



INSIGHTS FROM THE NEWLAND CHASE 2025 GLOBAL MOBILITY & IMMIGRATION SURVEY

Executive summary

The Newland Chase 2025 Global Mobility & Immigration Survey synthesizes data from 100 HR and mobility professionals to highlight top challenges, regional trends, strategic objectives, and emerging issues in global mobility and immigration programs. It notes that processing delays, geopolitical volatility and compliance for remote work are the most pressing challenges, while sustainability and digital nomad visas currently rank lower but may gain importance as regulations evolve. The analysis underscores cost control and regulatory changes as critical drivers, with most organizations focusing on the EU, UK, and APAC for both sourcing and placing talent. It also emphasizes the need for robust data governance and alignment of mobility initiatives with broader talent strategies to build globally experienced leadership pipelines and ensure resilience.

Introduction

In Q3 2025, Newland Chase surveyed **100 HR and mobility professionals** to explore how organizations manage immigration and global mobility. Respondents were primarily from large, internationally active companies and represented a range of roles, with a strong emphasis on global mobility and immigration management. The survey covered the structure of mobility teams, top challenges, regional relocation trends, strategic objectives, internal drivers, emerging challenges, and how immigration aligns with broader talent strategies. This report collates the quantitative results and open-text responses to highlight key themes and implications for 2026.



Confidence in compliance

Respondents were asked how confident they are that their organization's immigration policies and processes fully comply with current regulatory requirements (1 = Not at all confident, 5 = Extremely confident). The modal response was 4 (34 respondents), followed by 5 (10 respondents). Fourteen respondents selected the midpoint (3), and only two selected 1. Overall, professionals feel reasonably confident in their organizations' ability to comply with immigration rules, though the distribution shows room for improvement.

Respondent profile

Most respondents identified their role as either **global mobility or global mobility with immigration focus** (76 out of 100). Smaller groups included HR generalists (14), legal/compliance specialists (2), heads of immigration programs, and other operational roles. This distribution confirms that the survey captured insights from professionals directly responsible for immigration programs.

The majority of organizations surveyed maintain a hybrid operating model: 82 respondents said their teams **share immigration processes** with external partners. Only 9 fully outsource immigration tasks, 7 manage immigration entirely in-house, and 2 are not involved. This suggests that partnering with specialist providers remains the norm, while a minority of companies are insourcing expertise.



Top challenges and their perceived importance

Respondents were asked to select multiple challenges that they believe are present for their organizations. The most frequently cited issues are:

- 1) **Processing delays and capacity constraints** (28 mentions). Professionals struggle with backlogs at government agencies and overwhelmed immigration providers. Remote and hybrid work blur the boundaries between assignments and travel, increasing compliance complexity and straining capacity.
- 2) **Geo-political volatility and travel restrictions** (24 mentions). Continued conflict, sanctions, travel bans, and changing government policies make it difficult to plan assignments. Many clients of Newland Chase have observed that dispersed workforces create new compliance and duty-of-care obligations.
- 3) **Compliance for remote or “work-from-anywhere” staff** (20 mentions). Hybrid and remote arrangements require immigration and tax compliance across multiple jurisdictions. Research shows that around 80 percent of organizations now have remote/hybrid arrangements and that compliance complexity has surged as a result.
- 4) **UK skilled-worker rule changes** (18 mentions). Organizations operating in the UK face stricter eligibility criteria, minimum salary thresholds, and sponsorship requirements. Many respondents flagged this as a barrier to hiring.
- 5) **Expanding data privacy and AI regulations** (13 mentions). New legislation like the EU AI Act classifies AI used in immigration as “high-risk” and imposes strict data-governance requirements. Teams must update data-management frameworks to avoid penalties.
- 6) **Sustainability and carbon-reporting requirements** (10 mentions). The EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) requires companies to disclose emissions, including business travel, adding new reporting tasks for mobility teams.
- 7) **Digital nomad visa liabilities** (9 mentions). These visas allow remote work abroad but do not address tax liabilities and can create corporate tax obligations. Few organizations feel prepared to manage these risks.

Ranking of challenges

Respondents were asked to rank seven challenges (1 = most important, 7 = least important). The average rankings reveal the priority order of these industry-wide challenges.

