

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO

Expanding Globally Into The UK

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Land of Hope and Glory

If you're looking to expand your business within the UK, there are many reasons you should -

- **A robust economy**
- **A skilled, diverse workforce**
- **A competitive tax environment**
- **An advantageous geographical location**

These benefits, and many more, make the UK an attractive option for ambitious business leaders.

However, with these benefits come a set of challenges that must be navigated to ensure long-term success.

Our guide contains all the information you need to know before entering the UK.

By the time you've finished reading, you'll be perfectly placed to ensure a smooth, seamless transition into the country.

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The UK: A Quick Overview



The UK has the **world's sixth largest economy** and Europe's second largest economy in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) at the time of writing. **This GDP is on track to grow by 1.6%** in 2025, up from **0.8%** in 2024.



The country continues to lead the way with its technology, finance, and creative industries (as we'll explore in more detail later in this guide) and continues to attract international investment.



The UK government's policy framework is designed to attract this investment. The 2024 Autumn Budget featured an additional **£69.5 billion** in annual public spending over the next five years—equivalent to **2.2% of GDP**.



This commitment shows how serious the UK is about growth, innovation, and creating the right conditions for businesses to succeed.

In summary, the UK's economic stability, coupled with targeted government policies, reinforces its position as a hub for investment and expansion.

*Figures correct at the time of writing (January 2025)

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Opportunities

when expanding to the UK

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Opportunities when expanding to UK

The UK is a global economic powerhouse, offering a unique blend of stability, talent, and opportunity.

For business leaders, boards, and senior management teams looking to expand or diversify, the country provides an unparalleled environment for growth, and the benefits go far beyond its borders.

Here are some of the opportunities that have attracted our clients to the UK:

A SKILLED, EDUCATED, AND DIVERSE WORKFORCE

The UK is home to some of the world's most established academic institutions and brightest minds.

Around four in 10 workers or jobseekers in England and Wales **(42%)** possess a higher education qualification, with the London figure standing at **57%**, according to **a study by the Office for National Statistics**. Furthermore, the UK's literacy rate is **99%** for both men and women.

With a competent, intelligent workforce at their disposal, leaders and senior managers won't have to spend as much time training staff. Rather, they'll have a productive team of problem-solvers who are capable of developing innovative, pioneering solutions.

They'll also have a team of people offering unique life experiences and perspectives. At the time of writing, **14% of the working-age population** in the UK comes from a BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) background, with this figure expected to grow to **21% by 2051**.

These statistics underscore the UK's commitment to fostering a skilled, educated, and diverse workforce, making it an attractive destination for business investment and growth.

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GOVERNMENT INCENTIVES AND SUPPORT:

If you’re looking to expand to the UK but need some funding to get you on your way, the UK government may be able to support you.

It offers various funding schemes and incentives to foster innovation and assist businesses in scaling their operations, such The Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF).

This initiative provides funding for research and development projects aimed at tackling major industrial and societal challenges. It aligns with the key themes of the UK's Industrial Strategy, such as clean growth, future mobility, artificial intelligence, and the ageing society.

Additionally, regional grants are available to support businesses in specific areas and facilitate expansion.



FAVOURABLE TAX ENVIRONMENT:

The UK's tax incentives are wide-ranging and beneficial to all types of businesses. At the UK's International Investment Summit on October 14, 2024, Chancellor Rachel Reeves announced that the government would cap corporation tax at 25% for the remainder of the parliament.

This move represents a huge benefit for businesses looking to expand their operations in the UK while freeing up money to invest in people and technology. There are various other tax benefits for business leaders looking to expand in the UK.

For instance, if you're looking to invest in a UK-based small business, this country offers tax relief through the Enterprise Investment Scheme and the Venture Capital Trusts.

If you're working on innovative projects in the scientific and technological fields, you can take advantage of the Research and Development (R&D) tax relief provided by the UK via the R&D Expenditure Tax Credit.

Whatever your motivations are for expanding to the UK, they're most likely exploring from a tax efficiency perspective.You can read more about the UK's tax system and incentives here.



*Figures correct at the time of writing (January 2025)

ELITE TECH, FINANCE, AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES:

As we wrote above, the UK continues to demonstrate its unrivalled strength in the financial services, technology, and creative industries. It's also a major player in the clean energy market.

