



UK Visas
& Immigration

Entry information for the UK

A guide for UK Creative Events Managers

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1. Overview – creatives coming to the UK

Creatives can come to the UK to undertake short-term engagements/work using 3 main routes:

	Standard visitor	Permitted Paid Engagement (PPE) visitor	T5 (Temporary Worker) Creative or Sporting Worker
Entry clearance required?	Depends on whether you are a visa national or not.	Depends on whether you are a visa national or not.	Yes. Unless the applicant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is a non-visa national, • has a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS), and • is seeking entry for 3 months or less
How long can I stay?	Up to 6 months	Up to 1 month	Up to 12 months if Entry Clearance held. Up to 3 months if no Entry Clearance held (as described above).
What can I do in the UK?	<p>An artist, entertainer, or musician may:</p> <p>(a) give performances as an individual or as part of a group;</p> <p>(b) take part in competitions or auditions;</p> <p>(c) make personal appearances and take part in promotional activities;</p> <p>(d) take part in one or more cultural events or festivals on the list of permit free festivals in Appendix Visitor: Permit Free Festival list (where payment is permitted).</p> <p>Unless they are performing at a PFF, payment beyond expenses and prize money is not permitted.</p> <p>Can also undertake all other permitted activities in Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities.</p>	<p>A professional artist, entertainer or musician may carry out an activity directly relating to their profession, if they have been invited by a creative (arts or entertainment) or sports organisation, agent or broadcaster based in the UK. No formal sponsorship required but a letter or invitation is needed.</p> <p>Applicants must be able to demonstrate this is their full-time profession. An arts professional can include fields across the performing and creative arts, including but not limited to poets, make-up artists, photographers, models.</p> <p>Payment permitted. Applicant must be over 18. Engagement must be arranged before travel and declared as part of the application (visa and at the border).</p> <p>Can also undertake all other permitted activities in Appendix Visitor: Permitted</p>	<p>A Creative Worker is someone who can make a unique contribution to the UK's rich cultural life, for example, as an artist, dancer, musician or entertainer, or as a model contributing to the UK's fashion industry.</p> <p>The T5 (Creative or Sporting) route allows for multiple engagements during an individual's time in the UK. There can be no longer than 14 days between each engagement. However, when calculating the 14-day period between engagements, any time spent by the worker outside the UK (including the dates of their departure from and return to the UK) will not count towards the 14 days.</p>

		Activities except study and transit..	
Legislation	Appendix V of the Immigration Rules. Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities . Appendix Visitor: Permit Free Festival list .	Appendix V of the Immigration Rules	Appendix T5 (Temporary Worker) Creative or Sporting Worker of the Immigration Rules
How much does a visa cost?	For current fees please visit https://www.gov.uk/visa-fees		

2. Visa nationals

Some nationals need a visa to come to the UK. A list of countries and territories whose citizens and nationals need a visa prior to travel to the UK can be found in Appendix Visitor: Visa national list - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-visitor-visa-national-list>.

The Visas and Immigration pages of the Government website at <https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa> also have a 'Check if I need a Visa' function. This tool may also help individuals determine which visa is the most appropriate depending on the nature of their trip.

All nationals coming to the UK are assessed against the same Immigration Rules regardless of nationality and whether there is a visa requirement. The only difference is where that assessment is made.

3. The Visitor routes in more detail

Visitors (Standard and Permitted Paid Engagement)

All Visitors must meet the requirements in Appendix V: Visitor to the Immigration Rules (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-v-visitor>), As set out in the Rules, an applicant must satisfy the decision maker that they are a genuine visitor who will leave the UK at the end of their visit and will not make the UK their main home through frequent or successive visits – for instance that they have family, work or study ties in their home country. A visitor must also be able to show that they are able to support and maintain themselves during their visit. There is flexibility in the Rules for visitors to be maintained and accommodated by friends, relatives or another sponsor. A visitor must not intend to work or study except where this is specifically permitted.

The Visit Guidance provides further information about the Visitor routes - www.gov.uk/government/publications/visit-guidance.

