

Immigration News

Issue 3 2025

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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 the radical reforms announced by the UK Government in the recent immigration white paper will most likely impact many organisations and institutions.

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

Skilled Worker route – Immigration white paper to reduce migration and strengthen border

The UK Government has unveiled measures in an 82-page immigration [white paper](#) published on 12 May 2025 to reshape the UK immigration system. It will include new requirements on employers to boost domestic training in order to end reliance on international recruitment and reduce net migration.

Further information can be viewed in the GOV.UK news story [here](#). You can view the full White Paper [here](#).

The key measures in the white paper in relation to the Skilled Worker route include:

- Increasing the skill level for skilled workers back to RQF 6 (Graduate level) and above.
- Increasing salary thresholds
- The *Immigration Salary List* (ISL) will be abolished, and a new *Temporary Shortage List* will be established to provide time-limited access to the Points-Based immigration system. Occupations below RQF 6 must be listed on the *Temporary Shortage List* to gain access to the immigration system. Sectors will only be potentially added to the *Temporary Shortage List* if they are key to the industrial strategy or delivering critical infrastructure and following advice from the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC).
- Limiting access to those occupations where there have been long-term shortages, on a time-limited basis, where the MAC has advised it is justified, where there is a workforce strategy in place, and where employers seeking to recruit from abroad are committed to playing their part in increasing recruitment from the domestic workforce.
- Ending overseas recruitment for social care visas – in line with wider reforms to skills thresholds, social care visas will be closed to new applications from abroad. For a transition period until 2028, while the workforce strategy is being developed and rolled out, they will permit visa extensions and in-country switching for those already in the UK. This will be kept under review
- Increasing language requirements for Skilled Workers and workers where a language requirement already applies from B1 to B2 (Independent User) levels, in accordance with the Common European Framework for Reference for Languages (CEFR)
- The introduction of a new English Language requirement for all adult dependants of workers at level A1 (Basic User) to align to spousal and partner routes and work towards increasing this requirement over time. Adult dependants will also need to demonstrate progression to level A2 (Basic User) for any visa extension, and B2 (Independent User) for settlement.
- The *Labour Market Evidence Group* (LME) will also be established. The LME will comprise of the *Industrial Strategy Advisory Council*, the *Department for Work and Pensions*, *Skills England*, and the MAC. They will work together to gather and share evidence about the state of the workforce and training levels, focussing on sectors / occupations which are central to industrial strategy, which currently have high levels of reliance on migration for their workforce.

- Increasing the *Immigration Skills Charge* (ISC) by 32% to bring ISC rates in line with inflation.
- Streamlining the process for employers and skilled workers to get visas, reducing bureaucracy and supporting growth.
- Introducing new requirements for workforce strategies for key sectors where there are high levels of recruitment from abroad.
- Introducing reforms to allow a limited pool of UNHCR recognised refugees and displaced people to apply for employment through the existing Skilled Worker route, where they have the skills to do so.

Transitional arrangements will be put in place for those already on a Skilled Worker visa, so from the point the skills threshold is raised, existing Skilled Worker visa holders will continue to be able to renew their visa, change employment and take supplementary employment, in currently eligible occupations below RQF 6, although applicants from overseas, or those applying to switch from other routes, will have to follow the new rules.

For occupations with a skills requirement of RQF 3-5 (below degree level) where there are long-term shortages, they will only be permitted to use of the Points-Based immigration system, on a time-limited basis where the *Migration Advisory Committee* (MAC) has advised it is justified, where there is a workforce strategy in place, and where employers seeking to recruit from abroad are committed to playing their part in increasing recruitment from the domestic workforce.

Additionally, steps will continue to tackle illegal working, continuing to surge resource into the key sectors where illegal working is taking place – including the gig economy – and using eVisas and modern biometric technology to support the Home Office's (UKVI's) Immigration Enforcement visits – facilitated by the 1,000 staff deployed into enforcement and returns since the election.

