

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO
THE STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN IMMIGRATION RULES
PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2026 (HC 584)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Home Office and is laid before Parliament by Command of His Majesty.
- 1.2 This Explanatory Memorandum contains information for the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments and the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee.

2. Declaration

- 2.1 Jo White MP, Minister for Migration and Citizenship at the Home Office, confirms that this Explanatory Memorandum meets the required standard.
- 2.2 Kristian Armstrong, Director at the Home Office, confirms that this Explanatory Memorandum meets the required standard.

3. Contact

- 3.1. Specific written queries relating to this Statement of Changes should be directed to Robert Hayes-Walters at StateofChanges@homeoffice.gov.uk. Please note that this mailbox is only for parliamentary use in relation to specific technical queries regarding the drafting of this Statement of Changes. It is not a contact point for general enquiries. Queries to this e-mail address from outside Parliament about other immigration issues, including how these changes affect applications, will not receive a response.
- 3.2. More general queries should be directed to the Home Office as per the ‘Contact UKVI’ section on the visas and immigration pages of GOV.UK website.¹
- 3.3. A copy of this Statement of Changes can be found on the visa and immigration pages of the GOV.UK website.²

Part One: Explanation, and context, of the Instrument

4. Overview of the Instrument

What does the legislation do?

- 4.1 This instrument amends the Immigration Rules, made under the provisions of section 1(4) and section 3(2) of the Immigration Act 1971, that are used to regulate people’s entry to, and stay in, the United Kingdom.
- 4.2 The changes being made relate to:

¹ Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>

² Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-rules-statement-of-changes>

- Changes to Part Suitability: clarification regarding breach of immigration laws
- Changes to Appendix Skilled Worker to support victims of modern slavery
- Removal of the fee for a human rights claim by those in the Family Returns Process
- Changes to Part 1
- Extending Appendix Victim of Domestic Abuse (VDA) eligibility to include adult dependent children
- Changes to facilitate the UK rejoining the Erasmus+ programme
- Changes to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS)
- Changes to the continuous residence requirement in Appendix Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O))

4.3 This instrument also makes minor changes to other policy areas, detailed in paragraphs 5.33 to 5.51 of section 5 of this Explanatory Memorandum.

Where does the legislation extend to, and apply?

- 4.4 The extent of this Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules (that is, the jurisdiction(s) which the statement forms part of the law of) is all of the United Kingdom.
- 4.5 The territorial application of this Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules (that is, where the statement produces a practical effect) is all of the United Kingdom.

5. Policy Context

What is being done and why?

Changes to Part Suitability: clarification regarding breach of immigration laws

- 5.1 This change to SU11.4 will confirm that an applicant will additionally be classed as having been in breach of immigration laws if they previously acted to frustrate immigration controls. This is to ensure provisions apply equally to those in the UK and those outside of the UK applying for Entry Clearance. This change means applicants in the UK who previously failed to report for bail or absconded from bail or custody can now be refused on that basis.

Changes to Appendix Skilled Worker to support victims of modern slavery

- 5.2 The Skilled Worker route exists to allow people to work in a specific, sponsored job. Visa holders cannot normally take up other work if they are not working in the job they were originally sponsored to do. These changes lift that restriction for Skilled Workers who are identified by the Home Office Competent Authorities as victims of modern slavery, allowing them to work for any employer for the remaining duration of their existing permission. This incentivises victims to come forward early and

guards against those who seek to weaponise the sponsorship system in order to exploit vulnerable workers.

Removal of the fee for a human rights claim by those in the Family Returns Process

- 5.3 Appendix FM and Appendix Private Life are amended so that families in the Family Returns Process can raise Article 8/private life or family life claims without having to make a formal valid application, pay a fee, or use a specified form. Instead, they can give their claim directly to Home Office staff. This process is already in operation, and the Rules have been amended accordingly to formalise this and provide a legal basis.
- 5.4 This change aligns the Rules for those in the Family Returns Process with those who are in immigration detention, for whom provision for this process is already made in GEN.1.9. of Appendix FM and PL 1.3. of Appendix Private Life. Families do not routinely enter immigration detention for their removal from the UK, so the existing provision in the Rules for those in detention does not apply to them.
- 5.5 The intention of the change is to align provision in the Rules for those in the Family Returns Process with those in detention, reduce delays and mitigate risk of abuse through repeat fee waiver applications where a human rights claim is not subsequently made.

