

BRITISH VISA REQUIREMENTS

INFORMATION ABOUT ADMISSION TO THE UNITED KINGDOM FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

This leaflet explains:

- o what is a visa
- o which nationals must have a visa
- o the UK Immigration Rules for persons seeking medical treatment in the UK
- o how to apply for a visa

This leaflet is only a brief guide. It does not cover all the rules for entry. The law is mostly in the Immigration Act 1971 and the Statements of Changes in the UK Immigration Rules. The rules for entering the UK are different if you are a national of a Member State of the European Economic Area (the Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) or if you can claim British Citizenship or family or other connection with the UK, or wish to go to live, work or set up a business there.

WHAT IS A VISA?

A visa allows travel to a country. Even when you hold a visa you will still need to pass through immigration control at the United Kingdom port of entry, eg Heathrow or Gatwick. But if you are holding a visa you will not be refused permission to enter the United Kingdom unless there has been some change in your circumstances or you gave false information or did not disclose important facts when you obtained the visa. Holders of visas may also be refused entry on medical grounds, if they have a criminal record, if they are subject to a deportation order or if there are other exceptional reasons why they should not be admitted.

When you arrive in the United Kingdom, you may be questioned by an Immigration Officer so take all relevant documentation in your hand luggage.

MUST I GET A VISA?

If you are a national of one of the countries listed in leaflet INF 1 or if you are stateless or hold a non-national travel document or a passport issued by an authority not recognised by the UK you must have a valid UK visa on each occasion you enter the UK, unless you qualify for exemption as explained in INF 1.

Other nationals do not have to have a visa to enter the UK for the purpose of undergoing medical treatment. However, you will have to satisfy the immigration officer on arrival in the UK that you qualify for entry. If you are in any doubt about your eligibility you are advised to apply for a visa before you travel.

MEDICAL TREATMENT

THE RULES

The Immigration Rules provide for a person seeking medical treatment in the United Kingdom to be admitted as a visitor. But:

- the medical treatment must be private (ie fee paying), if you are specifically visiting for this purpose.
- you are not allowed to work in the UK or seek assistance from Public Funds.
- you must intend to leave the UK at the end of your period of treatment.

You may be required to produce satisfactory evidence of:

- i) the medical condition requiring consultation or treatment (and can show, if required to do so that any proposed course of treatment is of limited duration); and
- ii) satisfactory arrangements having been made for the necessary consultation or treatment; and
- iii) the estimated costs of such consultations or treatment; and
- iv) the likely duration of the period of stay in the UK; and
- v) sufficient funds available to you in the UK to meet the estimated costs of such consultations or treatment. You may be asked to give an undertaking that you will meet these costs.

Admission to the UK is normally for six months. The period for which you are admitted is at the discretion of the Immigration Officer on arrival at a UK port. On arrival in the UK you may be asked to satisfy the Medical Inspector that there is no danger to public health.

If there is reason to believe that a person applying for a visa as a visitor for medical treatment intends to find work, overstay or settle in the UK, the application will be refused.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A VISA FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT

If you wish to apply for an entry clearance you should fill in form IM2A (and related forms if applicable) which you can get free of charge from the nearest British mission offering a visa service. You should check with the Mission whether or not they

are able to process your application, if they cannot they will advise you where to apply. If you intend visiting other countries before arriving in the UK you should obtain your visa from a British mission before you leave. If you make an application for a visa outside your country of normal residence, it may be subject to delay.

Your application forms may be submitted by hand or by post together with:

- # your passport*
 - # 2 recent passport-sized photographs
 - # the visa fee which is non-refundable
- * In certain countries it may be inadvisable to send your passport through the post.

Fees must be paid in local currency (ie the currency of the country in which the British mission is located). You should not send cash through the post, but bank drafts, postal or money orders payable to the Mission may be enclosed.

If you are able, you may have to attend an interview. In addition to the documents listed above you may be asked for:

- # full details of the arrangements which have been made for the treatment – this evidence should include a medical report and a reliable estimate of the likely duration and cost of the treatment;
- # evidence that you will be able to pay for the treatment in full and that you will, in addition, have sufficient funds available to maintain and accommodate yourself and any accompanying dependants;
- # evidence of any firm travel plans you have made, such as your ticket or a letter from a travel agent confirming that the cost of your ticket has been deposited;
- # a letter from your employer granting leave of absence and stating how long you have been employed by him

and in what capacity or, if you are self-employed, evidence of your business activity and financial standing.

YOU SHOULD NOT BUY A TICKET IF DELAY OR REFUSAL OF YOUR APPLICATION WILL RESULT IN FINANCIAL LOSS. THE VISA OFFICER MAY ASK YOU FOR OTHER DOCUMENTS: PRODUCTION OF THOSE LISTED ABOVE DOES NOT GUARANTEE THAT ENTRY CLEARANCE WILL BE ISSUED.

There may be circumstances where the visa officer is required to make further enquiries:

- i) if the applicant has a history of mental illness; or
- ii) if the applicant is suffering from a communicable disease and it appears that there may be some danger to public health; or
- iii) if there is doubt about the arrangements which have been made for private treatment; or
- iv) if there are doubts about how much the treatment will actually cost or whether the applicant will be able to meet the full cost.

RECIPROCAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS

The United Kingdom has reciprocal arrangements with a number of foreign governments whereby their nationals can be referred to the United Kingdom for the purpose of receiving free hospital treatment under the National Health Service. You should check with the nearest British mission offering a visa service for further clarification.

DRUGS WARNING – The UK has severe penalties against drug smuggling. Drug traffickers may try to bribe travellers. If you are travelling to the UK avoid any involvement with drugs.

CUSTOMS & EXCISE – Advice on importing personal effects and goods into the UK may be obtained from:

HM Customs and Excise
Dorset House
Stamford Street
LONDON SE1 9PY

IMMIGRATION ADVISORY SERVICE (IAS) – The IAS is an independent charity which gives free and confidential advice, assistance and representation to persons who are applying for an entry clearance for the UK. Their address is:

County House
190 Great Dover Street
LONDON SE1 4YB.
Telephone: 44 171 357 6917
Duty Office 24 hrs: 44 181 814 1559
Fax: 44 171 378 0665

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