

# Immigration News

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



Please contact us for further information about our training sessions, which will also cover the changes announced recently by the UK government.

## Introduction

2025 appears to be bringing in yet more changes in the field of immigration and they appear to be accompanied by a more robust enforcement presence in the community from UKVI.

With the new SMS system also coming in (Sponsor UK), we anticipate more adjustments, but we will be here to guide you through any necessary changes.

We are here to support you with any immigration matters and remove some of those challenges associated with Immigration compliance. Should you need any advice or support with anything, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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## Working in the UK

### Right to Work checks: updated guidance for employers

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated their guidance for employers on conducting right to work checks.

The key changes are as follows:

- The guidance has been updated regarding the decommissioning of biometric cards, including Biometric Residence Permits / Cards (BRP/BRC), or legacy paper document, to confirm that individuals who hold such documents should take action to create a UKVI account to access their eVisa to prove their right to work in the UK.
- Annex A: Lists of acceptable documents for manual right to work checks has been updated to confirm that a clipped British or Irish passport is a cancelled document and therefore not acceptable proof of right to work.
- A clarification has also been made to Annex A: Lists of acceptable documents to clarify that a short or long birth certificate is considered acceptable when presented with official evidence of name and national insurance number issued by a government agency or a previous employer.
- An update has been made to Annex D: Employment of Ukrainian nationals to confirm the opening of the Ukraine Permission Extension scheme on 4 February 2025.
- The section referring to COVID-19 temporary adjusted checks has also been removed.

The updated *Employer's guide to right to work checks* can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-work-checks-employers-guide>

### Biometric Residence Permits: applicant and sponsor information

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated the information for migrant workers and their sponsors on using Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs).

Where a migrant worker has been issued with a BRP that expires on or after 31 December 2024, and they still have permission to stay in the UK, they should continue to carry their BRP with them when they travel to the UK until 31 March 2025.

The migrant worker should also be advised to retain their expired BRP as it may help with future applications to stay in the UK. They may also want to keep it for their personal records.

Those with a physical immigration document can continue to use it until it expires.

If a migrant worker has limited leave to enter or remain and they wish to remain in the UK, they will need to make a further application to the Home Office before their leave expires.

As per previous guidance, physical BRPs cannot be used as evidence of right to work and an online right to work check must be conducted instead.

The updated information on BRPs can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biometric-residence-permits-applicant-and-sponsor-information>

## **Updated sponsor guidance on sponsorship duties and compliance**

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated their guidance on applying for a sponsor licence and the sponsorship duties and responsibilities.

The key changes are as follows:

- Para C7.3 has been amended to reflect the new revocation grounds at Annex C2(cc) and (dd).
- Para C8.24 has been amended to reflect that, following the removal of the requirement to renew a sponsor licence every 4 years, a sponsor can only be downgraded to a B-rating on a maximum of 2 occasions during any rolling 4-year period – this corrects an oversight by the UKVI in their previous updated guidance.
- Annex C2(j) has been amended to remove the concession which allowed undischarged bankrupts to be appointed as Level 2 Users or Key Contacts; under the new provision anyone coming under the definition of 'you or your' must not be legally prohibited from acting as a company director unless a court has given them permission to act as such, or to form or promote a business.
- Annex C2(cc) has been added to reflect the new licence revocation ground where a sponsor recoups, or attempts to recoup, the cost of assigning a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) from a Skilled Worker.
- Annex C2(dd) has been added to reflect the new licence revocation ground where a sponsor recoups, or attempts to recoup, the cost of a Skilled Worker sponsor licence or associated administrative costs from a worker they are sponsoring.
- Annex C2(ee) has been added to reflect the new licence revocation ground where a sponsor seeks to sponsor a worker in a personal capacity.

The updated sponsor guidance on sponsorship duties and compliance (Part 3 of the sponsor guidance) can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workers-and-temporary-workers-guidance-for-sponsors-part-3-sponsor-duties-and-compliance>

## Updated sponsor guidance on applying for a sponsor licence (Work / Temporary route sponsors)

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated their guidance on applying for a sponsor licence and the sponsorship duties and responsibilities.