The policies outlined in the White Paper are part of the government's *Plan for Change*, are to be delivered over the course of this Parliament to strengthen the UK's immigration system, with the first changes set to be introduced in the coming weeks.

Further reforms are to be published by the government to the asylum system and border security later this summer, building on measures in the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill currently progressing through Parliament.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/immigration-white-paper-to-reduce-migration-and-strengthen-border>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/restoring-control-over-the-immigration-system-white-paper>

Skilled Worker route evaluation – Report published by the Home Office

The Home Office (UKVI) have published a report exploring the experiences and activities of international workers and sponsoring employers accessing the Skilled Worker route.

The key findings were as follows:

- Skilled Worker visa holders were predominantly working in higher-level professional occupations (49% of visa holders) and caring, leisure and other service occupations (34%). Other occupational groups were much less common, with the largest being skilled trades (8%) and associate professional occupations (5%).
- A fifth (21%) of Skilled Worker visa holders were earning over £40,000 annually.
- By nationality, visa holders from Nigeria (10%), the Philippines (10%), Ghana (9%) and Zimbabwe (6%) were less likely to earn over £40,000 per annum. A high proportion (60%) of visa holders from Zimbabwe earned £25,000 or less per year (93% of visa holders from Zimbabwe are Health and Care visa holders).
- 81% of sponsors agreed that being able to recruit visa holders had made a very positive difference to their business. Employers who employed workers on a Health and Care visa were particularly positive about the impact on their business
- Just over half of visa holders (54%) had a dependant on their Skilled Worker visa. For almost all (94%) this included a dependant partner, while around two-thirds (65%) had dependant children.
- Most dependant partners were employed (71%), with the majority of these employed full-time (54%). Many of those not in work were looking for work (13% of all dependant partners).
- Dependant partners were working in jobs across all salary brackets, though relatively few were earning more than £40,000 per annum: 29% were earning less than £17,500, 33% between £17,500 and £25,000, 16% between £25,000 and £40,000, and 6% more than £40,000. Higher dependant partner salaries were more commonly reported by Skilled Worker visa holders (19%), those living in London (14%) and those without dependant children (11%).
- Reported shortages of UK based workers with the required skills, and needing workers with specialist skills were strong drivers for sponsors using the Skilled Worker route (57% and 56% of sponsors respectively said these aspects influenced their decision a great deal).
- Around a third (36%) of businesses said they avoided using the Skilled Worker visa unless a necessity, and only one-in-twenty (5%) said they intentionally recruited candidates internationally.
- Most businesses (57%) prioritised hiring from within the UK but would sponsor a Skilled Worker visa if the preferred candidate required one.
- Skilled Worker visa holders were motivated to apply for the visa both for the career opportunities it afforded (87%) and because they wanted to live or work in the UK specifically (70%).

- 'Push' factors included issues in their home country (such as political volatility, or concerns about safety), wanting a better life elsewhere or being motivated by their company asking them to move.
- 'Pull' factors included career opportunities, the opportunity to advance their knowledge, their familiarity with the UK or the English language, and the chance to broaden their experiences.
- Being able to bring dependants with them was a deciding factor for coming to work in the UK for most of Skilled Worker visa holders with dependants on their visa.
- Most of those with dependants on their visa would not have come to the UK if the visa did not allow dependants, with only one-in-ten (10%) saying they would have come to the UK without their dependants.
- Visa sponsors reported that the changes in eligibility requirements would make it harder to recruit and retain skilled workers. Particularly, 65% of relevant visa sponsors that the Health and Social Care visa holders being no longer allowed to bring dependants would make recruitment and retention harder.
- The qualitative research found that employers felt negatively about the policy changes because of concerns that they would reduce the number of workers eligible to work in the UK who could fulfil the needs of their businesses.
- Qualitative findings suggest that the minimum salary threshold has had little influence on many visa holders, either because the role they wanted to go for already paid above the minimum, or because their role was not affected by it. On the other hand, this particular policy change had left certain visa holders concerned that they would no longer have the option to stay beyond their current visa.