Challenge	Average rank	Interpretation
Processing delays and capacity constraints	1.5	The highest priority. Long processing times for visas/work permits disrupt business plans and require early planning.
Compliance for remote/work-from-anywhere staff	3.2	A key challenge as hybrid work expands and employees request workcations.
Geo-political volatility & travel restrictions	3.4	Global instability and frequent policy changes create uncertainty.
UK skilled-worker rule changes	3.7	Important for organizations with operations in the UK.
Expanding data privacy & AI regulations	4.8	Rising in importance due to the EU AI Act and similar laws.
Digital nomad visa liabilities	5.0	A niche but growing concern; many respondents may not yet be managing digital-nomad programs.
Sustainability & carbon reporting requirements	6.4	Currently the lowest priority. However, new laws like the CSRD require companies to track travel emissions; the issue may gain prominence in the future.

Other challenges

Respondents listed additional pain points not covered in the previous question. Frequent themes included:

- **Cost control:** Many organizations face rising fees, especially after government fee increases and new surcharges in various jurisdictions.
- **Housing and relocation logistics:** Tight housing markets in destination cities make assignments more expensive and stressful.
- **Clarifying short-term business-visitor rules:** Respondents want more guidance on permissible activities and thresholds to avoid inadvertent breaches.
- **System integration and data management:** Legacy systems hinder real-time tracking of cases and decision-making. This aligns with client feedback we have received emphasizing technology-led and data-driven processes.
- **Brexit-related complexities:** Some organizations still struggle with post-Brexit rules for EU–UK mobility.
- **Generational expectations and DEIB:** Younger workers demand flexibility, remote options, and assignments that align with diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) goals.

Mobility flows and focus regions

Regional focus and relocation patterns

When ranking regions by how frequently they relocate employees from each region, respondents placed the **EU** first (average rank ≈ 2.1), followed by **Asia-Pacific (APAC)** and **North America**. The **UK**, Middle East, South America and Africa were less common sources.

For **destinations**, the **EU** and **North America** were ranked highest (averages of around 2.4), then the **UK** and **APAC**. Respondents rarely relocate employees to South America or Africa. This pattern highlights the importance of European and North American markets and suggests that the UK remains a key destination despite Brexit-related challenges.

Asked which regions they are most focused on for inbound/outbound moves, respondents most frequently chose the **UK (17)**, **EU (16)**, and **APAC (16)**, followed by the **US (14)** and the **Middle East (10)**. Smaller mentions included Latin America, China, and Canada. These focus regions mirror the ranking results and indicate that organizations anticipate continued activity in mature markets while exploring opportunities in APAC and the Middle East.

Regions employees are relocated from

Respondents ranked the frequency of relocations from seven regions. Average rankings were:

- 1) **European Union** – 2.1
- 2) **Asia-Pacific** – 2.7
- 3) **North America** – 3.0
- 4) **United Kingdom** – 3.4
- 5) **Middle East** – 4.8
- 6) **South America** – 5.4
- 7) **Africa** – 6.6

This suggests that most companies transfer talent from the EU and APAC, with fewer moves from emerging regions. The UK remains an important source, reflecting intra-Europe and trans-Atlantic transfers.

Regions employees are relocated to

The ranking for destination regions shows subtle differences:

- 1) **European Union** – 2.4
- 2) **North America** – 2.5
- 3) **United Kingdom** – 3.3
- 4) **Asia-Pacific** – 3.4
- 5) **Middle East** – 4.7
- 6) **South America** – 5.3
- 7) **Africa** – 6.4

EU and North America are not only sources of talent but also prime destinations. Respondents anticipate continued growth in the UK and APAC, while Latin American and African assignments remain niche.

Strategic objectives and internal drivers

Respondents were asked to select multiple objectives that align with their organization's strategic goals. The most cited objectives were:

- **Optimize program costs through streamlined, centralized mobility management** (48 mentions). Cost control is paramount. This objective emphasizes reducing vendor fees, airfare, and housing expenses. Cost-containment strategies have led many mobility programs into decline or redesign.
- **Build a diverse, globally experienced leadership pipeline** (32 mentions). Developing future leaders through international assignments remains a top priority and aligns with research showing that international experience is critical to attract and retain talent.
- **Strengthen cross-border knowledge transfer** (27 mentions). Organizations see mobility as a tool for spreading expertise and innovation across locations.
- **Accelerate entry into new markets** (16 mentions). Mobility enables rapid deployment of skilled talent in emerging regions.
- **Increase organizational resilience** (14 mentions). Building agility to respond to geopolitical shocks and supply-chain disruptions is crucial. 51 percent of employers expect mobility activity to increase as they seek greater agility.

Other objectives included enhancing the employer brand, aligning immigration with DEIB goals, and improving employee experience.



