



## SECURING OUR BORDER CONTROLLING MIGRATION

## ENTERING THE UK AS AN ENTERTAINER OR AN ARTIST



This leaflet summarises the different routes of entry into the UK for people who want to visit or work as an entertainer or an artist. These routes of entry vary depending on your nationality, your length of stay and the reasons you are travelling to the UK.

# Common questions

This section has answers to some common questions about entering the UK as an entertainer or an artist.

## **I hold a valid passport from a country in the European Economic Area. Do I need a visa to visit the UK?**

If you hold a valid passport or national identity card from a country in the European Economic Area you do not need a visa to come to the UK. This includes all the European Union countries plus Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. Special arrangements may apply to citizens of Bulgaria and Romania so please check with the nearest visa application centre or on the UK Border Agency website.

Please note that the UK is not a member of the Schengen group of countries, so a Schengen visa (applicable in other European countries) will not be valid for travel to the UK.

## **Am I considered to be a visa national or a non-visa national?**

Different rules apply to **visa nationals** and **non-visa nationals**, so it is important that you know which one you are.

If you hold a valid passport from one of the countries listed on page 8 of this leaflet, then you are considered to be a **visa national**. However if you hold a valid passport from a country not listed on the table, for example from Australia, Canada, USA, Singapore or Japan you are considered to be a **non-visa national**.

## **If I need a certificate of sponsorship, will it affect my visa application?**

Under certain circumstances you will need to apply for a certificate of sponsorship, for example if you are being paid for your activities in the UK. If you need a certificate of sponsorship it will also affect whether you need a visa for your visit to the UK. Information on Tier 5 creative and sporting certificates can be found on the UK Border Agency website.

## **I am a non-visa national, and I want to stay in the UK for less than six months. Do I need a visa?**

If you are a **non-visa national** and you are visiting the UK without a Tier 5 creative and sporting certificate of sponsorship you can stay for up to six months without a visa.

If you are a **non-visa national** and you are visiting the UK with a Tier 5 creative and sporting certificate of sponsorship you can stay for up to three months without a visa.

When you arrive into the UK, you will still be expected to show the correct supporting documentation.

Please note that if you have previously been refused entry to the UK, have been refused a UK visa, or have previously been in the UK and remained longer than your stated duration of stay, you may wish to consider applying for a visa before you travel.

## **I am a non-visa national and I want to stay in the UK for more than six months, do I need a visa?**

If you are a **non-visa national**, and you want to stay in the UK for more than six months, you will require a visa. If you want to stay more than three months and hold a Tier 5 sporting and creative certificate of sponsorship you will also need a visa.

Further information on the type of visa you need to apply for can be found in the 'types of visa' section of this leaflet on page 3 and on the UK Border Agency website.

### **Further information**

For further information on entering the UK as an entertainer or an artist please see the UK Border Agency website at [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas)

# Types of visas

Different types of visas allow you to do different things during your visit, and determine how long you are allowed to stay in the UK. This means it is important for you to apply for the right type of visa for your circumstances.

Please read the questions carefully on the visa application form, as failing to disclose information can lead to a refusal and a 10 year ban on entering the UK. It is your responsibility to ensure that you make us aware of all relevant circumstances. A ban may also apply if you fail to disclose relevant information about your visit to an immigration officer on arrival.

A copy of the visa application form can be found on the UK Border Agency website.

The visas outlined in this leaflet are:

- Tier 5 creative and sporting visa
- Short-term entertainer visitor visa
- Long-term entertainer visitor visa
- Child visitor visa

**The most appropriate visas for applicants from the arts and entertainment sector are usually a Tier 5 creative and sporting visa or an entertainer visitor visa (short-term or long-term).**

## Tier 5 creative and sporting visa

Who is the Tier 5 category of the points-based system for?

The Tier 5 category of the points-based system is for:

- Paid, temporary work for a maximum period of 12 months.
- People coming to the UK for short-term contracts or engagements such as theatre companies, actors or musicians on tour, visiting or guest conductors.

Holders can be accompanied by their entourage.