The full Skilled Worker route evaluation report can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skilled-worker-route-evaluation>

Skilled Worker visa: Jobs that qualify for a PhD salary discount

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated the occupation-specific 'going rate' salaries for occupations that are eligible for a PhD salary discount. The updated minimum salaries for a PhD salary discount can be viewed [here](#).

When calculating salaries, sponsors must pro-rata the relevant 'going rate' salary according to the hours the sponsored worker will be working. The salary to be paid to a sponsored worker must be above both the general salary threshold and the pro-rated 'going rate' salary.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skilled-worker-visa-jobs-that-qualify-for-a-phd-salary-discount>

Global Talent / Innovator Founder / HPI routes – Immigration white paper to reduce migration and strengthen border

The UK Government has unveiled measures in an 82-page immigration [white paper](#) published on 12 May 2025 to reshape the UK immigration system. The new measures to be introduced, aim to ensure that the very highly skilled have opportunities to come to the UK and access targeted routes for the brightest and best global talent.

Further information can be viewed in the GOV.UK news story [here](#). You can view the full White Paper [here](#).

The key measures in the white paper in relation to the Global Talent route include:

- Increasing the number of people arriving on the very high talent routes, alongside faster routes for bringing people to the UK who have the right skills and experience to supercharge UK growth in strategic industries.
- Increasing places to the schemes for research interns, including those working in the field of Artificial Intelligence, to allow businesses access to additional promising young talent.
- Making it simpler and easier for top scientific and design talent to apply for the Global Talent visa
- Reviewing the Innovator Founder visa to ensure it supports entrepreneurial talent currently studying at UK universities
- Doubling the number of workers that an overseas business can send to the UK with the aim of establishing a presence in the UK
- Exploring a targeted and capped expansion of the HPI route, looking to double the number of qualifying institutions, whilst maintaining the focus of the route on individuals that will have the most benefit to the UK workforce and ensuring that any necessary safeguards are in place.

The policies outlined in the White Paper, part of the government's *Plan for Change*, are to be delivered over the course of this Parliament to strengthen the UK's immigration system, with the first changes set to be introduced in the coming weeks.

Further reforms are to be published by the government to the asylum system and border security later this summer, building on measures in the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill currently progressing through Parliament.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/immigration-white-paper-to-reduce-migration-and-strengthen-border>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/restoring-control-over-the-immigration-system-white-paper>

Minimum occupation-specific 'going rate' salary thresholds for those applying for a Skilled Worker or Health and Care visa who are 'new entrants'

As a result of the recent Spring rule changes, the Home Office (UKVI) have updated their list of occupation-specific 'going rate' minimum salary thresholds for those applying for a Skilled Worker visa who qualify as a 'new entrant'.

Where you are claiming points for a reduced salary as they are a 'new entrant' you must add an explanation in either the 'Summary of Job Description' field or in a Sponsor Note on the CoS as to how the individual is eligible.

When calculating salaries, sponsors must pro-rata the relevant 'going rate' salary according to the hours the sponsored worker will be working. The salary to be paid to a sponsored worker must be above both the general salary threshold and the pro-rated 'going rate' salary.

The updated 'new entrant' minimum salary thresholds can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skilled-worker-visa-eligible-salary-if-youre-under-26-studying-training-or-in-a-postdoctoral-role>

Illegal working civil penalties for UK employers: 1 July to 30 September 2024

The Home Office (UKVI) have republished its quarterly report listing the fines (civil penalties) for illegal working given to employers in the UK from 1 July to 30 September 2024 as the wrong employer was previously named in error.

