

# News story: Government expands use of ePassport gates to 7 more countries

From today (Monday 20 May), visitors from Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea and the United States will be able to use ePassport gates at ports across the UK and juxtaposed controls in a move designed to speed up border controls for low-risk countries.

There were over 10 million arrivals in the UK by nationals from these countries in 2017.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Our new global immigration and border system will improve security and fluidity for passengers coming to visit or work in the UK.

Expanding the use of ePassport gates is a key part of this and allows us to improve the passenger experience of those arriving in the UK while keeping our border secure.

The new system will help to drive our economy, cement our reputation as a global leader and send a clear message to the world – the UK is open for business.

The change means the Government has delivered early on the commitment made in the Spring Statement, where the Chancellor announced that nationals from these seven countries would be able to use ePassport gates from June.

ePassport gates have been available to British and EU nationals since 2008. EU nationals will remain eligible to use them once the UK leaves the EU.

Chief Executive of the Airport Operators Association Karen Dee said:

As airports prepare for the busy summer months, we know that no one likes to wait long in a queue for passport control. That is why airports work closely with Border Force to ensure the border is welcoming, while maintaining the UK's security.

Enabling more passengers to use ePassport gates is an important next step in our joint efforts to enhance the welcome at the border. It will demonstrate the UK is open for business, tourism and visiting friends and relatives. It will also free up Border Force officers for other duties, improving the experience of all passengers.

Additionally, the Government is removing the need for all non-EEA travellers

to fill in landing cards upon arrival in the UK, making for a smoother entry to the country.

The move will reduce the burden on passengers while maintaining the UK's border security, as exactly the same security checks will be in place.

The UK is already a world leader in automated passenger clearance, allowing more nationalities to use ePassport gates than anywhere else. In the year ending September 2018, 51.9 million passengers used them across the UK and juxtaposed controls.

The gates use facial recognition technology to compare the passenger's face to the digital image recorded in their passport. They are monitored by Border Force officers and anyone rejected at the gates will be sent to a manned passport check to have their identity and passport checked.

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, and who are accompanied by an adult, are also able to use them.

There are currently 264 ePassport gates in operation at 15 air and rail terminals in the UK and juxtaposed controls.