

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.