New demands being placed on mobility teams

In open responses, professionals reported several new priorities:

- **Earlier planning due to visa delays.** Teams now initiate relocation planning months earlier to account for processing backlogs and capacity constraints.
- **Expansion of short- and long-term assignment programs.** Some companies are reintroducing long-term expatriate assignments, while others are increasing short-term secondments.
- **Policy revisions for remote/hybrid work.** Organizations are updating policies to address cross-border remote work, digital-nomad arrangements, and immigration compliance for multi-jurisdictional teams.
- **Focus on cost management and automation.** Leaders are demanding better reporting, cost tracking, and process automation to reduce waste.
- **Enhanced duty-of-care and risk monitoring.** Respondents mentioned the need for robust risk assessments, geopolitical monitoring, and crisis response protocols.

Internal factors influencing immigration planning

The survey asked respondents to select internal drivers impacting their immigration strategies. The top factors were:

1) Company growth / hiring plans

(47 mentions). As organizations expand, they require more work permits and need to anticipate where demand will arise.

2) Budgetary pressures (45 mentions).

Economic uncertainty and fee increases compel employers to cut costs or rebalance budgets.

3) Employee experience and retention

(36 mentions). Organizations recognize that a positive immigration experience improves retention and employer branding.

4) Corporate restructuring or M&A

(24 mentions). Mergers and reorganizations often require mass transfers and new compliance strategies.

Primary objectives for global mobility teams

When asked about their personal objectives for immigration and mobility, respondents described:

- **Data quality and SLA management.** Improving data accuracy, case-tracking, and service-level adherence to provide reliable compliance reports.
- **Continuous improvement and compliance excellence.** Ensuring full compliance with existing and upcoming regulations, including preparing for the EU AI Act and CSRD.
- **Global governance and policy design.** Creating or revising policies for all regions to provide consistency and clarity.
- **Business travel and technology enablement.** Adopting tools to manage business-visitor compliance and pre-travel assessments.
- **Enhancing employee experience and DEIB.** Designing policies that support diversity, equity, and inclusion while providing high-touch support to mobile employees.

Leadership expectations and talent strategy integration

Respondents noted that their leaders have new expectations around mobility. Themes include:

- **Insourcing and cost efficiency.** Some leaders want to bring more functions in-house to control costs and improve visibility.
- **Enhanced global risk monitoring.** Requests to monitor political developments, sanctions, and global crises more closely.
- **Alignment with corporate strategy.** Leaders expect mobility programs to support market expansion, M&A, and workforce agility.
- **Talent management integration.** Leaders are emphasizing immigration as part of broader talent acquisition and retention efforts, aligning with research showing that workforce agility and talent mobility must be viewed holistically across tax, immigration, and HR.

Asked how immigration fits into talent strategy, many respondents observed that mobility is **essential** to recruit and retain globally diverse talent, and to meet skills shortages. Some noted that immigration remains transactional or poorly integrated and called for a cultural shift to recognize mobility as strategic.



Conclusions and recommendations

The survey results reveal several consistent themes across respondents and align closely with broader industry research:

1) Processing delays and capacity constraints remain the foremost challenge.

Organizations must plan assignments earlier and build flexible timelines. Investing in technology and automation to track cases and proactively manage deadlines can mitigate risk.

2) Remote/hybrid work increases compliance complexity.

As remote/hybrid arrangements become mainstream, employers need clear policies, pre-travel assessments and tax/immigration guidance. Partnerships with legal and tax experts are crucial, and digital-nomad visas should be approached cautiously due to tax liabilities.

3) Cost control is a persistent priority. Rising fees and economic uncertainty drive organizations to streamline programs, renegotiate

vendor contracts, and use data-driven insights to optimize expenditures.

4) Regulatory change and data governance are gaining prominence. New regulations such as the EU AI Act and CSRD require robust data management and carbon-reporting frameworks. Organizations should invest in compliance technology, develop cross-functional teams, and stay abreast of evolving laws.

5) Talent strategy integration is key to future success. Mobility programs should be aligned with broader talent acquisition, leadership development, and DEIB goals. Building a globally experienced leadership pipeline and ensuring a positive employee experience help attract and retain talent, addressing skills shortages.

As this survey shows, global mobility professionals must navigate an increasingly complex environment marked by processing delays, geopolitical volatility, hybrid work, and new regulations. By adopting technology, strengthening data governance, integrating mobility with talent strategy, and focusing on employee experience and cost efficiency, organizations can build resilient and agile mobility programs that support business growth and talent development in 2026 and beyond.

In a world where remote work, geopolitical uncertainty and regulatory change are the norm, organizations that proactively adapt will gain a decisive advantage in attracting and retaining global talent. **To find out how your organization can apply these insights and build a resilient, future-ready mobility program, contact our team or visit our website to explore additional resources, toolkits and consultation opportunities. Your next step toward a more agile workforce starts here.**