

# NEWS RELEASE

## British High Commission

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### UPDATE ON IMMIGRATION CHANGES

The UK government is implementing a number of important changes to the immigration system this week.

Today the government will start to issue identity cards to foreign nationals making applications in the UK to stay as a student or based on marriage. This does not yet apply to people making visa applications in India.

The identity card will be introduced gradually over the next three years for all those coming to the UK for more than six months or extending their stay in the UK.

On 27 November, the government will also introduce:

- Tiers 2 and 5 of the Points Based System
- the new Business Visit Visa
- and an increase in the marriage visa age.

These changes will affect applications being made in India from this date.

The Points Based System will be expanded with the launch of Tier 2, for skilled migrants with a job offer and Tier 5, for temporary workers and youth mobility. The current work permit scheme will become part of Tier 2. Tier 5 covers those travelling temporarily to the UK for mainly non-economic reasons, including sportspeople, entertainers, charity workers and those travelling under international agreements. The government will also launch a new single generic Youth Mobility Scheme. The provision will abolish 6 existing youth mobility schemes, including the Working Holiday Maker Scheme.

The introduction of the new Business Visit Visa on 27 November will clarify the business activities that can be undertaken by holders of this visa.

From 27 November both parties to a marriage will have to be at least 21 years old before a marriage visa can be issued. This is part of the government's action against forced marriage. This complements the introduction today of new legislation to protect the victims of forced marriages.

#### Notes for Editors:

1. For further information on all these immigration changes please refer to announcements in British High Commission's press releases at: <http://ukinindia.fco.gov.uk>
2. The Points Based System is the new system for managing migration to the UK for the purposes of study, work and training. The Command Paper and Statements of Intent can be found at: [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/managingourborders/pbsd/cs/](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/managingourborders/pbsd/cs/)

3. The Points Based System Tiers 1 (highly skilled migrants) was introduced in February 2008, Tiers 2 (skilled migrants with a job offer) and 5 (temporary workers) will be introduced 27 November 2008. Tier 4 for students will be implemented from March 2009. Tier 3 (low skilled) will only be implemented if specific shortages are identified that cannot be filled from the UK's domestic or European labour force and is currently suspended.
3. The shortage occupation list which was issued on 11 November will start to be used when Tier 2 of the Points Based System is launched on 27 November. Tier 2 enables UK employers to employ nationals from outside the resident workforce and EEA to fill a particular skilled job that cannot be filled by a resident worker. If an occupation is not included on the list it does not prevent workers in that sector coming to the UK to work. It means that employers need to first show that they cannot recruit from the UK or European Economic Area (called the resident labour market test). The shortage occupation list can be found at: [www.ukba.gov.uk](http://www.ukba.gov.uk).
5. Under the Points Based System (PBS), prospective applicants need to accumulate points attached to various attributes in order to qualify for a visa. They can calculate their points in advance of their application, and therefore their likelihood of being successful. The PBS operates flexibly and the number of points required to qualify for entry can be lowered or raised depending on the needs of the economy and taking account of population trends.
6. Tier 5 covers temporary workers and youth mobility. Temporary workers include individuals in creative and sporting sectors coming to the UK for up to 12 months, charity workers (voluntary), those coming under government authorised exchange scheme, some religious workers, overseas government employees and those entering under international agreements. The Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS) allows sponsored young people to travel to the UK for principally non economic objectives. Six youth mobility provisions are abolished including the Working Holiday Maker Scheme. The YMS operates only where immigration risks are minimised, effective returns arrangements and reciprocal opportunities for young UK nationals are in place. This means that countries with a mandatory visa requirement are not eligible to join the scheme. Currently only 4 countries world-wide will be participating in the YMS: Japan, New Zealand, Australia and Canada. There will still remain a wide range of other PBS routes that young people of all nationalities can use.
7. The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act can be found at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts20070020.htm>

**Dan Chugg, Director, Press and Communications**  
**British High Commission, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi 110021**  
**Tel: 26872161; Fax: 26870065**  
**[mailto: Sam.Murray@fco.gov.uk](mailto:Sam.Murray@fco.gov.uk)**  
**Visit us at: <http://ukinindia.fco.gov.uk/>**