The key changes are as follows:

- Para L1.7 to L.10 have been added to clarify that sponsor licences must not be used to sponsor workers in a personal capacity.
- A minor correction has been made to para. L1.15 in relation to the definition of 'International Agreement' to reflect the maximum period a private servant in a diplomatic household can stay in the UK.
- Para L4.26 has been added to confirm that sponsors must not nominate Key Personnel who are prohibited from being a company director (for any reason, including bankruptcy), unless a court has given permission for that individual to act as a director or to promote or form a business and acting as Key Personnel would not contravene that permission.
- Para L4.46 has been added to confirm that **new sponsors** must have at least one Level 1 User who, in their own right meets the following requirements: (a) is an employee, a partner or a director within the sponsoring organisation; and (b) is a settled worker.
- Para L4.64 to L4.67 have been amended to reflect that Government Authorised Exchange sponsors should no longer appoint Level 2 Users from host employers, as such users will not be given access to the new sponsorship service (Sponsor UK).
- Para L6.17 has been added to expressly prohibit Skilled Worker sponsors from passing on the cost of the sponsor licence fee or associated administrative costs from 31 December 2024 or the Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) fee (for CoS assigned on or after that date).
- Para L7.1 has been amended to reflect the requirement to send supporting evidence to requests to add routes to a licence as well as to new sponsor licence applications.
- Para L8.7 and L8.20 have been amended to clarify that sponsors must genuinely intend to offer the roles they have indicated in their sponsor licence application.
- Annex L1(i) has been amended to include a new ground for refusal of a licence application to align with the new paragraph L4.26 (see above note).
- Annex L1(m) has been amended to include a new ground for refusal of a licence application where the UKVI have reason to believe that the prospective sponsor is acting or will act as an employment agency / business and intends to supply workers as labour to another organisation – this is to align with the guidance on employment agencies and third-party employment in section L5 and the equivalent revocation grounds in Annex C1(x) and (y) of Part 3: sponsor duties and compliance document.
- Annex L2(l) has been amended to add a new ground for refusal of a licence application where a prospective sponsor intends to sponsor workers in a personal capacity, as defined in section L1 of the guidance.

The updated sponsor guidance on applying for a licence can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workers-and-temporary-workers-guidance-for-sponsors-part-1-apply-for-a-licence>

## **Updated Skilled Worker sponsor guidance: passing on sponsorship costs to sponsored workers**

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated their sponsor guidance to reflect a commitment given in the Written Ministerial Statement of 28 November 2024 to prohibit the passing on of Skilled Worker sponsor licence or Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) fees to sponsored workers.

Para SK2.4 and Para SK11.11 have been updated to reflect that the UKVI will usually revoke a licence where a sponsor has recouped, or attempted to recoup, any part of the sponsor licence fee or associated administrative costs / CoS fees from the worker.

Sponsors must also not include any sponsorship fees as part of any clawback agreement.

The updated sponsor guidance can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workers-and-temporary-workers-sponsor-a-skilled-worker>

## **Skilled Worker visa: eligible occupations**

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated their list of eligible occupations for sponsorship under the Skilled Worker route to include eligible and ineligible jobs under SOC code 9119: Fishing and other elementary agriculture occupations not elsewhere classified.

Only certain occupations under SOC code 9119 are eligible for sponsorship.

The updated list of occupations eligible for sponsorship can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skilled-worker-visa-eligible-occupations>

## **Employing staff for the first time – published information by the Home Office (UKVI)**

The Home Office (UKVI) have published information on the 7 things an employer needs to do before employing staff for the first time, including checking if the person they wish to employ has a legal right to work in the UK and do the job in question.

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

<https://www.gov.uk/employing-staff>

## Sponsoring a Government Authorised Exchange Worker

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated their guidance about how to sponsor a migrant worker under the Government Authorised Worker route. The key changes are as follows:

- Annex GA1, section 10.1, has been updated to delete information relating to proof of immigration status and biometric residence permits, as this replicated information contained in Part 2: sponsor a worker, and to reflect that biometric residence permits (BRPs) are no longer valid beyond 31 December 2024.
- A minor amendment has also been made to Annex GA2 (which includes information about the new 'Sponsor UK' system and making a sponsor worker submission).

The updated guidance can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workers-and-temporary-workers-guidance-for-sponsors-sponsor-a-government-authorised-exchange-worker>

## Sponsoring a Minister of Religion

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated their guidance for religious organisations on how to sponsor a migrant worker under the Minister of Religion and Religious Worker (Temporary Work) immigration routes. The key changes are as follows:

- Para MRW2.4 has been deleted as the requirement to renew sponsor licences ended on 6 April 2025.
- Para MRW5.6A has been deleted as the requirement to enter information on a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) about the resident labour market test for Ministers of Religion has been removed (the resident labour market test for this route was removed on 1 December 2020 but, due to an oversight by the UKVI, this was not reflected on the CoS form).