Changes to Part 1

Amendment to Paragraph 34G(4) of the Rules

- 5.6 This change will clarify how the date of application is calculated following a fee waiver request. This will confirm that the subsequent application following a fee waiver decision must be the application specified in the fee waiver request. This is to combat abuse of the fee waiver process by applicants who are seeking to extend their permission under Section 3C of the 1971 Immigration Act by making a Human Rights (HR) application, then varying that to a non-HR application afterwards.

Amendment to Variation rules (adding 34BB 2A)

- 5.7 This change will confirm existing policy (currently not in the Immigration Rules, but part of the Immigration (Biometric Registration) Regulations 2008) that, even if the applicant should vary an application, there is a single period to enrol biometrics. This is to combat abuse by applicants who make a Human Rights application but don't enrol biometrics, and then vary the application multiple times, but often don't enrol for those either. This is also related to attempts by applicants to extend their permission under Section 3C.

Extending Appendix Victim of Domestic Abuse (VDA) eligibility to include adult dependent children

- 5.8 The eligibility requirements for Appendix Victim of Domestic Abuse (VDA) currently cater for spouses, partners and their children whose relationship has broken down because of domestic abuse and where they had entered the UK with a legitimate expectation of settlement based on their relationship.

- 5.9 This change would extend Appendix VDA to adult child dependants whose relationship with their visa sponsor has broken down due to domestic abuse, which will equalise their treatment under the Immigration Rules.

Changes to facilitate the UK rejoining the Erasmus+ programme

- 5.10 At the May 2025 UK-EU summit, the UK and the European Union (EU) agreed that the UK would seek to rejoin the Erasmus+ programme, which is the EU's main programme for education, training, youth, and sport activities.
- 5.11 This commitment formed an important part of the UK-EU Common Understanding package, where the UK agreed with the EU that it would work towards joining the Erasmus+ programme.³
- 5.12 The UK Government and European Commission announced on 17 December 2025 that they had reached agreement on the UK's association to Erasmus+ in 2027.⁴
- 5.13 Protocol I to the Trade and Cooperation Agreement was amended on 15 April 2026 to implement the UK's association.⁵

Immigration Rules: Introduction

- 5.14 New definitions have been introduced to clarify the meaning of terms used in the Erasmus+ permitted activities set out in Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities. Job shadowing, participative observation, skills competitions, and traineeships are all now defined activities within the Immigration Rules Introduction at paragraph 6.2(b). A new definition has also been added for youth workers under the Erasmus+ programme.
- 5.15 Additionally, the definition of course of study has been expanded to clarify that it includes courses undertaken by a visitor which are not part of a short educational exchange or visit.

Appendix V: Visitor

- 5.16 Changes have been made to Appendix: V of the Immigration Rules to permit visitors to study at UK state funded schools and academies where they are participating in an Erasmus+ project. This will permit state funded schools and academies to host Erasmus+ participants on short-term study placements (up to 6 months). Additionally, new eligibility requirements have been introduced to ensure Erasmus+ participants are legitimate and, where applicable, have permission from their parent or legal guardian and their home institution to undertake Erasmus+ activities under the Visitor route. This is to prevent any potential abuse of the Visitor route and safeguard Erasmus+ participants who are under the age of 18.

³ Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukey-summit-key-documentation/uk-eu-summit-common-understanding-html>

⁴ Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69df561c8e256133a842257a/EXPLANATORY_MEMO_RANDOM_EU_PROGRAMMES_TCA_DECISION.pdf

⁵ Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/decision-no-12026-of-the-specialised-committee-on-participation-in-union-programmes-under-the-trade-and-cooperation-agreement-amending-protocol-i-of-t>

Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities

- 5.17 The range of activities permitted under the Visitor route has been expanded to facilitate participation in Erasmus+. Under the Immigration Rules Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities, all visitors will now be able to partake in workshops, debates and attend Skills Competitions, provided they meet the relevant eligibility requirements outlined in Appendix V: Visitor.
- 5.18 Additionally, a new sub-section entitled “Erasmus+ Activities” has been added to the Immigration Rules Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities, setting out a new permitted activities section reserved only for those on the Erasmus+ programme. Under the Visitor route, Erasmus+ participants (provided they meet the eligibility requirements outlined in Appendix V: Visitor), can now do the following additional permitted activities:
- provide or receive training at a UK-based organisation or educational institution;
 - take part in courses at a UK-based organisation or educational institution;
 - undertake a traineeship for up to 30 days at a UK-based organisation or educational institution;
 - undertake practical learning in the form of job shadowing at a UK-based organisation (including sports organisations) or educational institution; and
 - partake in coaching or training assignments at a UK-based sports organisation.

