

Working in the UK

[Information for Employers / Sponsors and their employees on BRPs and eVisa](#)

[Quarterly report of Illegal Working Penalties](#)

Studying in the UK

[Information for Education Sponsors and their students on BRPs and eVisa](#)

[Increased maintenance costs for Student / Child Student applicants](#)

Sponsorship

[Sponsorship Transparency Statistics \(Q3 2004\)](#)

[Applying for a Student sponsor licence \(updated guidance\)](#)

Other Immigration News

[Pre-travel requirement for non-Europeans \(Electronic Travel Authorisation\)](#)

[Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme opening in February 2025](#)

[Using expired BRPs when booking an English Language \(SELT\) test](#)

Veristat Services

[Immigration training](#)

[Sponsor licence applications](#)

[Immigration audits/inspections](#)

[Immigration Advice/Support](#)

Veristat Limited

Immigration Update

 **December 2024**

www.veristat.co.uk T: +44(0)1344 624016

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.

Veristat would like to wish you all a wonderful festive period and a healthy and prosperous 2025!

Introduction

As we reach the end of the year, there are changes on the horizon with the pre-travel requirements (Electronic Travel Authorisation – ETA) to non-Europeans and full implementation of the digital immigration status. If you have not already done so, we would recommend that you ensure all migrant and sponsored employees and students are aware of these 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.

May we wish you and your families a very merry Christmas and a happy, peaceful, and prosperous New Year!

Information for employers and their employees on BRPs and eVisa

UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) are developing a digital immigration system, which means replacing physical documents with an online record of the migrant or sponsored worker's immigration status. This is referred to as an eVisa. Due to this change, physical BRP cards are no longer being issued.

The UKVI have provided guidance for overseas applications, their employers and sponsors, on Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs) to include information about the UKVI's plan to replace physical documents with an online record of their immigration status (eVisa).

Employers and sponsors may wish to inform or remind any migrant / sponsored workers who have BRPs expiring on 31 December 2024 that they should create a UKVI account now if they have not already done so. This is imperative if they are looking to travel outside the UK and Common Travel Area (CTA) over the festive period and return after January 2025.

A UKVI account must be created for the migrant / sponsored worker to access their eVisa and share information about their immigration status and conditions, such as their right to work or rent in the UK.

Where an employee has indefinite leave to enter or remain (also known as settlement) and they currently prove their rights through a different type of physical document, such as a wet-ink stamp in their passport or a vignette sticker, then they should make a free '[no time limit](#)' (NTL) application. Once their NTL application has been decided, they will receive an eVisa. They will be told how to access their eVisa in their decision email or letter.

Once the employee sets up their UKVI account, it is important that this is updated if there are any changes of circumstance or they obtain a new passport / travel document, as the eVisa will be linked to the passport on their account. If their passport / travel document changes and they do not update their UKVI account and link their eVisa to this new document, this could cause issues for them when travelling and returning to the UK.

Further information about creating and updating their UKVI account can be viewed [here](#). A UKVI account can be created [here](#). The Home Office (UKVI) has also published help videos explaining what an eVisa is and how to access and use one – this can be viewed [here](#).

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

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/online-immigration-status-evisa>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/online-immigration-status-evisa-help-video>

Illegal Working Penalties – published quarterly report

The Home Office (UKVI) have published their quarterly report on the total number of fines (civil penalties) for illegal working issued to non-compliant employers in the UK.

The quarterly report shows that during the period 1 April to 30 June 2024 a total of 568 penalties were issued, a total of 861 illegal workers were found, and the total value of penalties issued was £21,485,000.

The quarterly report on civil penalties issued can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/employers-illegal-working-penalties>

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

Information for education providers and their students on BRPs and eVisa

UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) are developing a digital immigration system, which means replacing physical documents with an online record of the migrant or sponsored worker's immigration status. This is referred to as an eVisa. Due to this change, physical BRP cards are no longer being issued.

The UKVI have provided guidance for migrant students and their sponsors on Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs) to include information about the UKVI's plan to replace physical documents with an online record of their immigration status (eVisa).

Education providers and sponsors may wish to inform or remind any migrant / sponsored students who have BRPs expiring on 31 December 2024 that they should create a UKVI account now if they have not already done so. This is imperative if they are looking to travel outside the UK and Common Travel Area (CTA) over the festive period and return after January 2025.

A UKVI account must be created for the migrant / sponsored student to access their eVisa and share information about their immigration status and conditions, such as their right to study and right to work or rent in the UK.

Once the student (or their family) sets up their UKVI account, it is important that this is updated if there are any changes of circumstance or they obtain a new passport / travel document, as the eVisa will be linked to the passport on their account. If their passport / travel document changes and they do not update their UKVI account and link their eVisa to this new document, this could cause issues for them when travelling and returning to the UK.

