

Transition to eVisas

Guidance for services in Greater Manchester to support residents with accessing an eVisa

On 31 December 2024, physical immigration documents are being replaced with an online record of immigration status known as an eVisa. Thousands of Greater Manchester residents are affected by this change and ultimately, will need an eVisa to prove their immigration status. Most GM residents who need an eVisa will be able to access one without help, guided by national Home Office information, videos, and remote support (see below). However, residents who are digitally excluded, have limited literacy or English skills, or face other vulnerabilities are likely to need extra support to access an eVisa.

Supporting someone to set up an eVisa is not classed as OISC-regulated immigration advice, and support can be offered by anyone.

This briefing will cover:

1. Who is affected?
2. Why is this so important?
3. Tips for GM services
4. What support is available?
5. FAQs
6. Useful resources

1. Who is affected?

Who needs to set up access to an eVisa?

Almost all non-British or non-Irish passport holders will need an e-visa to prove their immigration status. This includes:

- 1) Biometric residence permit (BRP) holders. All BRPs have an expiry date of 31 December 2024 no matter when a person's leave to remain ends, making eVisa support particularly urgent. This group includes:
 - Refugees who came through the asylum system
 - Afghan refugees who arrived via ARAP/ACRS/ALES
 - People who arrived on a Ukrainian resettlement scheme
 - Hong Kong BN(O) passport holders
 - Most people in the UK on a temporary student or work visa.
- 2) Physical Frontier Worker permit (FWP) holders. Most FWP cards will also expire on 31 December 2024.
- 3) Legacy paper document holders who have indefinite leave, including passports containing a wet-ink stamp, a vignette sticker or a form for affixing a visa (FAV).

Who doesn't need to set up access to an eVisa?

- 1) British or Irish citizens with a passport or the right of abode.
- 2) EEA nationals and family members who have a biometric residence card (BRC) and have been granted status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS). They should already have an eVisa.
- 3) Asylum seekers who have not yet received their decision from the Home Office. Physical ARC cards will still be valid after 31 December 2024.

2. Why is this so important?

Like physical immigration documents, eVisas will be needed to prove a person's right to rent, work and access benefits in the UK. They will replace any other documentation as proof of a person's immigration status. They will be crucial for people's day-to-day lives.

Key groups of concern

People who are digitally excluded

The transition to eVisa process relies heavily on technology, so people without access to the internet and a smartphone with sufficiently advanced software will need support. If someone has a tablet or laptop, they will be able to complete some of the steps, but will need support to prove their identity, as this requires the person to download an app on a smartphone (see FAQs below). The same device can be used for multiple applications. Once a person has their eVisa, they will need to be able to access a digital device and internet to generate a share code, though this will then be valid for 90 days.

People who don't speak English

Thus far, all Home Office communication on eVisas has been done in English only. Many people who need to gain access to an eVisa will have limited English language proficiency and limited literacy. This group will include a large number of people who are vulnerable to homelessness already, for example new refugees. These people are at risk of being unable to complete the application or may be unaware that they are required to complete an application at all.

3. Tips for GM services

All services should consider their capacity to offer direct support with eVisa applications to their service users and communities. This includes colleges, homelessness and social care services, community hubs and any frontline public service working with non-UK nationals. Some local authorities have opted to establish regular dedicated eVisa drop-in sessions in community settings, while others have integrated the support into their routine offer, where possible. This is likely to require access to

telephone interpreting and translation services. One example of good practice is Rochdale council, who have added the Migrant Help referral number as an option on their free public phones in Rochdale Library, allowing residents to more easily access support.

Regardless of service capacity, services should seek to **establish referral or signposting pathways** to other organisations that offer eVisa support, so that anyone who approaches their staff for help are given a route to support.

All services should consider **how to communicate** the importance of applying for an eVisa, and where to access support, to their service users and communities. This might include creating a dedicated webpage, using social media and/or displaying posters, ideally in multiple languages.

Services should **proactively engage** with groups and communities who will need to apply for eVisas, to ensure that they are aware of the transition and its implications. A particular focus should be put on **people facing multiple disadvantage**, such as new refugees, people in homelessness accommodation or people engaging with substance misuse and mental health services. Services should also strive to identify and engage with **people who are digitally excluded or have limited English language skills or literacy**.

Supporting someone with an eVisa application is not categorised as OISC regulated immigration advice, and frontline staff across GM services should feel empowered to help residents with applications where possible.

4. What support is available?

Migrant Help

Migrant Help have received funding to provide free support for vulnerable people in England, to help with their transition to an eVisa from mid-November.

- Telephone: 07483 170100
- Email: evisa@migranthelpuk.org

GM Organisations

Organisations in Greater Manchester have also received funding from the Home Office to provide vulnerable people with support with their transition to an eVisa.

Wai Yin Society

A mix of drop-in support and appointments in Central Manchester.