Appendix Student and Appendix Child Student

- 5.19 To facilitate participation in Erasmus+ by international students coming to the UK, a number of amendments are being made to Appendix Student and Appendix Child Student. These changes will enable students undertaking programmes as part of Erasmus+ to meet the requirements of the Student and Child Student routes where they would otherwise fall outside the existing rules.
- 5.20 Under the current rules, applicants must be studying either an approved qualification or a pre-sessional English language course. Erasmus+ programmes do not always lead to an approved qualification. This change will allow students undertaking a course as part of the Erasmus+ programme to be sponsored under the Student route by a sponsor participating in the scheme regardless of whether the course leads to an approved qualification.
- 5.21 Under the current rules, applicants must be studying at a minimum of Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) level 3 or 4, or Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 6 or 7, depending on their sponsor's licence status. As in-bound programmes that are part of Erasmus+ may include courses at RQF2, this change will permit sponsorship under the student route at this level, restricted to students who are Erasmus+ participants at a sponsor participating in the scheme.
- 5.22 Under the current rules, work placements are only permitted for courses below degree-level where the sponsor is no longer a Probationary Sponsor. A Student sponsor holds Probationary Sponsor status when it is first granted a sponsor licence. A Probationary Sponsor must demonstrate that it can fulfil its sponsorship duties, will continue to do so, and can be trusted to hold Student Sponsor status, by passing its

first annual Basic Compliance Assessment. When a Probationary Sponsor applies for, and passes, its first annual Basic Compliance Assessment, it will be given Student Sponsor status at which point this work placement restriction will no longer apply. Additionally, all courses with work placements must lead to an approved qualification. Together these requirements would prevent some Erasmus+ students from undertaking placements that form part of their programme. New sponsors obtaining a licence would be unable to offer programmes below degree-level which contain work placements during their one year probationary period. This change to the Rules exempts Erasmus+ programmes from this requirement, so that Erasmus+ courses with work placements can begin from the outset of the UK rejoining the Erasmus+ scheme. Additionally, Erasmus+ students will be able to take up a course with a work placement regardless of whether it leads to an approved qualification, given some Erasmus+ courses are not expected to lead to an approved qualification.

- 5.23 Under the current rules, work placements are restricted to a maximum of a third of the total length of the course (or half of the total course if the course is at degree level or above at: a higher education provider with a track record of compliance; an overseas higher education institution in the UK; or is part of a qualification recognised as being at UK bachelor's degree level or above by a student undertaking a study abroad programme in the UK). The changes exempt Erasmus+ participants from these restrictions to enable work placements that constitute a greater proportion of the course of study as in several Erasmus+ programmes anticipated to be facilitated through Appendix Student.
- 5.24 Under the current rules, study at a state-funded school or academy is only permitted in limited circumstances on the Student and Child Student routes. This change extends eligibility to allow study at a state-funded school or academy where the institution holds a sponsor licence and is sponsoring the Student or Child Student to undertake a programme as part of Erasmus+.

Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) visa scheme

- 5.25 An update is also being made to Appendix Government Authorised Exchange schemes to add the "Erasmus+" scheme.

Changes to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS)

Appendix EU changes

- 5.26 Consistent with the Withdrawal Agreement (WA), pre-settled status (PSS) granted under the EUSS may be removed where the holder no longer meets the eligibility requirements of the EUSS and it is proportionate to remove their PSS on that basis. The changes will enable a small number of PSS holders who no longer meet the requirements of the EUSS, e.g. due to a sudden change in family circumstances, but where it is not proportionate to remove their PSS, to remain in scope of the EUSS and qualify for settled status in due course.
- 5.27 The changes will amend the EUSS application deadline for first-time joining family member applicants to three months from their latest legal entry to the UK since the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020, to better reflect WA requirements. To prevent abuse, an applicant whose previous EUSS application was rejected or refused after entering the UK without an EUSS family permit (which enables relevant

requirements to be checked before they travel) will need to show reasonable grounds for applying more than three months after that previous entry or re-enter the UK with an EUSS family permit to trigger a new three-month deadline.