The updated guidance can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workers-and-temporary-workers-guidance-for-sponsors-sponsor-a-minister-of-religion-or-religious-worker>

## Temporary Work route: caseworker guidance

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated the guidance for their staff on how to consider applications for a visa or visa extension under a Temporary Work route. The guidance has been updated to clarify that seasonal workers will continue to be issued with a visa vignette and will not receive an eVisa. The updated guidance can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-application-for-uk-visa-under-tier-5-temporary-worker>

## Current Visa Processing Times – Work visas

The Home Office (UKVI) have published their current decision waiting times for those applying from inside or outside the UK.

Those applying to switch or extend their work visa from within the UK, should receive a decision within **8 weeks** of attending their biometric appointment or the date the application / documents were received by the UKVI (if no appointment is required). Applications made under the Health and Care Visa normally receive a decision within **3 weeks** if applied for from inside the UK. The latest processing times for those applying from inside the UK can be viewed [here](#).

Those applying for a work visa from outside the UK, should get a decision within **3 weeks** once they have either attended their appointment at the visa application centre (VAC) or used the ID Check app and submitted their application/supporting documents. The latest processing times for those applying from outside the UK can be viewed [here](#).

Applicants may be able to pay an additional fee to expedite their applications for a quicker decision.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visa-processing-times-applications-outside-the-uk>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visa-processing-times-applications-inside-the-uk>

## Studying in the UK

### Changes to Maintenance Requirements - Increased Living Costs for Student visa applicants

In line with the changes to the Immigration Rules, the financial information for Student applicants has been updated to reflect the increased maintenance requirements / living costs.

If a Student visa application will be boarding at a residential independent school, they will need enough money to pay boarding fees for one academic year.

For all other courses, a Student visa applicant will need:

- £1,136 for each month of their course (up to a maximum of 9 months), if they're studying outside London
- £1,483 for each month of their course (up to a maximum of 9 months), if they're studying in London

For each dependant a Student visa application will be bringing, they will also need:

- £680 for each month of their visa (up to a maximum of 9 months), if they're studying outside London

- £845 for each month of their course (up to a maximum of 9 months), if they're studying in London

The updated financial information can be viewed [here](#).

The Home Office (UKVI) have also updated their guidance to reflect these amendments to the maintenance requirements. The updated caseworker guidance can be viewed [here](#).

The caseworker guidance has also been updated to clarify that SCQF\_11\_Research and SCQF\_12\_Research constitute research-based courses on the Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS), in line with the wording for RQF\_7\_Research and RQF\_8\_Research courses.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/financial-evidence-for-student-and-child-student-route-applicants>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/points-based-system-student-route>

### **Changes to Maintenance Requirements – Increased Living Costs for Child Student visa applicants**

In line with the changes to the Immigration Rules, the financial information for Child Student applicants has been updated to reflect the increased maintenance requirements / living costs.

If the Child Student applicant will be boarding at a residential independent school, they will need enough money to pay boarding fees for one academic year.

If the Child Student applicant will be living during term time with a foster carer or close relative who is a UK resident or British citizen, the person the student would be living with would need to have £570 for each month of their course (up to a maximum of 9 months).

If the Child Student applicant will be living with a parent or legal guardian who has a Parent of a Child Student visa, they would need to have:

- £1,560 for each month of their visa (up to a maximum of 9 months) for the first child accompanying the parent
- £625 for each month of their course (up to a maximum of 9 months) for each additional child

If the Child Student applicant will be living independently as a 16- or 17-year-old, they would need:

- £1,023 for each month of their course (up to a maximum of 9 months), if they're studying outside London
- £1,334 for each month of their course (up to a maximum of 9 months), if they're studying in London

The updated financial information can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/financial-evidence-for-student-and-child-student-route-applicants>



## **Biometric Residence Permits: applicant and sponsor information**

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated the information for migrant student and their sponsors on using Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs). The updated information on BRPs can be viewed [here](#).

Where a migrant student has been issued with a BRP that expires on or after 31 December 2024, and they still have permission to stay in the UK, they should continue to carry their BRP with them when they travel to the UK until 31 March 2025.

