

# United Arab Emirates Immigration update

Transfer of Employment Sponsorship  
Applications Suspended Across Free  
Zones in Dubai

12 January 2024

## Introduction

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The Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs, and Port Security (ICP) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has advised that effective immediately, all applications for Employment Residence Permit (ERP) visa transfers within freezones have been suspended.

In light of this development, employees seeking to transfer their employment sponsorship from one freezone to another are no longer able to proceed with a visa transfer application. Instead, they must proceed with the cancellation of their existing ERP and application for a new ERP under the sponsorship of the new employer.

Additionally, any dependents sponsored under the employee's ERP will either need to cancel their current Dependent Resident Permit (DRP) and apply for a new DRP once the employee's new ERP is issued, or their current DRP can be temporarily placed on hold provided that the DRP is valid for at least 3 months.

### **Deloitte's view**

Employers located in free zones in Dubai, seeking to hire a foreign national who is currently employed by another company within the same free zone or in another free zone, will need to plan for the cancellation and submission of the new ERP application.

Dependents cannot exit and re-enter the UAE whilst their applications are in process and should not plan any travel during this period.

The authorities have not confirmed if the change in the process for the transfer of employment sponsorship is temporary or permanent and we will continue to monitor for further updates.

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# Contacts

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Our immigration experts listed below would be happy to discuss the above matters in more detail or support you through a further discussion on your immigration requirements.

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