

Home Secretary signals Britain is open for business

Home Secretary Priti Patel sent a clear message to the world today that Britain is ready to welcome the best and brightest global talent when the transition period comes to an end.

Today, the Home Office released more [detail on the UK's points-based immigration system](#) which will come into effect from 1 January 2021.

The new system will treat people from every part of the world equally, give us control of our borders, and help deliver a thriving economy for years to come.

Home Secretary, Priti Patel said:

The British people voted to take back control of our borders and introduce a new points-based immigration system.

Now we have left the EU, we are free to unleash this country's full potential and implement the changes we need to restore trust in the immigration system and deliver a new fairer, firmer, skills-led system from 1 January 2021.

Britain is open for business and ready to welcome the best and brightest global talent.

The further detail will give employers the time to prepare and the new immigration system will be implemented in phases to ensure smooth delivery. Several new, simplified immigration routes will be opened including:

- a new Health and Care Visa for key health professionals will make it easier and cheaper for health professionals to work in the UK, ensuring the NHS has continued access to the top global talent
- a new graduate route opening in Summer 2021 will allow international students to stay in the UK once they have successfully completed their studies – students who have completed undergraduate and master's degrees will be able to stay for 2 years and those who have completed PhD can stay for 3 years, making it easier for some of the best, international graduates to secure skilled jobs in the UK and contribute to the UK's economic growth

Under the new system a number of existing routes will be opened to anyone, regardless of nationality.

The [Global Talent Scheme](#) allows highly-skilled scientists and researchers to come to the UK without a job offer and the student route will ensure our world-leading universities can continue to welcome the talented and high potential students to our globally renowned institutions.

Principal and Vice Chancellor of the University of Glasgow, Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli said:

It's thanks to the world-class talent at our disposal that universities from all four nations of the UK have helped to lead the fightback against Covid-19.

By broadening opportunity and boosting competitiveness, the Graduate and Global Talent visas are key to ensuring that the UK remains a world leading environment for research and innovation and that our universities continue to bring together the brightest and best minds from around the world.

The new system will also require those applying via the skilled worker route to accrue points by meeting a number of relevant criteria, such as have a job offer at the appropriate skill level, the ability to speak English and meeting the salary threshold.

The new points-based system will also expand the skills threshold for skilled workers. An applicant's job must be at the minimum skill level of A-level or equivalent, rather than degree level under the current system. This will provide greater flexibility and ensure UK business has access to a wide pool of skilled workers.

Chair of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) UK India Business Forum, Mr Jim Bligh said:

Indian businesses welcome the UK's new points-based immigration. It's positive that the UK is seeking to attract highly-skilled nationals from across the world, regardless of nationality.

Across all sectors, Indian businesses bring in highly skilled nationals from around the world to help UK plc grow and compete. From high tech to haute cuisine, engineering to drug design, a smooth, skills-focused immigration system should help Indian companies across the economy to flourish in Britain in the years ahead.

Those EU citizens resident in the UK by 31 December 2020 can still apply to settle in the UK through the [EU Settlement Scheme](#) until 30 June 2021.

New plans to ensure safety of UK journalists

Minister for Media and Data John Whittingdale and Minister for Safeguarding Victoria Atkins will today co-chair the first meeting of a new committee to make sure journalists can operate without fear of violence or abuse.

Recent events such as attacks on journalists reporting on protests and threats to members of the press in Northern Ireland have exposed the fact that those who play an important role in the democratic process are not always safe.

The National Committee For The Safety of Journalists will bring together representatives from government, journalism, policing, prosecution services and the civil service to work in collaboration to make sure journalists are free from threats and violence.

The Committee's first task will be to develop a National Action Plan which sets out a framework through which the safety of journalists can be ensured and they can be protected from physical harm and threats of violence. The committee will meet twice a year and be tasked with monitoring progress in the area.

Minister for Media and Data John Whittingdale said:

"The UK has been at the forefront of the global campaign for media freedom but it is also essential that we protect the safety of journalists at home.

"The rise in misinformation during the pandemic has highlighted once again the valuable role played by journalists working for reputable news organisations who produce accurate and balanced high-quality journalism. We must do all we can to ensure that they can carry this out free from threats and intimidation."

Representatives from police services across the UK, the press, including the National Union of Journalists, Reporters Without Borders and the Society of Editors have been invited to join as members of the Committee. The Committee may ask journalists to attend on an ad hoc basis to share their experiences.

