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10 September 2024

Title: UK TO EXPAND DIGITAL TRAVEL TO MORE VISITORS

- The UK Government is digitising the UK border and immigration system to enhance security and improve the experience for travellers.
- By April 2025, all visitors who do not need a visa will need an Electronic Travel Authorisation to travel to the UK.
- Migrants in the UK with physical immigration documents should take action now to access their eVisa and benefit from its features.

The UK Government is taking major steps towards delivering its ambitious aim to digitise the UK border and immigration system and has today set out new implementation dates for the Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) scheme.

Everyone wishing to travel to the UK – except British and Irish citizens – will need permission to travel in advance of coming here. This can be either through an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) or an eVisa.

Today we are confirming that from 27 November 2024, eligible non-Europeans, which includes Saint Lucian passport holders, can apply for an ETA and will need an ETA to travel from 8 January 2025. ETAs will then extend to eligible Europeans from 5 March 2025, who will need an ETA to travel from 2 April 2025.

ETAs are digitally linked to a traveller's passport and ensure more robust security checks are carried out before people begin their journey to the UK, helping to prevent abuse of our immigration system. An ETA costs £10 and permits multiple journeys to the UK for stays of up to six months at a time over two years or until the holder's passport expires – whichever is sooner.

From today, information about ETA eligibility is available on GOV.UK. Anyone needing to apply for an ETA will be able to do so through a quick and simple process using the UK ETA app.

Gulf Cooperation Council visitors already need an ETA to travel to the UK.

The introduction of ETAs is in line with the approach many other countries have taken to border security, including the US and Australia.

Minister for Migration and Citizenship, Seema Malhotra, said:

"Digitisation enables a smooth experience for the millions of people who pass through the border every year, including the visitors we warmly welcome to the UK who are predicted to contribute over £32billion to our tourism economy this year. The worldwide expansion of the ETA demonstrates our commitment to enhance security through new technology and embedding a modern immigration system."

People who need a UK visa to live, work or study in the UK are now issued with an eVisa, providing digital proof of immigration status, instead of physical immigration documents which can be lost, stolen,

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or tampered with. eVisas mean people no longer have to wait for or travel to collect a physical document, streamlining their experience.

The UK Government is asking migrants in the UK who currently use a physical immigration document, including a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), or a passport containing ink stamps or visa vignette stickers, to take action now and create an online account to access their eVisa at gov.uk/eVisa. Most BRPs are due to expire on 31 December 2024, and BRP holders are urged to take action before their BRP expires.

Creating the account enables people to use online services to prove their rights and manage their data, such as their personal details and passport information, and won't impact their underlying immigration status. Through Government funding, extra support is being provided for vulnerable people who need to take action to move from physical documents to an eVisa.

The UK Government continues to work closely with global airline, maritime and rail carriers, who are crucial to ensuring smooth implementation of our digitisation programme.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- The full list of eligible nationalities for ETAs is available here on [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk)
- People who are legally resident in Ireland and from a nationality that does not usually need a visa to visit the UK (e.g. European and US nationals), do not need an ETA when travelling to the UK from within the Common Travel Area, provided they hold acceptable evidence of their residence status.
- An ETA costs £10 and permits multiple journeys to the UK for stays of up to six months at a time over two years or until the holder's passport expires – whichever is sooner.
- Further information on ETAs is available here on [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk)
- Further information on eVisa is available here on [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk)

We are delivering a wide range of communications activity to raise awareness of ETAs and eVisas and help ensure those impacted understand what the changes mean for them and the action they need take.

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