

News story: ePassport gates to open to visitors from Singapore and South Korea

Singapore and South Korea will be added to the list of countries whose nationals will be eligible to use ePassport gates to enter the UK from summer 2019, under plans announced by the Home Secretary today.

ePassport gates, which are currently available for British and EU nationals, provide a faster route through the border as they allow eligible passengers to be processed quickly and securely.

The proposals build on those set out in the Budget, to allow nationals from the US, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Japan to use ePassport gates, and demonstrate the government's commitment to develop a new global immigration system as we leave the EU.

An estimated additional 6.5 million passengers per year will be able to take an automated route through the UK border as part of the government's ongoing work to ease the passage for legitimate travellers.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

The UK is absolutely open for business from the rest of the world and as part of that we are improving the experience for travellers coming into the UK.

I'm pleased to announce today that, in addition to the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan, we will be allowing passengers from Singapore and South Korea to use ePassport gates when they travel into the UK – a transformational experience for the passengers involved.

ePassport gates use facial recognition technology to compare the passenger's face to the digital image recorded in their passport. The system is monitored by Border Force officers and anyone rejected by the gates will be sent to an alternative manned channel to have their passport checked.

All passengers are automatically checked against Border Force systems and watchlists.

There are now 259 ePassport gates in operation at 14 ports around the UK and juxtaposed control locations. The gates can be used by those aged 18 and over, and who are travelling using a biometric or 'chipped' passport. Those aged 12 to 17 years old, and who are accompanied by an adult, are also able to use them.

A statutory instrument will be laid in Parliament shortly which will legislate to facilitate the extension of the use of ePassport gates to include the US, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Singapore and South Korea.

[News story: Thousands of new places created in Outstanding schools](#)

Selective schools are to introduce a range of measures to improve access for disadvantaged children after being given permission to expand, Education Secretary Damian Hinds [announced today](#) (Monday 3 December).

The first 16 schools to receive funding from the £50m Selective School Expansion Fund have been confirmed and all have set out clear actions that will prioritise access for children on the pupil premium and are undertaking outreach work with local schools.

All 16 selective schools will be making changes to their admission arrangements to increase access for disadvantaged children, with over half of the schools committing to lowering the mark required to pass the entrance test for pupil premium pupils. Many more will help pupil premium children or children attending schools in less affluent areas prepare for their entrance tests.

Today's announcement builds on the 825,000 new school places created since 2010 and the one million this government is on course to create by 2020.

Education Secretary, Damian Hinds, said:

One of the stand-out features of this country's education system is its diversity, and selective schools are an important part of that. They include some of the best schools in this country, with almost all selective schools rated Good or Outstanding, and they are popular with parents. So it is right that when there is need for more places in an area, these schools should be able to expand – as other schools can – to enable as many children as possible to benefit.

I have always been clear that selective schools will only be able to expand if they meet the high bar we have set for increasing access for disadvantaged children, and all of these schools have done that. As a result, countless more children from disadvantaged areas will benefit from places at outstanding schools.

The schools are:

- Altrincham Grammar School for Boys (Trafford)
- Bournemouth School (Bournemouth)
- Bournemouth School for Girls (Bournemouth)
- Chelmsford County High School (Essex)
- Colchester County High School (Essex)
- Colyton Grammar School (Devon)
- John Hampden Grammar School (Buckinghamshire)
- Kendrick School (Reading)
- Lawrence Sheriff School (Warwickshire)
- Queen Mary's Grammar School (Walsall)
- Queen Mary's High School (Walsall)
- Sir Thomas Rich's School (Gloucestershire)
- Sir William Borlase's Grammar school (Buckinghamshire)
- St Michael's Catholic Grammar School (Barnet)
- Rochester Grammar School (Medway)
- Wolverhampton Girls High School (Wolverhampton)

As well as prioritising access for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, the successful schools have also committed to a variety of outreach initiatives. For example, Queen Mary's High School in Walsall will set up help desks in partner primary schools to assist parents registering children for the selection test and answer any questions they may have about the process.