The migrant student should also be advised to retain their expired BRP as it may help with future applications to stay in the UK. They may also want to keep it for their personal records.

Those with a physical immigration document can continue to use it until it expires.

If a migrant student has limited leave to enter or remain and they wish to remain in the UK, they will need to make a further application to the Home Office before their leave expires.

The Home Office (UKVI) have also updated the information about applying for a Student route licence on the GOV.UK website to remove references to BRPs as these are no longer being issued.

Further guidance is available to education institutions that hold a Student or a Child Student route licence on the Study Sector Support web page on the GOV.UK website, which can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biometric-residence-permits-applicant-and-sponsor-information>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/study-sector-support>

## **Visit the UK as part of a French school trip**

The France-UK school trip travel information form has been updated to reference electronic travel authorisations (ETAs).

This form allows you to bring a group of children from a school in France to the UK.

Children in such a group do not need a visa or an electronic travel authorisation (ETA), whatever their nationality.

Further information and the updated form can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visit-the-uk-as-part-of-a-french-school-trip>

## Current Visa Processing Times – Study visas

The Home Office (UKVI) have published their current decision waiting times for those applying from inside or outside the UK for a study visa.

Those applying to switch or extend their study visa from within the UK, should receive a decision within **8 weeks** of attending their biometric appointment or the date the application / documents were received by the UKVI (if no appointment is required). The latest processing times for those applying from inside the UK can be viewed [here](#).

Those applying for a Student/Child Student visa or Short-term study visa from outside the UK, should get a decision within **3 weeks** once they have either attended their appointment at the visa application centre (VAC) or used the ID Check app and submitted their application/supporting documents. The latest processing times for those applying from outside the UK can be viewed [here](#).

Applicants may be able to pay an additional fee to expedite their applications for a quicker decision.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/visa-processing-times>

## Sponsorship – please note...

### Claiming points for 'New Entrant' salary

When assigning a CoS where the worker is claiming points as a 'new entrant' under Option E (those who did not have valid leave under the Skilled Worker route before 4 April 2024) or Option J (those with continuous valid leave on the Skilled Worker route since before 4 April 2024), you must also provide a brief explanation of how the worker meets the new entrant criteria.

This explanation can be added in the 'Summary of job description' field or by adding a 'sponsor note' after you have assigned the CoS. Please refer to Para SK11.18 of the sponsor guidance, which can be viewed [here](#).

Where the worker is claiming points as a 'new entrant' as they will be under 26 on the date the applicant submits their visa application, you should include their full name (as shown on their passport), nationality and date of birth. Please refer to Para SK12.11 of the sponsor guidance, which can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workers-and-temporary-workers-sponsor-a-skilled-worker>

## **SMS System: Migrated to SpUK**

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated their SMS guide on miscellaneous CoS functions to add a note about the new column titled 'Migrated to SpUK'. The updated SMS guide 10 can be viewed [here](#).

The new Sponsor UK system is a new online platform that is being introduced by the Home Office (UKVI) to replace the current Sponsorship Management System (SMS). The new Sponsor UK system will gradually be introduced to a wider range of sponsors on different routes over the next few years.

The column titled 'Migrated to SpUK?' has been added to the SMS screens where multiple CoS search results are displayed. The new column appears for all sponsors regardless of the routes they are licenced in, or whether they are participating in the Sponsor UK pilot.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/miscellaneous-certificate-of-sponsorship-functions-sms-guide-10>

## **Defined CoS – Expiry Date**

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated their SMS guide on assigning 'Defined' CoS to clarify that Defined CoS expire after 90 days of being granted. The updated SMS guide 12 can be viewed [here](#).

Sponsors must assign a Defined CoS before the use by date otherwise it will expire, and they will be unable to assign it.

Para SK12.26 and SK12.28 have also been amended to provide clarification that a Defined CoS must be assigned to a worker within 90 days of the date it was allocated to the sponsor, rather than 3 months.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/restricted-certificate-of-sponsorship-sms-guide-12>

## **Compliance Casework Guidance - Sponsorship**

The Home Office (UKVI) have published their guidance for their caseworkers as to how to make decisions in caseworker compliance cases regarding sponsorship.

The Compliance casework guidance can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/compliance-casework-guidance>

## Other Immigration News

### Applying for an Electronic Travel Authorisation as a dual national

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated the section in their guidance on how dual citizens can prove their permission to travel to the UK.