Are there any requirements for a Tier 5 creative and sporting visa?

A Tier 5 creative and sporting visa requires the applicant to have a certificate of sponsorship from their sponsor(s) before applying for a visa – the sponsor will be the UK business employing or sponsoring the artist, entertainer or event.

How can I apply for a Tier 5 creative and sporting visa?

If you are a **non-visa national**, you can apply for a visa of up to three months, when you arrive in the UK. To apply for your visa, you must have a certificate of sponsorship in place.

If you are a **visa national** you should apply for a visa under the Tier 5 creative and sporting category from the country you live in. Some applications made under tier 5 of the creative and sporting category will be accepted in a country that you do not live in, as long as you are in that country in a similar role to the one you will undertake in the UK for example if you are on tour.

Is there a fee for applying for a Tier 5 creative and sporting visa?

If you are a **visa national** there is a fee for applying for a Tier 5 creative and sporting visa. However if you are a **non-visa national** and you are staying less than three months, there is no charge.

For the most up-to-date information on visa fees, please go to the UK Border Agency website.

What supporting documentation is needed for a Tier 5 creative and sporting visa?

Tier 5 creative and sporting visa applications should show that you are able to maintain and accommodate yourself unless your sponsor has clearly confirmed this on your certificate of sponsorship.

## Further information

For further information on entering the UK as an entertainer or an artist please see the UK Border Agency website at [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas)

## Entertainer visitor visa

### What is an entertainer visitor visa?

Entertainer visitor visas are for those who are entering the UK to attend or take part in charity events, music competitions, auditions, public appearances as an amateur group or to take part in major arts festivals on the permit-free festival list.

Applications for this list will be considered against certain criteria. This includes whether the cultural event or festival is supported by the Arts Council or another similar body. If your festival or event is included on the permit-free festival list and you can show an invitation to the event, you will be able to apply as an entertainer visitor.

Further information on the permit-free festival list can be found on the UK Border Agency website.

### How can I apply to for an entertainer visitor visa?

If you are a **visa national** you can apply for an entertainer visitor visa at your nearest application centre or on the UK Border Agency website before you enter the UK.

If you are a **non-visa national** you can apply for an entertainer visitor visa on arrival at the UK border.

### What supporting documentation is needed for an entertainment visitor visa?

Short-term and long-term entertainer visitor visa applications should include:

- A letter of invitation from a UK organisation or an event organiser confirming your attendance and/or participation at the event.
- Confirmation of what costs (if applicable) the UK sponsor will meet and whether the applicant will be paid or not.
- Evidence of your personal and financial circumstances in your country of residence. For example a contract of employment or a letter from your employer saying you can return to your job.
- Evidence of your previous travel history (for long-term visitor visa applications).

### Short-term entertainer visitor visa - What is a short-term entertainer visitor visa?

A short-term entertainer visitor visa is for short-term stays of up to six months. This visa also allows you to be accompanied by your entourage.

### How can I apply for a short-term entertainer visitor visa?

If you are a **visa national** you can apply for a short-term entertainer visitor visa at your nearest application centre or on the UK Border Agency website before you enter the UK.

If you are a **non-visa national** you can apply for short-term entertainer visitor visa on arrival in the UK.

### Is there a fee for applying for a short-term entertainer visitor visa?

If you are a **visa national** there is a fee for applying for a short-term entertainer visitor visa. However if you are a **non-visa national** there is no charge.

For the most up-to-date information on visa fees, please go to the UK Border Agency website.

## Long-term entertainer visitor visa

### What is a long-term entertainer visitor visa?

A long-term entertainer visitor visa is for entertainers who often visit the UK for short periods of time. It is valid for periods of one, two or five years. Holders of this visa can also be accompanied by their entourage.

### How long does the long-term entertainer visitor visa allow you to stay in the UK?

A long-term entertainer visitor visa allows regular visits to the UK, but the maximum period of stay for each visit is six months.

**You must not spend more than 180 days in a 12 month period in the UK as an entertainer or a general visitor.**

## Further information

For further information on entering the UK as an entertainer or an artist please see the UK Border Agency website at [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas)

Is there a fee for applying for a long-term entertainer visitor visa?

