

The latest news, views, and announcements

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The Office of the Traffic Commissioner (OTC) is taking significant steps towards modernisation with a move to digital-by-default services. From 31 January 2025, all changes to transport managers on an operator's licence must be made using the digital process available within the Vehicle Operator Licensing (VOL) system. As part of this transition, the traditional TM1 form will be withdrawn and no longer accepted after this date.

For operators with pending applications for new licences who wish to change the nominated transport manager, updates must be requested through the VOL self-service messaging facility. This streamlined process ensures that all changes are recorded and processed efficiently.

In addition to transport manager changes, the OTC will also require applications for licence type changes or licence surrenders to be made digitally through the VOL system from the same date. While most requests will need to follow this digital pathway, exceptions exist for Insolvency Practitioners, who will receive paper forms after a change in company status. Additionally, operators unable to surrender their licence online can still submit written requests.

The OTC recognises that some licence holders may require help with electronic services. A full assisted digital service will remain available to ensure all operators can comply with the new processes. For support, operators can contact the Licensing Office at:

Phone: **0204 551 8711**

Email: notifications@vehicle-operator-licensing.service.gov.uk

Operators are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the VOL system and act on this information promptly to ensure a smooth transition.

The Big Coach Conversation 2025

The Big Coach Conversation 2025 is bringing together professionals from across the coach and larger vehicle sector for a day of collaboration, innovation, and celebration. This event will take place on Thursday, 27 March 2025, at Derbyshire County Cricket Club in Derby. Doors open at 10:00 AM, providing attendees with ample opportunity to network, explore exhibitions, and register for the day's activities.

The event provides a platform to engage with industry leaders, gain insights into the latest trends, and tackle pressing challenges. Throughout the day, there will be interactive discussions and presentations that aim to foster collaboration and innovation within the industry.

The agenda includes opportunities to connect with manufacturers and compliance experts, explore the latest products, and discover new business opportunities. Exhibitors will showcase advancements and services relevant to all sectors of the coach industry.

Throughout the day, attendees can enjoy refreshments, a street food lunch, and informal networking breaks.



The day culminates in the Coach Hire Comparison Beyond Awards, a ceremony celebrating excellence and achievement within the industry. The evening will feature drinks, canapés, and further networking opportunities before concluding at 8:30 PM.

To find out more and register for this event, visit the official website at thebigcoachconversation.co.uk. The Big Coach Conversation 2025 promises to offer a unique opportunity to stay ahead of industry trends, forge valuable connections, and contribute to the future of the coach profession.

ETA Fees and Airside Transit Exemption

On Thursday, 16th January 2025, the Government announced new measures relating to immigration fees and Electronic Travel Authorisations (ETAs). These changes are part of a broader effort to ensure the sustainability of the UK's migration and border system.

As part of a recent review, the Government intends to raise the cost of an ETA from £10 to £16. This fee adjustment aims to ensure that the migration and border system is adequately funded. The increase will take effect once the necessary parliamentary approvals are completed.

Eligible non-Europeans, who currently require an ETA to travel or transit through the UK, can still obtain one at the current cost of £10 until the fee change is implemented. Similarly, eligible Europeans, who will be able to apply for an ETA starting from 5th March 2025, will also pay the current fee of £10 until further notice.

A comprehensive table detailing all proposed fee changes for immigration and nationality services is available here: [Visa Fees Transparency Data](#).

The list of nationals eligible for ETAs can be found here: [Check When You Can Get an ETA](#).

Airside Transit Exemption

In response to feedback from the aviation industry, the Government has introduced a temporary exemption for passengers transiting airside—those who do not pass through UK border control—from requiring an ETA. This exemption primarily applies to Heathrow and Manchester Airports, the only UK airports offering transit facilities. This measure came into effect on 16th January 2025 and will be kept under review.

What This Means

- The current £10 fee for ETAs remains in place until parliamentary approval is secured for the increase.
- Airside transit passengers at Heathrow and Manchester Airports are temporarily exempt from ETA requirements.

If you have any questions, please contact the ETA Engagement Team at etaengagement@homeoffice.gov.uk

Join Us for the Winter Ball This Saturday!

The highly anticipated Winter Ball is just around the corner! We are thrilled to welcome you this Saturday, 6 January 2025, at the elegant Royal Garden Hotel in Kensington. This promises to be a memorable evening filled with great company, fine dining, and a celebration of the coach industry community.

Festivities will begin at 6:00 PM with a champagne reception, followed by a sumptuous dinner and entertainment to keep the evening lively. It's the perfect opportunity to catch up with friends, network with peers, and ring in the new year in style.

We're also excited to announce that the evening will feature a tombola with some fantastic prizes up for grabs. Please note that the tombola will be **cash only**, so don't forget to bring some money along to take part!

We look forward to seeing you at this special event. Let's make it a night to remember as we kick off 2025 together!