- 5.28 The EUSS allows a biometric residence permit (BRP) (which may have expired by up to 18 months) to be used as proof of identity and nationality. As almost all BRPs expired by 31 December 2024, there is no benefit in keeping this provision beyond June 2026 and therefore the scope to apply with a BRP is being removed.
- 5.29 In *Ayoola* [2025], the Court of Appeal held that a child who holds PSS and whose EU citizen parent was formerly a worker or self-employed person in the UK has a right of residence under the WA that continues until the completion of their education in the UK. That right is not lost solely because, after the end of the transition period, the child ceases to be a family member of an EU citizen and does not qualify as a family member who has retained the right of residence. The changes will therefore enable such a child who has obtained PSS as a family member to retain their PSS (and go on to qualify for settled status), and will enable their primary carer (and any dependant under the age of 18 of that person) to obtain or retain PSS (and go on to qualify for settled status), where this is necessary for the child to complete their education in the UK.

Appendix EU (Family Permit) changes

- 5.30 The changes will delete the EUSS travel permit route, which enabled an EUSS status holder to return to the UK on a new passport. It has been replaced by scope for an EUSS status holder to use the Update My Details service from outside the UK, including to link their EUSS status to a new passport.

Appendix AR (EU) changes

- 5.31 The EUSS administrative review (AR) route closed to any new applications in April 2024. All EUSS AR applications have now been concluded and so the changes will remove the EUSS AR route from the Immigration Rules by deleting Appendix AR (EU) and a related provision in Appendix AR.

Changes to the continuous residence requirement in Appendix Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O))

- 5.32 This change removes the requirement for dependent children on the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route to complete a five-year continuous residence period before qualifying for settlement. This will enable eligible dependent children to settle alongside their parents, where their parents meet the settlement requirements, and where they would otherwise be prevented from doing so by the continuous residence requirement. This will align the BN(O) route with the well-established approach under other immigration routes.

Other Minor Changes

Changes to Appendix T2 Minister of Religion

- 5.33 An update is being made to Appendix T2 Minister of Religion to:

- exempt applicants that are members of religious orders from the requirement that their role must not involve mainly non-pastoral duties following a review of the route.
- change the way the financial requirement is assessed for main applicants and their dependants when main applicants are exempt from the requirement to be paid the National Minimum Wage. This is due to applicants not receiving a salary while they are in the UK.
- remove the upper limit on how long an applicant can remain within the route to align with other work routes.

Changes to Appendix Temporary Work – Religious Worker

5.34 An update is being made to Appendix Temporary Work – Religious Worker to:

- change the resident labour consideration requirement to remove the requirement for a sponsor to advertise, replacing it with an affiliation requirement. This will ensure an established connection to the sponsoring faith-based organisation is demonstrated.
- change the way the financial requirement is assessed for main applicants and their dependants when main applicants are exempt from the requirement to be paid the National Minimum Wage. This is due to applicants not receiving a salary while they are in the UK.

Change to the name of a service provider

5.35 In the Statement of Changes (HC 1691) laid in Spring 2026, we made changes that removed reference to the specific name of the service provider “Ecctis” within the Immigration Rules and instead referred to a generic term. This did not in any way change the rules an applicant needs to meet and was simply for consistency within the rules. We subsequently identified one instance in Appendix Skilled Worker where this change was not made, so are making that change now, at the first available opportunity since it was identified.

Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) schemes

5.36 A change is being made to Appendix Government Authorised Exchange schemes to remove the entry: “The Ofgem International Staff Exchange Scheme” as, following engagement with Ofgem, the scheme is no longer in operation and is now redundant.

Changes in Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities to improve clarification

5.37 Changes are being made to ensure the Visitor route remains aligned with mobility commitments the United Kingdom has made in free trade agreements with other nation states.

5.38 The changes will clarify that:

- visitors will no longer need to demonstrate that the training they wish to undertake in the UK is unavailable in their home country; and
- artists, entertainers, and musicians will be permitted to attend rehearsals under the Visitor route, while entertainment staff will be able to assist with activities permitted under PA.14.1.

- 5.39 Additionally, a minor clarification has been made to address a spelling error in the word “remunerated”, located in PA.9.1(h).

Change to introduce a new definition for “Entertainment staff”

- 5.40 A new definition for entertainment staff has been added to paragraph 6.2(b) to define who would be considered as entertainment staff under PA 14.2 of Appendix Visitor Permitted Activities. This new definition is being added to limit the scope by which entertainment staff can be interpreted, as well as to keep the definition aligned to the Visitor route immigration rules.

