

# Immigration Update

**May 2019**

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Veristat specialises in providing immigration advice, support and other services to employers and education providers, as well as individuals applying for leave to enter/remain in the UK.

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**\*\*NEW** Hourly retainer advice/support packages for employers and education providers. Call 01344 624016 for further details and a quote.

## Brexit update

### Right to Work checks on EEA/EU & Swiss nationals

The Home Office (UKVI) have confirmed that obligations for employers have not changed with regards to right to work checks for European nationals, so there is no need to check the status of existing EEA employees. This applies whether the UK leaves the EU with or without a deal.

Furthermore, employers can continue to conduct right to work checks on EU, EEA and Swiss citizens in the same way as they do now (i.e. by accepting a European passport or national identity card) until 1 January 2021.

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## EU Settlement Scheme

The EU Settlement Scheme was launched on 30 March 2019 and is now fully open. The scheme is free for European nationals and their family members to apply to, and deal or no deal, EU citizens will have until at least 31 December 2020 to apply. Applications to the EU Settlement Scheme are currently taking between 1 to 4 calendar days to process where no additional information is required.

You can view the full guidance on the EU Settlement Scheme [here](#).

The *Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration* has also published a report on his inspection of the EU Settlement Scheme, which can be viewed [here](#). The Home Office's response to this inspection report can be viewed [here](#).

*We provide full application advice and support to European nationals and their family members applying under the EU Settlement Scheme. For further details and a quote, please email us at [enquiries@veristat.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@veristat.co.uk) or call 01344 624016.*

<https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>

## Working in the UK

### Inspection of the Home Office's approach to Illegal Working

The Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, David Bolt, has published his report on the inspection of the Home Office's approach to illegal working. The full report can be viewed [here](#).

Several recommendations have been made, including a recommendation to review the effectiveness of the Civil Penalty regime.

The Home Office have also published its response to this inspection report, and you can view their response [here](#). All recommendations made by the Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration were accepted by the Home Office (UKVI).

*We undertake independent audits for employers to assess their compliance with right to work requirements. We also undertake training on the client's premises covering right to work and document examination. Please contact us on 01344 624016 or by email at [enquiries@veristat.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@veristat.co.uk) for further details.*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/an-inspection-of-the-home-offices-approach-to-illegal-working>

## Immigration statistics, year ending March 2019 (*Working in the UK*)

The Home Office (UKVI) have published their *Immigration statistics* for the year ending March 2019.

The key statistics in relation to *working in the UK* are as follows:

- The total number of work-related visas granted (including dependants) in the year ending March 2019 increased by 11% (18,461) to 181,093. About three quarters of this increase was accounted for by the increase in Skilled (Tier 2) work visas.
- The largest increase in grants was to Indian nationals who accounted for 53% of all Tier 2 visas granted. There were also notable increases for nationals for Nigeria (up 1,317 or 91%), the Philippines (up 979 or 32%), Pakistan (up 838 or 54%) and Egypt (up 656 or 51%).
- There was a 15% increase in Tier 2 work visas granted in the year ending March 2019.
- The total number of work visas granted was the highest level since the year ending March 2009, around which time the points-based system was introduced.
- The vast majority (95%) of work-related visa applications are granted. Tier 2 work visas had a grant rate of 98%, and Youth mobility and temporary workers (Tier 5) a grant rate of 95%.
- In the year ending March 2019, there were 60,559 Certificates of Sponsorship applications for Tier 2 work, an increase of 6,885 (13%).
- There was a 62% increase in applications in the Human health and social work activities sector, which was up by 4,342 to 11,337, which is likely due to the removal of doctors and nurses from the Tier 2 cap.

You can view the full Immigration statistics [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2019>

## Studying in the UK

### Immigration statistics, year ending March 2019 (*Studying in the UK*)

The Home Office (UKVI) have published their *Immigration statistics* for the year ending March 2019.

The key statistics in relation to *studying in the UK* are as follows:

- In the year ending March 2019, there were 243,937 Sponsored study (Tier 4) visas granted (including dependants), a 9% increase (+20,363) compared with the previous year, which was the highest level since 2011.
- Sponsored study visa applications for the Higher education (university) sector increased by 10% to 196,350, the highest level on record, accounting for 85% of all Sponsored study visa applications.

- The vast majority (97%) of Tier 4 visa applications were granted.
- There were continuing and notable increases in the number of Tier 4 visas granted to Chinese nationals (up 13% to 100,057) and Indian nationals (up 40% to 21,165) – this was the largest number of grants to Indian students since the year ending March 2012.

You can view the Immigration statistics [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2019>

## Other Immigration News

### Future Immigration System

The Home Office is currently conducting a year-long engagement programme across the UK to listen to views of businesses and communities about the UK government's plan to introduce a new skills-based immigration system from 2021. This skills-based immigration system will follow the end of freedom of movement and will favour experience and talent over nationality.

