



**Mimbre**  
acrobatic  
theatre

- Female-led acrobatic theatre company
- Based in Hackney but performing across UK, Europe and further afield
- Founded by Swedish and Italian acrobats
- Have always worked with people from outside the UK
- Arts Council England NPO, turnover just over £250k



This is just Lissy's experience and should obviously not be taken as cast-iron advice!

# Permitted Paid Engagements

- Less than a month
- Only applies to some people, including “professional artist, entertainer or musician”
- May not need to apply in advance - check here: <https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa>
- **Need a stamp in their passport, so HAVE to speak to a border official on the way in, DO NOT use an e-gate**

<https://www.gov.uk/permitted-paid-engagement-visitor>

They will need:

- A blank page on their passport
  - An [invitation letter](#) from you to them
  - Proof that “the paid engagement relates to your expertise, qualifications and main job in your home country” for example letter from a company in their home country
  - “extra documents if you’re an established arts, entertainment or sporting professional” for example media coverage and reviews, proof of recent performances
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# Visa sponsorship

There is a huge variety of ways someone can come and work in the UK, but we looked at:

- Creative Worker (temporary)
- Skilled Worker (permanent)

(Can also look at Youth Mobility Scheme, Global Talent Visa)

In the end (for now) only applied for Creative Worker

Possible approaches:

Pay a company to do this for you - we were quoted £3500+VAT

DIY approach - I spent about 1 week solidly reading all the guidance and working out how it might apply to us - it's complicated!

Also paid for advice from a barrister - this was not quite pro-bono but was dramatically below market rates

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# Useful links

- [Immigration rules](#) – the whole lot
- [Sponsorship: guidance for employers and educators](#) – page with everything an employer could possibly want
- The three main documents:
  - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workers-and-temporary-workers-guidance-for-sponsors-part-1-apply-for-a-licence>
  - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workers-and-temporary-workers-guidance-for-sponsors-part-2-sponsor-a-worker>
  - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workers-and-temporary-workers-guidance-for-sponsors-part-3-sponsor-duties-and-compliance>
- The documents relevant to the two routes we might use:
  - [Worker and Temporary Workers: guidance for sponsors: sponsor a Creative Worker](#)
  - [Workers and Temporary Workers: guidance for sponsors: sponsor a Skilled Worker](#)
- Useful appendices:
  - [Sponsor guidance appendix A: supporting documents for sponsor applications - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
  - [Sponsor guidance appendix D: keeping records for sponsorship - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

# Application process

## Timescales and cost

### **‘Small’ sponsor licence fee - £536**

Most applications are dealt with in less than 8 weeks.

**Priority service** for expedited processing of sponsor licence applications - additional **£500** (optional)

10 working days – only a limited number of slots each day – but we found that the invitation to apply for this came a few days after we submitted the application

## Application:

- Application form
- Supporting documents
  - Annual Accounts
  - Insurance certificate
  - VAT registration
  - PAYE registration
  - Corporation tax registration
  - Office lease
  - Foreign Entertainers Tax Unit registration
  - Bank statement
- Additional documents (mostly prepared for Skilled Worker application, but submitted for Creative Worker anyway)
  - Cover letter
  - Additional information
  - Record keeping

# Potential costs post-licence

## For Membre:

- Fee per Creative Worker Certificate of Sponsorship - £21

## For artist:

- If they apply beforehand - £624 healthcare surcharge, £259 fee

HOWEVER there is a 'Creative Worker visa concession' which means they can apply at the border IF they:

- They have a valid certificate of sponsorship
- are coming to work in the UK for 3 months or less
- do not normally need a visa to enter the UK as a visitor

And in this case, I *think* they don't have to pay those fees

# Successes and failures

We got the licence!

We asked for three Certificates of Sponsorship per year but were only awarded one which will ultimately be impractical.

# Questions

How do we as an organisation and me as an individual feel about helping the Home Office do its work, considering the Government's treatment of refugees and the 'hostile environment'?

Going forward is it going to be possible for younger creatives to make their careers in the UK?

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Thank you!



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