The quarterly report can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/illegal-working-penalties-uk-report>

End date for concession for temporary employment as sheep shearers

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated the guidance for their staff on the concession for temporary employment as sheep shearers. Since 1 April 2013, a non-visa national could apply as a seasonal worker to work as a sheep shearer in the UK. The end date for this concession is now 30 September 2025.

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/concession-for-temporary-employment-as-sheep-shearers-wrk26>

Dependent family members in work routes

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated the guidance for their staff on considering applications from people who wish to enter or remain in the UK as a dependent family member, to clarify who can be a parent. The updated guidance can be viewed [here](#).

The definition of 'parent' under para. 6 of the Immigration Rules is:

"Parent" means:

- (a) biological parent; and
- (b) legal parent, including birth mother where the child is not genetically related, spouse or civil partner of the birth mother at the time of the child's birth, and person with a parental order under section 54 or section 54A of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008; and
- (c) adoptive parent:
 - (i) who, when habitually resident outside the UK, adopted a child in accordance with a decision taken by the competent administrative authority or court in a country whose adoption orders are recognised by the UK; or
 - (ii) whose adopted child has been granted permission under Appendix Adoption or Part 8 of these Rules, and, if applicable, the adoption has been formally completed in the UK.

This means that children who could previously apply as a PBS dependant now cannot if their relationship does not meet the new definition. There may not now be a route for them to make an application, especially if both parents are not settled in the UK.

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dependent-family-members-in-work-routes-immigration-staff-guidance>

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

Student / Short-Term study routes – Immigration white paper to reduce migration and strengthen border

The UK Government has unveiled measures in an 82-page immigration [white paper](#) published on 12 May 2025 to reshape the UK immigration system. The full news story on the GOV.UK website can be viewed [here](#).

The UK Government has announced measures to strengthen the requirements that all sponsoring institutions must meet in order to recruit international students.

The key measures in the white paper in relation to the Student route and studying in the UK include:

- The Government will explore introducing a levy on higher education provider income from international students, to be reinvested into the higher education and skills system. Further details are to be set out in the Autumn Budget.
- The minimum pass requirement of each BCA metric will be raised by five percentage points. For example, a sponsor must maintain a course enrolment rate of at least 95% and a course completion rate of 90% in order to pass the compliance threshold.
- A new Red-Amber-Green banding system to rate the BCA performance of each sponsor will be introduced, so that it is clear to them, the authorities and the public, which institutions are achieving a high rate of compliance, and which are at risk of failing.
- The introduction of new interventions for sponsors who are close to failing their sponsor duties, including placing them on an action plan designed to improve their compliance, and imposing limits on the number of new international students they can recruit while they are subject to those plans.
- Reducing the ability for graduates to remain in the UK after their studies to a period of 18 months.
- Requiring all sponsors wishing to use recruitment agents for overseas students to sign up to the [Agent Quality Framework](#), designed to maintain the highest standards of agent

management, and ensure that individuals whose visas they are sponsoring are genuinely coming to the UK to study.

- Ensuring there are arrangements, for future international student recruitment, for sponsoring institutions to demonstrate that they are considering local impacts when taking its decisions on international recruitment.
- In relation to short-term study, the requirements have already been strengthened for individuals applying for this route to provide evidence that they are a genuine student. There will now be a review of the accreditation bodies to ensure that their processes are robust and consider what further checks need to be put in place to ensure the right level of scrutiny is being applied both before an organisation is accredited, and when that accreditation is renewed.
- Introduction of a new English Language requirement for all adult dependants of students at level A1 (Basic User) to align to spousal and partner routes and work towards increasing this requirement over time. Adult dependants will also need to demonstrate progression to level A2 (Basic User) for any visa extension, and B2 (Independent User) for settlement.

You can view the full White Paper [here](#).