Standard Visitor

Under the Visitor Rules, Standard visitors to the UK are permitted to undertake all the activities at [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities](#), including the following creative activities:

- *An artist, entertainer, or musician may:*
 - a. *give performances as an individual or as part of a group;*
 - b. *take part in competitions or auditions;*
 - c. *make personal appearances and take part in promotional activities;*
 - d. *take part in one or more cultural events or festivals on the list of permit free festivals in [Appendix Visitor: Permit Free Festival list](#) (where payment is permitted).*

- *Personal or technical staff or members of the production team of an artist, entertainer or musician may support the activities in PA 14.1. or Appendix V: Visitor at V 13.3.(e), provided they are attending the same event as the artist, entertainer or musician, and are employed to work for them outside of the UK.*

- *Film crew (actor, producer, director or technician) employed by an overseas company may visit the UK to take part in a location shoot for a film or programme or other media content that is produced and financed overseas.*

If your delegate is travelling for a reason related to a creative event but not directly participating in it, they may qualify to enter the UK as a visitor to carry out other permitted activities, for example as a member of the press, or a TV crew.

Under the Standard Visitor route, the only payment a delegate is permitted to receive for a performance is if they are participating in one or more Permit Free Festivals.

For further information about how to become a Permit Free Festival please visit this page on GOV.UK - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-to-be-on-the-list-of-permit-free-festivals/how-to-apply-to-get-on-the-list-of-permit-free-festivals>.

Permitted Paid Engagement (PPE) Visitor

Under the [Visitor Rules](#), there are a few activities where payment by a UK source is allowed. [V 13.1 – V 13.3](#) details the Permitted Paid Engagements, which include:

- *professional artist, entertainer, or musician may carry out an activity directly relating to their profession, if they have been invited by a creative (arts or entertainment) organisation, agent or broadcaster based in the UK.*

As well as the general requirements under V 3.1. and V 4.1. – V 4.6. of Appendix V: Visitor, PPE Visitors must meet the following additional requirements (V 13.1. – V 13.3.):

- *An applicant must intend to do one (or more) of the permitted paid engagements set out in V 13.3., which must:*
 - a. be arranged before the applicant travels to the UK; and*
 - b. be declared as part of the application for a visit visa or leave to enter; and*
 - c. be evidenced by a formal invitation, as required by Appendix 4; and*
 - d. relate to the applicant's area of expertise and occupation overseas.*
- *An applicant must not be a child.*

PPE Visitors can undertake the engagements listed in V 13.3. and all the other permitted activities in Appendix V: Permitted Activities apart from study and transit.

Documents for Visitors

Apart from a valid travel document, the Standard Visitor route does not require any mandatory documents (unless the individual coming to the UK for private medical treatment, to donate an organ, as an academic coming for up to 12 months or is a child). This is because visitors can come to the UK for a variety of reasons and each person will have their individual circumstances. Applicants are best placed to determine the documents they think best demonstrate that they meet the Immigration Rules.

It is, however, recommended that organisers inviting any performers to their events in any of the Visitor routes provide invitation letters. An example is set out in Section 8 of this guidance.

PPE visitors **must** have a formal invitation letter from the inviting creative (arts or entertainment) organisation, agent or broadcaster based in the UK.

Prepare the application and supporting documents carefully. Submitting only an invitation letter in support of an application may not give the decision maker all the necessary information to be satisfied that the individual meets the requirements of the Immigration Rules. To support their application, your delegate should gather evidence of their circumstances, employment, ability to meet the costs of the trip and details of where they will be staying and why they are visiting the UK.

The supporting documents guidance provides some examples of the types of documents a visitor might choose to submit with their visa application or show to a Border Force Officer on arrival - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visitor-visa-guide-to-supporting-documents>.

4. The T5 (Temporary Worker) Creative or Sporting Worker route in more detail

The T5 (Temporary Worker) Creative or Sporting Worker route allows professionals to work in the UK for up to 12 months through formal sponsorship. For information about extending stay under T5 (Temporary Worker) Creative or Sporting Worker from within the UK please visit <https://www.gov.uk/tier-5-temporary-worker-creative-and-sporting-visa/extend-your-visa>

In order to invite and sponsor creatives to work in the UK under the T5 route, you will first need a sponsor licence that allows you to issue Certificates of Sponsorships (CoS).

