle of Man who are not subject to immigration control, i.e. broadly new residents who are British and Irish Citizens - have also been explored, considering how we might maintain equity in treating all those relocating to the Isle of Man. Our commissioned research has explored the potential challenges and benefits of all of the following:

- The requirement for all new residents relocating to the Isle of Man to hold private health insurance;
- The introduction of an immigration health surcharge for those not subject to immigration control relocating to the Island (citizens from the United Kingdom, Ireland, Jersey and Guernsey);
- A similar healthcare charging scheme to that in effect in Jersey where new residents must have resided for at least six months before receiving subsidised access to healthcare; and
- Maintaining the current approach of not charging migrants not subject to immigration control.

Fairness is the primary motivation for this research, but additional reasons include helping to address the increased demand for health and social care services. The Population Report 2024⁴⁴ suggests that inward migration of those over 55 is minimal or even negative. Accordingly, it is believed that the increasing demand for the Island's healthcare system is being driven primarily by the ageing *resident* population, rather than new residents who have relocated to the Island; nonetheless any population increase will place some additional demand on NHS services.

There are also practical operational considerations to take into account too, as well as our economic need to continue to attract workers, and the prioritisation and phasing of both policy and operational changes.

Any change to the current policy of free healthcare access for new residents who are not subject to immigration control requires careful consideration and planning to ensure that the new policy achieves its intended goals without unintended negative consequences. Maintaining the current policy of not charging arrivals who are not subject to immigration control has practical advantages, such as avoiding the need for significant investment in billing systems and administrative capacity. However, this approach may increase inequality between those subject to immigration control and those not subject to immigration control, and contribute to the strain on healthcare resources.

A counterpoint is that introducing charges could impact the Isle of Man's attractiveness as a relocation destination for those relocating from within the Common Travel Area which is unlikely to be economically desirable, especially if considered for introduction at the same time as immigration routes are reviewed and fees increased.

The options set out in this chapter and the 'Alternative Healthcare Charges' research paper (appendix 4) will be fully considered in parallel with the introduction of the Immigration Health Surcharge. The paper is being shared publicly at this early stage of policy development for transparency and to inform debate. A balanced approach must be struck.

5.3.3 Next steps

Overall, given the scale of demand for workers the Government's position remains to approach disincentives carefully.

There remains a sustained need for additional labour, which could be further affected by potential tightening of immigration controls. As such, the introduction of disincentives such as a healthcare charge for individuals not subject to immigration control (broadly British and Irish citizens) is not considered necessary at this time. This policy work has been shared to

⁴⁴ Statistics Isle of Man, Isle of Man Population Report 2024, February 2025, p.4.
<https://www.gov.im/media/1387381/20250203-population-report-030225.pdf>

provide the opportunity for debate, at a time when the IHS is being introduced for those subject to immigration control.

As a guiding policy principle, Government remains committed to exploring where contributions to public services can be enhanced by new residents, as the management of information improves and better data becomes available. Next steps will also include consideration of the outcomes from the health levy consultation once they are available.

While disincentives are not proposed to be introduced *now*, it is sensible to be prepared. Given the increasingly volatile nature of the international economy, economic conditions could shift in a short period. It is entirely possible that Government may need to apply disincentives quickly as an “emergency brake” to protect the local economy, markets and Manx workers. Government will keep under review the potential to extend a charge for access to healthcare services to new residents not subject to immigration control. Work will also start on a set of financial disincentives and changes to legal controls that could be implemented at short notice. This could include measures relating to work permits, immigration visa routes, or access to healthcare and housing.

Better data collection and monitoring systems will be key to the viability of a number of options, for example expansion of charging mechanisms for those not subject to immigration control (see chapter 5.4 – Management of Information).

5.4 Improving management information

Like a number of reports before it, the July 2024 Council of Ministers Report on Inward Migration acknowledged the need for better management information on the volume and characteristics of inward migration. Such data is essential for informing public service provision and enabling more rapid and responsive stewardship of migration into the future.

5.4.1 Situation

The report highlighted significant limitations in the current data. A particular challenge is that the positive policy of free movement within the Common Travel Area (CTA) means that people can travel between CTA member jurisdictions without checks. For those arriving to work in the Isle of Man, some data is collated via the work permit and immigration systems; but there remains significant potential to improve what is gathered and to ensure this happens at the earliest point. In terms of inward migration, the least timely data concerns the small minority of people who choose to move to the Island to reside here but are not required to apply for a visa or work permit. There is also a challenge in gathering timely data on those who leave (outward migration).

An example of the impact on public services has been afforded by the Department of Education, Sport and Culture’s (DESC) which in 2024 identified 325 unexpected arrivals into schools, clustered in the East, since the 2022-23 school year⁴⁵. Earlier warning of the

⁴⁵ Unpublished study from the Department of Education, Sport and Culture.

numbers and needs of those coming to live on the island would clearly assist in planning capacity. This work will continue to consider DESC's information needs and how the Department can be better informed earlier about new school arrivals.