Update in Appendix A to remove outdated provisions relating to Tier 1 (Entrepreneur) and Tier 1 (Investor)

- 5.41 This change removes references to entry clearance and extension applications in the Tier 1 (Investor) route. The deadline for main applicants to apply for entry clearance or to extend their stay under the Tier 1 (Investor) route was 17 February 2026. This change also removes point scoring requirements associated with entry clearance and extension applications for the Tier 1 (Entrepreneur) route.

Removal of provisions in Appendix Start-up related to main applicants no longer eligible to apply

- 5.42 This change removes references to main applications in the Start-up route. Main applications under this visa have not been able to be made since April 2023. Dependants are still eligible to apply under this visa.

Annual Uplift to the Student Route Maintenance Requirement

- 5.43 There is a maintenance requirement for student applicants to demonstrate they have funds to support themselves for each month of their course (up to 9 months). This level of funds is aligned with the maintenance loans available for home students, which is reviewed every year by the Department for Education. This change increases the maintenance requirement to match the maintenance loans available for home students for the 2026/2027 academic year. We will ensure it continues to align with home students’ maintenance loans in future.
- 5.44 The annual uplift to the existing maintenance requirement was already ministerially agreed as part of the package of measures to combat student abuse on the student route that was announced in May 2024. The Home Secretary committed to continue these changes in her statement of the 30 July 2024.⁶
- 5.45 We have updated the maximum amount for the accommodation offset in line with the changes to the maintenance requirement. The accommodation offset allows students to demonstrate less maintenance funds if they have paid a deposit for their accommodation in the UK

Minor change to the BN(O) definitions

⁶ Available at <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2024-07-30/hcws51>

- 5.46 In the introductory provisions of the Immigration Rules a change has been made to replace the definition of “BN(O) Household Member” with “BN(O) Adult Child”. This is a consequential amendment to align the terminology with changes made in HC 1691.

Appendix Long Residence: changes to remove inconsistencies

- 5.47 In Appendix Long Residence, paragraph LR 15.2 contains provisions governing the variation of settlement applications and the consequences of failing to pay any required Immigration Health Charge, including rejection of the varied application as invalid. No equivalent provisions currently apply where a permission-to-stay application is varied under paragraph LR 6.2. These changes address that inconsistency and align the treatment of varied permission-to-stay and settlement applications.

Appendix CRP - Addition of age requirement to Eligibility

- 5.48 Appendix Child Relative (Sponsor with Protection) (CRP) is intended to allow a child under 18 to apply for either entry clearance or permission to stay with or join their close relative who has protection status in the UK and is not settled.
- 5.49 At present there are provisions in the Validity section of the Rules to reject an application where the applicant is over 18, however this provision cannot be operationalised for Entry Clearance applications for technical reasons.
- 5.50 This change will introduce a new Eligibility requirement that would allow decision makers to refuse where an applicant is over the age of 18, ensuring the integrity of this route’s purpose and streamlining operational decision making.

Other drafting changes

- 5.51 The Statement of Changes also introduces minor drafting changes to correct incorrect paragraph references and minor errors.

6. Legislative and Legal Context

How has the law changed?

- 6.1 The Immigration Rules, as laid before Parliament by the Secretary of State, constitute a statement of practice to be followed in the administration of the Immigration Act 1971 for regulating the entry into, and stay of, persons in the United Kingdom.
- 6.2 This Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules will be incorporated into a consolidated version of the Immigration Rules. This can be found on the GOV.UK website, where all the Statements of Changes in Immigration Rules issued since May 1994 are published.⁷
- 6.3 The changes to Appendix T2 Minister of Religion and changes to Appendix Temporary Work – Religious Worker will come into effect on 29 October 2026, the changes relating to the Annual Uplift to the Student Route Maintenance Requirement will come into effect on 30 November 2026 and the EUSS changes relating to

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules>

biometric residence permits will come into effect on 9 December 2026. All other changes will come into effect on 8 October 2026 as detailed in the implementation section of the Statement of Changes.

