

# NEWS RELEASE

## British High Commission

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### **NEW BUSINESS VISIT VISA ENSURES THE UK REMAINS THE DESTINATION OF CHOICE FOR BUSINESS**

The government today published detailed plans for the creation of a new visit visa for business. The aim is to clarify business activities which can be conducted by holders of this visa and ensure that the UK continues to be a global business hub.

Today's Statement of Intent provides further details in advance of the changes of how the business visit visa will work. It defines the following activities possible under the new visa:

- attending meetings and conferences
- arranging deals, negotiating or signing trade agreement or contracts
- undertaking fact-finding missions, checking details of goods and
- conducting site visits and promotional activities.

The aim is to ensure that the UK stays open and attractive to business and remains the top destination in Europe for inward investment (and second globally only to the US).

The UK is the most preferred nation for investments by India. India is the fastest growing source of Inward Investment Projects from Asia into the UK. Figures for the financial year 2007-08 show 75 inward investment projects from India.

The Visitor Consultation, published in December 2007, proposed three principal categories of visitor - business, tourist and sponsored family. For the first time, this consultation process included engagement with foreign communities abroad and the former Immigration Minister, Liam Byrne, came to India to hear the views of stakeholders. The government set out the results of its consultation and proposals for reform of the visitor routes in June 2008.

The High Commissioner, Sir Richard Stagg, said at the time the results were published:

"The reforms provide us with a framework to create a 21<sup>st</sup> century visa and immigration system, responsive to the needs of today's genuine visitor and the security of the UK."

Today, the government also set out the key features of the new visas for sportsmen and women and entertainers, recognising the important contribution these individuals make to British cultural and sporting life. The three new visitor visas will be launched in late November.

The proposal is part of the government's review of the short-term migration system for visitors, to underpin the UK as a destination of choice for business and visitors, whilst deterring those who would seek to abuse the immigration system.

None of the visitor proposals affects the Points Based System (PBS) for longer term migration and for those coming to study. The PBS was launched for applications in the UK under Tier 1 (highly skilled migrants) on 29 February and on 1 April for applications from India. Tiers 2 (skilled workers with a job offer) and 5 (temporary and youth mobility) will be launched globally in late November and Tier 4 for students will be phased in from Spring 2009.

**Notes for Editors:**

1. The Government Response to the Consultation on Visitors can be found at: [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/consultations/close\\_dconsultations/visitorsconsultationpaper](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/consultations/close_dconsultations/visitorsconsultationpaper).
2. The Visitor Consultation took place between December 2007 and March 2008 and received 604 responses. The consultation document can be found at: [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/consultations/close\\_dconsultations/visitorsconsultationpaper](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/consultations/close_dconsultations/visitorsconsultationpaper)
3. The full analysis of responses can be found in Annex B of the Government Response to the Consultation on Visitors.
4. The Command Paper and Statements of Intent for the Points Based System can be found at: [http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/managingourborders/pb\\_sdocs/](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/managingourborders/pb_sdocs/)

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