In line with the recommendations made by the *Migration Advisory Committee*, the UK government's proposals are as follows:

- remove the annual cap on the number of visas issued for skilled workers
- widen the skills threshold to include people with qualifications equivalent to A levels or Scottish Highers
- ends the requirements for labour market tests by employers wanting to sponsor a highly skilled worker

On Friday 3 May, the Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, met with local business leaders in Aberdeen to seek their views on the plans.

You can view the UK government's white paper on the new immigration and borders system [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-hears-from-scottish-businesses-on-skills-based-immigration>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-uks-future-skills-based-immigration-system>

## **Biometric residence documents: information for financial providers**

The Home Office (UKVI) have published information for financial providers to help them understand how to consider a biometric residence document as proof of identity and perform *Knowing Your Customer* (KYC) checks.

This guidance explains the type of evidence that customers may provide as proof of identity when making an application for a UK bank account.

The guidance to financial providers can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biometric-residence-documents-information-for-financial-providers>

## **Changes at borders: ePassport gates expanded to 7 more countries**

From Monday 20 May 2019, visitors from Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea and the United States will be able to use the ePassport gates at ports across the UK and juxtaposed controls in a move designed to speed up border controls for low-risk countries.

This means that nationals of these countries will not always have their passport stamped, so it is important that alternative evidence (e.g. employment, education or government letters or boarding passes) is retained by applicants as evidence of their absences and proof of living in the UK for any future settlement or citizenship applications they may choose to make.

Additionally, the Government is removing the need for all non-EEA travelers to fill in landing cards upon arrival in the UK.

Further information can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-expands-use-of-epassport-gates-to-7-more-countries>

## Veristat Services

### Advice/Support packages

These packages can either be on a fixed rate monthly retainer basis, which can include a number of services, such as: acting as your Level 1 user, issuing of CoS/CAS, immigration audit, etc. Alternatively, you can purchase an annual package of either 5, 10, 15 or 20 hours' advice/support per year at reduced rates.

If you are interested in discussing our retainer or hourly advice/support packages further, then please contact us on 01344 624016 or email us at [enquiries@veristat.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@veristat.co.uk).

### Training for employers and education providers

We provide bespoke training on all aspects of immigration matters, including Right to Work, Tier 2 sponsorship, Tier 4 sponsorship, and identification of fraudulent documents.

These training sessions are conducted on the client's premises for a standard half-day rate for up to 12 persons per session.

If you think your organisation would benefit from training in any of these areas, please contact us for a quote by emailing us at [enquiries@veristat.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@veristat.co.uk). If you would like to discuss the contents of our training packages or require a bespoke training package to be delivered, please contact us by telephone on 01344 624016 or email us as above.

### Audits and Inspections

Veristat is hugely experienced at providing compliance audits across all immigration tiers. We have worked with hundreds of employers, ranging from small family businesses to multi-nationals, high street retailers and professional sports clubs. In the education sector, we have also worked with over 30 universities and a significant number of colleges and schools.

Our audit/inspection service is fully flexible and can be tailored to individual requirements, and is based on sound practical experience of UKVI's policies, culture and approach.

- For employers, we offer on-site Tier 2 compliance inspections (with staff aware or unaware to simulate a surprise UKVI visit). We also offer right to work compliance visits.
- For education providers, our service ranges from a "lite" health-check to a comprehensive review of Tier 4 activities, assessing compliance with UKVI requirements and sharing best practice. We also offer targeted inspections covering specific issues, such as BCA, Tier 2 compliance, policies, student unions, relationships with partner institutions, etc.

On completion, we provide a comprehensive, evidence-based report, together with an assessment of how compliant the business or institution is with UKVI's requirements. We will support the introduction of change if required and offer a 'spot check' follow up service at a later date if required to reassure management that recommendations have been implemented.

If you're interested in booking an audit/inspection, please call us on 01344 624016 or email us at [enquiries@veristat.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@veristat.co.uk).

### **File Inspection Days**

If you're unsure whether you require a full compliance audit or specific training but would like an independent check of your files to ensure they are fully compliant with Home Office requirements, we can provide a UKVI file compliance inspection of either your staff or student files.

Depending on the number of employees/students you have, we would either check all files or an agreed sample. After the inspection has taken place, we would provide a written report outlining any risks, feedback and recommendations.

For further information or a quote for our file inspection days, please call us on 01344 624016 or email us at [enquiries@veristat.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@veristat.co.uk).

### **Presentations for European nationals (Brexit)**

We provide sessions targeted at European nationals currently living and working in the UK. We can come to your premises and speak directly to your EU/EEA and Swiss employees, outlining their position now, and the likely situation they may find themselves in following Brexit. These practical sessions are designed to clarify the situation and more importantly their options moving forwards.

If you're interested in booking a session for the European nationals working for you, please call us on 01344 624016 or email us at [enquiries@veristat.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@veristat.co.uk).

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