



Home Office

Sports visitors

This guidance is based on the Immigration Rules.

Archived

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Immigration Rules paragraphs 46M-46R

This guidance tells you how to consider applications for sports visitors under paragraphs 46M–46R of the Immigration Rules.

Sportspeople and those working directly with them can visit the UK for a short time to take part in specific events. They can do this without permission to work or applying under the points-based system.

There are no provisions within the Immigration Rules to grant:

- Indefinite leave to remain (settlement) in any of the visitor categories.
- Entry to the UK as a dependant of a visitor. A dependant or family member will need to qualify in their own right in one of the visitor categories.

For more information, see related link: Immigration Rules – Part 2: paragraphs 40-56Z.

Changes to this guidance – This page tells you what has changed since the previous version of this guidance.

Contact – This page tells you who to contact for help if your senior caseworker or line manager can't answer your question.

Information owner – This page tells you about this version of the guidance and who owns it.

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Key facts: Sports visitors

This page lists the key facts extracted from the guidance for sports visitors, as described in paragraphs 46M – 46R of the Immigration Rules.

Category: Sports visitors	
Eligibility requirements	<p>The applicant must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• be genuinely seeking entry as a sports visitor for a limited period no longer than six months (not required for extensions)• leave the UK at the end of the period of the visit• maintain and accommodate themselves and any dependants without using public funds• meet the cost of the return or onward journey. <p>The applicant must intend to do one or more of the following during their visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• take part in a sports tournament, a particular sporting event or series of events in which the applicant is either:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• taking part, either as an individual or as part of a team• making personal appearances and promotions, such as book signings, television interviews, guest commentaries, negotiating contracts, or to discuss sponsorship deals• taking part in 'trials', providing it is not in front of an audience, either paying or non-paying, or• undertaking short periods of training, either as an individual or as part of team, providing the applicant is not intending to settle in the UK, being paid by a UK sporting body, or joining a UK team where they are involved in friendly or exhibition matches• take part in a specific one-off charity sporting event, providing they are not paid other than for travelling and other expenses• join, as an amateur, a wholly or mostly amateur team provided they are not paid other than for board and lodging and reasonable expenses, or• serve as a member of the technical or personal staff, or as an official, attending the same event as a visiting sportsperson coming for one or more of the purposes listed above. <p>The applicant must not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• intend to live in the UK for extended periods through frequent or successive visits• intend to take employment• intend to produce goods or provide services within the UK

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intend to undertake a course of study • be a child under the age of 18 • intend to marry or form a civil partnership • intend to give notice of marriage or civil partnership • intend to receive private medical treatment • be in transit to a country outside the common travel area.
Application forms	Applications made outside the UK – Online application (VAF1J where online form not available) Extension (within UK) – FLR (O) Indefinite leave to remain – Not applicable
Cost of application:	UK Visas and Immigration fees
Entry clearance mandatory?	Only for visa nationals. See related link Immigration Rules – Appendix 1 for a list of visa nationals.
Is biometric information required for applications made in the UK?	Yes
Code of leave to enter granted	Code 3
Entry clearance endorsements	<p>Visa nationals C: VISIT: 6 MONTHS: SPORTSPERSON: LTE SIX MONTHS: CODE 3.</p> <p>Non visa nationals D: VISIT: 6 MONTHS: SPORTSPERSON: LTE SIX MONTHS: CODE 3</p>
Conditions of leave to enter	No work or study allowed. No recourse to public funds.
How long is leave to remain normally granted for?	Stay must not be more than six months.
Are dependants allowed?	No, dependants must qualify as a visitor in their own right.
Work and study allowed?	No work allowed other than guest broadcast engagements, where this is incidental to the visit. No study allowed.
Is switching into this category allowed?	No
Does this category lead to settlement (indefinite leave to remain)?	No
Is knowledge of language and life required?	No
CID case type	Visitor (sports) – LTR
Immigration Rules paragraphs	Immigration Rules - Part 2: paragraphs 46M-46R (sports visitor)

