

UK Visas & Immigration 2020

World news story

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Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS) COVID19 UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI)

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UKVI

UKVI (Coronavirus Immigration Helpline CIH) CIH@HomeOffice.gov.uk GWF (replacement visa)

SME E-commerce Accelerator Pilot to increase the level of international e-commerce backing for SMEs in the food and drink industry.

The plan will also see the introduction of Defra's first Agri-food Counsellor serving the Gulf. In this new role, they will support the UK's food and drink industry and represent the interests of UK businesses already exporting, or planning to export, to the region.

These measures are being announced as part of a programme of support for the agriculture, food and drink industry to ensure they benefit from new trade and investment opportunities – including future free trade agreements (FTAs).

Over the last two months the Department for International Trade has launched the first round of talks for the US, Japan and Australia and New Zealand Free Trade Agreement negotiations. Additionally, the department has announced the first UK Tariff in almost 50 years, the UK Global Tariff, which firmly backs British industry, including agri-food and drink. In 2019 the UK exported £2.4bn of food and drink to the US, £312m to Japan, £453m to Australia and £58m to New Zealand.

Minister for Export, Graham Stuart MP, DIT said:

More trade is absolutely critical to helping the UK's agriculture, food and drink industry recover from the impact of coronavirus.

The package of measures we have announced today will support 'bounce back' in exports, and help our world-class producers and manufacturers increase trade with the rest of the world. It will also get the industry ready to capitalise on the opportunities that are being opened up by the series of free trade agreements that my department is negotiating around the world.

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Victoria Prentis, Defra said:

The high quality of British food and drink is recognised around the world and the wider industry supports thousands of jobs across the UK.

This package of measures signifies our strong commitment to support the sector in recovering from the impact of coronavirus. It includes the promotion and showcasing of British expertise and produce to new export markets, identifying opportunities and strengthening existing relationships.

Our new Agri food counsellor serving the Gulf region will be an important new role representing the interests of UK businesses exporting to the area, working to open new export markets and supporting food and drink promotion activities within the region.

Ian Wright CBE, Chief Executive of the Food and Drink Federation said:

Support on this scale from UK Government is extremely welcome at this uncertain time. The package of measures is testament to the close and long-running work between FDF, DIT and Defra to boost our exports performance. Our success in restarting and expanding exports will be absolutely vital in aiding the UK's post-Covid economic recovery.

UK food and drink is an international success story, exporting more than £23 billion of quality products each year. The 'bounce back' plan will ensure that specialist support is available to those UK businesses which trade around the world and provides fantastic potential for those companies looking to export. With a footprint in every constituency, food and drink is uniquely placed to drive an exports-led recovery. In the longer term, it is important that government and industry continue to work together to take advantage of export opportunities and address fragmentation in available support across the UK.

AHDB's International Market Development Director Dr Phil Hadley said:

We welcome today's announcement by government to launch a new recovery package, which will provide immediate support to those businesses looking to grow their trade activity overseas. Coronavirus has had a big impact on the UK's export activity and while we continue to ship our produce around the world, the challenges of the pandemic have been strongly felt in all sectors.

Therefore, we are very encouraged to see this 'bounce back' plan, which will provide significant support to many of the UK businesses we assist in growing their overseas trade. We hope that many will benefit from new trade and investment opportunities, so that AHDB, in partnership with government, can continue to put UK produce on the tables of more households around the world.

UK Government minister for Scotland David Duguid said:

Scottish food and drink is world-famous and highly sought after around the globe. This 'bounce back plan' will help support the thousands of people working in the industry across Scotland and is a further example of the UK Government doing everything we can to make sure we recover from the unprecedented pandemic.

We are working to ensure we enjoy the new opportunities as a

country outside the EU through making new free trade agreements with countries around the world – bringing a wealth of new markets to our sector.

Agriculture, food and drink are among Scotland's biggest success stories and vital to our economy and we are working to make sure this flourishes for many years to come.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

Wales has a proud and growing international food and drink reputation. This bounce-back plan will provide opportunities for Welsh businesses to market their produce around the world and help support thousands of people working in the industry.

