

# GMS Flash Alert

Immigration

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## United Kingdom – Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) Scheme Is Now Fully Enforced

The UK government began fully enforcing its Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) scheme from 25 February 2026, requiring all visa-exempt visitors to obtain digital permission prior to traveling to the UK.<sup>1,2</sup>

### WHY THIS MATTERS

The ETA scheme will significantly affect global mobility stakeholders, particularly HR leaders, payroll managers, and internationally mobile employees. This development necessitates updated compliance protocols and proactive communication within organisations to avoid costly travel disruptions and to help maintain business continuity for frequent UK travelers. For mobile employees, failure to obtain the appropriate documentation may result in denied entry, missed business opportunities, and potential reputational risks for employers.

### Background

Previously, visitors from visa-exempt countries could travel to the UK without advanced digital permission, relying on carrier checks and border controls. The ETA scheme was introduced in March 2023, but enforcement was phased to allow time for adaptation. British and Irish citizens, including dual citizens, were, and remain, exempt from ETA requirements, however dual citizens will now be expected to present a valid British passport or Certificate of Entitlement.

### Key Highlights

- **Mandatory ETA:** From 25 February 2026, visitors from 85 nationalities who currently do not require a visa (for example, the United States, Canada, Australia, and France) will not be able to travel to the UK without an ETA.
- **Universal digital permission:** Essentially, anyone wishing to enter the UK will need to have either (1) an advance digital permission through an ETA or an eVisa or (2) a valid British/Irish passport, a Certificate of Entitlement, or another type of UK residence permit or visa to enter the UK.

- **Consequences of non-compliance:** Without the correct documentation (valid British/Irish passport, ETA, eVisa, or residence permit), individuals may be denied boarding by carriers.
- **Dual British citizens:** While British and Irish citizens (including dual citizens) are exempt from needing an ETA, dual British citizens, regardless of other nationality, are expected to present a valid British passport or Certificate of Entitlement to avoid potential issues.
- **Alignment with global standards:** This move aligns the UK with similar travel authorisation schemes in other countries, such as the United States (ESTA) and Canada (eTA).
- **Application process:** The ETA application process is available through the official UK ETA app, costs GBP 16, and may provide a decision within minutes, though it is recommended to allow at least up to three working days for processing.<sup>3</sup>

## KPMG LLP (U.K.) INSIGHTS

As per KPMG in the UK, these changes may have significant implications for business travelers and employees, as well as for personal travel. In light of the changes, organisations and travelers might consider the following:

- Confirm your international assignees, business visitors, and other employees who frequently travel to the UK are aware of the stricter enforcement requirements to prevent disruptions to critical business travel.
- Inform any potentially affected individuals within your workforce about the need for an ETA or appropriate documentation, including guidance for dual British citizens.
- Review your travel policies and procedures for all individuals travelling to the UK.
- Identify any employees or frequent business visitors who may be affected by the ETA requirement.
- Advise dual British citizens within your organisation to travel to the UK with their valid British passport; or if their passports have expired or they have never held a British passport, advise them to obtain a new valid British passport or Certificate of Entitlement ahead of international travel.
- Travelers should apply for their ETAs well in advance of their intended travel dates to account for potential processing delays. Non-compliance could lead to costly travel delays and missed business opportunities.

If individuals and/or their programme managers have any questions or concerns about the scope of the policy update, its application and potential impacts, and appropriate next steps, they should consult with their qualified immigration professional or a member of the Immigration team with KPMG in the United Kingdom (see the Contacts section).

### ENDNOTES:

- 1 GOV.UK, "[No permission, no travel: UK set to enforce ETA scheme](#)," published on 24 November 2025.
- 2 GOV.UK, "[Electronic Travel Authorisation \(ETA\) factsheet – February 2026](#)."
- 3 GOV.UK, "[Get an electronic travel authorisation \(ETA\) to visit the UK](#)."

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## Contacts

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local GMS or People Services professional\* or one of the following professionals with the KPMG International member firm in the United Kingdom:



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**The information contained in this newsletter was submitted by the KPMG International member firm in the United Kingdom.**

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