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Changes to this guidance

<p>About this guidance</p> <p>Key facts</p> <p>Entry or extension requirements</p> <p>Granting or refusing</p>	<p>This page lists changes to the sports visitors guidance, with the most recent at the top.</p> <table border="1"><thead><tr><th data-bbox="490 400 831 443">Date of the change</th><th data-bbox="831 400 1704 443">Details of the change</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td data-bbox="490 443 831 592">19 March 2014</td><td data-bbox="831 443 1704 592">Six month review by the modernised guidance team:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minor housekeeping and plain English changes.</td></tr><tr><td data-bbox="490 592 831 1082">23 September 2013</td><td data-bbox="831 592 1704 1082">Six month review by the modernised guidance team:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key facts:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ heading 'Application forms' updated to reflect the move in some countries to online applications only○ heading 'Entry clearance endorsements' added an entry for non-visa nationals who apply for entry clearance• Grant or refuse entry clearance:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ sub-heading 'The endorsement is' added an entry for non-visa nationals who apply for entry clearance• Minor housekeeping and plain English changes.</td></tr><tr><td data-bbox="490 1082 831 1157"></td><td data-bbox="831 1082 1704 1157">For previous changes you will need to access the archived guidance. See related link: Sports visitor – Archive.</td></tr></tbody></table>	Date of the change	Details of the change	19 March 2014	Six month review by the modernised guidance team: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minor housekeeping and plain English changes.	23 September 2013	Six month review by the modernised guidance team: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key facts:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ heading 'Application forms' updated to reflect the move in some countries to online applications only○ heading 'Entry clearance endorsements' added an entry for non-visa nationals who apply for entry clearance• Grant or refuse entry clearance:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ sub-heading 'The endorsement is' added an entry for non-visa nationals who apply for entry clearance• Minor housekeeping and plain English changes.		For previous changes you will need to access the archived guidance. See related link: Sports visitor – Archive.	<p>Related links</p> <p>Key facts</p> <p>Grant or refuse entry clearance</p> <p>See also</p> <p>Contact</p> <p>Information owner</p> <p>Links to staff intranet removed</p>
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Entry or extension requirements

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This section tells you what you must check to see if an applicant meets the entry or extension requirements in the sports visitor category.

When considering an application you must check that:

- the application is valid
- the applicant's passport or travel document is genuine
- the applicant meets the requirements of the category
- there are no general grounds for refusal.

For more information, see related links:

- Specified application forms and procedures
- Passports and travel documents
- General grounds for refusal.

For a list of visa nationals, see related links: Immigration Rules – Appendix 1.

Requirements for entry and extensions

Under paragraph 46M of the Immigration Rules a sports visitor must:

- be genuinely seeking entry as a sports visitor for a period not exceeding six months (not required for extensions)
- leave the UK at the end of the period of the visit
- maintain and accommodate themselves and any dependants adequately:
 - out of resources available to them without recourse to public funds or taking employment, or
 - be maintained and/or accommodated by relatives or friends who can prove they are able and intend to do so, and are legally present in the UK, or will be at the time of

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their visit

- meet the cost of the return or onward journey.

A sports visitor must also do one or more of the following during their visit:

- take part in a sports tournament, a particular sporting event or series of events in which the applicant is either:
 - taking part, either as an individual or as part of a team
 - making personal appearances and promotions, such as book signings, television interviews, guest commentaries, negotiating contracts, or to discuss sponsorship deals
 - taking part in 'trials', providing it is not in front of an audience, either paying or non-paying, or
 - undertaking short periods of training, either as an individual or as part of team, providing the applicant is not intending to settle in the UK, being paid by a UK sporting body, or joining a UK team where they are involved in friendly or exhibition matches
- take part in a specific one-off charity sporting event, providing no payment is received other than for travelling and other expenses
- join, as an amateur, a wholly or mostly amateur team providing no payment is received other than for board and lodging and reasonable expenses, or
- serve as a member of the technical or personal staff, or as an official, attending the same event as a visiting sportsperson coming for one or more of the purposes listed above.

The applicant must not:

- intend to live in the UK for extended periods through frequent or successive visits
- intend to take employment
- intend to produce goods or provide services within the UK
- intend to undertake a course of study
- be a child under the age of 18
- intend to marry or form a civil partnership

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- intend to give notice of marriage or civil partnership
- intend to receive private medical treatment
- be in transit to a country outside the common travel area.

