

“Scotland visa urgently needed, as hospitality vacancies increase”

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UKHospitality Scotland is adding its voice to growing calls for the specific needs of Scotland to be recognised in the UK's immigration system.

Recruitment challenges continue to affect Scottish hospitality's ability to grow, as new figures show that vacancies in Scotland increased by 60% in April 2024, compared to January 2024.

The research, conducted by recruitment website Caterer.com, said that chefs, front of house staff and restaurant management were the three most difficult roles to fill in Scotland.

Hospitality businesses in the UK recruit more than three-quarters of their staff from within the UK, but Scottish businesses are finding unique challenges in the numbers of people available to work.

The declining birth rate in Scotland and its rural nature are thought to be key factors.

Leon Thompson, Executive Director of UKHospitality Scotland, said: “Scotland's hospitality and tourism sectors have been such a huge success story, and have been essential in making Scotland a leading visitor destination globally.

“Like the rest of hospitality in the UK, our businesses have struggled to recruit staff.

“This ongoing issue is putting at risk hospitality's ability to serve Scotland and create places where people want to live, work and invest.

“A dedicated Scotland visa which allows sectors facing shortages to recruit essential staff would be a gamechanger for Scottish hospitality.

“It would also be clear recognition from an incoming government that the needs of business will be reflected in our approach to immigration.

“With such clear support from the business community for a dedicated Scotland visa, I hope all political parties heed the call and commit to its introduction.”