Extending Appendix Victim of Domestic Abuse (VDA) eligibility to include adult dependent children

- 6.4 Following a High Court order in Northern Ireland: JR337 Application for Judicial Review [2026] NIKB 12, the Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Concession (MVDAC) was found to be unlawful as applied to the applicant. The applicant is an adult child who claimed to be the victim of domestic abuse by her parent, on whom they were dependent for permission to remain in the UK. As a result of the ruling, the Home Office will need to amend MVDAC policy to address this cohort.⁸
- 6.5 While this litigation targeted the MVDAC, Home Office Legal Advisors (HOLA) agree that continuing to exclude adult dependent children who are on a route to settlement from applying under Appendix VDA will likely lead to future successful challenge of VDA on the same grounds and that a dependent parent would be in an analogous position.
- 6.6 Because of this, we are amending the Rules to extend eligibility for Appendix VDA to adult child dependants as these are the two dependencies cohorts that could be represented in the immigration routes covered by Appendix VDA.

Changes to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS)

- 6.7 For the EUSS-related changes at paragraph 5.29, the relevant provisions of the WA have been in force since the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020. It was initially considered that they only applied to those who benefitted from them at the end of the transition period. However, in November 2025, the Court of Appeal ruled that the provisions could be first relied on after the end of the transition period: *Ayoola v SSHD* [2025] EWCA Civ 1519 (28 November 2025).⁹ The changes reflect that judgment.

Why was this approach taken to change the law?

- 6.8 This is the only possible approach to make the necessary changes.

7. Consultation

Summary of consultation outcome and methodology

- 7.1 The changes in this Statement have not been the subject of a formal public consultation, as this would be disproportionate given the nature of the changes.

8. Applicable Guidance

- 8.1 Guidance relating to these Rules changes will be updated and placed on the GOV.UK website when these changes take effect.

⁸ <https://www.judiciaryni.uk/judicial-decisions/2026-nikb-12>

⁹ <https://caselaw.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ewca/civ/2025/1519>

- 8.2 It is our practice to only publish guidance updates when Rules changes take effect to mitigate the high risk of users referring to the wrong version.

Part Two: Impact and the Better Regulation Framework

9. Impact Assessment

- 9.1 A full Impact Assessment has not been prepared for this Statement of Changes because the level of impact and/or type of change being made does not warrant doing so.
- 9.2 Although there is a degree of impact as a result of the changes being made, a full Impact Assessment has not been prepared for the changes listed below because the level and effects of the changes do not meet the threshold for producing an Impact Assessment or Economic Note:

Changes to facilitate the UK rejoining the Erasmus+ programme

- 9.3 The United Kingdom (UK) and the European Union (EU) have agreed for the UK to associate to the Erasmus+ programme from 2027. The UK's re-association with the Erasmus+ programme is a significant policy change for the Government, at substantial cost to the public purse public. However, the changes to the Immigration Rules are facilitative.
- 9.4 The number of participants that could come to the UK under the Erasmus+ programme through our various immigration routes from 2027 is difficult to accurately estimate. The 2019 Erasmus+ annual report from the Publications Office of the EU found that approximately 60,000 Erasmus+ participants came to the UK as part of the programme that year.¹⁰ Since 2019, the Erasmus+ programme has expanded the range of activities eligible for funding and there is likely to be pent up demand since the UK was last a part of the programme. As a result, participant mobility to the UK is expected to be higher than 2019 levels, though this is likely to represent only a moderate increase in usage of our immigration routes relative to the total volume of applicants per year (with the exception of the GAE route which is likely to see a significant increase relative to current volumes).
- 9.5 The Immigration Rules changes do not, in themselves, give rise to any direct or significant impacts on businesses, charities, voluntary bodies, or the public sector. Any wider impacts associated with the implementation of the UK's re-association with Erasmus+ are attributable to the underlying policy.

Appendix V: Visitor and Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities

- 9.6 The changes to Visitor provisions will simply expand the activities that visitors are permitted to do while in the UK. Where the visitor is coming to the UK to undertake an activity ringfenced to Erasmus+, the visitor will be required to demonstrate they are a genuine participant in the Erasmus+ programme.