Guidance for organisations wishing to sponsor individuals can be found on our website at: www.gov.uk/uk-visa-sponsorship-employers. Our service standard for processing a sponsor licence application is 8 weeks.

- The T5 Immigration Rules for those coming to the UK as a creative worker can be found here - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-t5-temporary-worker-creative-or-sporting-worker>
- Appendix T5 Creative Workers Codes of Practice can be found here - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-t5-creative-workers-codes-of-practice>
- Appendix Finance can be found here - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-finance>

Under the Points Based System, there are mandatory documents; the T5 guidance - <https://www.gov.uk/temporary-worker-creative-and-sporting-visa/documents-you-must-provide> - provides further information.

Usually, entry under T5 requires a visa regardless of the nationality of the individual. However, non-visa nationals seeking to come to the UK for three months or less under this route, can apply for leave to enter at the border, provided they obtain a CoS in advance. They will be required to present their CoS number to an Immigration Officer on arrival and may be required to provide evidence of meeting the financial requirements.

Non-visa nationals wishing to enter the UK via Ireland and stay for three months or less must complete a form for Immigration Clearance. Our published guidance provides more detail and can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-travel-area>

Those intending to stay for more than three months must obtain a visa in advance of travel.

5. Visa applications

If participants of creative and cultural events are required to apply for a visa in advance of travel, please advise them to apply as early as possible. **Applications can be made up to three months in advance of the travel.**

Our service standard for processing standard non-settlement visas is 15 working days from when we receive an application (including biometric information) to when we send our decision to the applicant. Please advise delegates to allow as much time as possible to ensure the information on their form is accurate.

UK hosts of events should ensure that invitation letters are sent to their delegates as early as possible before the event to allow them to apply for a UK visa. All supporting documents should be self-uploaded in advance of attending the Visa Application Centre (VAC), or taken to the VAC for assisted scanning, in line with the visa application process. If you are issuing an official letter of invitation to attend an event in the UK, we would recommend that your delegates include the original letter with their supporting documents.

In many locations, for an additional fee, delegates may be able to use our Priority and Super Priority visa service. The service standards for these products are 5 working days and the end of the next working day respectively.

Full instructions for what your delegates need to do before, during and after applying for a visa, and what to do once they enter the UK can be found on our website at: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/what-you-need-to-do>

To find details of the nearest visa application centre use this link: www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre.

Filling out the relevant visa application form

Instructions for participating performers, personal or technical staff, officials, organisers and any job related to media coverage for events and competitions applying under the Visitor routes

- Go to: <https://www.gov.uk/visit-uk-business-trip>
- Under 'Apply for visa', select either: **being paid by a UK company to come as an expert in your profession** to apply under the Permitted Paid Engagement rules, or **coming on a business trip and not being paid by a UK company** to apply under the Standard Visitor rules, including performing at events on the Permit Free Festival list.

Instructions for those applying under the T5 (Temporary Worker) Creative or Sporting Worker route

- Go to: <https://www.gov.uk/tier-5-temporary-worker-creative-and-sporting-visa/apply>
- Under 'Apply online', select Tier 5 (Temporary Worker) visa - Creative and Sporting

Instructions for friends or family of any of the above groups

- Go to: <https://www.gov.uk/visit-uk-holiday-family-friends>
- Under 'Apply for visa', select: **Find out how to apply for a Standard Visitor visa**

Other hints and tips

Delegates are required to provide details of previous travel. 'Holiday' is fine, but 'performance' is vague. Stating where and what the performance was, provides the Entry Clearance Officer with more information about the applicant's circumstances and profession.

Remember, the official making the decision may not always be familiar with local customs, e.g. if salary payments are made in a pattern that may appear unusual to our staff it may be helpful to point this out.