But don't just take our word for it. The statistics speak for themselves:

- The financial and insurance services sector contributed £208.2 billion to the UK economy in 2023, **8.8%** of total economic output. It was the fourth largest industry in terms of economic output.
- In 2022, the UK became only the world's third country to have its tech industry valued at $1 trillion, after the US and China. Furthermore, UK tech startups raised $21.3 billion in 2023. The UK tech industry employs around three million people at the time of writing.
- In 2022, the UK's creative industries contributed £124.6 billion to the economy, accounting for **5.7%** of the UK's gross value added (GVA), with a **6%** growth since 2019.
- The UK renewable energy market size was estimated at $20.25 billion in 2023 and is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of **20.3%** from 2024 to 2030.

These numbers highlight just how attractive the UK is for business leaders aiming to expand their operations into a world-class environment that champions innovation and creativity.



*Figures correct at the time of writing (January 2025)

STRATEGIC GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION:

The UK is in a strategic global position due to its time zone, which overlaps with both Asian and American markets. Using forex trading as an example, the overlap windows for exchanges are:

- **1 pm to 4 pm (UTC)** when both New York and London exchanges are open
- **12 am to 7 am (UTC)** when both Tokyo and Sydney exchanges are open
- **8 am to 9 am (UTC)** when both Tokyo and London exchanges are open

This is a broad example, but it shows how flexible the UK time zone is with the rest of the world.

This time zone allows you to interact with suppliers, clients, and stakeholders across the globe. It also allows for seamless operations with minimal downtime or interruption, which will further boost your business's expansion opportunities.

You no longer have to think or work within the confines of your immediate location, which may have been a constraint for your business until now.

STRONG TRADE RELATIONSHIPS:

The UK continues to maintain strong trade relationships with the world's most powerful countries. It's established some vital trade agreements in recent years, including:

- The UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement
- Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)
- UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement

These agreements provide businesses with increased market access, reduced tariffs, and opportunities for growth in diverse international markets.

*Figures correct at the time of writing (January 2025)

Challenges

when expanding to the UK



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Challenges when expanding to the UK

“Challenges are what make life interesting. Overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.”

Joshua J. Marine

As you know, nothing that’s worth achieving in life comes easy.

If you are to make a success of your UK expansion, here are a few potential obstacles you need to be aware of before you enter the country.

COMPLEX EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURES

One of the first hurdles businesses face when entering the UK is understanding its employment structures.

The UK has a highly regulated labour market, and failing to comply with local employment laws can lead to costly penalties and reputational damage. For businesses employing UK-based contractors, understanding the umbrella sector is essential.

The umbrella sector acts as an employment vehicle for UK contractors, helping businesses manage their payroll, taxes, and compliance.

If you’re unfamiliar with this system, we can provide the necessary support to ensure you stay compliant while protecting profit margins and avoiding potential operational distress during your expansion.

*Figures correct at the time of writing (January 2025)

MANAGING MULTIPLE COMPLIANCE OBLIGATIONS:

The UK's regulatory landscape can be daunting for newcomers. Firstly, sector-specific regulations—such as strict data protection laws under the UK GDPR—demand rigorous compliance, especially for those working in the tech and finance industries.

Secondly, new customs procedures, tariffs, and documentation requirements have been put in place post-Brexit. This development has complicated cross-border operations and is important to consider if you're planning to engage in trade between the UK and countries in the European Union.

Finally, employment laws covering workers rights, benefits, and health and safety obligations differ from many global standards. These laws include The Employment Rights Act 1996, Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and The Working Time Regulations 1998.

If you're not au fait with these laws or don't have time to digest them in full, our team of specialists can provide the necessary guidance to help you avoid potential legal pitfalls.

ADAPTING TO A NEW CULTURE:

Though this may seem an obvious point, there's more to familiarise yourself with when you expand to the UK than just its weather and fish and chips.

Some of the country's subtle cultural nuances and working practices can significantly impact business success. For instance, professionalism, politeness, and formality are integral to business operations in the UK. So, too, are punctuality, formality, effective communication, and teamwork.

