

# Visiting the UK

A guide for artists and people who work in creative jobs



This document was written by **Arts Infopoint UK** with help from Latitude Law, Newfields Law and Tamizdat. It is an easy read version of 'Visiting the UK - a visa guide for international artists and creative professionals'.

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# How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 45**.

Arts  
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# About this guide



This is a guide for people who work in the arts. It is about applying for a **visa** to work in the UK.



A **visa** is an official document that allows you to enter another country. A working **visa** allows you to work in that country. A **visa** is usually stamped or glued into your passport.



Information about **visas** can be hard to understand. That is why we have made this guide.



You may need to get legal advice about **visas**. For example, from a solicitor. This guide is not legal advice. There is more information about this here: [artsinfopointuk.com/legal-disclaimer](https://artsinfopointuk.com/legal-disclaimer)



You might not need some of the information in this guide. But you may find it useful to look over all of it.

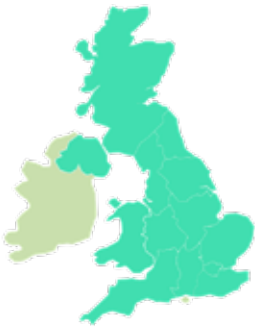


We have included links where you can get more information. But they are not in Easy Read. You may need support to read the extra information.



We would like to know what you think about this guide. Please let us know by emailing:  
[infopoint@wai.org.uk](mailto:infopoint@wai.org.uk)

# Visa National and Non-Visa National



In the UK visitors are listed as:

- **Visa National**
- or **Non-Visa Nationals**



Which one you are depends on your **citizenship**.

**Citizenship** means the rights you have in the country you live.

## Visa National



This means **citizens** who come from a country who need a **visa** to visit the UK for any reason.



The type of **visa** you will need will depend on the work you plan to do when in the UK.





Here is a list of the countries that need a **visa** to visit the UK: [www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-visitor-visa-national-list](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-visitor-visa-national-list)

## Non-Visa National



This means **citizens** who come from a country who do not need a **visa** for a holiday to the UK.



Or for **some** activities to do with work.



If your country is **not** in the list in the link above, then this is your group.



Most people in this group will need a work **visa** if they are going to be working in the UK.



But the type of **visa** they need will depend on what they will be doing.

# Common Travel Area (CTA)



If you live in Ireland, the Isle of Man, Jersey or Guernsey you do not need a **visa** to live or work in the UK.



But there may be more rules to follow for some types of **visa**. For example the **Standard Visitor route** and **Permitted Paid Engagements visa**.

For example, if you are travelling from another country to Ireland and then to the UK, you might not see staff at the border to stamp your passport.

For the Standard Visitor route and Permitted Paid Engagements visa, you have special permission to enter the UK in this situation – this is called ‘Deemed Leave’.



There is more information about the **Common Travel Area (CTA)** here: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-travel-area-guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-travel-area-guidance)





You should now know whether you are:

- a **Visa** National
- a **Non-Visa** National
- or if you are from a **Common Travel Area**.



You now need to look at which of these areas best describes what you will be doing in the UK:

- Unpaid activities
- Paid activities
- Living and working in the UK



We will describe them more in the next section.

# Unpaid activities



For example, maybe you have a meeting in the UK. Or maybe you have a performance that you are not going to be paid for.



Most people will need a job offer before travelling to the UK. But some activities are allowed if they are **unpaid**.



It may be possible for some of your costs to be paid under this **visa**. For example, travel or accommodation.

## These are the things you can do as an unpaid visitor:



- Go to conferences, meetings, and interviews.



- Sign Contracts or talk about them.



- Give talks as long as they are not to make money.



- Attend trade fairs. As long as there are no sales.



- Visit sites for possible work and get information.



- Give performances as individuals or as part of a group.



- Take part in competitions or auditions, and promote what you do.



It is possible for your staff to come along as a **standard visitor**, if they are going to the same event. They will have to follow the same rules as you.



A **standard visitor** is the usual way people travel to the UK for normal travel and holidays.

# How to apply for a visa to do unpaid activities

## Non-Visa Nationals



You can enter the UK for up to 6 months without a **visa** or fees.



Artists must apply for an **Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA)** before they travel. This includes people from most countries.



The **ETA** will cost £16 and let them visit the UK as many times as they want for 2 years.



More information about **ETA** can be found here: [www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta)

# Visa Nationals



You must apply for a **standard visa** before visiting the UK.



The cost starts at £127.