The UK Government said it would do whatever it took to support the people and businesses of Wales through the pandemic and we have produced an unprecedented package of measures to deliver on that promise.

The full range of measures announced today include:

1. Launch of a GREAT DIT Food & Drink Exporting Masterclass, an extensive and bespoke programme of webinars to be produced in conjunction with trade associations, UK regions, including Devolved Administrations, and DIT's international network, all supported by DIT's Export Specialists.
2. Launch of Food & Drink SME E-commerce Accelerator Pilot to leverage DIT's E-exporting Programme to increase the level of international e-commerce support for food and drink SMEs, including agri-tech. This will include the offer of one-to-one e-commerce export clinics with the programme's e-commerce specialists and regional advisers, a new series of industry webinars and podcasts focussed on highlighting the opportunities available to export through e-marketplaces internationally, as well as virtual workshops on internationalising their websites for those companies selling direct to consumers in various markets around the world.
3. Promote 50 Food and Drink Export Champions to stimulate aspiring exporters, while utilising International Trade Advisor specialist networks focused on agri-food.
4. Announce the first Defra Agri-food Counsellor serving the UAE and wider

Gulf Region, with the role focussing on supporting our food and drink sector and representing the interests of UK businesses already exporting to the area, as well as those looking to export for the first time. The new Defra-funded Regional Agri-Food Counsellor will be based in Dubai and will work alongside DIT's existing sector leads in the UAE, providing specialist knowledge and engagement in Government to Government discussions on behalf of UK interests and sectors. She will also support food and drink promotion activity at the UK pavilion at World Expo in 2021, identifying opportunities for new markets and further developing existing export relationships.

5. Launch of a programme of physical and virtual events, using innovative, interactive software to connect buyers, promote the UK and reach international markets. This will include: an overseas virtual buyer trial working directly with chosen US buyers through a virtual delivery programme; and developing a UK 'Smart Distance Selling Process', which includes the dispatch of food and drink samples to buyers.
 6. Leveraging Defra's Food is GREAT campaign, which will extend into the UAE and the EU later this year, to provide impactful and targeted activity in priority export markets, such as USA, China and Japan. This also will be complemented by new agri-food creative imagery within DIT's GREAT Ready to Trade campaign when this resumes in the summer, under the Food is GREAT and Invest in GREAT pillars.
 7. Two Virtual Investor Roundtables chaired by Lord Grimstone, Minister for Investment, with agri-food and drink, and agri-tech companies to inform the development of the UK's investment strategy, the UK Agri-Tech International Strategy and the launch of Phase 2 of the High Potential Opportunity Programme.
 8. Uplift of UK Export Finance's "Exporters' Edge" campaign to further outreach and engagement to identify and respond to the needs of the industry and raise awareness of how UKEF and Trade Finance can help the businesses win and fulfil export contracts. UKEF is also accelerating the development of its products to allow a wider range of UK exporters to access its support. Its enhanced offer will provide easier access to working capital for UK exporters by offering financing that is not tied to specific export contracts but instead supports general business activities.
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New Cross-Government Working Group launched to address challenges faced by Windrush generation and their families

As part of the ongoing efforts to right the wrongs experienced by the Windrush generation, Home Secretary Priti Patel has today (Monday 22 June) launched the Windrush Cross-Government Working Group.

The Group, co-chaired by the Home Secretary and Bishop Derek Webley, brings together stakeholders and community leaders with senior representatives from a number of government departments to address the challenges faced by the Windrush generation and their descendants.

Progress is being made to right the wrongs, with more payments made every week under the Windrush Compensation Scheme.

However, there is much more to do. This Group will play an important role in ensuring the Government upholds its commitment to the Windrush generation.

