



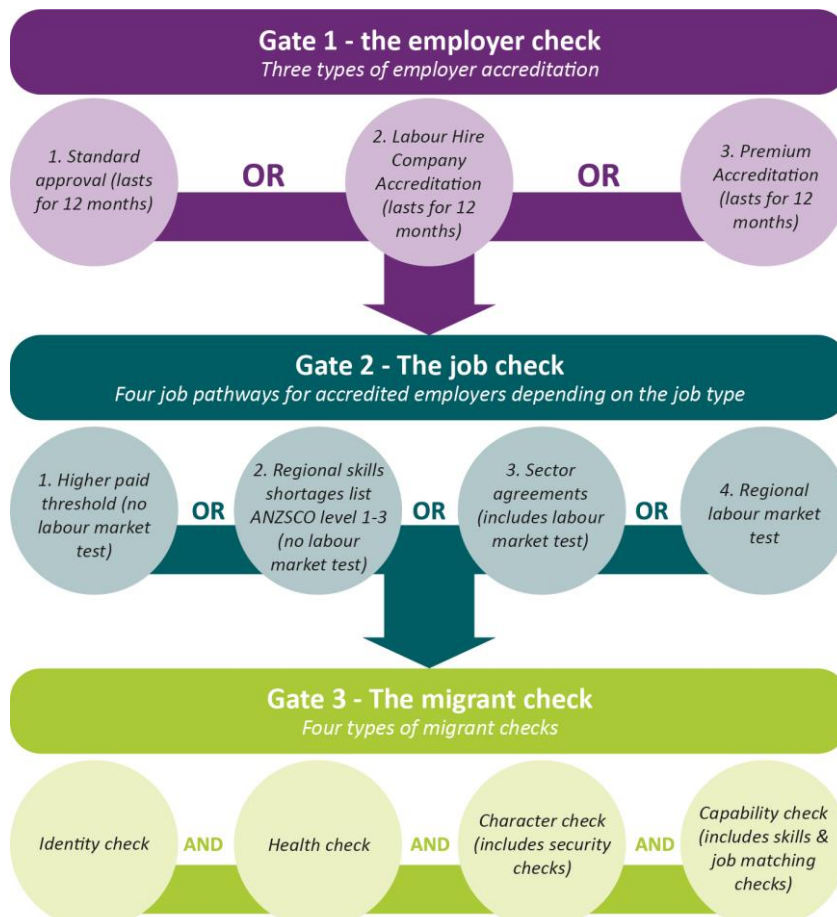
Employer-assisted temporary work visa proposals – Fact sheet

The Government is consulting on changes to employer-assisted temporary work visas that will ensure access to work visas is better matched to where there are genuine skill shortages.

The proposed changes include:

- **introducing a new framework for all employer-assisted temporary work visas** which will be employer-led, rather than migrant-led, and will simplify the system by reducing the number of application pathways into one enhanced framework (see Figure1).
- **replacing the Essential Skills in Demand Lists with Regional Skills Shortage Lists** to better reflect the skill shortages that exist in the regions and provide a stronger signal to temporary migrants of opportunities in regional areas.
- **introducing sector agreements** to ensure longer-term structural issues are addressed, so that sectors or industries do not become reliant on migrant labour, at the risk of shutting out opportunities to New Zealanders.
- **improving alignment of the immigration, welfare, and education systems** to improve how we work together to increase the employment of New Zealanders and deliver better labour market outcomes for New Zealand.

Figure 1: Summary of the proposed new framework for employer-assisted temporary work visas



What are employer-assisted temporary work visas?

Employer-assisted temporary work visas are generally those in which an employer can demonstrate through labour market tests that there are no suitable New Zealanders available to do the work. Around 20 per cent (or 47,000) of the 230,000 temporary work visas issued in 2017/18 were employer-assisted (the rest were issued for a range of reasons including to working holiday makers and family members of New Zealanders and recent migrants).

Why are these changes needed?

The current employer-assisted temporary work visa system is overly complex, includes a number of different visa options and does not respond sufficiently to sectoral or regional differences in the labour market. There are also too few checks and balances on employers hiring migrants, resulting in some employers with poor track records still being able to access migrant labour. Signals from the immigration system, for example the inclusion of an occupation on a skills shortage list or growth in temporary work visas for an occupation, generally do not trigger corresponding responses from the domestic labour market (such as by employers/industry and the compulsory education, tertiary education, welfare and employment systems).

Overall, the proposals will ensure that access to work visas is better matched to where there are genuine and high skill needs, and that the system provides more incentives and support for businesses to employ more New Zealanders.

How will the new framework work?

The new framework will simplify the immigration system by reducing the number of pathways for employer-assisted temporary work visas into one enhanced framework that includes employer, job and migrant checks. It will also ensure that access to work visas is better matched to where there are genuine and high skill needs and that the system is rebalanced in terms of the incentives and support for businesses to employ more New Zealanders.

What visas will be affected by these proposed changes?

These proposals will impact the following six temporary work visa categories:

- Essential Skills including the Essential Skills in Demand Lists (ESID)
- Approval-in-Principle
- Talent (Accredited Employer)
- Work to Residence – Long-term Skill Shortage List occupation
- Silver Fern (Practical Experience)
- Silver Fern (Job Search)

What impact will the proposed framework have on employers?

The changes as a whole will provide more certainty for employers who meet the required standards, make for faster processing for employers hiring subsequent migrants, and support better compliance and assurance processes. The new framework would initially require more upfront investment for most employers however this is balanced with longer-term ease and certainty.