

Community
Legal Service



COVENTRY LAW CENTRE

IMMIGRATION

People who sponsor visitors

This leaflet explains what the Immigration Rules say about how you can sponsor a visitor and what you can do to support the application.

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How can my visitor come to the United Kingdom?

Your visitor must be able to show that they:

- only want to visit the country for up to six months;
- plan to leave the United Kingdom at the end of their visit; and
- have enough money to support and accommodate themselves without working or help from public funds.

What are public funds?

If you come to live or stay in the United Kingdom, you must be able to support and accommodate yourself without claiming certain state benefits. These are:

- Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA);
- housing and homelessness assistance;
- Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit;
- Working Families Tax Credit;
- a social fund payment
- Child Benefit, or
- any disability allowance.

Will I need to supply any documents to support my visitor's application?

The documents the Entry Clearance Office (ECO) will need will depend on the circumstances of the case. The Entry Clearance Office may ask you to send them:

- evidence of your immigration status in the United Kingdom; and
- a letter of sponsorship explaining your relationship to the person who is applying, the purpose of the visit and where your visitor will be staying.

If you are prepared to provide support and accommodation, and pay for your visitor to travel to the United Kingdom, you should send the Entry Clearance Officer evidence that you can do so (such as your payslips, recent bank statements or a copy of your savings account book).

If you receive any public funds, the Entry Clearance Officer or the Immigration Officer (or both) will need to consider whether you will be able to support and accommodate your visitor. You will not be able to get extra public funds to support your visitor.

Can my visitor do business during their visit?

Your visitor can do business in the United Kingdom in connection with their work or business overseas as long as it **does not** involve:

- doing paid or unpaid work, or doing any business or any professional activity; or
- producing goods or providing services in the United Kingdom, including selling goods and services to members of the public.

If you are sponsoring a person for the purposes of business, the Entry Clearance Officer may ask you to send the Home Office a letter from your company explaining what your visitor will be doing and whether your company is paying for the trip.

A visitor can only stay for six months. People who regularly visit the United Kingdom for business can apply for a multiple-entry visa as a visitor that is valid for two years.

Can my visitor come to the United Kingdom for private medical treatment?

Your visitor can come to the United Kingdom, or apply for an extension of stay, for private medical treatment.

Your visitor must be able to show that:

- they have made satisfactory arrangements for the consultation or treatment they need;
- they have enough money to pay for any treatment and to support and accommodate themselves without working or help from public funds; and
- they plan to leave the United Kingdom at the end of his or her treatment.

If you are paying for your visitor's private medical treatment, you should say so and send the Home Office evidence that you can do so.

Medical Treatment on the National Health Service (NHS)

Visitors are not allowed to enter or stay in the United Kingdom to receive free medical treatment from the National Health Service (NHS). You will be charged for any treatment you receive. Please make sure you have enough medical insurance to cover your stay.

Does a visitor need a visa to come to the United Kingdom?

People who live in certain countries need to get a visa to come to the United Kingdom.

You can get guidance leaflets and information about visas from Coventry Law Centre.

A person who does not need a visa does not need to get entry clearance. However, they can apply for an entry certificate before travelling if they want to. If your visitor has got entry clearance (a visa or entry certificate), they will be allowed to enter the United Kingdom unless:

- their circumstances have changed;
- they have given false information; or
- they have not told the Home Office important facts.

What will happen when my visitor arrives in the United Kingdom?

The Immigration Officer will have to be satisfied that your visitor qualifies for entry as a visitor. If they are a non-visa national and do not already have entry clearance, it would be helpful if your visitor has:

- a return ticket; and
- a letter of sponsorship.

It would also be helpful if you could meet your visitor at the airport with evidence of your status and, if you have agreed to help pay for the visit, that you can do so.

What happens if my visitor is refused permission to enter the United Kingdom?

If the Entry Clearance Officer refuses your visitor's application, the Entry Clearance Officer or the Immigration Officer will tell them. The decision will be given in a detailed written refusal notice. The Entry Clearance Officer will not tell you, the sponsor, their decision.

Can I or my visitor appeal against the refusal decision?

From 2 October 2000, your visitor can appeal against a decision to refuse entry clearance, but only if they are visiting a close member of their family. Your visitor will not be able to appeal against a decision that was made before 2 October.

There are rules to explain exactly which members of the family qualify for this right of appeal. The Entry Clearance Officer or Immigration Officer will tell your visitor if they qualify.

Will it help if I give a guarantee?

You cannot guarantee that the person you are sponsoring will leave at the end of their visit.

APPEALS

Coventry Law Centre will advise you about appealing and may represent you at the hearing. The Law Centre offers free legal advice and representation.

You can contact the Law Centre for an appeal appointment or telephone our free legal advice line on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10:00 and 12:00 on 024 76253168.