



Home Office

Partner Pack: ID cards

Changes to travelling to the UK using EU, EEA and Swiss ID cards



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What's changing

European Union (EU), European Economic Area (EEA) and Swiss nationals can currently travel to the UK with a valid passport or a national identity (ID) card.

From the 1 October 2021, changes to government legislation will mean that most EU, EEA and Swiss nationals can only travel to the UK using a valid passport, unless they have applied to the EU Settlement Scheme by 30 June 2021 or otherwise have protected rights under the Citizens' Rights Agreements.

From 1 October, an ID card will no longer be accepted for travel to the UK, unless the exceptions apply.

Anyone travelling to the UK on an invalid travel document may be refused entry at the border.



Who does this affect?

Most EU, EEA and Swiss nationals travelling to the UK using an ID card.



Who does this not affect?

This will not affect EU, EEA, and Swiss nationals:

- who have received settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS)
- who have made an application by 30 June 2021 to the EUSS but have not yet received a decision on their application
- have an [EU Settlement Scheme family permit](#)
- who are an [S2 Healthcare Visitor](#)
- with a frontier worker [permit](#)
- who are Swiss nationals and have a [Swiss Service Provider](#) from Switzerland visa

EU, EEA and Swiss nationals in the groups above can still use their ID cards to travel to the UK at least until 31 December 2025. They'll also be able to use them after that date, if the cards meet the security standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

This will also not apply to Gibraltar ID cards issued to British citizens or to passport cards issued to Irish citizens, they will continue to be accepted for travel to the UK.

Why we need to change

Following the end of free movement on 31 December 2020, EU, EEA and Swiss nationals now follow the same rules for entering the UK as travellers from around the world.

We are committed to building back a safer, fairer and more prosperous UK. The points-based immigration system is one step towards achieving our ambition.

The change to travel documents is another step to strengthen our borders and bring rules for EU nationals in line with the rest of the world.

Strengthening the security of our border is a key government priority. ID cards are amongst the least secure travel documents and they are often used by organised crime groups. Phasing these out will help to deter those who would abuse the system.

We need your help – support for the campaign

In 2019, just under 10 million people used an ID card rather than a passport to book a flight to enter the UK*. This equates to around a third of all EEA and Swiss air passengers. Maritime passengers are even more likely to use an ID card. Data from Calais in 2019 shows around 83% of EEA and Swiss freight drivers used an ID card. This puts into perspective the size of the audience who need to be aware of this change.

There's a risk that EEA nationals may continue to travel to the UK using ID cards and be turned away at the border. This will cause significant disruption to flow at the border, including other passengers, Border Force, and as well as leading to costs for carriers.

It is critical that as many travellers as possible are prepared for the change and we'd appreciate your help with sharing communication materials through your channels and informing your stakeholders. In the following sections you'll find materials to get you up to speed, and content you can use for your own channels to help spread the word.

We are open to your suggestions and feedback. If there is something you think is missing from this pack that would be helpful for your channels, please do let us know. Translated assets and more social assets will be available later in the year. Thank you.

*All data is based on operational data sets and should be treated as an estimate.



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Communications materials



Key messages



- From the 1 October 2021, changes to government legislation will mean that most EU, EEA and Swiss nationals can only travel to the UK using a valid passport, unless they have applied to the EU Settlement Scheme by 30 June 2021 or otherwise have protected rights under the Citizens' Rights Agreements.
- ID cards will no longer be accepted as a valid travel document and it will not be possible to enter the UK using one.
- Gibraltar ID cards issued to British citizens and passport cards issued to Irish citizens will continue to be accepted for travel to the UK.
- We are committed to building back a safer, fairer and more prosperous UK.
- The change to travel documents forms part of wider plans to strengthen our borders and bring rules for EU nationals in line with the rest of the world following the end of free movement.

Factsheet



This includes key lines and Q&As to help you communicate the changes to your stakeholders.

You may use this to crib key lines and answer frequently asked questions.

What's included:

- What's changing and why
- Who it impacts
- What people need to do

This is available in the [asset library](#).



Social assets



Digital assets for you to use to communicate on social media and online platforms.

We suggest the below copy to accompany any social posts:

- From 1 October 2021, most EU, EEA and Swiss nationals will need a passport to travel to the UK, find out more on [GOV.UK](#)
- Travelling to the UK using an EU ID card? From 1 October you'll need to use your passport to enter the UK. Find out more on [GOV.UK](#)

Please link to the GOV.UK site: [Visiting the UK as an EU, EEA or Swiss citizen](#)

The assets are available in the [asset library](#).



Copy



Here's some copy that you can use in newsletters or for updating your websites or guidance.

Copy is available in the [asset library](#).



GOV.UK



The GOV.UK website has the latest guidance and information all in one place to support you with communicating the changes.

Please include a link to the site in your materials.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visiting-the-uk-as-an-eu-eea-or-swiss-citizen>





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More information on changes to the immigration system



Points-based immigration system

- The rules for EU, EEA and Swiss citizens looking to work/study in the UK have changed.
- The UK left the EU on 31 January 2020 and free movement between the UK and the EU ended on 31 December 2020.
- On 1 January 2021, the UK implemented a new points-based immigration system that prioritises skills and talent over where a person comes from.
- EU, EEA and Swiss citizens who want to work or study in the UK will need to meet certain requirements under the UK's new points-based immigration system and apply for a visa online before travelling to the UK.
- Under the new system, EU, EEA and Swiss citizens can continue to visit the UK without applying for a visa and in most cases, will be able to stay for up to six months. Visitors may participate in a wide range of activities, including tourism, visiting family and friends, short term study and business-related activities.
- Those eligible for status under the EU Settlement Scheme are not affected.
- Find out more at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

Travelling to the UK with status under the EU Settlement Scheme

- If you have status under the EU Settlement Scheme, to avoid delays at the border you must either travel to the UK with the passport or ID document that you used to apply or add the document on which you intend to travel to your UK Visas and Immigration account before you travel.
- You can do this by going to [Update your UK Visas and Immigration account details on GOV.UK](#) or alternatively you can update your documents from the [View and prove your immigration status service](#).

Biometric Residence Cards

- Biometric Residence Card (BRC) holders need to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to obtain immigration status to remain living in the UK after 30 June 2021 even if the card expires after this date.



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Get in touch



Contact

If you have any questions, feedback, or would like to discuss how we can work together to communicate this change please contact:

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ID cards communications campaign lead





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Thank you