If a visitor is a dual citizen with British or Irish citizenship, they do not need to apply for an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA), and they can prove their permission to travel using a: valid British or Irish passport, or other valid passport containing a *certificate of entitlement*.

The Home Office (UKVI) have also published guidance on using the 'UK ETA' app to apply for an ETA to come to the UK. The updated guidance on the 'UK ETA' app can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/using-the-uk-eta-app>

### Checking eVisa information is correct before travelling / Reporting errors to the UKVI

All migrants (whether settled or with limited leave to enter / remain) should check their eVisa has all the correct details before travelling. This includes checking that their current identity document (i.e. passport) is linked to their eVisa. Further information about checking eVisas can be viewed [here](#).

If an individual finds an error with their eVisa digital status, they will need to report this using the Report an error with your eVisa form, that can be viewed [here](#).

Those contacting the Home Office regarding such issues would normally receive a response within 10 working days, and they should receive an email to advise them when the issue has been resolved. Further information for individuals about asking the Home Office to check that the immigration status is correct can be viewed [here](#).

If anyone has lost access to the email address or phone they use to receive security codes for their UKVI account, they can recover their UKVI account [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-sure-your-evisa-is-correct-before-you-travel>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ask-the-home-office-to-check-your-immigration-status-is-correct>

<https://www.gov.uk/report-error-evisa>

<https://update-your-details.homeoffice.gov.uk/account-recovery/help>

## Landlord's guide to right to rent checks

The Home Office (UKVI) has updated their guidance for landlords, letting agents and homeowners on how to conduct a right to rent check when letting privately rented accommodation.

The key changes are as follows:

- The guidance has been updated regarding the decommissioning of biometric cards, including Biometric Residence Permits / Cards (BRP/BRC), or legacy paper document, to confirm that individuals who hold such documents should take action to create a UKVI account to access their eVisa to prove their right to rent in the UK.
- Annex A: Lists of acceptable documents for manual right to rent checks has been updated to confirm that a clipped British or Irish passport is a cancelled document and therefore not acceptable proof of right to rent.
- A clarification has also been made to Annex A: Lists of acceptable documents to clarify that a short or long birth certificate is considered acceptable when presented with official evidence of name and national insurance number issued by a government agency or a previous employer.
- An update has been made to Annex C: Ukrainian nationals and right to rent, to confirm the opening of the Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme on 4 February 2025.
- The section referring to COVID-19 temporary adjusted checks has also been removed.
- Further information has also been added on Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETAs) and how non-visa nationals can prove their right to rent.

The updated guidance can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landlords-guide-to-right-to-rent-checks>

## Applying for Indefinite Leave to Remain on basis of Long Residence

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated their guidance on applying for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) on the basis of Long Residence to reflect changes to the Immigration Rules excluding time with permission on Ukraine Schemes from counting towards the qualifying period requirement under the long residence route.

The updated caseworker guidance can be viewed [here](#).

They also clarify in the updated guidance on periods exempt from immigration control and added a clarification about permission extended by virtue of section 3C of the Immigration Act 1971.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/long-residence>

## **Applying for a UK visa: Using the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app to verify identity**

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated their guidance to visa applicants to confirm that when using the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app to verify their identity, they can use either their current or expired Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) if their application route allows.

The updated information can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/using-the-uk-immigration-id-check-app>

## **Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) requirements for residents of Ireland**

The Home Office (UKVI) have published guidance for those living in Ireland regarding the Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) requirements, as those living in Ireland may be exempt from applying for an ETA before travelling to the UK. If an individual is a national of a country eligible for an ETA, they do not need an ETA if both of the following apply:

- They are legally resident in Ireland.
- They are entering the UK from Ireland, Guernsey, Jersey or the Isle of Man

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

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/electronic-travel-authorisation-eta-residents-of-ireland>

## **Opening of the Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme**

The Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) scheme opened to applications on 4 February 2025. Those with permission in the UK under one of the Ukraine Schemes who apply under the UPE scheme for a further 18 months' permission to stay in the UK. Further information can be viewed [here](#).

The Home Office (UKVI) have also published their guidance for their staff in considering applications under the Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) scheme, which can be viewed [here](#).

