



# Global Immigration alert

December 2024

## United Kingdom

Latest update impacting holders of Biometric Residence Permits expiring on 31 December 2024

### Executive summary

On 4 December 2024, the UK's Minister for Migration and Citizenship, Seema Malhotra, laid a [Written Minister Statement \(WMS\)](#) in Parliament about the transition to eVisas. New statistics show that there is still a significant number of migrants who have not yet created a UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) online account, in advance of the deadline of 31 December 2024. While the UK authorities recommend that affected migrants create their eVisas ahead of the end of the calendar year, UKVI have decided to allow carriers to accept a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) expiring on or after 31 December 2024 as valid evidence of permission to travel until at least 31 March 2025.

### Background

UKVI has been developing a digital immigration system (i.e., eVisas) which would replace physical documents with online records of applicants' immigration status. For this to happen, migrants must first create a UKVI account. Effective 1 January 2025, they will be able to use an eVisa to travel to the UK provided their passports are linked to their UKVI account. Please refer to our previous [alert](#) for further details on how to create a UKVI account as well as the latest version of the UKVI eVisa [Partner Packs](#).

### Key developments

While statistics show that over 3.1 million migrants have successfully made the transition to eVisas from March to November of this year, with less than one month to go until BRPs expire on 31 December, there are still a number of migrants who have not yet signed up for their eVisas.

Migrants who have been issued a visa on or after 1 November 2024 are not being issued a BRP but they must still create their UKVI online account to obtain their eVisas, as noted in the instructions on their UKVI decision letters. The UK authorities are encouraging parents and caretakers to create UKVI online accounts on behalf of the children for whom they provide care.

The WMS announced further updates to address other areas of concern and how the government plans to continue to engage with stakeholders and communities through the transition. The main areas of concern are noted below.

- ▶ Legacy document holders
  - ▶ The No Time Limit (NTL) application process, designated for migrants who hold legacy documents (e.g., passports containing ink stamps or vignette stickers) and are transitioning to eVisas, has been further streamlined and now creates a UKVI account as part of the process (removing the need for NTL applicants to take the additional step to create their online account and access their eVisa). Therefore, NTL applicants will have an account created manually for them by caseworkers. This is expected to ease the process for legacy document holders.
- ▶ Working with carriers
  - ▶ The UKVI has developed technology to enable carriers to check migrants' immigration status automatically via systems checks. The authorities engaged extensively with carriers about the roll

out of eVisas to travel to ensure they are fully prepared for the coming changes, and the authorities created a 24/7 support hub which carriers can contact to confirm a passenger's immigration status where necessary.

- ▶ The immigration status for most passengers will be checked digitally, either via automated systems or using the online "[View and Prove service](#)". Share codes are valid for 90 days, and as such, travelers may choose to obtain one before they travel (and take the code with them). Migrants will need to ensure that their eVisa details are correct to mitigate delays or challenges related to travel. This includes checking that their immigration status is displaying correctly and that their passport details are up to date in their UKVI account. Migrants may use the "[update your UKVI account details](#)" service to ensure that their personal details are correct and that the passport they will travel with is linked to their account. There is a specific online form to [report an error](#) if their personal details as reflected on the eVisa are inaccurate.
- ▶ For migrants who are dual nationals, the authorities recommend that travelers add the passport they will use for travel to their UKVI account. Additionally, travelers may ensure that the passenger information provided to the carrier matches the details on their passport or immigration permission. For additional support, travelers may follow the "[guidance on ensuring an eVisa is correct before travel](#)".
- ▶ The UK authorities listened to concerns about the risk to migrants who are traveling after 31 December 2024, and whose underlying status has not expired. In order to smooth the transition to eVisas, the UKVI decided to allow carriers to accept a BRP or EUSS BRC (Biometric Residence Card) expiring on or after 31 December 2024 as valid evidence of permission to travel until at least 31 March 2025 (this date will be kept under review). Migrants traveling in early 2025 may therefore continue to carry their BRP, as this will add to the range of checking options available to carriers to confirm their immigration status.
- ▶ Extending use of expiring BRPs
  - ▶ The UK authorities listened to concerns about the risk to migrants who are traveling after 31 December 2024, and whose underlying status has not expired. In order to smooth the transition to eVisas, the UKVI decided to allow carriers to accept a BRP or EUSS BRC (Biometric Residence Card) expiring on or after 31 December 2024 as valid evidence of permission to travel until at least 31 March 2025 (this date will be kept under review). Migrants traveling in early 2025 may therefore continue to carry their BRP, as this will add to the range of checking options available to carriers to confirm their immigration status.
  - ▶ While the government is committed to the roll out of eVisas, these temporary measures scheduled for the early part of 2025 are being enacted to smooth the transition and provide confidence and reassurance to travelers that they will not face unnecessary delays when proving their travel status to airlines and other carriers.
- ▶ Printed documents
  - ▶ Travelers may also carry printed copies of their successful UKVI decision emails/letters when traveling abroad. Although these documents cannot be used as evidence of their immigration status, they can be used when interacting with the UKVI should any subsequent issues arise in connection with their eVisa. Migrants may also print out their eVisa profile page. BRP holders are also able to retain their expired BRPs for their own records, and legacy document holders who make the switch to an eVisa may still present their physical documents as evidence of their immigration status.

### Impact on employers

Employers may consider assisting employees with creating their UKVI accounts prior to 31 December 2024. The extension of the ability to use expiring BRPs until at least 31 March 2025 is expected to provide more flexibility to individuals who do not create their online UKVI accounts and obtain their eVisas prior to the deadline. Impacted migrants may carry their expired BRPs and printed versions of their UKVI decision letters/emails to mitigate delays when providing details about their travel status to airlines and other carriers.

### 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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