The policies outlined in the White Paper are part of the government's *Plan for Change*, are to be delivered over the course of this Parliament to strengthen the UK's immigration system, with the first changes set to be introduced in the coming weeks.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/immigration-white-paper-to-reduce-migration-and-strengthen-border>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/restoring-control-over-the-immigration-system-white-paper>

Agent Quality Framework

The Home Office (UKVI) announced to education sponsors on 2 May 2025 that they will be updating their policy to require sponsors who use agents to recruit international students, to be signed up to the [Agent Quality Framework](#) (AQF).

It was also confirmed that they would be setting out the requirements for sponsors in respect of the AQF requirement in due course, and that this guidance will be added to the student sponsor guidance when the policy comes into force on 1 September 2025.

<https://www.buila.ac.uk/activities/a-partnership-for-quality-uk-quality-framework-for-education-agents-2>

2025 Spring Rules: Child Student Policy Changes - Safeguarding

The Home Office (UKVI) have published guidance on the 2025 Spring Rules: Child Student Policy changes about safeguarding.

From 29 May, changes will come into effect for *Appendix Child Student* of the Immigration Rules and several changes will be made to improve safeguarding on this route:

- Carers of international students for periods lasting less than 28 days (nominated guardians) will have to meet the same requirements as those for close relatives and private foster carers, including a requirement to provide a letter of undertaking.
- A new list of permitted living arrangement categories has been created. Applications must specify which arrangement they will be entering. The financial requirements section has also been updated to align with this new list.
- Caseworkers will also be given broader powers to refuse Child Student applications where the Child Student's carer in the UK has committed a relevant criminal offence, or they pose a safeguarding risk to the applicant once they are in the UK. This includes adults living with a nominated guardian.
- Child Students should have an emergency contact for their time in the UK. This may be their school.
- A Child Student, who is a full boarder, may not need a nominated guardian (or close relative / private foster carer) in the UK where the school fulfils the role of an emergency UK contact and in circumstances such as where the student will, during school holidays / closures:
 - Return home
 - Stay with their parents in the UK (e.g. if the parents are visiting the UK)
 - Stay in school (provided the school is still open with staff members present)
 - Attend a study camp (with parental consent and school oversight)
- The permitted living arrangements do not prevent a student attending a school trip or staying with a friend (with parental consent).
- Weekly or flexi boarders may stay with a nominated guardian (rather than a close relative / private foster carer) when not staying at school.
- Boarding students can live with their parent – who has permission as a Parent of a Child student for the student's sibling who is younger than 12 – when they are not staying at school.
- Guardianship organisations can be named as a guardian on the letter of undertaking. Where a Child Student has an arrangement in place with a guardianship organisation and doesn't yet have the details of their homestay or carer, then details of that organisation and a named contact from that organisation can be provided instead.
- A letter of undertaking is only required where the student will have a nominated guardian (or close relative / private foster carer).
- Sponsors will be required to retain a copy of the letter of undertaking where the student has a nominated guardian or close relative / private foster carer.

- An additional duty will also be introduced on Child Student sponsors to require them to make reasonable endeavours to collect information on travel arrangements for students with a nominated guardian. Sponsors will have to:
 - Keep records of when the child is arriving
 - Record details of the person collecting the child
 - Record where the child will be staying if they are not proceeding directly to school, and
 - Report to the relevant authority if the child does not enrol at school.

The above changes will only formally apply to students applying for a visa from 29 May 2025 onwards.

With respect to the final bullet-point above, the Home Office (UKVI) recognise that it won't always be possible to collect the information due to circumstances outside of the sponsor's control, but sponsors should keep a record of their reasonable attempts to do so.

The Student Sponsor Duties guidance (Document 2) will be updated with further information on 29 May 2025. The 2025 Spring Rules: Child Student Policy Changes – Safeguarding guidance can be viewed [here](#).

This guidance includes a Q&A, which Child Student sponsors may find helpful in preparing for the changes being introduced.

<https://www.boarding.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Child-Student-updated-Q-and-A.pdf>

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...