As a result of the new UPE scheme, the Ukraine Extension Scheme closed to all applications on 4 February 2025.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/support-for-family-members-of-british-nationals-in-ukraine-and-ukrainian-nationals-in-ukraine-and-the-uk>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukraine-permission-extension-scheme-caseworker-guidance>

## Current Visa Processing Times – Family route visa applications

The Home Office (UKVI) have published their current decision waiting times for those applying from inside or outside the UK for a family route visa. The latest visa processing times can be viewed [here](#).

For those applying to switch to or extend their Family route visa from within the UK, they should receive a decision within **8 weeks** if minimum income and English language requirements are required, or **12 weeks** if applying under the 'Private Life' category where minimum income and English Language are not required once they've attended their biometric appointment or applied online/provided documentation (if no appointment is required). It may be possible to expedite the applications for a quicker decision by using either the Priority or Super Priority services if they are available at the time of application. The latest processing times for those applying from inside the UK can be viewed [here](#).

Those applying for a Family route visa from outside the UK, should get a decision within **24 weeks** once they have either attended their appointment at the visa application centre (VAC) or used the ID Check app and submitted their application/supporting documents. If paying extra to use the priority visa services, you would normally expect to receive a decision within 6 weeks of the biometric appointment, although delays are still being experienced in some cases. The latest processing times for those applying from outside the UK can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visa-processing-times-applications-outside-the-uk>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visa-processing-times-applications-inside-the-uk>

## Proof of English Language (SELT) for visa or citizenship applications

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated their list of accepted secure English Language tests (SELT) and test centres for visa and citizenship applications. The updated information on SELT tests can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prove-your-english-language-abilities-with-a-secure-english-language-test-selt>

## Immigration status checks: guidance for banks and building societies

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated their guidance for banks and building societies on carrying out immigration status checks on current account holders and applicants to include information on people proving their immigration status with an eVisa. The updated guidance can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-status-checks-guidance-for-banks>

## **Diplomatic Visa Arrangements (DVA)**

The Home Office (UKVI) have published updated guidance for their staff about the diplomatic arrangement (DVA) visa and permission to enter the UK on the DVA visa route.

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/visitors-immigration-staff-guidance>

## **Veristat Services**

### **Training on IDSPS, the Skilled Worker or Student routes/Right to Work/Forgery**

We provide comprehensive training on all aspects of immigration, including IDSPs, the Student route, the Skilled Worker route, Right to Work and the identification of fraudulent documents. Our sessions include the recent changes being brought about by the 2021 points-based immigration system and how employers and education providers can be prepared moving forwards.

All training can be provided in person at the client's site or remotely via Microsoft teams/Zoom.

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 call us on 01344 624016 or email us as above.

### **Sponsor licence applications**

Employers or education providers wishing to employ EEA/EU nationals or non-EEA nationals who do not have right to work need to apply for a Sponsorship licence.

We provide a comprehensive advice and support package to employers and education providers applying for a licence. This can include preparation for a Home Office (UKVI) visit and training on the new Skilled Worker or Student routes and the SMS system, as well as assistance with applying for Certificates of Sponsorship (CoS) or Confirmation for Acceptance for Studies (CAS) and a step-by-step guide for completing the application itself.

Please email us at [enquiries@veristat.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@veristat.co.uk) or by telephone on 01344 624016 for further details and/or a quote for helping you with your application.



## Audits and Inspections

Veristat is hugely experienced in providing compliance audits across all immigration routes. We have worked with hundreds of employers, ranging from small family businesses to multi-nationals, high street retailers and professional sports/football clubs. In the education sector, we have 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. It is based on sound practical experience of UKVI's policies, culture and approach.

- For employers, we offer on-site Skilled Worker or ICT compliance inspections (with staff aware or unaware to simulate an announced or unannounced 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 student route activities, assessing compliance with UKVI requirements and sharing best practice. We also offer targeted inspections covering specific issues, such as BCA, Skilled Worker compliance, policies, student unions, relationships with partner institutions, etc.

On completion, we can 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 beneficial to reassure management that recommendations have been implemented.

If you are 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).

Please note we are also now offering remote audits and inspections- please contact us for more details.

## 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).

## **Advice/Support packages**

We offer advice/support packages on either a fixed rate monthly retainer basis or on a fixed-hourly basis, which can include a number of our services, such as: acting as your Level 1 user, issuing of CoS/CAS, immigration audit, etc. If you do not require ongoing retainer advice/support, we offer either 5- or 10-hour annual support packages 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)

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