Further information about creating and updating their UKVI account can be viewed [here](#). A UKVI account can be created [here](#).

The Home Office (UKVI) has also published help videos explaining what an eVisa is and how to access and use one – this can be viewed [here](#).

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

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/online-immigration-status-evisa>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/online-immigration-status-evisa-help-video>

Financial evidence for Students and Child Student visa applicants (Maintenance requirements)

The Home Office (UKVI) have published revised maintenance requirements for those applying under the Student or Child Student route.

If applying on or after 2 January 2025, applicants will need £1,483 per month to support themselves on a course in London and £1,136 per month if on a course outside London.

Education sponsors may wish to ensure any Students or families of Child Students are aware of the requirement to provide evidence of meeting these increased maintenance costs (as well as any outstanding course / boarding / accommodation fees of up to 9 months) when they apply for their visas, unless they are exempt from providing financial evidence.

The updated guidance on financial evidence for Student and Child Student applicants can be viewed [here](#).

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

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/guidance/visa-processing-times-applications-outside-the-uk>

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

French-UK school trips – updated guidance

The Home Office (UKVI) have published updated their guidance for those visiting the UK as part of a French-UK school trip. The updated guidance can be viewed [here](#).

The information has been updated to confirm that children do not need a visa or an electronic travel authorisation (ETA), but adults may need a visa or an ETA, depending on their nationality.

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



Sponsorship – please note...

Worker and Temporary Worker Priority Sponsor Change of Circumstances service

The Home Office (UKVI) have published updated guidance for Worker or Temporary Worker sponsors on the Priority change of circumstances service.

The priority service is now open from 7am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Any requests made outside of this time will not be considered. Additionally, there is now a maximum of 100 priority service requests that will be accepted each day.

These changes will undoubtedly be welcome news for sponsors who have struggled to use the priority service in recent months.

The updated guidance on the Priority change of circumstances service can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-change-of-circumstances-for-sponsors>

Unexpected / scam calls claiming to be from the Home Office

If your Level 1 or Level 2 user receives an unexpected email, telephone call or letter from someone claiming to be from the Home Office (UKVI), it may be a scam. Please be vigilant!

The Home Office (UKVI) will never contact you to ask you for, or to verify your SMS user ID or password OR to provide you with a link to log into the SMS system. If you are contacted by the Home Office (UKVI) and you have any concerns, you should call them on 0300 123 4699.

There is also some useful guidance on Fraud, tricks and scams on the GOV.UK website, which can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/frauds-tricks-and-scams/fraud-tricks-and-scams>

Applying for a Student sponsor licence (updated Home Office / UKVI guidance)

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated their guidance for education providers / sponsors on applying for a sponsor licence.

The key changes were as follows:

- Definitions for Private providers and Overseas HEIs have been added to the Glossary.
- References to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) have been replaced, with the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (Medr).
- References to the sponsor licence renewal process have been removed.
- References to the Premium Customer Service have been removed.
- A broken link to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) in Table 3 on para. 6.13 has been fixed.

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-sponsor-guidance/applying-for-a-student-sponsor-licence-accessible>

Pre-licence priority service – updated guidance

The Home Office (UKVI) have published updated guidance to sponsors and prospective sponsors on applying to use the Pre-licence Priority service.

The 'How to apply' section has been updated to reflect that the pre-licence priority service is available between 9am and 23.59pm, Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays.

You can either request the priority service when you make your application for a sponsor licence and pay the priority service fee with your application fee, subject to the eligibility criteria, or you can request priority service after you have submitted your application and paid your application fee by logging back into your sponsor application account and selecting 'Finish incomplete applications'.

Where you are successful in prioritising your licence application, normally you would receive a decision within 10 working days unless your application raises complex issues, and UKVI requires further time to assess these fully.

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-licence-priority-service-guidance>

Sponsorship Transparency Statistics (Q3 2024)

The Home Office (UKVI) have published their Q3 2024 Sponsorship Transparency statistics.

The key statistics from this quarterly report are as follows:

- As of Q3 2024, there were a total of 106,215 Skilled Worker sponsors, 1,053 Student sponsors, and 4,535 Temporary Worker sponsors registered with the UKVI.
- The number of new sponsor licence applications made in each route during this period were as follows: 9139 Skilled Worker licence applications, 318 Temporary Worker licence applications, 159 Skilled Worker / Temporary Worker joint licence applications, 18 Student licence applications, 4 Skilled Worker / Student joint licence applications, 1 Skilled Worker / Student / Temporary Worker joint licence application, and 1 Student / Temporary Worker joint licence application.
- The percentage of Student sponsors with full 'Student Sponsor' status was 95.5%.
- The average length of time taken (days) to process a sponsorship application was 29 days.
- The following actions were taken against sponsors during Q3 2024: 509 Skilled Worker licences were suspended / 513 were revoked, 49 Temporary Worker licences were suspended / 46 were revoked, and 4 Student sponsors were issued with an intention to revoke / 2 were revoked.