Visa Nationals will need these documents when they visit the UK:



- A welcome letter from the organisation you will be involved with



- Proof you can support yourself. For example, a bank statement



- Proof you can afford to get back home. The UK government say it is best not to use a return ticket as proof of this.



The UK government try to decide whether to give you a **visa** within 3 weeks. But it can take longer.



You should make sure you give plenty of time for your **visa** application.



Some countries have a system where applications can be dealt with quickly.



There is more information about this here:  
[www.gov.uk/guidance/visa-decision-waiting-times-applications-outside-the-uk](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/visa-decision-waiting-times-applications-outside-the-uk)



# Paid activities



This is for people who want to come to the UK for work and get paid. Then leave.

There are 6 main types of ways a person can carry out paid work. They are:



**1. Permitted Paid Engagement [Visa](#) (PPE)** - Lets you stay up to 6 months. You must do your work in the first 30 days after you arrive.



**2. Permit Free Festivals (PFF)** - Lets you stay up to 6 months



**3. Temporary Work - Creative Worker [Visa](#) Concession** (for Non-[Visa](#) Nationals only) - Lets you stay up to 3 months



**4. Temporary Work - Creative Worker [Visa](#)**



## 5. Youth Mobility Worker Visa



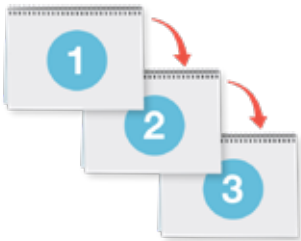
## 6. Frontier Worker permit



Numbers 1, 2 and 3 are good for short pieces of work and tours. And they can be easier and cheaper to get.



The **Temporary work Creative Work Visa Concession** is not for **Visa** Nationals.



But it can be used by **Non-visa Nationals** for up to 3 months.



Numbers 4, 5 and 6 are good for longer term pieces of work.

# Permitted Paid Engagements



This is for short touring in the UK.



People may be coming to carry out an event, or a number of events for up to 6 months. You must do the paid work in the first 30 days after arriving.



It is for artists who are up and running already.



The activity must be planned before you come.



And the UK group organising the work must send you a letter inviting you to take part.

## The letter should say:



- When and where the activity is.
- How it is connected to the work you do.
- Where you will be staying.



Artists should also put together information about:

- their work
- how they are seen by people in their country
- how much money they earn
- any other work they have outside of the UK
- what they want to do in the UK.



These are the rules you will need to follow for a **Permitted Paid Engagement**:



- You must be at least 18 years old.



- You must be visiting the UK for no more than 6 months. You must do the paid work within the first 30 days after arriving.



- You must have enough money to support yourself. You should not rely on **public funds** to support yourself.

**Public funds** means things like welfare benefits and grants. For example, money given to you by the government.



- You must have enough money to pay for your journey home.



- When you leave, you cannot travel through Ireland, the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands.



More information can be found here:

[www.gov.uk/permitted-paid-engagement-visitor](https://www.gov.uk/permitted-paid-engagement-visitor)

# How to apply for Permitted Paid Engagements

## Visa Nationals



Must apply for a standard visitor visa before visiting the UK. From their home country, or the country where they live.



It will cost £127. But there might be some other fees for services at the application centre.



The UK government tries to decide about applications in 3 weeks. But it might take longer. You can apply 3 months before you travel.



## Non-Visa Nationals



You do not need to apply for a **visa**. You will need an Electronic Travel Authorisation.



Keep your documents ready in case a Border Official wants to see them.



If allowed, you can enter using an **eGate**.

**eGates** are machines that check your passport.

# Permit free festivals



This is for short term working visits at some UK festivals.



Artists can take part in 1 or more event on the list of permit free festivals.



They will need a welcome letter from a UK organisation or festival that is on the Permit Free Festival list. The letter will say:



- What the activity is



- Details about any contract you may have for the work



- Information about how they can afford to be in the UK and get home.

# How to apply for a permit free festivals visa

## Visa Nationals



You must apply for a **Standard Visitor visa** before travelling to the UK.



The UK government try to decide whether to approve your **visa** within 3 weeks. But it can take longer.

## Non-Visa Nationals



You do not need to apply for a **visa**. You will need an Electronic Travel Authorisation.



If allowed, you can enter using an eGate.



For a list of the permit free festivals go here:  
[www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/-immigration-rules-appendix-visitor-permit-free-festival-list](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/-immigration-rules-appendix-visitor-permit-free-festival-list)

# Temporary Work - Creative Worker Visa Concession



This is for:

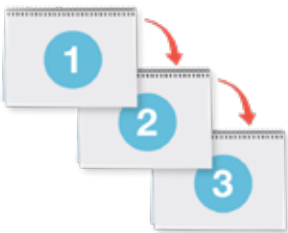
- **Non-[Visa](#) Nationals**
- for short term tours in the UK.



