

UK announces new points-based immigration system

UK Home Secretary Priti Patel will today launch a new points-based immigration system, ensuring that the UK continues to attract the brightest and the best from around the world, including India.

The new Points-Based Immigration System will award points for specific skills, professions, salaries or qualifications/attributes, and visas will be awarded to those who gain sufficient points. The system will provide simple, effective, and flexible arrangements for skilled workers to come to the UK.

The new single global system will treat EU and non-EU citizens equally, giving top priority to those with the highest skills and the greatest talents, including scientists, innovators and academics.

The minimum general salary threshold will be reduced to £25,600 (approximately ₹23.8 lakh), down from the previously proposed £30,000.

The Home Secretary will also announce a reformed Global Talent route. This will include a new fast-track scheme for world-leading scientists, top researchers and mathematicians to come to the UK. This will run alongside the Points-Based Immigration System and will allow a small number of highly skilled workers to come to the UK without a job offer.

Acting British High Commissioner to India, Jan Thompson, said:

The new Points-Based Immigration System is great news for Indian nationals looking to work in the UK. It puts Indian applicants on a level playing field, and prioritises those with the greatest skills and talent – something which India has in abundance.

This news is just the latest example of the UK's continuing global outlook following our departure from the EU, and further evidence of our commitment to strengthening the UK-India Living Bridge.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Today is a historic moment for the whole country. We will attract the brightest and the best from around the globe, boosting the economy and our communities, and unleash this country's full potential.

These developments come on the back of the UK's Graduate route announcement, which will allow eligible international students – including those from India

– to stay in the UK for two years after completing their studies to work or look for work. The new Graduate route will be introduced from the summer of 2021. There continues to be no limit on the number of international students who can come to the UK to study.

Indian nationals continue to receive more skilled work visas than the rest of the world combined, accounting for 52% of all Tier 2 visas granted globally last year. Over half a million UK visit visas were issued to Indians in 2019, up almost 10% from the previous year. Tier 4 student visa numbers also increased by 63% last year – almost four times faster than the percentage increase globally.

Further Information

- The new Points-Based Immigration System will award points for an appropriate job offer, English language skills, and a salary threshold. The education threshold will be reduced to A-level (Higher Secondary School Certificate or equivalent) from degree level, and the general salary threshold is being reduced to £25,600 (approximately ₹23.8 lakh) from £30,000. Applicants will be able to 'trade' characteristics if they do not meet all the requirements. Tradeable points will be given for salary, a job offer in a specific shortage occupation, and educational qualifications.
- The UK Home Office will publish further details on the Points-Based Immigration System in due course, including detailed guidance regarding the points tables, shortage occupations and qualifications.
- These new arrangements will take effect from 1 January 2021, once freedom of movement with the European Union has ended.
- The announcement will also formalise a new fast-track NHS Visa for certain medical professionals with NHS job offers, reducing their visa fees and providing support to come to the UK with their families. Applicants will need to have a job offer from the NHS, be trained to a recognised standard and have good working English language skills. Indians are already the largest non-British group of staff in the NHS with more than 21,000 healthcare professionals, including more than 7,500 nurses.

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Shipment of Highly Active Waste from the UK to Germany

The waste results from the reprocessing and recycling of spent nuclear fuel at the Sellafield site in West Cumbria, which had previously been used to produce electricity by utilities in Germany.

There will be a total of 3 shipments to storage facilities in Germany, with the first shipment scheduled for the first half of 2020.

The Vitrified Residue Returns programme is a key component of the UK's Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) strategy to repatriate highly active waste from the UK, fulfil overseas contracts and deliver UK Government policy.

These returns involve Sellafield Ltd working in partnership with [International Nuclear Services \(INS\)](#) to return the waste to German customers.

INS, a subsidiary of the NDA, will perform the shipments, drawing on more than 40 years' experience of transporting nuclear materials safely and securely around the world.

The waste will be transported by sea on a specialised vessel to a German port, then onwards by rail to the final destinations. INS has contracted with Daher Nuclear Technologies GmbH, to safely manage the overland transport in Germany.

The shipment will be carried out in full compliance with all applicable national and international regulations, and subject to issue of all relevant permits and licences.

Extensive search after report of man overboard



A coastguard helicopter from Lydd, a coastguard rescue team from Margate, RNLi lifeboats from Ramsgate and Margate, a Kent police RHIB and a Royal Navy vessel were all involved in the search, which was carried out in very rough seas and challenging conditions.

A call, reporting a possible man overboard, came in from a boat off Margate Harbour at around 5.41am.

At around 1pm, after many hours of searching, a body was sadly found in the water by the RNLi Margate lifeboat and was brought to shore.

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[£500 million boost for UK film industry from US firm](#)

The UK's creative industry is expected to benefit from a £500 million boost following an announcement today (19 February) of a major investment planned by a leading US film studio.

Atlanta-based movie studios firm, Blackhall Studios, announced their intention to build a £150 million state-of-the-art film studio in Reading, their first outside of the US. Once built, the site would become one of the largest film studios in the UK, boosting the UK's film capacity substantially. Once operational, the studio is expected to be worth £500 million to the UK economy per year.

The new studio is expected to be built at the Thames Valley Science Park, which is owned by the University of Reading. Blackhall was assisted in securing a site by officials at the Department for International Trade (DIT), who have been working with the business over the past year. DIT officials worked with teams in Atlanta and Los Angeles, as well as the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

Following the completion of the transaction, the investment is expected to create up to 3,000 jobs in the local area, including 1,500 employed at the studio site, from set-building trades and advanced digital skills to physical film production.