The purpose of the Group is to:

- Provide strategic input into the Home Office's response to the Wendy Williams Lessons Learned Review
- Support the design and delivery of practical solutions to address the wider challenges that disproportionately affect people from Black and wider BAME backgrounds. This will include programmes on education, work and health
- Advise on the design and delivery of the Windrush Schemes Community Fund

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

This group is crucial to delivering on our promise to right the wrongs experienced by the Windrush generation and it is right that we advance these issues in a constructive, sensitive and responsible way.

We know that the best way to make sure we reach all those affected is by listening to them and hearing their voices, including how best to address the wider challenges that disproportionately affect those from BAME backgrounds.

From issues affecting education, work and health, this group will

support Government to deliver practical solutions as well as advising on the design of the Windrush Community Fund scheme and response to the Wendy Williams review.

What we need most now is action and I am excited to work in partnership with this group who themselves hold valuable experience within the community and are driven to bring the ultimate change that we all want to achieve, which is making a difference to people's lives.

Bishop Derek Webley, co-chair of the Windrush Cross-Government Working Group said:

It's an honour to be able to serve members of the Windrush generation who have served this country with dignity and pride, and helped to build this country over many years.

This Working Group recognises that the work we're doing can't be done without the voices of the community, and we will work with them and the government in finding a way forward that would meet the satisfaction of the Windrush community.

Group members include stakeholders and community leaders representing the affected communities, including Bishop Joe Aldred from Churches Together in England; Paulette Simpson, Executive Director of the Voice; Blondel Cluff, Chief Executive of the West India Committee and Kunle Olulode, Director of Voice4Change England. All members bring a balance of experience in community engagement and specific sector expertise.

Members also will include representation at a senior level from a number of government departments, including No10, the Home Office, the Department for Education, the Department of Health and Social Care, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department for Work and Pensions.

Member of the Group, Duwayne Brooks OBE said:

The Windrush generation were treated terribly by successive governments and it is time this is put right.

I am pleased that the government is committed to righting these wrongs and I am looking forward to working with the Home Secretary and others to ensure all those affected come forward to claim the compensation they deserve and get the support they need to move on.

Blondel Cluff CBE, who is also a member on the Group said:

We are at a seminal moment as a nation and as such I welcome the invitation to serve on the Cross-Government Windrush Group, particularly given the evident 'buy in' across government.

I trust that together we shall make tangible, positive, and sustainable progress on this critical matter.

The Home Office, as requested by Wendy Williams, is carefully considering the Lessons Learned Review. The Home Secretary has agreed to respond in full by the end of September and has also committed to provide an update to Parliament before summer recess.

The Group will play an important role in assisting with the Home Office's response by providing insight and guidance, as well as help to ensure that the lessons from the Windrush review are shared across government.

As announced by the Home Secretary in March, the Home Office will shortly launch a separate £500k Windrush Scheme Community Fund for grassroots organisations, to help improve uptake and awareness of the schemes supporting those who were directly affected. This includes the Windrush Scheme, which has so far provided over 12,000 people with documentation confirming their status. One of the first tasks for the Group will be to work with stakeholders to co-design and deliver this Fund.

To ensure that all those affected are reached, the Home Office is also launching a £750k targeted advertising campaign, using a range of channels, such as adverts and social media, to make sure those most affected around the UK are aware of the support available to them and know how to apply. The Government will work closely with stakeholders to ensure our campaign encourages as many people as possible to apply.

Grassroots activity, including recruiting community ambassadors nationally and in priority areas to encourage and support applications among their networks, is also being undertaken. More details on this activity will be announced in due course.

Black communities and wider minority ethnic communities still face injustices, and the Government is dedicated to tackling this, including by launching a cross-governmental commission into racial inequality. The Windrush Cross-Government Working Group will also have an instrumental role to play in this work, and in ensuring we address the wider challenges that disproportionately affect people from black and wider minority ethnic backgrounds. The Working Group will meet quarterly for the duration of the Windrush Compensation Scheme, which is currently open until April 2023. The date will be kept under review.

The Group will complement the Race Equality Commission, which is being set up

by Number 10 and will sit separately to this group.