Student Sponsors: International Student Recruitment – Agent details on CAS

On 22 May, the Home Office (UKVI) will introduce additional non-mandatory fields on the 'assign a CAS form' on the Sponsorship Management System (SMS).

This will allow sponsors to provide the details of any agent involved in recruiting a sponsored student, where such an agent has been used.

Completing agent details on the CAS form, where applicable, will become part of sponsor duties in future, however as the Home Office (UKVI) appreciate the technological requirements for sponsors, they are working with sector bodies to understand appropriate timescales. For this reason, this will not be implemented as part of the 1 September 2025 update.

Phishing emails purporting to be from the Home Office

The Home Office (UKVI) is aware of emails circulating that are purporting to be from the Home Office (UKVI) asking sponsors to update their organisation details. These emails are phishing attempts and should be disregarded. The Home Office will not take suspension or revocation action solely for not updating organisation details. SMS users should remain vigilant and verify the email addresses and URLs of any correspondence. Official emails from the Home Office will always be sent from a .gov email address.

Other Immigration News

English Language requirements (Various routes) – Immigration white paper to reduce migration and strengthen border

The UK Government has unveiled measures in an 82-page immigration [white paper](#) published on 12 May 2025 to reshape the UK immigration system. The full news story on the GOV.UK website can be viewed [here](#).

New English Language requirements across a broader range of immigration routes, for both main applicants and their dependants, are to be introduced to ensure a better knowledge of English, including an assessment of improvements over time.

There will be increased language requirements for settlement across the majority of immigration routes from B1 to B2 (Independent User) level, in accordance with the Common European Framework for Reference for Languages (CEFR)

The policies outlined in the White Paper, part of the government's *Plan for Change*, are to be delivered over the course of this Parliament to strengthen the UK's immigration system, with the first changes set to be introduced in the coming weeks.

Further reforms are to be published by the government relating to the asylum system and border security later this summer. This is building on measures in the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill currently progressing through Parliament.

You can view the full White Paper [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/immigration-white-paper-to-reduce-migration-and-strengthen-border>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/restoring-control-over-the-immigration-system-white-paper>

Earned settlement and citizenship– Immigration white paper to reduce migration and strengthen border

The UK Government has unveiled measures in an 82-page immigration [white paper](#) published on 12 May 2025 to reshape the UK immigration system. The full news story on the GOV.UK website can be viewed [here](#).

The key measures in the white paper in relation to Indefinite Leave to Remain - ILR (settlement) and citizenship include:

- Doubling the standard qualifying period for settlement to 10 years
- A shorter pathway to settlement for non-UK dependants of British citizens to five years, provided they have remained compliant with their requirements, and they will retain existing safeguards to protect the vulnerable, including settlement rights for victims of domestic violence and abuse.
- Expanding the points-based system to both settlement and citizenship rules, so they are based on contribution to the UK, with further details to be set out to Parliament by the end of the year
- Providing individuals with the opportunity to reduce the qualifying period based on Points-Based contributions to the UK economy and society. The Home Office will consult on these changes later this year.
- Increasing the language requirements for settlement across most immigration routes from B1 to B2 (Independent User) level, in accordance with the Common European Framework for Reference for Languages (CEFR)
- Introducing a new bereaved parent route, allowing those in the UK on the route of a parent of a British or settled child, but who have tragically lost their child, to settle immediately.

- Introducing changes to ensure children who have been in the UK for some time, who turn 18 and discover they do not have status, to be fully supported and able to regularise their status and settle. This will also include a clear pathway for those children in care and care leavers.
- Introducing reforms to citizenship to align to earned settlement reforms, building on the expansion of the Points-Based System to settlement and citizenship.
- Refreshing the Life in the UK test and how it operates.
- Considering measures to reduce the financial barriers to young adults, who have lived in the UK through their childhood, from accessing British nationality.