6. Children applying as Standard Visitors

There are additional criteria to be met for children under the age of 18 travelling to the UK to attend events as Standard Visitors as set out in Appendix V: Visitor:

- *Adequate arrangements must have been made for their travel to, reception and care in the UK. (V 5.1.)*
- *If the child is not applying or travelling with a parent or guardian based in their home country or country of ordinary residence who is responsible for their care; that parent or guardian must consent to the child's travel to, reception and care in the UK. Where requested, this consent must be given in writing. (V 5.2.)*
- *A child who holds a visit visa must either:
(a) hold a valid visit visa that states they are accompanied and will be travelling with an adult identified on that visit visa; or
(b) hold a visit visa which states they are unaccompanied; if neither applies, the child may be refused entry unless they meet the requirements of V 5.1. and V 5.2. (V 1.4.)*

Travelling alone

Children can travel to the UK without an adult (someone over the age of 18), but there must be suitable arrangements for their travel to, reception and care in the UK. It is strongly advised that a parent or guardian provides their written consent for a child to travel to the UK and their full contact details. It may also be appropriate for parents or guardians to provide evidence of their relationship to the child.

The parent or guardian will also need to provide proof that a child has somewhere suitable to live during their stay in the UK, including:

- the name and date of birth of the person that they will be staying with;
- an address where they will be living;
- details of the relationship to the person who will be looking after them; and
- consent in writing from the person you will be staying with confirming that they can look after the child during their stay in the UK.

Travelling with an adult

When travelling to the UK with an adult (someone over the age of 18), the adults need to be identified in the child's visa application. If the person travelling with the child isn't their parent, specific information about them will need to be provided in the application.

The names of the accompanying adults will appear on the child's visa, and the child will be refused entry to the UK if they arrive in the UK without the accompanying adult.

Children can identify up to two adults in their visa application, and their visa will only be valid if they travel with at least one of them. The named adults can apply for a visa at the same time, but they must each complete a separate application.

7. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the visa application process

How do my delegates apply for a visa?

Applications for visit visas are made online <https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/uk-visit-visa>

How do I make enquiries about a visa application?

You should be able to find the information you need about visit visas on our website (www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa) but if you need to contact us, our contact details are [here on GOV.UK](#)

Can my delegates apply in their own language?

The application form has been translated into a range of languages, however all answers must be in English. Supporting documents must also be in English or accompanied by a translation. Translation requirements are outlined in the guide to supporting documents: www.gov.uk/government/visitor-visa-guide-to-supporting-documents

Where should my delegate apply?

An application can be made from any country where we have a Visa Application Centre (VAC). The online form will ask which country an applicant is applying in, this then gives a list of available Visa Application Centres. An application can also be made online from a country where there is no VAC presence, but the applicant would need to travel to a VAC to complete the application process. Further details about our visa application centres are available [here](#)

When should my delegates apply?

Applications can be made up to three months in advance of the intended date of travel to the UK. UK hosts of events should ensure that invitation letters are sent to the delegates as quickly as possible before the event to allow them plenty of time to apply for a visa.

How long will my delegates applications take?

We aim to process visit applications within **15 working days from submitting biometrics**, but we recommend that applications are made as early as possible allowing at least four weeks. In many locations, for an additional fee, delegates may be able to use our Priority and Super Priority visa service.

What is “biometric information”?

Biometric information consists of fingerprint scanning and a full-face digital photograph. Visa applicants must provide their biometric information **each time** they apply for a UK visa.

Can delegates do anything in advance to make the application process quicker?

Yes. When an application is started your delegate will be asked to supply an email address and create a password, they will then be emailed a link to return to the application at a later point. This means the form can be started more than three months before the planned date of travel.

What is Priority and Super Priority Service

Priority service means that we will aim to make a decision on your application in 5 working days, this service is available in over 200 locations.

Super Priority service reduces this to the end of the next working day, this service is available in around 20 locations.

Both services are charged at an additional fee. Some applications may take longer if they are complex, please check the [visa application centres](#) website for any further information.

Important note: Priority service does not imply or guarantee in any way that a delegate will be successful in their visa application. All visa applicants must meet the requirements of the UK immigration rules.

My delegate travels a lot and cannot be without their passport, are there any services that could help?

We offer a Keep My Passport service in over 40 locations, this allows the applicant to keep their passport while the application is being considered. If the visa application is successful, they will need to provide their passport to the VAC for the vignette to be printed. This service comes at an additional cost and details of which services are available at each VAC are set out on the Commercial Partner website

Are there any other services available for the convenience of my delegates?