For more information on the measures put in place to support the Windrush generation, please see our factsheet:

<https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/05/13/wind/>

[New protections for UK businesses key to national security and fight against coronavirus](#)

Press release

New protections will be introduced to further safeguard the national security and resilience of the UK.



- Changes to Enterprise Act 2002 will protect UK businesses critical to combating coronavirus and future public health emergencies
- Extension of existing powers to protect companies and technologies which are key to national security

Changes to the Enterprise Act 2002, being laid before Parliament on Monday 22 June 2020, will allow the government to scrutinise certain foreign takeovers to ensure they do not threaten the UK's ability to combat a public health emergency such as coronavirus.

The economic disruption caused by the pandemic may mean that some businesses with critical capabilities are more susceptible to takeovers – either from outwardly hostile approaches, or financially distressed companies being sold to malicious parties.

These new powers will enable the government to intervene if a business that is directly involved in a pandemic response, for example, a vaccine research company or personal protective equipment manufacturer – finds itself the

target of a takeover.

In addition, these changes will expand powers to scrutinise and intervene in mergers in 3 sectors of the economy central to national security – artificial intelligence, cryptographic authentication technology and advanced materials – by lowering the thresholds that must be met before such scrutiny can take place.

This follows the introduction of powers in 2018 allowing the government to intervene in military products and technologies normally used for civilian purposes but which may have military applications, computing hardware, and quantum technology.

Secretary of State for Business, Alok Sharma commented:

To better protect the country's resilience to Covid-19 we are taking steps now to mitigate against public health emergencies.

These measures will strike the right balance between the UK's national security and resilience while maintaining our world-leading position as an attractive place to invest – the UK is open for investment, but not for exploitation.

These powers will send an important signal to those seeking to take advantage of those struggling as a result of the pandemic that the UK government is prepared to act where necessary to protect our national security.

These latest changes to the Enterprise Act are intended to mitigate risks in the short term ahead of more comprehensive powers in the forthcoming National Security and Investment (NS&I) Bill.

Notes to editors

- The Enterprise Act 2002 allows the UK government to intervene in mergers and takeovers on 4 specified public interest considerations; national security, media plurality, financial stability, and now to combat a public health emergency.
- The government has intervened on public interest grounds under the EA02 on 20 occasions: 12 on national security grounds, 7 on media plurality and once on financial stability.
- No transaction has ever been blocked in public interest grounds.
- The public health emergency Statutory Instrument will be laid on Monday 22 June 2020 and will come into force on Tuesday 23 June 2020.
- The Statutory Instrument to lower the thresholds for artificial intelligence, advanced materials and cryptographic authentication will be laid on Monday 22 June 2020 but will not come into force until both Houses of Parliament have debated and approved it.

Nation pays tribute to the Windrush Generation and their descendants

- Communities across the country are getting ready to mark national Windrush Day on June 22
- The second national day of celebration is backed by a £500,000 Windrush Day Grant Scheme overseen by a panel of community representatives.
- Theatre productions, concerts, exhibitions and lectures will all be available free online

On Monday 22 June 2020, the nation will pay tribute to the outstanding and ongoing contribution of the Windrush Generation and their descendants.

With online lectures and readings, cooking classes, and theatrical and musical events, the country will recognise how British Caribbean communities have changed our society for the better.

Building on the success of the inaugural national Windrush Day last year, 49 projects across the country were awarded funding to mark Windrush Day 2020 and commemorate the seminal moment 72 years ago when the Empire Windrush arrived at the port of Tilbury.

Many of the government funded projects have been adapted due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and will now take place online.

The majority of projects to celebrate and recognise the arrival of the Windrush Generation and their contribution from theatre productions to exhibitions to lectures are now being delivered online. These include:

Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

Britain would not be the strong and vibrant nation it is today without the immeasurable contributions that the Windrush Generation have made to our country.

These are men and women who built their lives and made their home here in Britain, enriching all spheres of our society as a result.