The policies outlined in the White Paper, part of the government's *Plan for Change*, are to be delivered over the course of this Parliament to strengthen the UK's immigration system, with the first changes set to be introduced in the coming weeks.

Further reforms are to be published by the government to the asylum system and border security later this summer, building on measures in the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill currently progressing through Parliament.

You can view the full White Paper [here](#).

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/restoring-control-over-the-immigration-system-white-paper>

Family route – Immigration white paper to reduce migration and strengthen border

The UK Government has unveiled measures in an 82-page immigration [white paper](#) published on 12 May 2025 to reshape the UK immigration system. The full news story on the GOV.UK website can be viewed [here](#).

A new Family policy will be introduced by the end of the year, which will cover all UK residents, including those who are British, settled, on work routes or refugees seeking to bring family members to the UK.

The key measures in the white paper in relation to the Family / Private Life routes include:

- Plans to tackle the over complex family and private life immigration arrangements, where they believe too many cases are considered 'exceptional' rather than having a clear framework.
- Legislation brought forward to make clear it is the government and Parliament that decides who should have the right to remain in the UK to address cases where Article 8 right to family

life legal arguments are being used to frustrate deportation where removal is clearly in the public interest.

- Ensuring those coming to the UK have an appropriate level of English language skills to be able to effectively integrate into local communities. Changes to the English Language requirements for adult family dependants will be introduced to align with the broad approach detailed in the White Paper.
- Ensuring the Family unit has sufficient money financially to support any migrants without relying on the taxpayer through reviewing and extending the financial requirements to other dependant route. The Home Office have commissioned the MAC to look at the financial requirements on Family routes.
- Ensuring those who serve or have served as members of HM Armed Forces, and their dependants, have their rights to reside in the UK and become British citizens protected in line with the Armed Forces Covenant.
- Exploring tightening the suitability rules on the Family route to ensure people are of the good character expected.

You can view the full White Paper [here](#).

The policies outlined in the White Paper, part of the government's *Plan for Change*, are to be delivered over the course of this Parliament to strengthen the UK's immigration system, with the first changes set to be introduced in the coming weeks.

Further reforms are to be published by the government to the asylum system and border security later this summer, building on measures in the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill currently progressing through Parliament.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/immigration-white-paper-to-reduce-migration-and-strengthen-border>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/restoring-control-over-the-immigration-system-white-paper>

Qualification and Language Service (QLS) – formerly known as Ecctis

On 1 May 2025, a new Qualification Language Service (QLS) was launched in the UK, in partnership with the Home Office. Ecctis is no longer offering the Visa Nationality Service on behalf of the Home Office for UK visa applications. QLS verifies English language proficiency and/or the UK equivalence of academic qualifications for degrees taught overseas. QLS is provided by Ecctis on behalf of the Home Office and its website can be viewed [here](#).

<https://qls.ecctis.com/>

eVisa support videos / tutorials

The Home Office (UKVI) has published a series of 'how to' videos / tutorials to help individuals access and use their eVisa, as well as updating and recovering their UKVI account.

The series of video tutorials on eVisas / UKVI accounts can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/evisa-support-videos>

Prove English Language using a SELT test

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated their guidance for those submitting a visa or citizenship application in relation to proving their English language abilities with a secure English Language test (SELT) to confirm that expired biometric residence card (BRC) or biometric residence permit (BRP) can be used to book a SELT test.

The test must however be undertaken no later than 18 months after the expiry date printed on the card. The applicant must bring their expired BRP / BRC with them on the day of the test.

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

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

Updated guidance for Registering as a British citizen if you are a British overseas territories citizen, British overseas citizen, British protected person, British subject or British national (overseas)

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated their B(OTA) guidance on registering as a British citizen to update the sections on good character, how to prove being free from immigration restrictions, evidence of identity, travel after submitting an application, citizenship ceremonies, returning biometric residence permits (BRPs) and citizenship-related queries.

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/form-bota-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>

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. 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 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.

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.

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

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