

Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA): Stakeholder factsheet

Background

- Each year the UK welcomes millions of visitors from around the world. From holidays to short term study or business trips, the UK is a dynamic, diverse, and exciting destination.
- We are making improvements to deliver a more streamlined, digital immigration system which will be quicker and more secure for the millions of people who pass through the UK border each year.
- Electronic Travel Authorisations (ETAs) are being introduced worldwide for visitors to the UK who do not currently need a visa for short stays of up to six months, or who do not already have a UK immigration status.
- An ETA is a digital permission to travel – it is not a visa and does not permit entry to the UK – it authorises a person to travel to the UK.
- Eligible non-Europeans need an ETA to travel to the UK.
- Eligible European visitors can apply from 5 March 2025 and will need an ETA to travel from 2 April 2025.
- Applying for an ETA is quick and simple. Most applicants get an automatic decision in minutes when applying through the UK ETA app, which means spontaneous trips to the UK are still possible.
- Visitors are advised to allow three working days for a decision on their application, this is to take account of the small number of cases which may need further review. Visitors should apply in advance and find out when to do so on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).
- An ETA currently costs £10 and permits multiple journeys to the UK for stays of up to six months at a time over two years or until the holder's passport expires – whichever is sooner.
- The introduction of ETAs is in line with the approach many other countries have taken to border security, including the US and Australia, and helps prevent the arrival of those who present a threat to the UK.

Eligibility for an ETA

- Eligible visitors, including children, who do not [need a visa](#) for short stays or who do not have any other UK immigration status will need an ETA to travel to the UK, including to transit through the UK (pass through the border).

- British and Irish citizens do not need an ETA.

Applying for an ETA

- Information on who can get an ETA and how to apply before coming to the UK is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)
- The easiest way to apply for an ETA is through the 'UK ETA app', which can be downloaded from the [Google Play](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.homeoffice.app) or [Apple App Store](https://apps.apple.com/uk/app/uk-eta-app/id6444444444). People can apply on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) if they do not have access to a smartphone.
- Applicants usually get a decision within three working days but may get a quicker decision if they use the UK ETA app.
- To apply for an ETA, applicants need to:
 - Pay a fee
 - Provide contact and passport details
 - Provide a valid photo, complying with our rules for digital photos on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)
 - Answer a set of questions
- Visitors must travel using the same passport they used when they applied for an ETA.
- As with all our fees the cost of an ETA is kept under review, and we intend to increase the cost of an ETA to £16 in the future. We will provide more information in due course.

Frequently asked questions

How do people know if they need to obtain a visa instead of an ETA?

- If a person intends to visit the UK for longer than six months, they need to obtain a relevant visa. They may also need a visa for stays of less than six months for purposes other than visit, transit and some business visits.
- People can check if they need a visa by using the [visa checking tool on GOV.UK](#)

Do British dual-citizens need an ETA?

- [Dual citizens](#) with British or Irish citizenship do not need an ETA.
- They will need to prove their permission to travel with their British or Irish passport, or other passport containing a [certificate of entitlement](#).

How does ETA work in Northern Ireland?

- The UK does not operate routine immigration controls on journeys from within the Common Travel Area, with no immigration controls whatsoever on the Ireland-Northern Ireland land border.
- However, everyone arriving in the UK, including those entering Northern Ireland, continue to need to enter in line with the UK's Immigration Rules including obtaining an ETA if they are eligible.
- British and Irish citizens do not need an ETA.
- Non-Irish residents of Ireland from nationalities that do not need a visa to visit the UK (e.g. European and US nationals), do not need an ETA when travelling to the UK – including Northern Ireland – from within the Common Travel Area which includes Ireland, provided they hold acceptable evidence of their residence status. Full guidance on this can be found at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). If they are travelling to the UK from outside the Common Travel Area, they will need an ETA before they travel, once required for their nationality.

What happens if someone is not able to obtain an ETA?

- If an applicant's ETA application is rejected, they will be told the reason and can apply again.
- If an applicant's ETA application is refused, they cannot appeal and instead need to [apply for a visa](#) if they still wish to seek permission to come to the UK.

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