As well as operating within and supporting journalists in the UK, the Committee will invite observers to provide international perspectives.

Safeguarding Minister Victoria Atkins said:

"News media fulfil an extremely important role in our democracy and it is right that we do everything we can to protect them from harm."

Ian Murray, Executive Director of the Society of Editors said:

"The Society of Editors is pleased to be able to support and play a role in

the National Committee for the Safety of Journalists.

Journalism is not a crime nor is it at odds with society. Indeed it plays an important role in keeping society free, and yet increasingly we see journalists targeted for violence and abuse.

“This committee’s role in pinpointing action to combat this is both welcome and of vital importance.”

Rebecca Vincent, Director of International Campaigns at Reporters Without Borders said:

“Reporters Without Borders is pleased to see this Committee moving forward at a time when journalists are facing greater risks than ever before. We look forward to working with the Committee to ensure better protections for journalists throughout the UK – and that the UK government is leading by example in its efforts to champion media freedom globally.”

Michelle Stanistreet, NUJ general secretary, said:

“Attacks on journalists are on the rise in the UK and around the globe. Increasingly the press is harassed and singled out for attack while doing their job. Unfettered journalism is a vital part of our democracy and the NUJ looks forward to working with the committee to protect a free media and end the impunity of crimes against journalists.”

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- In April 2019 the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the world’s largest security oriented inter-governmental organisation, urged member states to establish “a national committee for safety of journalists which would gather representatives of the prosecutor’s office, the police and journalist associations to verify that all attacks and threats are properly investigated, improve procedures if needed; propose protection measures when necessary and implement preventive action to reinforce the security of journalists.” This followed attacks, threats, and murders of journalists around the world.
- Last year the Foreign and Commonwealth Office launched its international Media Freedoms Campaign to shine a global spotlight on media freedom and increase the cost to those who are attempting to restrict it.
- The UK supports freedom of expression as a fundamental right in itself and as an essential enabler of the full range of other human rights protected by UK and international law.

- A full list of membership is as follows:

Police Service Northern Ireland

the National Police Chiefs' Council

Police Scotland

Crown Prosecution Service

Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service

Reporters without Borders

Society of Editors

News Media Association

Head of Newsgathering, BBC

National Union of Journalists

Index on Censorship

Observers:

UNESCO

BBC World Service

Justice for Journalists

International Federation of Journalists

Committee to Protect Journalists

Parliament approves veterans question in next Census

The move will allow central and local government to better understand the profiles and needs of the ex-military community.

This in turn will allow for stepped up services for veterans, with better data and understanding allowing for more targeted and efficient support.

Data from the Census will be an important part of ensuring that mental health support for former service personnel is as effective as possible.

The inclusion of the question in next year's Census has been welcomed by veterans groups and charities and builds on the government's first ever veterans strategy, which was launched in 2018.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Johnny Mercer said:

Allowing veterans to identify themselves in the next Census is a key step in ensuring that all of government provides the best support possible.

Better information means better support and today is a positive step forward in providing that.

Minister for the Constitution and Devolution Chloe Smith said:

The Census is an unparalleled source of information on how the UK population lives and works.

It provides a detailed picture of the nation, helping us deliver tailored public services that meet the needs of citizens of all walks of life. Ultimately it will ensure that taxpayers money is invested where it is most needed.

It is estimated that there are currently around 2.2million veterans in the UK. The rich diversity of this community underlines the importance of improving data, so that policies and support can be better targeted.

We know from previous research around the Veterans Strategy that often people are reluctant to ask, and sometimes veterans themselves are reluctant to say that they are a veteran. The process of developing the census question has therefore helped the government to develop a common way of asking if someone has served in the Armed Forces.

Charles Byrne, Director General of The Royal British Legion, said:

This is an extremely proud moment for the Legion. After leading a successful campaign, the fact that a military question will be in the 2021 Census will significantly improve our understanding of the Armed Forces community which up until now has been very limited. It will ensure that we, along with other charities and service providers, can deliver the best service possible to them when and where it is needed most.

This is something we have been striving towards for many years, it will have a huge impact on service personnel, veterans and their

families well into the future, as the outcome will allow us to provide more effective care and support to those who are in need. We are delighted and are extremely grateful to everyone who has supported the campaign and helped us to achieve this historical success.