Yes, a wide range of services are available for customer convenience, popular services include peak time and weekend VAC appointments, SMS updates, photocopying, premium lounges and even the ability to submit biometrics in the comfort of your own home or office. Additional services such as travel insurance and UK sim card can also be purchased visa commercial partner websites and in VACs. These are known as 'user pay' or 'added value' services, please see the website of the VAC your delegate wishes to attend to find out which services are available in their location.

Why aren't all services available in all locations?

Not all customers want all services, to provide the best value for both our customers, our additional services are provided where there is a demand for them.

Is it possible for someone else to collect my delegates passport and documents on their behalf?

Passports must be collected by the applicant or a nominated representative. You can check if a visa application centre offers a courier service, which may be more convenient way for passports and documents to be returned, this is an additional service for which the fee will vary upon location.

Can a delegate apply for a visa in one country and collect it in another?

No, however a small number of VAC's do offer an out of country courier service at an additional cost, please check the VAC website to see if this service is available.

What travel date should be stated on the application form?

On the application your delegates should be specific in stating planned dates of travel to and from the UK. Delegates cannot arrive in the UK earlier than the start date on their visa. If your delegate tries to travel before this date, the airline may not let them board their flight, or they may be refused entry on arrival in the UK. It is not usually possible to make changes to the validity dates of a visa, after it has been printed. If plans change, your delegate may need to make a new visa application.

Are there any other ways to make my journey easier?

Nationals of some countries may be able to clear immigration control faster through our Registered Traveller Service. To be eligible delegates must have a visa or have visited the UK 4 times or more in the last 24 months.

For further information about the Registered Traveller Service, please visit our website:

www.gov.uk/registered-traveller.

What can I do if my delegates visa is refused?

A decision to refuse a visa is made only after careful consideration of all the facts by an Entry Clearance Officer, including the fact that the delegate is to attend or contribute to a specific event. If the application is refused, the refusal notice that will provide details about the reasons for refusal. Your delegate is free to make a new application, but it is strongly recommended that they read their refusal letter carefully and fully address all the reasons for the initial refusal.

I am funding my delegates travel; do I need to provide additional information?

In most cases, providing details of your support on the visa invitation letter should be sufficient. However, if you send funds directly to your delegate it would be prudent to provide evidence to support the payments you have made

This guide is for me, are there any documents I can share with my delegates?

Yes, the GREAT Campaign Asset Library provides a selection of documents which may be shared:

[GREAT Visit Visa](#)

Whilst we can point you to this material it is important that you read the Terms and Conditions as it is your responsibility to ensure you comply with any restrictions placed on the sharing of documents published.

8. Invitation letters:

How will the letter be sent to the recipient?

- If you are sending the letter by email, use a non-editable PDF format.
- Always use official headed paper for your organisation including the relevant contact information.

Where possible, a letter should be sent to an individual and include:

- full name - as it appears in the passport;
- date of birth;
- nationality; and
- passport number.

The letter should also include:

- details of the event;
- dates of the event;
- location of the event;
- dates of arrival and departure to and from the UK;
- details of why the applicant has been invited;
- details of costs that will be covered by the host e.g. flights, accommodation, transportation etc;
- whether the applicant will be paid for their participation in the event;
- contact details for UKVI staff or Border Force Officers to use to verify the authenticity of the letter.

The letter should be signed by the relevant competent authority.

Notes on best practice

You may find it helpful to give each delegate a unique reference number. This will make verification quicker and easier in the event it is requested.

Example letter

Edinburgh, April XXXX

Name
Date of birth
Nationality
Passport number

Dear

Invitation to [Name of Event]

We take great pleasure in inviting you to participate in [Name of Event] to be held in Edinburgh, Scotland.

We will provide the following:

- Accommodation and full board from [date] to [date]
- Registration and entry fees
- Assistance throughout your stay

You will be responsible for the travel costs to and from Edinburgh. Please see the attached sheet for a full programme.

We look forward to having the pleasure of welcoming you to Scotland.

This letter was signed by

President /Event Director

9. Visa Application Process

End to End, Customer Journey – this represents a generic high-level visa customer journey for an international visa applicant

