



Mobility: Immigration alert

January 2024

United Kingdom

Changes to business visitor rules effective 31 January 2024

Executive summary

On 7 December 2023, the UK government published a series of [changes](#) that go into effect on 31 January 2024 and increase the number of permitted activities that can be undertaken by foreign business visitors in the UK.

Key developments

The changes impact the following categories of individuals and are summarized in the tables on the next page:

- ▶ Employees of overseas based companies that have a branch or affiliate in the UK
- ▶ Individuals who live and work outside the UK and seek to work remotely for short periods from within the UK
- ▶ Scientists, researchers, and academics seeking to conduct research in the UK
- ▶ Overseas lawyers/legal professionals
- ▶ Individuals seeking to enter the UK to engage in a permitted paid engagement (PPE)

The changes follow the recommendations included in [EY and the City UK](#), and [EY and the City of London](#) Corporation reports. In the 2021 EY and TheCityUK joint report, EY called on the UK government to adapt the visit rules in line with the business need for short-term productive work. We are encouraged that the Migration Advisory Committee echoed that recommendation in its October 2021 report to consider expanding visit rules.

The EY and City of London report includes recommendations for the government to:

- ▶ Evolve visitor rules globally to recognize cross-border remote work (CBRW) as a permitted "Remote Work Visitor" activity in itself
- ▶ Engage proactively in trade agreement negotiations, recognizing that much of the pressure on UK business comes from employee demand for short periods of outbound CBRW
- ▶ Lead unilaterally by recognizing certain forms of CBRW as permitted under a "Remote Work Visitor" activity stream

Changes to the Youth Mobility Scheme

The following changes to the Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS) go into effect on 31 January 2024:

- ▶ Uruguay will be added to the list of participating countries with an allocation of 500 places.
- ▶ The number of allocations for Japanese nationals will increase from 1,500 to 6,000 per year.
- ▶ For South Korean nationals, the permitted age range for applicants will be expanded to 18 to 35 years (up from 18 to 30 years), and the number of available YMS visas each year will increase from 1,000 to 5,000.
- ▶ The ballot process for nationals of Japan and South Korea has been removed.

Intra-corporate activities

Rules prior to 31 January 2024	New rules effective 31 January 2024
Employees of an overseas based company may conduct the following activities on a specific internal project with UK employees of the same corporate group, provided no work is carried out directly with clients : (a) advise and consult; (b) troubleshoot; (c) provide training; and/or (d) share skills and knowledge.	Employees of an overseas based company may conduct the activities in the preceding column directly with clients provided that the activities are incidental to their employment abroad and do not amount to the offshoring of a project or service to their overseas employer.

Remote work

Rules prior to 31 January 2024	New rules effective 31 January 2024
Visitors are permitted to undertake limited activities relating to their employment overseas remotely while in the UK (e.g., responding to emails, answering phone calls). However, the visitor's main purpose for coming to the UK should be to undertake a permitted activity, rather than specifically to work remotely from within the UK.	Visitors will be permitted to work remotely while in the UK, provided it is not the primary purpose of their visit.

Scientific and academic research

Rules prior to 31 January 2024	New rules effective 31 January 2024
Scientists and researchers can only conduct independent research, and academics can only conduct research for their own purposes if they are on sabbatical leave from their home institution.	Scientists, researchers and academics are permitted to conduct research in the UK as part of their visit. These changes do not apply to academics who apply for 12-month visit visas or if they are applying to extend their permission from within the UK.

Overseas legal professionals

Rules prior to 31 January 2024	New rules effective 31 January 2024
Overseas legal professionals may enter the UK as business visitors and conduct the following activities: (a) attend a court hearing in the UK if summoned in person by a UK court, (b) serve as an expert witness to give evidence in a UK court, or (c) advise a UK-based client on specific international litigation and/or an international transaction.	Overseas legal professionals may enter the UK as business visitors and provide the following additional legal services: (a) advice; (b) appearing in arbitrations; (c) acting as an arbitrator or mediator; (d) acting as an expert witness; (e) appearing in court in jurisdictions which allow short-term call or where qualified in that jurisdiction; (f) conferences and teaching; (g) providing advocacy for a court or tribunal hearing; (h) litigation; and (i) transactional legal services, including drafting contracts.

Paid engagements

Rules prior to 31 January 2024	New rules effective 31 January 2024
Business visitors may engage in certain permitted paid engagements. Click here for more information.	<p>The existing provisions of the PPE Visitor route will move into the Standard Visitor route and individuals traveling to the UK to undertake these activities will not require a separate visa to do so. However, visitors intending to undertake PPE must still have arranged their PPE activity prior to travel to the UK, and this must be undertaken within 30 days of arrival in the UK as a visitor.</p> <p>In addition to the existing permitted activities, the following activity will be deemed to be a PPE: "A speaker coming to the UK to give a one-off or short series of talks and speeches, where they have been invited to a conference or other event."</p>

Impact on employers

These changes are expected to provide greater flexibility, simplify and streamline processes and reduce costs, and facilitate agile mobilizations of global employee workforces.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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