There is a fee for applying for a long-term entertainer visitor visa.

For the most up-to-date information on visa fees, please go to the UK Border Agency website.

## Child visitor visa

What is a child visitor visa?

A child visitor visa is for **visa nationals** and **non-visa nationals** travelling to the UK, who are under 18 years of age.

What information do I need to apply for a child visitor visa?

To apply for a child visitor visa you will need written consent to travel from your parent or guardian in your home country. You will also need to show that you have adequate travel, reception and care arrangements in place for your stay in the UK. Please ensure that you carry details of these for presentation to the official on arrival in the UK.

If you apply to visit the UK as an accompanied child you must travel with the adult named on the visa. If you apply as an unaccompanied child, you may travel alone or with any adult.

**Please note that the agency has a duty of care to children so UK Border Agency officers will check that the reception and care is adequate for all applicants who are under 18 years of age.**

What supporting documentation does an accompanying adult need to provide?

It is advisable for the accompanying adult who is not the parent, or who has a different family name to the arriving child to carry any of the following documentation as proof of their relationship:

- A birth or adoption certificate showing the relationship of the child to accompanying adult.
- For children coming to study, evidence from the organiser that arrangements are in place.

- A letter from school detailing term dates if relevant.
- Return tickets covering the period of stay.
- A copy of a parent's passport.
- Divorce/marriage certificates if the natural parent has a different surname to the child.
- Letter of authority providing contact details of the parents.

In keeping with the UK Border Agency's legislative duty, UK Border Agency officers will make enquiries to ensure that they are satisfied as to the relationship between any accompanying adult(s) and child before allowing them to proceed into the UK. This may include questioning a child and the accompanying adult(s) separately. This is to ensure that the welfare and safety of arriving children is not compromised, and to help combat child trafficking.

**Please ensure you carry your supporting documentation as you may be required to present this on arrival at the UK border.**

Where can I apply for a child visitor visa?

If you are a **non-visa national** and you are staying in the UK for less than six months, you can apply for a child visitor visa at the border, but you must have evidence of your care and reception arrangements.

If you are a **non-visa national** and you are staying in the UK for more than six months, or if you are a **visa national** you must apply for a child visitor visa before you enter the UK.

You can apply for a child visitor visa at your nearest visa application centre or on the UK Border Agency website.

Is there a fee for a child visitor visa?

If you are a **visa national** there is a fee for applying for a child visitor visa. However if you are a **non-visa national** and you are staying less than six months, there is no charge.

For the most up-to-date information on visa fees, please go to the UK Border Agency website.

## Further information

For further information on entering the UK as an entertainer or an artist please see the UK Border Agency website at [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas)

# General information

## Applying for a visa

In many countries you will need to apply for your visa online. However you can make an appointment during this online process to submit your printed and signed form in person at your nearest visa application centre.

There are some countries that do not have an online application facility. If the country you are applying from does not have this facility you will need to complete a visa application form. Your completed form then needs to be signed and presented in person at a visa application centre.

## When do I need to apply for my visa?

You must apply for your visa **at least 15 working days** before it is needed, to allow time for your application to be processed. There is no automatic fast track service for visas. **We cannot deliver a same day service.**

As part of the visa application process, you will need to send us your passport. Please check on the UK Border Agency website to find out how long the processing times are for the country that you are applying from.

Please also be aware that visa applications can only be accepted up to three months before your date of travel.

## Biometrics

All visa applications will require you to attend your local visa application centre to submit your biometric details. This involves a digital photograph and a ten digit finger scan being taken. Your application cannot be assessed until these details have been submitted.

## What happens when I arrive at the UK border?

### Entering the UK with an entertainer visitor visa

When you arrive at the UK border a UK Border Agency officer will ask what you intend to do in the UK. This is to assess whether it is covered by the entertainer visitor category. They will also look at your previous immigration history. They may also wish to see supporting documentation relating to your stay. If they are satisfied, you will be given a stamp for six months that will cover the purpose of your visit. If you leave the UK your stamp will expire.