These gaps in data hinder government's ability to forecast demand for public services, as well as effectively monitor and control migration flows. To improve understanding of migration trends and patterns, the collection and management of migration information must be timely, accurate and reliable.

The Cabinet Office commissioned a short scoping paper to inform the way forward, which is provided at Appendix 5. This research confirmed the situation diagnosis summarised above and provided further detail, including highlighting that migration data collection is fragmented and undertaken by different services at different times across government.

5.4.2 Next steps

The commissioned scoping paper confirms there is real potential to achieve improvements to our migration data through central coordination and establishment of a clear information requirement. The Cabinet Office will now progress this work as a priority, in collaboration with other government departments and in particular the Department for Enterprise and the Treasury. This will involve:

1. **Development of a migration dashboard**, most immediately for use by the Council of Ministers' Economic and National Strategy Board (ENSB). Migration is already a standing item at ENSB and the dashboard can underpin discussions in that forum. In its first phase the migration dashboard will feature currently available data only. As a minimum viable product, it will pull into what *is* known into one place, and will only be used in tandem with officer explanation to assist interpretation.
2. **Expanding data collection on migration**, with a focus on data valuable to inform decision-taking. This phase will be ongoing, inspired by the UN recommendations on core and optional information collection on incoming and departing residents (see p.21-22, Appendix 5) as well as ongoing learning from similar jurisdictions.

This step will be closely tied into the commitment in chapter 5.5.1 to streamline relocation to the Isle of Man for all those looking to reside here, and which focusses on simplification and digital service delivery where possible. Greater digitisation is a necessary enabler to better management information.

3. **Increasing the frequency of publishing migration data over time** for transparency and informing wider debate.

By expanding data collection and increasing the frequency of migration data publication, the Government will actively use this enhanced information to monitor migration trends, assess

the effectiveness of current policies, and make timely adjustments to ensure migration policies remain responsive to the evolving economic needs of the Island.

Given the size of the Isle of Man Government, a separate migration oversight committee is not considered necessary at this time. Instead, as shown in step 1 above, policy and data improvement will focus on supporting the Council of Ministers' Economic and National Strategy Board (ENSB) in overseeing migration. Officer level coordination will be undertaken via two established groups too, the cross-government Immigration Strategy Group and ENSB Lead Officer Group.

In addition, as part of the scoping exercise to determine potential ways to improve management information, Cabinet Office also tasked Pragmatix to give high-level consideration of a single registration system for all Manx residents (see p.36-55, Appendix 5). Fundamentally, it is recognised that the fullest and most reliable data picture of those who arrive to reside in the Isle of Man would be achieved by collecting data on all residents - not just those who move here after a certain date.

As the examples provided illustrate, citizen registration systems are typically introduced for much broader purposes than the management of migration. The 'ballpark' cost estimates provided by Pragmatix of between £2.5 million and £4 million further underpin that any future registration system must afford a better service experience and greater efficiency across a wide array of public services to warrant the investment.

Our approach to customer data management is now being advanced under the Efficiencies and Change Programme. All digital systems development in the Isle of Man Government is today underpinned by the principle of creating a linked customer record, in a context of increasing standardisation of platforms. At the current time, therefore, Government is taking an accelerated but incremental approach to determine the use of linked customer records, in compliance with all relevant legislation and data protection regulations. It is not proposing at this point to mandate that every Manx resident must have a particular unique identification record (e.g., a social security number) – which is often the crux of single registration systems elsewhere. Nevertheless, this option remains under review and could be brought forward should the incremental approach fail to generate the necessary management information.

In sum, the three priority steps set out here aim to arm government with more accurate and timely data to better monitor migration changes and improve reporting to enable faster policy responses - such as new incentives, disincentives or controls - in response to emerging trends.

5.5 Arrival into the Isle of Man

The July 2024 report identified that streamlining relocation processes could deliver a better 'arrival experience' for new residents, simplifying a complex relocation journey. Since then, policy work across Departments has explored potential opportunities to streamline the employer experience and to support integration. The shared objective of improvement in these areas is to ensure successful arrival into the Isle of Man, enabling those coming to the Island on visas and work permits to become productive and engaged members of our community quickly.

5.5.1 Streamlining the relocation experience

There are currently various separate compulsory registration processes, introduced independently over the years, which new residents are expected to complete within different time scales. The July 2024 report identified potential to create a single process or hub for new residents that would consolidate these registration processes, digitised, thereby delivering efficiencies for government as well as individuals. At the same time, more information could be gathered, early, to support public service planning; and in-person welcome meetings could afford an opportunity both to smooth arrival into our community and confirm the identity of visa holders.

Since then, workshops with people who have recently moved to the Isle of Man have confirmed a strong appetite for clearer, centralised information resources. Participants, including new residents who have relocated to the Island via visa routes, and new residents who are British and Irish citizens, stressed the value of easily accessible guidance on all the required registrations, timelines, and available support. Some visa holders who participated in the workshops included Business Migrants who echoed these ideas, highlighting similar challenges arriving on island, such as navigating regulations, setting up essential services, opening bank accounts, and obtaining company insurance.

