

New changes to the Immigration Rules come into effect on Tuesday 1 October 2013, designed to bring "greater flexibility" for businesses, workers and visitors.

Key changes include the following:

- removing the current requirement for Tier 2 Intra Company Transfer migrants extending their permission in the UK beyond 3 years to satisfy an English language requirement;
- waiving the restriction prohibiting Tier 2 General migrants from owning more than 10% of the shares in their sponsoring organisation if the migrant earns a salary package of £152,100 or more in the UK; and
- expanding the activities that a business visitor can undertake in the UK, to include the following additional permissible activities:
  - **internal audits.** Internal auditors from global corporations can now enter the UK as business visitors to undertake short internal audits. Previously such auditors were required to enter the UK under Tier 2 Intra Company Transfer, and were then prevented by the cooling-off period from returning to the UK under Tier 2 for 12 months;
  - **corporate training.** In provisions designed to be of particular benefit to third party contractors, business visitors can now receive corporate training in the UK, provided the following criteria are met: the training is for the purposes of the visitor's employment overseas; it is delivered by a UK company that is unconnected to the visitor's corporate group; and the main activity of the UK company is not the provision of training.

### Registered Traveller Pilot Scheme

Mark Harper, Minister for Immigration, has announced a new 'Registered Traveller' pilot scheme which came into force on 24 September 2013.

The scheme is initially open to selected nationals of Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the United States who have travelled to the UK four or more times in the preceding fifty-two week period prior to enrolment, and who are coming to the UK as visitors. In its initial pilot stages, the scheme will only operate at Heathrow and Gatwick airports, and is currently only open to nationals of the above countries who have also previously been an IRIS member.

To successfully enrol on the scheme, applicants must:

- be a national of Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand or the United States of America;

- be over 18;
- have visited the UK at least 4 times in the last 52 weeks;
- be registered for the iris immigration registration system (IRIS); and
- be coming to the UK as a visitor (including business visitors).

The scheme offers the following benefits to the relatively limited number of persons eligible to enrol at this stage:

- users will be able to access expedited clearance processes at Heathrow and Gatwick border control broadly in line with those enjoyed by UK/EEA nationals;
- users will not be required to fill out landing cards; and
- users will be able to use the UK/EEA channels at border control.

### 'Low-risk/High-volume'

According to the statement released by Mr Harper, the nationalities selected for the scheme at pilot stage were chosen due to their high volume of travel to and from the UK, and the fact that they are considered "low risk" to the UK in terms of potential abuse of UK immigration controls or physical, economic or social harm to the country.

Initial registration on the scheme will expire on 31 March 2014. From 1 April 2014, the scheme is expected become permanent and any persons previously registered at pilot phase will be able to re-apply. In due course, the Government intends to roll out the scheme to other ports of entry to the UK and, potentially, to other categories of entry. The nationalities covered by the frequent traveller arrangements will also be reviewed. The scheme is currently free of charge but it is anticipated that an enrolment fee will be introduced from 1 April 2014 when the scheme becomes permanent.

Details on how to enrol on the scheme can be found via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/registered-traveller-scheme>

If you require any further information on the changes to the Immigration Rules, or the Registered Traveller pilot scheme, please do not hesitate to contact Annabel Mace, Supinder Sian or Kate Gamester.