There is also a particular emphasis on urgency and tight turnaround times in certain sectors, particularly in the tech and creative industries. Think a "We need this yesterday" level of urgency.

Again, if you need any further guidance or direction in this area, we have plenty of on-the-ground experts who can help you. By leveraging their insights, you can effectively tap into the opportunities offered by the UK market.

*Figures correct at the time of writing (January 2025)

NAVIGATING SUPPLY CHAIN AND LOGISTICAL ISSUES:

We touched on Brexit, and this has had a marked impact on the UK's supply chain landscape.

In fact, Brexit was identified as the main root cause of shortages by firms in the UK. This was in response to a survey from The UK Trade Policy Observatory (UKTPO), a partnership between the University of Sussex and Chatham. The goods and services that appeared to be most problematic for firms were electronic goods and labour, followed by raw materials, metals, and machinery and parts.

Acknowledging and preparing for these challenges will enable businesses to better position themselves for successful expansion into the UK market.





Your Trusted Partner

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How we can make your UK expansion a success

Now is the opportune moment to leverage the UK's potential for global growth. The best time to expand there was yesterday, and the second best time is today.

If you're ready to take your business to the next level in the UK, we're ready to help you do this.

At Briars, we've supported businesses across multiple industries in setting up and thriving in the UK, and we know that the right guidance is crucial. From employment regulations to financial oversight, we offer the expertise needed to help you move from strategy to action.

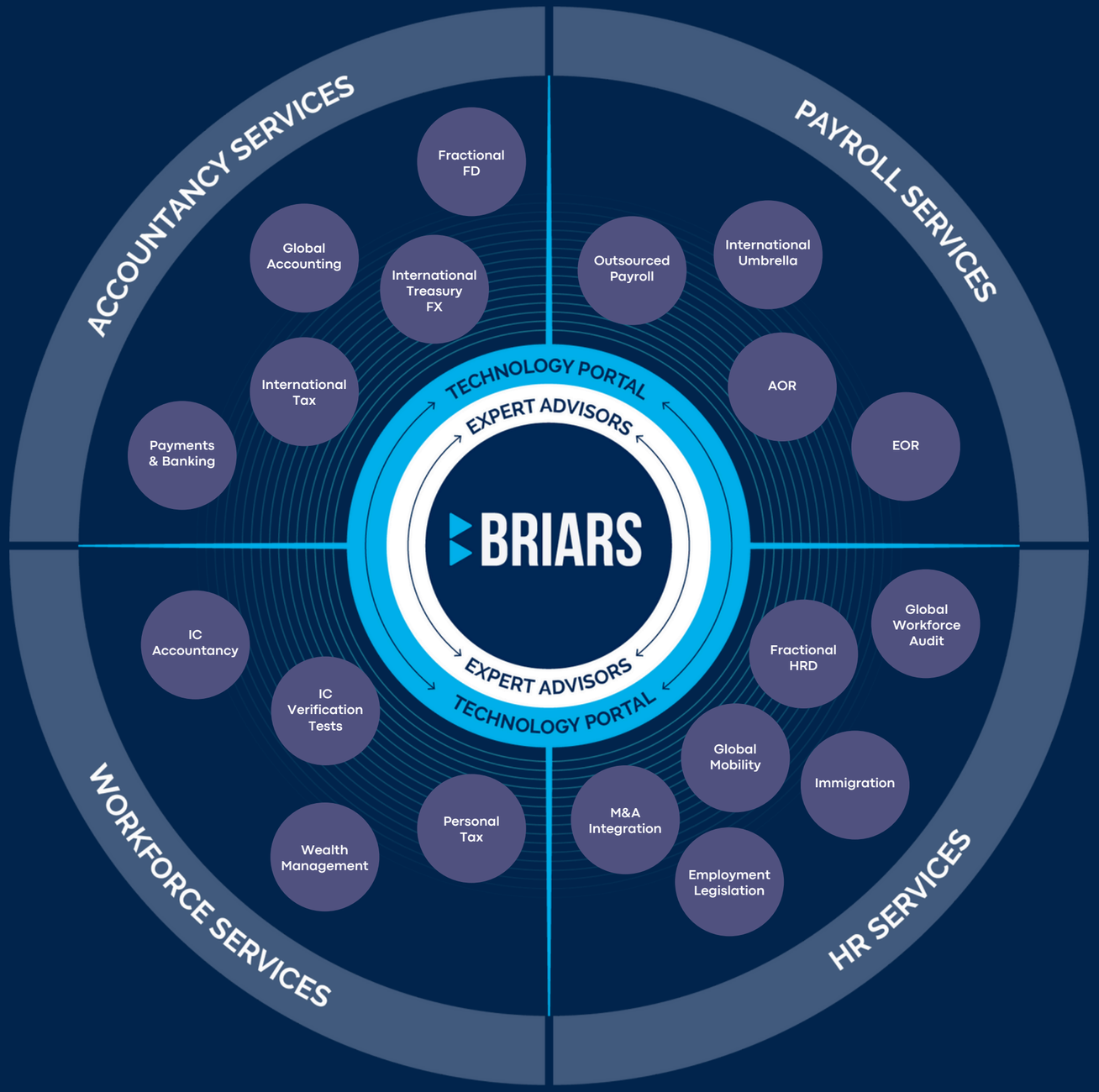
- **Talent acquisition and general HR support:** Not only will we help you find the right talent within the UK, but we will also provide you with comprehensive HR support, including recruitment, compliance with employment laws, and workforce management strategies.
- **Remuneration benchmarking:** We can help you make sure the right people receive the right compensation for their role, location, and experience, among other factors.
- **Business setup and incorporation:** We can help you choose the best kind of company for your needs.
- **Tax advice and compliance services:** Our local, on-the-ground tax experts will help you get to grips with UK tax laws and ensure you remain compliant with all tax obligations.
- **Ongoing business support:** From accounting and payroll to legal and regulatory compliance, we offer a full suite of services to support your business operations.
- **Insurance implementation:** We help your company implement the necessary insurances quickly and easily.

