



# **UK BORDER AGENCY** CUSTOMER CHARTER

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## **WHO WE ARE**

The UK Border Agency is the UK Government department responsible for securing the United Kingdom's borders and controlling migration.

We manage border control for the United Kingdom, enforcing immigration and customs regulations.

We want to create an environment that inspires our staff to deliver excellent customer service in all that we do.

## **OUR CUSTOMERS**

Our customers are varied – they can be individuals or families, their representatives, employers or Members of Parliament. We call anyone that uses the services of the UK Border Agency a customer. We welcome comments and suggestions from our customers by post, email or phone.

## WHAT WE DO

We provide a range of services to people in the UK and overseas. We work in a highly complex business which contributes to the security and economic well-being of the UK. We work closely with a number of different partners and aim to give the best possible service to our customers.

### **Our services include;**

- Providing information and considering visa applications to people abroad who want to enter the UK.
- Preventing prohibited and restricted goods from entering the UK, whilst allowing the free movement of legitimate trade.
- Collecting duty and tax on imports from countries outside the European Union, and protecting the UK tax system against cross border tax fraud.
- Providing information and consideration to people who wish to enter the UK to work or study.
- Managing the entry of people travelling into and out of the UK through the UK border.
- Protecting people that ask to be recognised as a refugee under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Geneva Convention).
- Meeting EU and international obligations and treaty requirements to examine imports and exports.
- Providing information and licences to UK employers recruiting and sponsoring migrants.

- Issuing Certificates of Sponsorship to sponsors.
- Providing information and consideration to people who are applying for permission to stay in the UK or to become a British citizen.
- Providing information and consideration to people already in this country who are applying to stay longer.
- Serving illegal entry notices and removal directions to people that have been granted temporary admission or that have been detained and facing deportation.
- Advising agents or other representatives of services in the categories listed here.
- Advising Members of Parliament, elected Members of the Scottish Parliament, and members of the Assemblies in Wales and Northern Ireland, who are making representations on behalf of constituents.

*We offer immigration and customs information rather than advice. If you need specialist advice on your case, you should approach a qualified lawyer who is a member of the Law society or a qualified immigration adviser, registered for that purpose by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC).*

## **OUR SERVICE STYLE**

**We aim to provide a high level of service for all our customers. As a customer you can expect the following:**

- For our staff and our business partners' staff, whether in the UK or overseas, to be thorough, polite and professional.
- For the information we provide to be in plain language, accurate and meet your needs.
- For us to process applications in line with our published delivery standards.
- For us to provide you with a detailed response to an enquiry or complaint.
- If we refuse your application, for us to give you a clear and detailed explanation of why we refused it and details of if and how you can appeal.
- For us to keep your personal details confidential and handle information about you in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- For us to deal with requests for information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 or the Freedom of Information Act 2000, whichever is applicable.
- For us to give you the opportunity to give us feedback on our services and to complain if necessary.
- Where possible, we will sort out any complaints immediately or pass them on to the appropriate person to resolve.

## **OUR VALUES**

The Home Office Values state that;

- We deliver for the public
- We are professional and innovative
- We work openly and collaboratively
- We treat everyone with respect

In delivering our business to our diverse society and to all those who use our services, we will assess the impact of our policies to ensure there are no unlawful adverse impacts on the grounds of race, religion and belief, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation and age.

We aim to:

- Employ a workforce that reflects, at all levels, the diversity of society as a whole.
- Treat all our staff and customers with dignity and respect.

## **OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS**

**When you visit our premises you can expect the following:**

- To be in a safe and comfortable environment.
- To be dealt with by staff in uniform or by staff who are dressed appropriately for their role, in line with our Values.
- If you have an appointment, to be seen within a reasonable time.

**When you contact us by post or e-mail, you can expect the following:**

- For any replies to be in clear plain English.
- For any replies to be correctly addressed and accurate.
- For us to answer your question or respond to your comment.
- For all replies to include a contact telephone number.

**When you visit our website and our business partners' websites you can expect the following:**

- For the information to be up-to-date and accurate.
- To be able to contact us by e-mail through the website.

**If you call any of our call centres, you can expect our staff to:**

- Explain why we need to put you on hold or transfer you to another number.
- Take a note of any comments about our services and pass them on to the relevant person to be dealt with.
- Treat you politely and in a professional way, in line with our Values.
- Provide you with the correct information.

## SERVICE TARGETS

We aim to reply to 95% of correspondence from Members of Parliament within 20 working days.

For customers overseas we aim to reply to;

- 90% of public correspondence within 20 working days.

At the UK Border we intend that;

- 95% of British, European Economic Area<sup>1</sup> and Swiss passengers should wait no longer than 25 minutes and that,
- 95% of other (non British / European Economic Area / Swiss) passengers should wait no longer than 45 minutes.