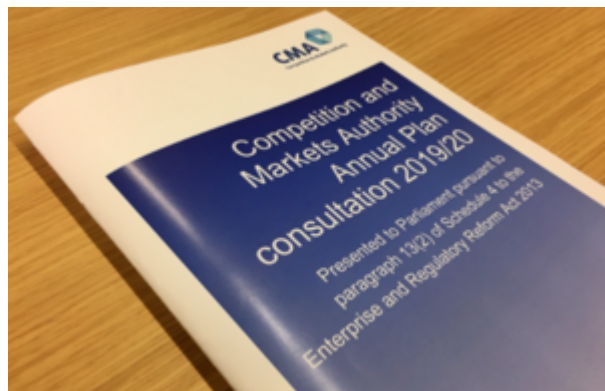
Today's announcement builds on the Memorandum of Understanding the government agreed with the Grammar School Heads Association (GSHA) earlier this year, in which the group outlined its commitment to widening access and working with local schools to raise standards for all children.

Chief Executive of the Grammar School Heads Association Jim Skinner said:

We are delighted that selective schools are being supported to expand. It is really important that, just like other good and outstanding schools, they are able to expand to meet parental demand, especially at a time of significant growth in the number of pupils reaching secondary age.

The large majority of selective schools now prioritise access for disadvantaged pupils, which is backed up by outreach and partnership work with local schools. Selective schools are therefore well placed to contribute to meeting the ongoing need for more school places and supporting high quality education provision elsewhere.

News story: Vulnerability and digital economy feature in CMA's draft plan



Making sure people get a good deal from businesses and that firms treat their customers fairly remain central to the CMA's work.

In 2019/20 the CMA proposes to:

- step up its interest in people who are vulnerable to exploitation, or getting a poor deal due to their personal circumstances, building on the programme of work it launched in 2018
- improve trust in markets, by ensuring customers are treated fairly and clearly explaining how competitive markets benefit people across the UK
- promote better competition in online markets, retaining a strong interest in how the digital economy is developing, and protecting people from illegal and unfair practices online
- support economic growth and productivity, helping to create the conditions which allow innovative businesses that treat their customers well to emerge and succeed

The draft plan sets out how preparing for the UK's exit from the EU is a high priority for the CMA, both in terms of policy development and expansion to prepare for significant additional responsibilities. The CMA is focused on being ready whether or not there is an implementation period after March 2019.

The CMA enters 2019/20 with a substantial volume of ongoing work and at the time of publication has 23 competition enforcement cases, 5 consumer enforcement cases, 1 super-complaint investigation, 17 merger investigations, 1 market investigation and 2 market studies under way. Most recently, it published the interim report in its [funerals market study](#) and is now consulting on its proposal to refer the sector for an in-depth market investigation.

For more information, read our [draft 2019/20 Annual Plan](#).

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Speech: PM G20 House of Commons statement: 3 December 2018

With permission Mr Speaker, I would like to make a statement on the G20 Summit in Argentina.

But before I do so, I would like to put on record my thanks to President Macri for hosting such a successful Summit.

This was the first visit to Buenos Aires by a British Prime Minister, and only the second visit to Argentina since 2001. It came at a time of strengthening relations between our two countries, when we are seeking to work constructively with President Macri.

Mr Speaker, as we leave the European Union, I have always been clear that Britain will play a full and active role on the global stage, as a bold and outward-facing trading nation.

We will stand up for the rules-based international order.

Strive to resolve with others challenges and tensions in the global economy.

Work with old allies and new friends for the mutual benefit of all our citizens.

And remain steadfast in our determination to tackle the great challenges of our time.

At this Summit, we showed that the international community is capable of working through its differences constructively and the leading role the UK will continue to play in addressing shared global challenges.

We agreed – along with the other G20 leaders – on the need for important reforms to the World Trade Organisation to ensure it responds to changes in international trade.

We pursued our objective of making sure that the global economy works for everyone and the benefits are felt by all.

We called for greater action in the fight against modern slavery and tackling climate change.

And I held discussions with international partners on security and economic matters, including on the progress of our exit from the European Union and the good deal an orderly exit will be for the global economy.

