

# HR & Tax Alert


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## United Kingdom - Introduction of Identification Cards

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### Executive Summary

In a recent statement, the key milestones for combating illegal immigration through the introduction of the National Identity Scheme were outlined by the Government. A major part of this scheme is the controversial introduction of Identification Cards (ID cards) which will combine the cardholder's biometric data with their checked and confirmed identity details.

### Details of the Identification Card Scheme

The ID Card scheme is intended to provide a simple and extremely secure system of personal identification for everyone aged 16 or over who is legally resident in the United Kingdom for a specified period, likely to be three months or more. The cards will enable employers to check an individual's unique reference number against registered information about their identity to confirm their eligibility to work in the UK.

Home Office Minister Liam Byrne confirmed that biometric cards for foreign nationals will be

implemented in 2008 with fingerprinting of visa nationals to be expanded to cover all visa-issuing posts by April 2008.

Since March 2006, Britain's biometric passports have been successfully implemented by the Identity and Passport Service (IPS). With this first stage of the Government's National Identity Scheme successfully implemented, the next milestone for UK nationals will be in 2009 when everyone over the age of 16 applying for a passport will have their personal details added to the National Identity register. Initially individuals will be able to opt out of having an ID card, but from 2010 they will be compulsory for anyone renewing or obtaining a new passport.

### Next Steps

The Government will be issuing an Identity Management Action Plan by the end of this year detailing further benefits of the ID cards and details of the implementation of the scheme. We will continue to keep you updated of further developments via future Alerts.

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