Our Global Outsourcing Platform

A People-Driven 360° Model Powered by Technology

Briars is your total platform solution, providing HR, Payroll, Corporate, and Workforce Services through an expert blend of people and technology. More than just a service provider, we proactively guide your business with strategic direction, acting as a single point of contact to simplify complexity.

Our approach is designed to identify, block, and tackle risks before they arise, ensuring your operations remain seamless and compliant. We're not just an EOR provider or accountant—we're your strategic partner in global expansion, dedicated to driving success while removing barriers and enabling confident decision-making at every step.



Our UK Suite of Services

Corporate Services

- Global Accounting Solutions
- International Tax Services
- International Payments & Banking
- International Compliance
- International Treasury & FX
- Fractional FD Solutions

Payroll Services

- Bespoke Payroll Solution Design
- All Types of International Payroll
  - Employer of Record
  - Agent of Record
  - Non-Resident Employee Payroll
  - PEO
  - Traditional Outsourced Payroll

People Services

- Global HR Solutions
- Employment Legislation
- Global Mobility Solutions
- Immigration Solutions
- M&A Integration
- Fractional HRD Solutions

Workforce Services

- Personal Tax Solutions
- IC Verification Tests
- IC Accountancy Services





Briars has been very collaborative in supporting our UK business. Their tailored solutions, efficiency in meeting tight deadlines, and unwavering commitment to compliance have ensured our UK accounts seamlessly integrate into our global reports. Their expertise allows us to focus on expanding our footprint while trusting them to manage our business needs.

NICOLAS COLLIGNON, HEAD OF
LUXEMBOURG OFFICE AT SANI/IKOS GROUP

Lead the Way in the UK

Because we live and breathe the world of UK and international expansion, we are committed to helping businesses thrive across regions and borders, unlocking new opportunities and achieving remarkable growth as we have done for 30 years.

Picture your business flourishing in London, Manchester, Edinburgh, or beyond—confidently navigating local regulations, business landscapes, and cultural nuances with a trusted partner by your side.

With Briars, every step of your expansion is seamless and straightforward, backed by expert guidance and deep local insights. This empowers you to focus on what matters most—your core business.

Let us handle the complexities so you can lead with confidence and watch your business grow across the UK and beyond.





BRIARS + YOU

Discover a world of opportunity

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