

Mobility: Immigration alert

November 2023

United Kingdom

Autumn Statement 2023

Executive summary

On 22 November 2023, the UK Chancellor made a number of immigration-related announcements in the Autumn Statement 2023, notably about business visitor visa reform. The government will expand the business visitor rules to allow business travelers to engage in a wider range of permitted activities and paid engagements, effective from January 2024. The government will also explore further reforms to the business visitor rules in 2024.

Key developments

In his speech, the Chancellor confirmed the government will deliver on the Spring Budget 2023 commitment relating to the simplification and expansion of the UK's business visitor visa. He stated that the changes relate to short-term business visitor visas, and will not have an impact on the overall level of the UK net migration. The government will introduce changes from January 2024 that will broaden and clarify the activities that can be undertaken in an intra-corporate setting, offer wider coverage for the legal services sector and simplify arrangements for those undertaking paid engagements.

The Chancellor also stated that the government will explore further improvements to the business visitor rules alongside the potential for further enhanced provisions linked to trade negotiations.

The government is also signing and expanding new and existing Youth Mobility Schemes (YMS) to make sure the next generation of talent have a wide range of opportunities to live, work and travel abroad and experience other cultures. In 2023, the government has increased the places available on the YMS with Australia and Canada by 7,000 and, for 2024, added a further 9,100 places through new and expanded agreements, including with Japan and South Korea. The government has also expanded the eligibility and length of stay available for participants from Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

The announcements follow the recommendations included in [EY and the City UK](#), and [EY and the City of London](#) Corporation reports. In the 2021 EY and TheCityUK joint report, EY called on the UK government to adapt the visit rules in line with the business need for short-term productive work. We are encouraged that the Migration Advisory Committee echoed that recommendation in its October 2021 report to consider expanding visit rules.

The EY and City of London report includes recommendations for the government to:

- ▶ Evolve visitor rules globally to recognize cross-border remote work (CBRW) as a permitted "Remote Work Visitor" activity in itself

- ▶ Engage proactively in trade agreement negotiations, recognizing that much of the pressure on UK business comes from employee demand for short periods of outbound CBRW
- ▶ Lead unilaterally by recognizing certain forms of CBRW as permitted under a "Remote Work Visitor" activity stream

Impact on employers

These announcements will provide greater flexibility, simplify and streamline process and reduce costs, facilitating the agile mobilization of the global employee workforce.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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