We aim to resolve complaints whenever possible as soon as they happen. If this is not possible we aim to resolve;

- 95% of service complaints within 20 working days.
- 95% of serious misconduct complaints within 12 weeks.

We aim to solve the problem in a way that is as clear and simple as possible. We will not normally investigate allegations of misconduct more than three months after the incident occurred.

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1 Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

## **DELIVERY TARGETS**

We will deliver our decisions efficiently, accurately and in line with waiting times described below.

### **Overseas**

#### **Straightforward non-settlement visas<sup>2</sup>:**

- 90% within 1 week,
- 98% within 2 weeks,
- 100% within 12 weeks.

#### **Non straightforward non-settlement visas:**

- 90% within 3 weeks,
- 98% within 6 weeks,
- 100% within 12 weeks.

#### **Overseas settlement cases:**

- 95% within 12 weeks,
- 100% within 24 weeks.

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2 A straightforward application can be decided on the basis of the application and the supporting documents submitted without the need for further enquiries or more detailed scrutiny.

A non-straightforward application requires more time to be decided, for example if more detailed enquiries or a personal interview are needed. More details are provided on the Visa Services website, [www.ukvisas.gov.uk](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk).

## **In the UK**

### **Family routes**

(including marriage, Certificate of Approval for Civil Partnership and armed forces):

- 65% within 4 weeks.

### **British citizenship applications:**

- 95% within 6 months.

### **Employment routes**

(Points Based Tier - 1 highly skilled migrants, Tier - 2 skilled workers with a job offer, Tier - 5 temporary workers to fill a labour shortage):

- 75% within 4 weeks.

### **Applications to study**

(Points Based Tier 4 - students):

- 75% within 4 weeks.

### **Visiting the UK**

(including private medical visits):

- 65% within 4 weeks.

### **Issuing licences to sponsors and employers:**

- 95% within 4 weeks.

### **Permanent residence applications:**

- 95% within 6 months.

### **Protection**

(Asylum claims):

- 75% within 6 months.

Our public enquiry offices offer a same-day service, at a premium fee, for considering straightforward applications for permission to extend your stay in the United Kingdom or stay here permanently (known as ‘leave to remain’ and ‘settlement’). More information about our same day services can be found on the ‘What services are available?’ section of our website, [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/contact/applyinginperson/peoservices](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/contact/applyinginperson/peoservices).

*We may need to change our service and delivery targets without prior notice due to exceptional circumstances, changes in government policy or for operational reasons.*

## **WHAT WE EXPECT FROM OUR CUSTOMERS**

**We will do our best to provide you with the services you need, when you want them. In return we ask that you:**

- Have all necessary documents available for us to inspect when you pass through border control points.
- Make sure that you use the correct and most up-to-date forms. These can be downloaded, along with the relevant guidance notes, from our website. Handwritten application forms should be filled in clearly, in black ink and in English<sup>3</sup>.
- Make any applications in good time, enclosing the full and correct fee and any evidence we need.
- Only contact us to ask about the progress of your applications if we have failed to meet published targets.

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3 Welsh language is accepted for those living in Wales.

- Send all further correspondence to the named caseworker in the first instance before contacting another official.
- Tell us if you have special needs.
- Let us know if you need an interpreter to use our services.
- Give us all the information we ask for and tell us about any relevant changes in circumstances (for example, a change of address) as soon as possible.
- Treat our staff politely and with respect.
- Provide complete and accurate information and not deliberately mislead us in any way.
- Keep to all relevant laws.

**We will not tolerate:**

- Abusive, intimidating, or threatening behaviour.
- Swearing and offensive language.
- Insulting remarks about a person's sex, race, nationality, disability status, age, actual or perceived religion or belief or actual or perceived sexual orientation.
- Shouting.
- Insults about our procedures, our staff or other people.
- Attempts to use pressure or bribery to get information.

## **CONTACTING US**

Our contact centres are dedicated to answering your enquiries about immigration, nationality, asylum and employing overseas nationals.

### **Immigration Enquiry Bureau**

Phone: 0870 606 7766

Mon–Thu: 09:00–16:45, Fri: 09:00–16:30

### **Nationality Contact Centre**

Phone: 0845 010 5200

Mon–Fri: 09:00–21:00

### **Sponsorship & Employer Helpline**

Phone: 0300 123 4699

Mon–Fri: 09:00–17:00

### **Work Permit Customer Contact Centre**

Phone: 0114 207 4074

Mon–Fri: 09:00–17:00

### **Asylum Support Contact Centre**

Phone: 0845 602 1739

Mon–Fri: 09:00–21:00

## **COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS**

If you would like to make a complaint about our services you should contact the relevant port, office or detention centre that provided the service. If you wish to make a complaint and do not have this information, you should contact the appropriate Customer Service Unit for your type of complaint. The ‘Making a complaint’ pages of our website explain how you can find this out, [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/contact/makingacomplaint](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/contact/makingacomplaint)