- Telephone: 0161 833 0377
- Email: info@waiyin.org.uk

Europaia

- Telephone: 07955 366 338, 0333 305 8570
- Email: support@europaia.org.uk

Afghanistan and Central Asian Association – remote support only in GM

- [Link to referral form](#)
- Telephone: 0208 572 0300
- Email: admin@afghanistan-central-asian.org.uk

KeyRing – Oldham only

- [Link to referral form](#)
- Telephone: 0161 669 5868
- Email: ancora@keyring.org

Other support resources

‘Assisted Digital’ support

UKVI are offering a support service for digitally excluded people. To find out more text ‘VISA’ and a number to call you on to 07537 416 944 or call them on 03333 445 675. Visit <https://www.gov.uk/assisted-digital-help-online-applications> for further details.

UK Immigration: ID Check App

If you encounter problems with the UK Immigration: ID Check App, UKVI have a dedicated helpline. Call +44 300 790 6268 and select option 3 or call +44 203 875 4669 if you are unable to dial 0300 numbers.

5. FAQs

For official guidance on eVisa support, please visit the government website. These FAQs only cover some of the key issues and may not be the most up to date advice available.

How do eVisas work?

People with an eVisa will need to log into their UKVI account to use the [view and prove service](#). There they can generate a share code to prove their status to others.

What is the application process like?

To access an eVisa, people will need access to a smartphone, a mobile phone number, and an email address. They will need their **BRP card** or a **valid passport with their BRP number or application number**. They must first create a UKVI account and confirm their identity using the ‘UK Immigration ID Check’ app. This is often the most difficult part. Then, they must complete the rest of the steps on their UKVI account. The whole process should take 30 minutes to 1 hour.

The information contained in this document is accurate as of 21 October 2024.

Can anyone who is eligible access their eVisa?

All those who are eligible can now access their eVisa by creating a UKVI account and following the steps in the Home Office guidance. **You do not need an invitation.** To complete the process, a person must also use their BRP or passport to prove their identity which requires access to the *UK Immigration: ID Check* App.

What smartphones are compatible with the app?

Smartphones that have a camera and either the Google Play Store or the Apple App Store. Older models of both Apple and Android phones may not support the app, with Android devices requiring the Android 8.0 (or Android Oreo) operating system or later, and iPhone users requiring an iPhone 7, 7 Plus or newer and iOS 15 or later.

What if someone has lost their BRP card?

If a person has lost their BRP they must report it as lost or stolen, but it is no longer possible to request a replacement BRP.

If a person does not have a BRP but has a passport, they can use this along with their Unique Application Number (UAN) or Global Web Form (GWF) number, found on their decision letter, to create a UKVI account. If a person does not have a BRP, passport, or UKVI account, they must wait until early November at which point they will be able to create a UKVI account to access their eVisa without a BRP or passport.

What if someone has never had a BRP?

Legacy document holders who have never had a BRP must make a free 'no time limit' (NTL) application, which will transfer the proof of their indefinite leave directly to an eVisa, or to a BRP with which the applicant can then create their own UKVI account. Legacy document holders should check the government website for further updates on this.

Frontier Worker permit holders can use their permit to set up their UKVI account and access their eVisa.

Does someone need to keep their physical immigration documents after they have access to an eVisa?

eVisa holders should keep their physical immigration documents even after they expire. They should also keep a separate record of the BRP number or application number used to create the UKVI account.

Can a parent access their child's eVisa on the same account?

Parents must create separate UKVI accounts for each of their children. However, the same email address and phone number can be used for multiple accounts, so a parent may create their own account and their child's account using the same contact details.

The information contained in this document is accurate as of 21 October 2024.

What happens if someone misses the 31 December 2024 deadline?

The window to access an eVisa will not end on 31 December 2024. The Home Office has stated that they will allow eVisa applications to continue into 2025.

For those that miss the deadline, they should still complete the application as soon as possible, but in the meantime, there is another way to prove their status. Employers and landlords in the UK can use the existing Employer Checking Service and Landlord Checking service to check their immigration status. These services can be used to check the status of someone who has not completed their eVisa application or is waiting for their application to be processed.

6. Useful resources

Link to the government website, for the most up to date guidance on eVisa applications
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/online-immigration-status-evisa>.

Translated step by step guidance in English, Arabic, Dari, Pashto and Ukrainian
[eVisas - Lancashire County Council](#)

Video produced by the Home Office in English explaining what an eVisa is
[What is an eVisa? \(video\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Video produced by the Home Office in English with step-by-step guidance on how to access an eVisa
[How to create a UKVI account and access your eVisa \(video\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Video produced by the Home Office in English explaining how eVisas are used when travelling from outside of the UK
[How to travel with your eVisa \(video\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Video produced by the Home Office in English explaining how to use an eVisa to generate a share code
[How to prove your immigration status with an eVisa \(video\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Step by step video guide to creating an eVisa account in Ukrainian
[Як створити імміграційний обліковий запис та приєднати е-віза / How to create an immigration account \(youtube.com\)](#)

North West RSMP eVisa information webpage
<https://northwestrsmp.org.uk/general-information-for-migrants/evisas/>

GMCA Linktree that collates the above resources (will be updated where appropriate)
<https://bit.ly/eVisa-information>

RSMP eVisa drop in

The North West Regional Strategic Migration Partnership are hosting a series of open sessions where you can join a call to discuss the questions that you have about eVisas.

When: 2nd Wednesday every month - 1pm – 1.45pm

Click here for the link to [Join the Teams meeting](#) or contact gen.burgess@manchester.gov.uk for more information