Warner Bros, Sony and HBO have all filmed productions in Blackhall's US studio, with box-office hits, including "Venom", "Jumanji: The Next Level" and "Godzilla: King of the Monsters" produced at their US sites.

Secretary of State for International Trade Liz Truss MP said:

The UK and the US are each other's largest investors, and this announcement demonstrates the strength of our trading relationship, which benefits all sectors and regions in the UK.

Blackhall's commitment is a strong endorsement of our creative industry and the great creatives that work in UK film, and is set to deliver hundreds of new jobs in the area.

I look forward to negotiating and signing a new ambitious free trade agreement with the US, to ensure we can continue to deepen our trading relationship and grow our creative industries.

Ryan Millsap, Chairman and CEO of Blackhall said:

We are excited to be establishing a base in the UK. Blackhall is the global standard for entertainment production space and our US-based clients like Disney, Universal and Sony are all asking us to expand into the UK to meet their desire to create productions here.

They wouldn't trust just anyone to meet their high standards, so we are delighted to serve them in this way.

We are very excited about the prospect of investing in the UK creative industries as one of the most vibrant markets in the world. We hope that the site at Thames Valley Science Park will be the start of a series of investments in the UK which will see investment in jobs, training and the creative arts across a range of disciplines.

The UK has a wealth of talent that our UK companies recognise and want to partner with for decades to come.

Adrian Wootton, Chief Executive of Film London and the British Film Commission said:

The booming film and TV industries continue to demonstrate unprecedented growth and in 2019 inward investment spend from major

international productions topped £3.04 billion.

We know that what brings productions here is the combination of our competitive and reliable tax relief, world-class studios and facilities, exceptional post production and VFX, and an immense variety of locations.

The Blackhall Studios development will be a fantastic and hugely significant addition to this, allowing for even more content creation.

It is particularly exciting to be welcoming new international studio investors to operate here, bringing a fresh perspective to our infrastructure and further bolstering the UK offer.

The potential investment follows a number of positive announcements about UK film in 2019, including Netflix's statement that they intend to spend \$500m making over 50 TV shows and films in the UK over the course of this year.

The new studio is expected to strongly benefit the local area, including the University of Reading, which has a film and TV department and business school. The new studio will be located less than an hour away by train to London, within the UK's "creative corridor" that is being developed through Thames Valley.

In 2019, the UK's creative industries attracted more than £3bn of inward investment. This is expected to grow over 70% in the next five years.

[Innovation: MHRA's speedy approval of high dose flu vaccine demonstrates flexibilities in national applications](#)

The issue

Influenza vaccines are known to be less effective in the over-65 age group, since the immune system is less vigorous in older people. Advancements have been made in flu vaccine technology which can enhance the vaccines' protective effect in this age range, compared to those which are known to be effective in the under-65s.

The Department of Health and Social Care and the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) in the UK expressed a desire that such vaccines be made available to the UK public as soon as possible, and preferably in time for the 2019 to 2020 flu season.

How the MHRA helped

An application for a flu vaccine by Sanofi Pasteur, which is designed to be effective in the over-65 age group, was approved by the MHRA in a very short timescale and became available for the 2019 to 2020 flu season. This was achieved despite additional complexities to the supply chain because of changing legislation. This is one of three newer vaccines that JCVI recommends for use in the over-65 age group.

Most flu vaccines are made to a specific formula. Due to the desire to enhance its effect in older people, this formula has been optimised for the over-65 age group, resulting in a product which is more effective in older people than the standard flu vaccine.

This meant that the changes needed to be thoroughly evaluated to ensure they did not change the safety profile of this vaccine compared to the well-established safety profile of other, more conventional flu vaccines.

Whilst developing the product and preparing the regulatory submission, Sanofi Pasteur sought advice on scientific and regulatory aspects which were specific to its product.

Because this was a purely national application, managed by the MHRA without involvement of other regulatory bodies, it was possible to be extremely flexible regarding the timeframe and co-operation between the various groups to achieve the desired outcome.

Hugo Fry, Sanofi UK Country Chair & General Manager of Sanofi Pasteur said:

“It’s exciting to see the MHRA increasingly thinking creatively on how to be a fast, balanced, light-touch yet scientifically robust regulator in order to create and capitalise on opportunities for faster product approvals. The accelerated approval of our TIV High Dose influenza vaccine is a great example of this and clearly demonstrates their agility, flexibility and willingness to collaborate with industry”.

Outcomes

Through close collaboration working with the MHRA, Sanofi Pasteur was granted a UK licence for Trivalent Influenza Vaccine (Split Virion, Inactivated) High Dose (TIV High Dose).

The process took just seven months, compared with a standard review time of 12 months for national approvals. The UK is the only European country where TIV High Dose is approved.

The MHRA’s Licensing Director, Dr Siu Ping Lam, said:

“This is further evidence of the MHRA’s ability to deliver in an agile and flexible way, and enhances our standing as a world-leading, innovative regulator, to enable time-critical preventative medicines to be available earlier and timely for the protection of our patients”.

How we can help you

[Contact the Innovation Office](#) to find out more about accessing expert knowledge, guidance and experience that could help you develop ideas and save time and money.

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