

News story: Minister visits Bristol business incubator to discuss immigration

Immigration Minister Caroline Nokes today (Monday 3 June) visited a business hub in Bristol to hear from tech companies, social innovators and academics on plans for the new skills-based immigration system.

The minister visited Engine Shed – which plays host to SETsquared Partnership, a globally-recognised business incubator – before sitting down with local industry leaders and entrepreneurs to discuss how the new immigration system will benefit companies based across the South West.

The visit was part of a year-long engagement programme across the UK on the future immigration system. The Home Office has already held more than 90 events and met with over 1,300 stakeholders this year.

Immigration Minister Caroline Nokes said:

We are committed to designing a new immigration system that is streamlined, digital and prioritises the skills people can bring to the UK, rather than where they come from.

I'm determined to ensure that the new system supports small businesses and entrepreneurs – like those I met in Bristol – which is why we are engaging with groups across the UK.

The new system will allow us to take control of our borders while ensuring that the UK has access to the talent we need to remain a global business leader.

The government's proposals will:

- remove the annual cap on the number of visas issued for skilled workers. This will ensure that businesses who need overseas talent will not face unnecessary barriers
- abolish outdated schemes such as the resident labour market test for high-skilled workers and widen the skills threshold to include people with qualifications equivalent of A levels
- extend the time that international students, who come to the UK to study, can stay post-study to find employment. The time period for undergraduates and postgraduates will be extended to six months, while

those who have completed a PhD will be able to stay for a year

There will also be a new route for workers from low-risk countries at any skill level for a temporary period. This 12-month visa will provide access to the labour market, but no access to benefits. It is designed to support businesses in adjusting to the new immigration system but ensure they have the incentive to train young people in the future.

The new immigration and borders system will be implemented in a phased approach from 2021 and full details are available in the government's [White Paper](#).

The government recently announced new Start-up and Innovator visas to enhance the UK's visa offer to leading international talent.

The Start-up visa route is open to those starting a business for the first time in the UK, while the Innovator visa route is for more experienced business people who have funds to invest in their business.