You do not need to apply for a visa. You will need an **Electronic Travel Authorisation**. You need to make sure you follow these things:



- You must be a **Non-[Visa](#) National**



- The total length of activity is 3 months or less from the date your [visa](#) is given to you



- You have a UK organisation that will **sponsor** the [visa](#). The UK organisation must be registered and have a **Home Office sponsor licence**.

A **sponsor** means the organisation is responsible for you during your stay in the UK.



- The UK **sponsor** organisation must give you a **Certificate of Sponsorship**. Sometimes there will be more than 1 **sponsor**.



It may be possible to do some other work whilst in the UK on this **visa**. Up to 20 hours a week.



For more information go here:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/skilled-worker-visa-immigration-salary-list](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skilled-worker-visa-immigration-salary-list)



If you are coming to the UK through Ireland under the **Creative Worker Visa Concession** you must apply for something called **remote clearance**.



You must do this **at least 72 hours** before you arrive in the UK.



More information about the visa can be found here:

[www.gov.uk/creative-worker-visa/creative-worker-concession](http://www.gov.uk/creative-worker-visa/creative-worker-concession)

# Longer paid activities in the UK

## Temporary Work - Creative Worker Visa



This is for paid work in the UK over a longer period of time.



It can be useful for jobs like:

- Dancers
- Musicians
- Actors



It allows people to work in the UK for up to 12 months. You may be able to apply to stay for up to 2 years.



It may be possible to do some other work whilst in the UK on this visa. Up to 20 hours a week.

## To get this **visa** you must:



- Have a UK organisation **sponsor** you.



- Have a **Certificate of Sponsorship** from your **sponsor**. This will say what you will be doing. And why you want this type of **visa**.



- Apply for a **visa**, with the information from the **Certificate of Sponsorship**. Your application must be sent to the country you live or are from.



You must prove you have at least £1,270 for 28 days. Unless your sponsor has promised to support you, and this is on your **Certificate of Sponsorship**.



The fee for this **visa** is £319. There may also be other fees.



This can be good for people working in the UK longer than 3 months. But there is no shortest time you must stay.



# Youth Mobility Worker Visa



You may be able to stay for paid work for up to 2 years. You can leave the UK and return within the 2 years.



If you are from Australia, Canada, or New Zealand, you can stay longer. You can add up to 1 more year to your visa while in the UK.



To get this **visa** you must:

- Be 18 to 30 years old. Or 18 to 35 for some countries.



- Have at least £2,530 in savings



If you are 18 to 35, you can apply if you are from:

- Australia
- Canada
- New Zealand
- South Korea



If you are 18 to 30, you can apply if you are from:

- Andorra
- Iceland
- India
- Japan
- Monaco
- San Marino
- Uruguay
- Hong Kong, if you have an SAR passport
- Taiwan

You can also apply if you are 18 to 30 and are:

- A British Overseas Citizen
- A British Overseas Territories Citizen
- A British National Overseas



There is a special visa for people from India. It is called the **India Young Professionals Scheme**. You can find out about it here:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/india-young-professionals-scheme-visa-ballot-system](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/india-young-professionals-scheme-visa-ballot-system)



It will cost £319 to apply for this **visa**. And there may be other charges.

# Frontier Work Permit



This is for people who work in the UK but are from a European country.



You can apply to work in the UK for up to 5 years with this **visa**.

**To get this **visa** you must:**



- Be an EU national or come from Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein
- Mainly live outside the UK
- Have worked in the UK by 31 December 2020
- and you must have performed work in the UK in the 12 months before applying.



There is no fee to apply for this type of **visa**.

# Living in the UK



This is for artists who need to travel to the UK to live **and** work.



This is good for artists who want to be in the UK for a long time.



There are 2 types of **visa** in this section.

## Global Talent visa



This is for top artists in dance, music, theatre, books, film and TV.



This **visa** can last for up to 5 years.

# Skilled Worker visa



This is for people who want to be employed in the UK. The employer will be their **sponsor**.



The job must need certain skills. And it must be paid work.



This **visa** can last for up to 5 years.



Family members can apply for a visa that lasts the same time.



Please go here for more information:  
[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration)

# Questions and answers



Here are some answers to questions lots of people ask.

## Unpaid Activities



### Question:

I am a **Visa National**. Where can I apply for a **standard visitor visa**. And what documents will I need?