The Q3 2024 Sponsorship Transparency Statistics can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sponsorship-transparency-data-q3-2024>



Other Immigration News

Booking an approved English Language test using an expired BRP for ID

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated their guidance for those booking an approved English Language (SELT) test to confirm that a current and valid BRP can be used as proof of identification, unless the BRP expires on 31 December 2024.

Further information about the identification requirements and terms / conditions for booking an approved English Language (SELT) test can be viewed [here](#).

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

Pre-travel requirement for non-Europeans

The UK Government is introducing Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) for millions of visitors who pass through the UK border.

From 27 November 2024, all eligible non-European visitors can apply for an ETA and will need one to travel to the UK from 8 January 2025.

Eligible visitors should apply for their ETA through the UK ETA app, which will need to be downloaded on your smartphone device. Visitors can also apply on GOV.UK if they do not have access to a smartphone.

All travellers to the UK (except British and Irish citizens) will need permission to travel in advance through either an ETA or an eVisa.

The ETA will also open to eligible Europeans from 5th March 2025.

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-opens-pre-travel-requirement-to-non-europeans>

Ukraine Permission Extension scheme opening on 4 February 2025

The Home Office (UKVI) has announced the opening of the Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme on 4 February 2025. Further information can be viewed [here](#).

This route will open to those who have been given permission to be in the UK under one of the Ukraine Schemes. If successful, the applicant would be given a further 18 months' permission to stay in the UK.

Changes are also being made to the Immigration Rules to make clear that time spent in the UK with permission under the Ukraine Schemes cannot be used toward the qualifying period for a Long Residence application. The Statement of Changes to the Immigration Rules laid before Parliament in November 2024 can be viewed [here](#).

<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/statement-of-changes-to-the-immigration-rules-hc-334-26-november-2024>

Checking your eVisa is correct before travelling

The Home Office (UKVI) has published guidance on how to check your eVisa details are correct before travelling in or out of the UK. The guidance can be viewed [here](#).

It is imperative that applicants / migrants living in the UK check their eVisa has all the correct details and that any issues with the eVisa are resolved before travelling.

The individuals can do so by:

- Checking their immigration status is displayed correctly by using the '[view and prove your immigration status](#)' service. If the status is displayed incorrectly, they will need to report an error with their eVisa [here](#).
- Use the update your UKVI account details service to check that the passport they will be using is linked to their account, and that all personal details are correct. Individuals can check and update their UKVI account details [here](#).

If an individual has dual nationality and neither of those nationalities are British or Irish, they'll need to add the passport they'll use to travel to their account. If they have a passport for both nationalities, they can add both to their account.

It is imperative that the passenger information provided to the carrier matches the details on the passport or immigration permission.

For British or Irish citizens who hold dual nationality, or those with the right of abode, they'' need to show their carrier (for example, airline, rail company, or other transport provider) either:

- Their British or Irish passport.
- Another passport containing a certificate of entitlement to the right of abode.

It is the responsibility of the individual to check the entry, exit, and transit requirements of other countries, and they may be asked to show evidence of their UK immigration status to authorities there.

If an individual is outside the UK and cannot access their eVisa, they can get help to recover access to their UKVI account via [here](#).

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

Booking a Life in the UK Test – Use of expired BRP

The Home Office (UKVI) have updated their guidance for those booking a Life in the UK Test to confirm that initially from 1 January 2025, an expired Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) can be used to make a Life in the UK test booking.

Where an applicant uses an expired BRP to book their Life in the UK Test, they must take their expired BRP with them on the test day.

Further information about the identification requirements and terms / conditions for booking a Life in the UK Test can be viewed [here](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/terms-and-conditions-for-booking-and-taking-the-life-in-the-uk-test>

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>

Changes to the commercial partner visa application services

The Home Office (UKVI) has published further information on the visa application centres that will change commercial partner between now and January 2025.

A list of the locations that are due to change and have already changed commercial partner can be viewed [here](#).

TLScontact also became the commercial partner for UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services (UKVCAS) on 15 October 2024. This change does not affect the application decision, processing times, or appointment availability. However, appointment availability may be limited for a short time.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-commercial-partner-visa-application-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



Click here to return to the start of the document

If you or a colleague would like to subscribe to receiving this update by email every month, please email us at enquiries@veristat.co.uk.