### Entering the UK with a Tier 5 creative and sporting visa

When you arrive at the UK border a UK Border Agency officer will ask what you intend to do in the UK. They will also want to see your certificate of sponsorship reference number.

You will then be asked to wait a few minutes while they check the computer system and mark your certificate of sponsorship reference number as used.

They may ask you about your ability to maintain yourself unless your sponsor has agreed to cover this aspect. Your previous immigration history will be checked and if satisfied the officer will stamp your passport for up to three months. They will ask you when you intend to leave the UK and mark the stamp as valid until that date. If you leave the UK your stamp will expire, although your certificate of sponsorship number is valid for multiple entries, so you will be able to use it again if you want to re-enter the UK within the validity date of your certificate of sponsorship.

## Further information

For further information on entering the UK as an entertainer or an artist please see the UK Border Agency website at [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas)

## **You must comply with the rules in the UK**

You will have been allowed to enter the UK for a specific purpose. If you have been issued a visa, you must keep to the conditions attached to it. For example, if you are not allowed to work, taking up employment will mean that you are breaking the conditions of your visa – you could be fined, deported from the country and banned from returning to the UK for up to 10 years.

It is illegal to stay longer in the UK than your visa allows. If you overstay, you may face prosecution and detention as well as a 10 year ban.

No refunds are given if your visa is refused or if you are issued with a visa valid for a shorter period than you applied for.

The British government is committed to a firm but fair migration system. The UK Border Agency receives over 2.5 million applications a year from people wanting to come to the UK, and delivers first-class customer service to genuine applicants. Those who try to gain access to the UK with false documents or deception will face an automatic ban from the UK for up to 10 years. Applicants who have previously breached UK immigration laws by staying in the UK illegally or working without permission will also be banned from coming to the UK.

### **Further information**

For further information on entering the UK as an entertainer or an artist please see the UK Border Agency website at [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas)

# Countries whose nationals need a visa to come to the UK (visa national countries)

Afghanistan	Cyprus, northern part of	Kosovo	Senegal
Albania	Djibouti	Kuwait	Serbia
Algeria	Dominican Republic	Kyrgyzstan	Sierra Leone
Angola	Egypt	Laos	Somalia
Armenia	Equatorial Guinea	Lebanon	South Africa
Azerbaijan	Eritrea	Lesotho	Sri Lanka
Bahrain	Ethiopia	Liberia	Sudan
Bangladesh	Fiji	Libya	Surinam
Ecuador	former Yugoslav	Madagascar	Swaziland
Belarus	Republic of	Malawi	Syria
Benin	Macedonia	Mali	Tajikistan
Bhutan	Gabon	Mauritania	Tanzania
Bissau	Gambia	Moldova	Thailand
Bolivia	Georgia	Mongolia	Togo
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Ghana	Montenegro	Tunisia
Burkina Faso	Guinea	Morocco	Turkey
Burma (Myanmar)	Guinea	Mozambique	Turkmenistan
Burundi	Guyana	Nepal	Uganda
Cambodia	Haiti	Niger	Ukraine
Cameroon	India	Nigeria	United Arab Emirates
Cape Verde	Indonesia	Oman	Uzbekistan
Central African Republic	Iran	Pakistan	Vatican City
Chad	Iraq	Palestinian Authority	(service and emergency passports only)
China, People's Rep.of	Ivory Coast	Peru	Venezuela
Colombia	Jamaica	Philippines	Vietnam
Comoros	Jordan	Qatar	Yemen
Congo, Dem.Republic of	Kazakhstan	Russia	Zambia
Congo, Republic of (Congo Brazzaville)	Kenya	Rwanda	Zimbabwe
Cuba	Korea (Dem. People's Rep)	Sao Tome & Principe	
		Saudi Arabia	

## Please note

The information available in this leaflet is subject to change and is not intended to be comprehensive. Details which may be relevant to individual circumstances may have been omitted. It is not a complete statement of immigration and nationality law or policy. You are advised to consult [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas) before you make your application.