

November 2016, the Home Office has laid before Parliament a package of changes to the Immigration Rules.

## Tier 2

Earlier this year we announced reforms to the route for skilled workers, following recommendations made by the Migration Advisory Committee's review. The main changes in the rules being published today are:

- Increasing the Tier 2 (General) salary threshold for experienced workers to £25,000, with some exemptions.
- Increasing the Tier 2 (Intra-Company Transfer) salary threshold for short term staff to £30,000.
- Reducing the Tier 2 (Intra-Company Transfer) graduate trainee salary threshold to £23,000 and increasing the number of places to 20 per company per year.
- Closing the Tier 2 (Intra Company Transfer) skills transfer sub-category.

These changes will come into effect for all certificates of sponsorship assigned on or after 24 November 2016. The date from which Intra Company Transfers will be liable for the Health Surcharge will be announced in due course.

## English language requirement

As announced in January this year, a new English language requirement at level A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is being introduced for non-EEA partners and parents. This affects those applying to extend their stay after 2.5 years in the UK on a 5-year route to settlement under Appendix FM (Family Members) to the Immigration Rules.

The new requirement will apply to partners and parents whose current leave under the family Immigration Rules is due to expire on or after 1 May 2017.

Applicants will be able to meet the new requirement by passing a speaking and listening test at level A2 or above provided by one of the approved test providers, Trinity College London or IELTS SELT Consortium. Applicants will also be able to meet the A2 requirement on the basis that they are a national of a majority English-speaking country or the holder of a degree taught or researched in English.

Applicants will be exempt from the A2 requirement if at the date of application they are aged 65 or over; they have a disability which prevents them from meeting the requirement; or there are exceptional circumstances which prevent them from being able to meet the requirement.

The new A2 requirement will help family migrants better engage in everyday conversation and thereby participate and integrate in everyday life in the community. The new requirement will also support progression towards the B1 level English language required for settlement.

By announcing the implementation date now, the Government is providing a further 6 months' notice of the new A2 requirement, enabling those who need to do so to improve their English from the A1 level already required to come here on a partner or parent visa.

A Q&A on the new A2 English language requirement is attached. For further information, see the Statement of Intent on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

## Other changes

In addition to the above, we propose to make a number of minor changes, including for Tier 1 (Entrepreneur and Exceptional Talent), Tier 2 (General) applications, Tier 5 youth mobility quotas and Tier 5 maintenance funds.

For information on all the changes and implementation dates visit [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)