Let me take each of these in turn.

At this year's Summit I came with the clear message that Britain is open for business and that we are looking forward to future trade agreements.

Once we leave the EU, we can and we will strike ambitious trade deals.

For the first time in more than forty years we will have an independent trade policy, and we will continue to be a passionate advocate for the benefits open economies and free markets can bring.

We will forge new and ambitious economic partnerships, and open up new markets for our goods and services in the fastest growing economies around the world.

During the Summit I held meetings with leaders who are keen to reach ambitious free trade agreements with us as soon as possible. This includes Argentina, with whom I discussed boosting bilateral trade and investment, and I announced the appointment of a new UK Trade Envoy.

I also discussed future trade deals with Canada, Australia, Chile, and Japan – with whom we want to work quickly to establish a new economic partnership based on the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement.

On the global rules that govern trade, we discussed the importance of ensuring an equal playing field and the need for the rules to keep pace with the changing nature of trade and technology.

There is no doubt that the international trading system, to which the United Kingdom attaches such importance, is under significant strain.

That is why I have repeatedly called for urgent and ambitious reform of the World Trade Organisation – and at this Summit I did so again.

And in a significant breakthrough, we agreed on the need for important reforms to boost the effectiveness of the WTO, with a commitment to review progress at next year's G20 Summit in Japan.

On the global economy, we recognised the progress made in the past ten years, with this year seeing the strongest global growth since 2011.

But risks to the global economy are re-emerging.

In particular, debt in lower income countries has reached an all-time high of 224 per cent of global GDP.

So I called on members to implement the G20 guidelines on sustainable finance that we agreed last year, and which increase transparency and encourage cooperation.

At this year's Summit, I continued to pursue our mission to make the global economy work for everyone, and the need to take action in our own countries and collectively to ensure that the benefits of economic growth are felt by all.

Around the world we are on the brink of a new era in technology which will transform lives and change the way we live. This has the potential to bring us huge benefits – but many are anxious about what it will mean for jobs.

That is why in the UK, alongside creating the right environment for tech companies to flourish through our modern Industrial Strategy – we are investing in the education and skills needed so that people can make the most of the jobs and opportunities that will be created.

We made strong commitments to improving women's economic empowerment, and alongside this I called on G20 leaders to take practical action to ensure that by 2030 all girls – not just in our own countries but around the world – get 12 years of quality education.

To build fair economies and inclusive societies we must tackle injustice wherever we find it. Around the world we must all do more to end the horrific practice of modern slavery, and protect vulnerable men, women and children from being abused and exploited in the name of profit.

Two years ago I put modern slavery on the G20 agenda at my first Summit, and this year I was pleased to give my full support to the G20's Strategy to eradicate modern slavery from the world of work.

I announced that next year the government will publish the steps we are taking to identify and prevent slavery in the UK Government's supply chains in our own transparency statement.

This is a huge challenge. Last financial year the UK Government spent £47 billion on public procurement – demonstrating just how important this task is. I urged the other leaders around the G20 table to work with us and ensure that their supply chains are free from slavery, as we work to bring an end to this appalling crime.

On climate change, I made clear the UK's determination to lead the way on the serious threat this poses to our planet. We need a step change in preparing for temperature rises, to cut the cost and impact of climate-related disasters, and to secure food, water and jobs for the future. As a UN Champion on Climate Resilience, the UK will continue to pursue this agenda at next year's UN Climate Summit.

Nineteen of us at the G20 reaffirmed our commitment to the Paris Agreement, but it remains a disappointment that the United States continues to opt out.

I also announced that the UK will be committing £100 million pounds to the Renewable Energy Performance Platform, which will directly support the private sector in leveraging private finance to fund renewable energy projects in sub-Saharan Africa.

Mr Speaker, this Summit also gave me the opportunity to discuss important matters directly with other leaders and raise concerns openly and frankly.

In that context I met Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, first to stress the importance of a full, transparent and credible investigation into the

terrible murder of Jamal Khashoggi, and for those responsible to be held to account – a matter which I also discussed with President Erdogan.

