

UK STANDARD VISITOR VISA (SVv)

updated January 2016

Overview

You can apply for a Standard Visitor visa if you want to visit the UK:

- for leisure, eg on holiday or to see your family and friends
- for business, or to take part in sports or creative events
- for another reason, eg to receive private medical treatment

Check if you need this visa

if you're visiting from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland.

You might not need a Standard Visitor visa if you qualify for British citizenship.

Read the guidance on right of abode (ROA) to find out what you should do instead.

The Standard Visitor visa has replaced the:

- Family Visitor visa
- General Visitor visa
- Child Visitor visa
- Business Visitor visa, including visas for academics, doctors and dentists
- Sports Visitor visa
- Entertainer Visitor visa
- Prospective Entrepreneur visa
- Private Medical Treatment Visitor visa

To qualify for a Permitted Paid Engagements Visitor Visa for sports visitor visa, applicants must be at least 18 years of age and be participating in a sporting event, competition or related activity in the UK.

Sporting activities include:

- Participating in a charity, exhibition or competitive sports event, tournament or series of events;
- Joining an amateur sports team;
- Making a personal or promotional appearance;
- Negotiating a contract or sponsorship deal;
- Participating in a trial or short period of training, either as part of a team or as an individual.

Sportspeople, their officials and support staff coming to the UK as a visitor cannot be paid or sell goods or services to members of the public.

Visitor visa applicants must intend to visit the UK for no more than 6 months and show that they have enough money for their stay in the UK and their return or onward journey.

Visitor visa applicants may also be required to meet certain health and character requirements.

Sports Visitor Visa Entitlements

This visitor visa entitles the holder to participate in sporting event, competition or related event in the UK. A Sports visitor visa is usually granted for a maximum of 6 months and holders are expected to leave the UK at the end of their permission to stay.

A visitor visa does not entitle the holder to work, conduct business or study in the UK. This means a sports visitor to the UK cannot receive payment for their appearance in the UK or sell goods, such as merchandise, to the public.

For more information

<https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa/overview>

Who has the right of abode?

Section 2(1) of the 1971 Act, as amended by s.39 (2) of the British Nationality Act 1981 (BNA 1981), defines the two categories of people who currently have the right of abode:

- British citizens
- Commonwealth citizens who had the right of abode immediately before 1 January 1983 and who have not, since then, ceased to be Commonwealth citizens

The following chart sets out who had the right of abode under the original 1971 Act, and the section they have the right of abode under from 1 January 1983.

Person with right of abode	Original 1971 Act section	Section after 1/1/1983
A citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies (CUKC) who was born, adopted, naturalised or registered in the UK or Islands	2(1)(a)	2(1)(a)
A CUKC born to or adopted by a parent who, at the time of the person's birth or adoption, had right of abode under s.2(1)(a) of the 1971 Act	2(1)(b)(i)	2(1)(a)
A CUKC born to or adopted by a parent who, at the time of the person's birth, had right of abode under s.2(1)(b)(i)	2(1)(b)(ii)	2(1)(a)
A CUKC who was ordinarily resident in the UK for any continuous period of 5 years before 31 Dec 1982 (time spent subject to immigration conditions can be included but the conditions must have been removed before completion of the 5 years)	2(1)(c)	2(1)(a)
A Commonwealth citizen (not a CUKC) with a parent / adoptive parent who, at the time of the person's birth / adoption, was a CUKC by birth in the United Kingdom	2(1)(d)	2(1)(b)
A female Commonwealth citizen who is, or has been, married to a man with right of abode at any time before 31 Dec 1982	2(2)	2(1)(b)
A CUKC woman who is, or has been married to a man with right of abode at any time before 31 Dec 1982	2(2)	2(1)(a)

The only way to acquire the right of abode since 1 Jan 1983 has been by becoming a British citizen.

Note: The re-admission of Pakistan and South Africa to the Commonwealth in 1989 and 1994 respectively did not have the effect of reviving any claims by their nationals to right of abode in the UK. Citizens of Pakistan and South Africa will not have a right of abode in the UK unless they are also British citizens.

Zimbabwe and the Gambia have withdrawn politically from the Commonwealth. However, for nationality purposes they remain on the list of Commonwealth countries at Schedule 3 of the British Nationality Act 1981, and so their nationals can continue to have a right of abode in the UK as Commonwealth citizens

Proof of the right of abode

Under section 3(9) of the 1971 Act, as amended by the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, a person claiming the right of abode in the UK can prove it by presenting either:

- a UK passport describing them as a British citizen
- a UK passport describing them as a British subject with the right of abode in the UK
- a certificate of entitlement to the right of abode

This superseded earlier legislation, which allowed other documentation in some cases.

The right of abode is a statutory right that a person either does or does not have. However, in order to prove that right a person is required to present one of the above forms of evidence. Regulations provide that a certificate of entitlement is only valid for the validity period of the passport that it is attached to. A person who has a certificate of entitlement in an expired passport should be advised to apply for a new certificate of entitlement to be placed in their current passport before travelling

On 12th August 2015 UK Visa & Immigration updated their Entry VISA Guidance. For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-of-abode-roa>