The commissioned research paper for this workstream (see Appendix 6) has explored options for streamlining the relocation process, informed by these local focus groups as well as insights from other jurisdictions. A number of other governments have established centralised hubs providing relocation information and resources. Their platforms explain required steps and assist users with administrative processes across public services, employment, housing, and education. Some also function as registration portals, reducing repetitive data entry.

Based on these insights, four ideas have been scoped at a high level:

- Enhancing the Locate website: Further development of the Locate Isle of Man website into a centralised information and resource hub. This would consolidate all necessary relocation information, covering pre-move guidance, logistics and practical on-arrival advice, making the process smoother for residents and business migrants.

- A relocation app: Complementing the hub, a tailored mobile app for new residents could be developed, featuring personalised checklists, reminders, and resource links to guide them through relocation stages.
- A welcome meeting: a meeting within three months of arrival to assist with registrations, provide information, and enable validation of visa/work permit holder identification; this could be on a spot check or mandatory basis.
- 'Tell Us Once' capability: allowing new residents to submit key information on a single occasion, which is then shared across relevant government departments.

These ideas are complementary, but some may deliver better cost return. Currently, Locate serves as a valued central information point for many new residents, and affords a solid foundation for potential further development. Locate Isle of Man is already exploring an AI solution to improve information access.

5.5.2 Streamlining the employer experience

Complementary to this, to encourage employers to continue to expand their workforce when there are no suitable Isle of Man workers available, the system to provide permission to work in the Island must be as simple and efficient as possible, whilst also providing the necessary checks and protections for Isle of Man Workers. This is consistent across the Island's current Work Permit system and Confirmation of Employment (CoE) process, which is required to obtain a Worker Migrant visa.

Following a policy review of the Work Permit system and process undertaken in Q1 2025, taking into account input from Tynwald Members, the Department for Enterprise decided that there should be no significant reforms to the Work Permit system in the short term. Instead, the Department will seek operational efficiencies within the existing system and, in partnership with the Passports, Immigration, and Nationality team, seek to align where possible with the CoE system.

Work is therefore currently underway to develop a single employer portal, to handle applications for both Work Permits and CoEs. This portal will allow employers to easily see and manage the Work Permits and CoEs that they hold. It will bring with it a number of improvements, such as online payments for Work Permit applications and removing the need for paper CoE applications, which will both reduce processing time and administration on employers and government.

5.5.3 Supporting integration

The Isle of Man has a long history of welcoming new arrivals. For generations, people have come to our Island and made it their home; English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, Polish, South African or Filipino people have all made their way to the Island. They have added and enriched our national story and helped to build the successful economy we have today.

The Isle of Man Government warmly welcomes all new residents arriving through our Work Permit and visa routes, and recognises its responsibility to help new residents to settle, if needed, for the benefit of the whole community. A number of organisations including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), have explored the challenges individuals face when moving country, such as language barriers and discrimination. Their research suggests that targeted integration support can be effective in helping to address these obstacles, ensuring that both new residents and the resident population benefit from a more inclusive society.

Promoting integration typically focuses on building positive relationships, cultivating mutual respect, and creating a sense of belonging. The Cabinet Office commissioned a short paper to review the available evidence on 'what works' in supporting integration.

The commissioned research paper (Appendix 7) examines case examples from a range of jurisdictions and feedback from recent arrivals into the Isle of Man. Participants in the new arrival workshops praised the Isle of Man's welcoming nature. Nonetheless, an increase in concern about potential negative impacts of inward migration has been evident on local social media in recent months, and it may be timely to consider additional support for integration.

The research paper identifies some approaches that are considered to have worked elsewhere, and which correspond to ideas and issues raised in our new arrival workshops. These ideas require further research to ascertain the value for the Isle of Man, alongside current government and third sector activities:

- Expanded relocation events and community resources as already provided by Locate Isle of Man on their website and social media;
- Group sessions to provide newcomers with peer support and help them settle;
- A formal mentorship scheme pairing new residents with established community members;
- Dialogue events and cultural exchanges, including engaging those uneasy about inward migration, to foster inclusion;
- Enhanced communications to increase transparency and understanding around inward migration into the Isle of Man, counter misinformation, and raise awareness of the contributions from new residents to the Island's social and economic life.

5.5.4 Next steps

As this chapter shows, improving arrival into the Isle of Man could involve an array of operational changes. The next steps are to take forward the research and options work completed in recent months:

1. A project is now included in the government Efficiencies and Change Programme, tasked to define and deliver improvements to new resident arrivals in the Isle of

Man, where simplification can increase efficiency and deliver a better experience for new residents. Locate Isle of Man will be a key partner, and accelerated scoping will be directly informed by research at Appendix 6 and the specific improvement opportunities identified.

2. A second project will also be scoped under the auspices of the Efficiency and Change Programme on the potential for an employer portal.

In parallel, the Housing and Communities Board (HCB) will consider potential ways to support integration of new residents, engaging with relevant community organisations. Action will continue to be coordinated across government.