¹⁰European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, *Erasmus+ annual report 2019 – Statistical annex*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2020, <https://op.europa.eu/s/AjaX>

- 9.7 We expect these changes are likely to support only a small increase in usage of the Visitor route relative to the overall volume of visitors coming to the UK each year as, in the year ending March 2026, 2.2 million visitor visas and 25.1 million Electronic Travel Authorisations (ETAs) were granted to applicants.
- 9.8 In terms of impact on businesses and other organisations, the changes will enable them to take part in Erasmus+ activities that will be facilitated through the Visitor route. To host Erasmus+ visitors, organisations will not need to sponsor them (unlike the Student and Government Authorised Exchange visa routes), meaning the barrier for accepting Erasmus+ visitors is low. However, they may want to assist participants in demonstrating that they are a participant in the Erasmus+ programme (such as in supplying evidence that a mobility is part of a genuine Erasmus+ project).
- 9.9 Overall, these additional provisions will not introduce arrangements that are less favourable to organisations than the current system. The provisions are therefore in line with existing arrangements for organisations not taking part in Erasmus+.

Appendix Student and Appendix Child Student

- 9.10 The changes we are making will simply expand the Appendix Student and Child Student eligibility criteria so that various Erasmus+ schemes and activities become eligible on such routes.
- 9.11 To host such Erasmus+ students, organisations will need to sponsor them meaning that the organisations must hold a valid student sponsor licence.
- 9.12 We expect these changes are likely to support only a moderate increase in usage of our Student routes relative to the overall volume of students coming to the UK each year as, in the year ending March 2026, 412,825 study visas were granted to applicants.

Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) visa scheme

- 9.13 The addition of the Erasmus+ scheme is facilitative and is within the existing GAE visa route. It does not create a new immigration route or affect the existing sponsorship system. Erasmus+ GAE scheme participants will be sponsored under existing provisions and be subject to existing route requirements and conditions.
- 9.14 The addition of the scheme is expected to result in significant use of the route, relative to its current yearly usage, as it sees much smaller volumes than our other routes (in the year ending March 2026, 7,235 Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) visas were granted to applicants). This reflects the anticipated scale of the UK's participation in Erasmus+ rather than an expansion of the GAE route itself. The Immigration Rules change enables eligible participants to access the existing visa route and sponsorship framework.
- 9.15 The scheme is endorsed by DfE, which will monitor its operation and assess delivery against the scheme's objectives. It is administered by an overarching sponsor, IRARA Services Ltd, appointed by DfE following an open procurement exercise. The roles and responsibilities of the Home Office, DfE and the overarching sponsor are set out in a scheme agreement signed by all parties.

- 9.16 Any administrative activity associated with sponsorship arises from the operation of the Erasmus+ programme and the appointment of the overarching sponsor by DfE, which is responsible for delivery of the scheme and ensuring compliance with Home Office sponsorship requirements.

Extending Appendix Victim of Domestic Abuse (VDA) eligibility to include adult dependent children

- 9.17 Due to the small numbers affected, a full impact assessment is not considered proportionate. However, our analysis of Performance Reporting & Analysis Unit (PRAU) data suggests that this change will lead to an estimated 163-447 additional Appendix VDA grants per annum. The overall impact on volumes is therefore expected to be modest, and any associated risks of increased route abuse are likely to be manageable.

Impact on businesses, charities and voluntary bodies

- 9.18 In relation to the other changes in this Statement, there is no, or no significant, impact on business, small businesses, charities or voluntary bodies, or on the public sector.

10. Monitoring and review

What is the approach to monitoring and reviewing this legislation?

- 10.1 The approach to the monitoring of these changes is to review the operation and effect of all the relevant Immigration Rules, including any Rules amended or added to by the changes in this Statement, and lay a report before Parliament within five years of 6 April 2017, and within every five years after that. Following each review, the Secretary of State will decide whether the relevant Immigration Rules should remain unchanged or be revoked or amended. A further Statement of Changes would be needed to revoke or amend the relevant Rules.
- 10.2 A statutory review clause is included in the instrument.

Part Three: Statements and Matters of Particular Interest to Parliament

11. Matters of special interest to Parliament

- 11.1 For all changes there are no matters of interest.

12. European Convention on Human Rights

- 12.1 As this Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules is subject to negative resolution procedure and does not amend primary legislation, no statement is required.

13. The relevant European Union Acts

- 13.1 This instrument is not being made under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 or the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (“relevant European Union Acts”). It does, however, relate to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union because it supports further implementation of the EUSS.

- 13.2 For all other changes, this instrument does not relate to withdrawal from the European Union or trigger the statement requirements under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018.

14. Consolidation

- 14.1 The Government has committed to the consolidation of the Rules as part of its response to the Law Commission recommendations on simplifying the Immigration Rules.