### Answer:

You can apply at:

- A **visa** application centre.
- A place called a **British Diplomatic Mission**.
- Or a place called a **consular post**.



There is more information here:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/where-to-apply-ecb05](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/where-to-apply-ecb05)



### Question:

What is meant by support staff? What documents do they need?



### Answer:

Staff who are employed to work on an event in another country.



It is a good idea to have a letter written by the employer.



It should give information about the **terms and conditions of employment**. For example, how many hours the person does and what they do.



# Permitted Paid Engagements



## Question:

What do I need to do when I arrive in the UK?



## Answer:

If you are a visa national, you **must** make sure the Border Force staff stamp your passport.



Have all your documents ready to show if the officer asks.



If you are a non-visa national, you do not need a stamp at the Border. If allowed, you can enter using an eGate.



### Question:

Can I do more than 1 job with different companies? Like a tour of places?



### Answer:

Yes, you can do more than 1 job, as long as all the jobs are done within 30 days after you arrive in the UK.



You must follow the rules about the types of jobs you can do.



### Question:

Can my staff apply for this type of **visa** too?



### Answer:

Yes. As long as it is to support the same event. And they are employed to work for you outside the UK.



**Question:**

Can someone do both Permitted Paid Engagements (PPE) and Permit Free Festivals in 1 visit?



**Answer:**

Yes, but all PPE work must be done within the first 30 days after you arrive in the UK.



You must say what work you will do when you apply. You need to show an invitation for any events you will take part in.



**Question:**

Is there a limit to the number of times I can visit the UK in a year?



**Answer:**

There is not a limit, but each visit must be no longer than 6 months. You should not spend more than half your time here.

## Permit Free Festivals (PFF)



### Question:

Which festivals are permit free?

### Answer:

Here is a list of all the permit free festivals:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/-immigration-rules-appendix-visitor-permit-free-festival-list](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/-immigration-rules-appendix-visitor-permit-free-festival-list)



### Question:

What do I do when I arrive in the UK?

### Answer:

If you are allowed, you can use the eGates when you arrive.



If you cannot use the eGates, you must talk to a Border Force officer and show your passport and documents. Your passport must be valid for your whole stay.



**Question:**

Can my staff use this type of **visa**?



**Answer:**

No. They come as a **Standard Visitor**. They must be going to the same festival. And they must be allowed to work for you outside of the UK.



**Question:**

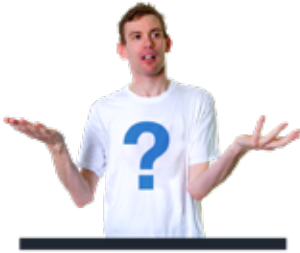
Is there limit to the number of times can I visit the UK in a year?



**Answer:**

There is not a limit, but each visit must be no longer than 6 months. You should not spend more than half your time here.

# Temporary Work - Creative Worker Visa



## Question:

What can I do on a **Temporary Work - Creative Worker Visa**?

## Answer:



- You can stay for up to 12 months.



- Work for your **sponsor** doing the job set out in the **Certificate of Sponsorship**.



- You may be able to do another job for up to 20 hours a week.



- You can leave the UK and come back.



- You can bring family members with you.



### Question:

How do I apply for a **Temporary work – Creative Worker Visa**?



### Answer:

You must get a **Certificate of Sponsorship**. Then apply for this **visa** online.



The organisation that gives you a **Certificate of Sponsorship** must be classed as a **Licensed Sponsor**.



Here is a list of these organisations:  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-licensed-sponsors-workers](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-licensed-sponsors-workers)



You can apply for this **visa** 3 weeks before the date on the **Certificate of Sponsorship**.



It usually takes about 3 weeks for the UK Government to deal with this **visa**.





You can also contact the UK **Visa** and Immigration department for advice. But there can be delays:



**Website:** [www.gov.uk/contact-ukvi-inside-outside-uk](http://www.gov.uk/contact-ukvi-inside-outside-uk)



There is also an online form you can use to get advice. This costs £2.74. Please click here for this:  
<https://ukvi.mysecurepay.co.uk/Home>

# Hard words

## eGates

These are machines that check your passport.

## Citizenship

Citizenship means the rights you have in the country you live.

## Public funds

This means things like benefits and grants. For example, money given to you by the government.

## Sponsor

A sponsor means the organisation is responsible for you during your stay in the UK.

## Visa

A visa is usually a stamp on a passport or document that means a person is allowed to be in a country. A working visa allows the person to work in that country.