The next census is due to be held on 21st March 2021 and results will be available the following year. People will be able complete the census online on any device, with help and paper questionnaires for those that need them. The data collected will provide crucial and up-to-date insight on the diversity of society.

The Office for Veterans Affairs (OVA), which was created last year, is ensuring that the whole of government is delivering better outcomes for veterans, particularly in areas such as mental health, employment and housing. It is working in partnership with local authorities and the Devolved Administrations to coordinate activity across the United Kingdom.

The work of the OVA includes:

- Pulling together all functions of government, and better coordinating charity sector provision, in order to ensure this nation's life-long duty to those who have served
- Ensuring that every single veteran and their family knows where to turn to access support when required
- Helping to generate a 'single view of the veteran' by making better use of data to understand veterans' needs and where gaps in provision exist
- Improving the perception of veterans

Census 2021

- The 2021 Census will provide decision-makers and citizens with comprehensive data on our society. Getting the best information is essential for informing policy, planning and funding decisions, across national and local public services.
- The Office for National Statistics is working to deliver the Census in England and Wales as planned and is continuing to be guided by the evidence and latest advice from Government and experts on COVID-19.

[Priti Patel proscribes far-right terrorist group](#)

News story

Government takes action to proscribe Feuerkrieg Division.



The Home Secretary has today moved to outlaw the far-right terror group, Feuerkrieg Division.

Priti Patel has asked Parliament for permission to proscribe the white supremacist group, which was founded in late 2018 and operates across North America and Europe. They advocate the use of violence and mass murder in pursuit of an apocalyptic race war and promote their ideology online, often using social media platforms to target teens and people in their early 20s.

Proscription will make it a criminal offence to be a member of or invite support for the group, with those found guilty facing up to 10 years behind bars.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

This vile white supremacist group advocates violence and seeks to sow division, targeting young and vulnerable people online.

I am determined to do everything I can to stop the spread of extreme ideologies that encourage and glorify terrorism, which is why I have taken action to proscribe this group.

In September 2019, UK police apprehended a 16-year-old member on terrorism charges. In retaliation for the arrest of one of its followers, Feuerkrieg Division distributed a list of police buildings and an image of a senior police officer with a gun to his head and the words "race traitor" across his eyes to its members, urging them to carry out attacks.

The decision to proscribe the group follows a meeting of the Proscription Review Group, which brings together representatives from the police and other partners to assess the risk posed by groups who may be considered for proscription.

The proscription order laid in Parliament today will now be debated and, subject to approval, will come into force later this week.

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UKHO appoints RAdm Peter Sparkes as Acting Chief Executive following the retirement of CEO Tim Lowe CBE

Press release

Rear Admiral Peter Sparkes, the current UK National Hydrographer and Deputy Chief Executive, has been appointed to the position of Acting Chief Executive and Accounting Officer.



The UK Hydrographic Office has announced the appointment of Rear Admiral Peter Sparkes, the current UK National Hydrographer and Deputy Chief Executive, to the position of Acting Chief Executive and Accounting Officer.

Rear Admiral Sparkes will take this position whilst a permanent replacement is sought for Tim Lowe CBE, the previous Chief Executive and Accounting Officer of the UKHO, who announced his retirement on July 10th.

Commenting on Tim's retirement, Peter said:

On behalf of the Senior Leadership Team and all at the UK Hydrographic Office, I want to acknowledge and thank Tim for the significant personal and professional investment he has made in the business and our people. He should reflect with enormous pride on all that he has achieved during the last 5 years as the National Hydrographer and CEO.

As Acting Chief Executive, I will continue to build on these achievements, working together with our executive committee, fantastic staff and partners to enable safe, secure and thriving oceans.

Peter joined the UKHO as UK National Hydrographer in 2019 continuing his

distinguished career in the Royal Navy. His previous appointments include Command of Her Majesty's Ships CUMBERLAND and PROTECTOR, and he was responsible for the development and introduction of the Warship Electronic Charting Display Information System. Between 2018-19, Peter also served as the Chief of Defence Staff's liaison officer in the Pentagon, Washington DC.

In his role as National Hydrographer, Peter has acted as the UK Government's representative at the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), working with partners to set and maintain standards that protect the safety of mariners around the world. In addition to this, he has overseen key international partnerships to support the sharing of global marine geospatial data. On behalf of UK government, his teams have also delivered numerous hydrographic and capacity building programmes that help UK Overseas Territories and developing Commonwealth states to create safe and sustainable blue economies.

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