From supporting and leading community networks and public services, to elevating our arts and culture, this generation has contributed so much to our society and our economy.

I also want to say a deep and heartfelt thanks to all those working in our NHS, councils and all other key sectors – including children and relatives from the Windrush generation.

You are the true heroes working on the frontline in the battle against coronavirus: a battle that we are winning thanks to your efforts.

Wherever you are in the country I'd encourage you to share in the celebrations and enjoy the range of thought-provoking materials online, marking the day in a way that it so deserves from your home.

Faith Minister Lord Greenhalgh said:

Windrush Day is a fantastic opportunity to recognise and celebrate the huge contribution made by those who first stepped ashore at Tilbury docks more than 70 years ago.

They came to rebuild the nation following the war and they and their descendants have continued to enrich social, economic, political and religious life ever since.

The 22 June 1948 was a pivotal event in our national story and Windrush Day keeps their legacy alive for future generations, ensuring that we all understand the diversity of Britain's history.

Chief Executive of The Voice Newspaper and Windrush Day Advisory Panel Member Paulette Simpson, said:

We are living in extraordinary times, but the commitment and effort shown by community groups around the country to adapt and adjust their plans to ensure Windrush Day 2020 is acknowledged and celebrated is both inspiring and heart-warming.

It clearly demonstrates the depth of feeling that exists for the Windrush Generation and their descendants and all they have contributed and continue to contribute to British Society – and that's to say nothing of the great resilience and fortitude they showed.

With each passing year, Windrush Day becomes more firmly embedded in the national consciousness. It might not be a Windrush Day like we saw last year, but it will remain a Windrush Day honoured by a community fiercely proud of their heritage, and a day that provides an opportunity for us all to celebrate our shared culture and heritage.

Other plans for the lead up to Windrush Day and on the day itself include:

- The National Theatre's epic production of Andrea Levy's Orange Prize-winning novel, *Small Island*, filmed live during its sold-out run in

2019, is streaming for free with [National Theatre at Home](#).

- A 'celebrate at home' art and activities pack hosted on the [Voice](#) newspaper online including:
- A playlist of the 10 most important Windrush related records developed by leading black music expert and cultural commentator, Lloyd Bradley.
- Album covers for colouring in/window decoration
- Empire Windrush colouring in poster, and Windrush Day branded posters.
- Residents across Lambeth, London are being encouraged to join in the singing of a special recording of You Can Get It If You Really Want It, first performed by Desmond Dekker at 10:27am, representing the arrival of 1,027 people on the original Empire Windrush.

Windrush Day

In June 2018, the government announced an annual Windrush Day to encourage communities across the country to commemorate the Windrush story on Windrush Day and throughout the year.

The national celebration is backed by a £500,000 Windrush Day Grant Scheme overseen by a Windrush Day Advisory Panel of community representatives.

Launched in October 2019, the Windrush Day Grant Scheme received over 200 bids for funding from community groups, charities and local authorities across England.

This year's successful bids came from across the country from Bristol to Birmingham and Leicester to Leeds indicating the breadth of enthusiasm in communities across the country to mark Windrush Day 2020.

Windrush Generation

Windrush Day marks the anniversary of the arrival of MV Empire Windrush at the Port of Tilbury, near London, on 22 June 1948. The arrival of the Empire Windrush nearly 72 years ago marked a seminal moment in Britain's history and has come to represent the rich diversity of this nation.

Those who arrived on the Empire Windrush, their descendants and those who followed them have made and continue to make an enormous contribution to Britain, not just in the vital work of rebuilding the country and public services following World War 2 but in enriching our shared social, economic, cultural and religious life.

Overcoming great sacrifice and hardship, the Windrush Generation and their descendants have gone on to lead the field across public life, in business, the arts and sport. Britain would be much diminished without their contribution.

Further information

The MV Empire Windrush docked at the Port of Tilbury on 21 June 1948. However, passengers disembarked a day later on 22 June 1948 – hence why this

has come to be known as Windrush Day.