

# Supporting refugees around eVisas

## Toolkit

**This information relates to the switch from physical documents to eVisas for refugees; how individuals might be affected by this change, and what churches can do to offer support.**

### What is an eVisa?

An eVisa is an online record of a person's immigration status and the conditions of their permission to enter or stay in the UK.

This means that refugees will only be able to view the following online, through a "UKVI" account:

- Their immigration status
- The conditions of the type of permission they have to enter or stay in the UK

### Why is this a current issue?

The Home Office made the decision that eVisas will be replacing physical BRP (Biometric Resident Permit) cards.

For those who still have physical cards, switching to eVisas needs to be completed by **31 December 2024**. From October 2024, BRP cards are no longer issued – just eVisas only.

If someone has been granted asylum after 31 October 2024, they should receive login details from the Home Office, **who should have set up their UKVI account on their behalf**.

If someone was granted asylum before 31st October, and/or holds a physical BRP card, they will need to switch this to to an e-visa. **They will need to set up the account themselves**. This can be done [here](#)

### Why does our church need to be aware of these changes?

There are likely to be people in your congregation or wider community affected by these changes, perhaps through e.g. attending worship, taking ESOL classes, people take part in hosting schemes, or if your church is part of the Welcome Church network.

There may also be asylum seekers and refugees attending other ministries your church hosts, such as foodbanks, night shelters or mental health drop-ins.

### What are the challenges of this switch?

The switch to e-visas can be worrying or frightening for many individuals:

- An individual might struggle to understand the process of switching, or may not have realised that this needs to happen by 31 December 2024
- It may cause an individual's mental health to suffer, or make existing conditions worse
- Lack of digital access/digital literacy means accessing eVisas online may be difficult for some people



## What support can we offer as Church communities?

**Educate yourself/your team** on these changes, using the resources in the section below.

**Offer practical help to individuals:**

1. Check-in with individuals: do they still have a BRP card?
2. Help with setting up/accessing their UKVI account
3. In terms of internet access – can you offer this support in church? Does your local library offer free internet access?
4. In terms of mental health – remember to signpost to services (both internal and external)
5. Spread awareness of the 31 December deadline – could you put a poster up (downloadable below), share at a drop in, or through word of mouth?
6. Make sure that individuals have provided the Home Office with their up-to-date phone number and email address (this includes those currently going through the asylum process)
7. Encourage individuals to check that the information on their e-visa is correct: if it is not, errors can be reported [here](#)

## What Resources are there to help?

**The Home Office** have produced a video about the switch to e-visas.

**The Greater London Authority (GLA)** has a helpful page linking to this video and offering more explanation about the process, [here](#).

**RAMFEL (Refugee and Migrant Forum of Essex and London)** have a webpage with guidance and support [here](#) (including self-help guides in five different languages - English, Arabic, Dari, Pashto and Ukrainian).

You can also refer an individual for specialised support with the switch to an eVisa via this webpage, or call their support line on **020 7052 5212**

## Where can I get more advice or have questions answered?

If you have any further questions about the transition to eVisas and how this affects people in your church communities, or would like any more help around work in your church with those seeking asylum and refugees, please do get in touch with Laura Johnson on the Compassionate Communities team:

Laura Johnson (Development Worker – Refugees, Asylum, Modern Slavery and Homelessness)

[laura.johnson@london.anglican.org](mailto:laura.johnson@london.anglican.org)

020 3837 5143