And second, to urge an end to the conflict in Yemen and relief for those suffering from starvation – and to press for progress at the upcoming talks in Stockholm.

Our relationship with Saudi Arabia is important to this country, but that does not prevent us from putting forward robust views on these matters of grave concern.

I also discussed the situation in Ukraine with a number of G20 leaders. The UK condemns Russian aggression in the Black Sea and calls for the release of the 24 Ukrainian service personnel detained, and their three vessels.

Mr Speaker, at this year's Summit we reached important agreements, demonstrating the continued importance of the G20 and international cooperation.

It also demonstrated the role that a global Britain will play on the world's stage as we work with our friends and partners around the world to address shared challenges and bolster global prosperity.

And I commend this Statement to the House.

News story: Alert for charities operating in Syria or Turkey about aid passing through the Bab Al-Hawa crossing

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, is issuing this alert to charities to alert charities and charitable appeals which are operating in Syria or Turkey, directly or via partners, that there is a risk that a terrorist organisation may financially benefit from any aid passing through the Bab Al-Hawa crossing.

Following recent media reporting, since September 2018, regarding the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing between Turkey and Syria, the Charity Commission ('the Commission') is publishing this alert to raise awareness amongst charities – including their trustees, employees and volunteers of the current situation and to remind them of their duties under counter-terrorism legislation and charity law.

This is due to reporting that the crossing is under control of Hay'at Tahir

Al-Sham ('HTS'), an alternative name for the terrorist organisation Al Qa'ida which is [proscribed under the Terrorism Act 2000 \('TACT'\)](#). HTS was added to the [proscribed list](#) in May 2017.

The Commission is alert to the fact that charities and their partners use the Bab Al-Hawa crossing to deliver aid into Idlib province, Syria. There is a risk that HTS could incur financial benefit from any aid passing through the Bab Al-Hawa crossing and therefore charities and their partners, using this crossing, may be inadvertently funding HTS.

It is a criminal offence under section 17 of TACT to enter or become concerned with an arrangement as a result of which money or other property is made available or has reasonable cause to suspect that it will or may be used for the purposes of terrorism.

The Commission, in issuing this alert, is raising awareness of the current situation and reminding charities that separate from any criminal offences that may be committed, any association between a charity – and by extension its trustees, officers and partners – and terrorism and/or extremism is corrosive to public trust and confidence in charities and may be used by the Commission as evidence of misconduct and/or mismanagement in the administration of a charity.

Charities that use partners to deliver aid from Turkey to Syria should ensure that they know which border crossings are being used and regularly review the situation on the ground.

Trustees of charities which are currently using the Bab Al-Hawa crossing either directly or through partner organisations must consider the risks of committing an offence under UK Counter Terrorism Legislation – including section 17 TACT and take appropriate action in the best interests of their charity. This may include suspending or stopping the movement of aid via the Bab Al-Hawa crossing at this time or exploring alternative routes.

Reporting concerns

Any charities that have utilised the Bab Al-Hawa crossing since September 2018 either directly or via a partner organisations may be required to make a report under section 19 TACT if they believe or suspect that a terrorist financing offence has been committed. The Commission has previously issued a [regulatory alert](#) regarding section 19 requirements.

There are a number of ways in which charities can report their suspicions or beliefs so as to comply with their legal obligations under section 19 of TACT, such as:

In addition the Commission also expects trustees to report any suspected loss to a terrorist group under the Serious Incident Reporting framework.

Summary

In summary, the advice for charity trustees is:

- know which border crossings are used by your charity, either directly or via overseas partners
- consider if continued use of the crossing is in the best interests of your charity
- if the Bab Al-Hawa crossing has been used since September 2018, and/or is still being used, consider making a report under section 19 TACT and a [serious incident report \(RSI\)](#) to the Charity Commission simultaneously.
- ensure that trustees, staff, volunteers and partners are aware of the legal requirements to report under TACT
- ensure there are mechanisms in place to ensure that country offices, agents/staff or other partners based overseas to report concerns promptly

Notes

Alert issued as regulatory advice under section 15(2) of the Charities Act 2011 for England and Wales.