



## Rishi Sunak announces “significant” rise to UK visa fees and Immigration Health Surcharge

The UK Prime Minister has announced a big hike in visa fees and the compulsory charges migrants pay to access the UK’s health system.

Chief Secretary of the Treasury John Glen then provided more details on the price rises in parliament.

The annual Immigration Health Surcharge migrants pay to use the UK’s National Health Service until they are settled is set to increase by 64 per cent: from £624 to £1,035 per year, with the discounted rate for students, children and youth mobility visa holders increasing from £470 to £776 per year.

We await an announcement of when this increase will happen, so it is advisable to get applications in swiftly.

John Glen also said that the cost of work visas and visit visas would increase by 15 per cent. The Treasury Minister added that the Government would hike *"the cost of study visas, certificates of sponsorship, settlement, citizenship, wider entry clearance, leave to remain and priority visas by at least 20 per cent."*

He added: *"We are also equalising costs for students and those using a priority service, so that people pay the same whether they apply from within the UK or from outside the UK."*

Priority services allow applicants to pay extra to receive a swifter decision on their visa or settlement. Currently within the UK, applicants can pay £500 to receive a decision within five working days and £800 for a reply by the end of the next working day. Without this, applicants could wait eight weeks or even up to six months in some categories. Charges for "priority" and "super priority" applications outside the UK vary: for typical work, study and visit visas it’s £250 for five working days and an additional £956 for a next day response. For overseas applications by people joining a British spouse or partner, the “priority” fee is £573 for a decision in six weeks, compared with the normal 12 to 24 weeks.



As the Treasury Minister alluded, student visa application fees also vary: £363 if applying outside the UK; £490 to extend or switch to a student visa from inside the UK.

We can only guess that the "equalising" the minister mentioned will be upwards. Whether that will be after an increase of upwards of 20 per cent has been added remains to be seen.

There has been no mention of the timescale so far, so it is advisable to apply for visas for any hires or those joining them sooner rather than later.

Please contact [\[email protected\]](#) if you are concerned or want to make a swift application.

Both the Prime Minister and his Chief Treasury Secretary chose to link the increase in costs for UK migrants to the UK Government's current pay disputes with public servants.

Under pressure to accept the recommendation of an independent review of pay for teachers, police, junior doctors and other public sector workers, Rishi Sunak confirmed a pay rise of between five and seven per cent across the board.

He said that this would be paid for with £1 billion raised from increasing immigration fees, as well as asking Government departments to "reprioritise" - which he insisted did not mean cuts to services.

Dr Madeleine Sumption, director of the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford warned: *"costs will fall unevenly on different groups of migrants. For some skilled workers, employers will absorb the cost - the UK is already one of the most expensive countries in the world and employers will not like it, but depending on the amount they may well pay it anyway.*

*"The implications are more serious for the majority of migrants who pay the fees themselves... There is already evidence that some migrants acquire substantial debt in order to pay fees, so a 'significant' fee rise could greatly increase the financial burden on new migrants in the UK as they try to establish themselves here."*

To discuss the implications of the UK Government's announcement for you or your staff hires, or for any related advice or help formulating company policies please contact [\[email protected\]](#).