

The Wellcome Sanger Institute employs 1,015 staff, the majority of whom are academic scientists or technical scientific staff who run and develop our high-throughput, large-scale genomic pipelines. In total staff are 70% UK, 19% EU, and 11% international. Critically, 61% of the Institute's scientific and technical staff come from the UK, 24% are from the EU and 15% are from outside the EU. The Institute's science is globally competitive and the Institute is delivering part of the Life Sciences Industrial Strategy. Recruiting the necessary staff is critical to that delivery.

Our Position

- *Loss of freedom of movement risks harming UK science*
- *Inclusion of EU citizens in the new visa requirements will increase our operating costs 170% and will make recruitment harder.*
- *We strongly oppose the introduction of a £30K earnings threshold.*
- *The removal of the Tier 2 Visa Cap is a welcome improvement.*
- *There should be a dedicated visa route for visiting scientists.*

Loss of Freedom of Movement

We are disappointed that the Government has confirmed EU citizens will be included in the requirements of the new immigration system. It is our view the loss of freedom of movement for EU citizens will make the UK less attractive to the type of globally competitive scientists that the Sanger Institute seeks to recruit. The Sanger Institute currently covers visas costs for employees and these proposals represent a 170% increase in visa costs for the Sanger Institute plus an additional administrative burden.

£30,000 threshold

30% of the Institute's staff earn under £30,000 pa. 20% of these staff come from outside the UK. These staff are responsible for developing and managing our state of the art high-throughput scientific pipelines. The £30K threshold does not recognise salaries in the academic and charitable sectors and does not reflect the skills and qualifications of these staff. Salary is not an appropriate proxy for measuring talent and skill level. The Sanger Institute absolutely opposes the introduction of the £30K threshold.

Visiting Workers

Visiting workers are strategically important to the Sanger Institute. These workers come for periods of weeks to a few months and come either to introduce a new skill to the Sanger Institute or to learn from the Institute as part of a collaboration. We call for a dedicated visa route for researchers coming to the UK for short-term visits in order to sustain vital international collaboration and drive new collaborations; keeping the Institute and UK at the forefront of global genomic research.

Tier 2 Visa Cap

The removal of the Tier 2 visa cap is an important and welcome improvement, and the Institute is fully supportive of the proposal to remove it. This cap has, in the past, directly impacted the Institute's ability to deliver its science, damaging our reputation with collaborators and wasting research funding.

Immigration Skills Surcharge

Although the Tier 2 visa cap will be scrapped we are disappointed that there is no indication the Immigration Skills Surcharge will also be removed. The Sanger Institute relies heavily on its Bioinformaticians and Software Developers to develop the analytics and tools required to analyse our data. Their skills are in global demand but are not classed under priority SOC codes and therefore incur a Skills Charge; an additional cost for the Sanger Institute.

Shortage Occupation List

The white paper provides very little information on the shortage occupation list, although we are conscious the list is under review by the Migration Advisory Committee. The current shortage occupation list does not reflect the challenging shortages of a number of skills in the research sector, in particular software developers.