Extensions only

The applicant must not be in breach of immigration laws, except for any period of overstaying:

- for 28 days or less which will be disregarded, or
- if the application was submitted before 9 July 2012.

For more information, see related link: [Applications from overstayers \(non family routes\)](#).

More information

For more information on the above reasons to visit, see related links:

- Taking part in a particular sporting event
- Charity events and exhibition matches
- Joining an amateur club or team
- Technical or support staff and officials.

If the sports person is coming to base themselves in the UK to work they will need to qualify under the points-based system (PBS) in either:

- Tier 2 (Sports person), or
- Tier 5 (Temporary worker – creative and sporting).

For more information on Tiers 2 and 5, see related links:

- Tier 2 of the points-based system
- Tier 5 (Temporary worker).

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	<p>Switching</p> <p>A sports visitor cannot switch to a category covered in the PBS, unless they were issued with a certificate of sponsorship (CoS) for Tier 5 (Temporary worker - creative and sporting) before they came to the UK. If they have a CoS, they can apply for leave to remain under Tier 5 work without leaving the UK.</p> <p>For more information on switching into Tier 5, see related link: Creative and sporting – no entry clearance.</p>	
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Taking part in a particular sporting event

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This page tells you what sporting events, or series of events, a sports visitor can do in the UK.

An amateur or professional sports person can come to the UK to take part in particular short term events or a series of events as a sports visitor providing it is for a genuine event and no longer than six months.

Definition of particular sporting events

'Particular events' are defined as:

- taking part, either as an individual or as part of a team, in a specific event or tournament, for example Wimbledon
- personal appearances and promotions, such as book signings, television interviews, guest commentaries, negotiating contracts, or to discuss sponsorship deals
- taking part in 'trials', providing it is not in front of either a paying or non-paying audience
- short periods of training, either as an individual or as part of team, providing they are not:
 - basing themselves here
 - being paid by a UK sporting body, or
 - joining a UK team where they are involved in friendly or exhibition matches.

Definition of a series of events

Paragraph 6 of the Immigration Rules defines a series of events as two or more linked events, such as a tour, or rounds of a competition, which do not add up to a league or a season.

A series of events can be:

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- Football teams coming to the UK to participate in pre-season friendly matches or competitions against English clubs.
- Those coming for a series of events that, although not part of the same competition, are being held in the UK at the same time. For example, the AEGON tennis championship takes place immediately before Wimbledon. In such cases it would be unreasonable to expect players to return home and obtain fresh entry clearance.

Participation in an event not considered to be a sports competition

The rules do not define what they consider a sport. If you are concerned that a person applying to come to the UK as a sports visitor will not be participating in a genuine sport, you must discuss this with your higher executive officer (HEO) or entry clearance manager in the first instance.

Visitors undertaking permitted paid engagements

Where the applicant is seeking entry to undertake a paid engagement not covered by the sports visitors provisions, they may be able to qualify under the visitors undertaking permitted paid engagements route (PPE).

The PPE makes provisions for certain professionals (including sportspersons) to enter the UK for up to one month to undertake a paid engagement at the invitation of a UK based organisation. The activities that can be undertaken under the PPE provisions are limited to those specified in paragraph 56X(iii) of the Immigration Rules and set out in the PPE guidance. See related links.

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Charity events and exhibition matches

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This page tells you what type of charity events and exhibition matches a sports visitor can do in the UK.

An amateur or professional sports person can take part in a specific one-off charity sporting event or exhibition match. They may be either an individual or member of an overseas team. They must not receive a fee or sponsorship, but may receive cash prizes, board, lodging and living expenses.

The organisers must not be making a profit.

Definition of a charity event

A charity sporting event can be:

- a competition, such as the London marathon, or
- the following type of match:
 - testimonial
 - benefit
 - exhibition.

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Joining an amateur club or team

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This page tells you about sports people coming to the UK to join an amateur club or team in the sports visitor category.

A person who is in the UK as a sports visitor is allowed to join, as an amateur, a wholly or mostly amateur club or team, providing they are not paid other than for board and lodging and reasonable expenses.

Definition of amateur

The rules define an amateur as a person who engages in a sport or creative activity solely for personal enjoyment, and who is not seeking to earn a living from the activity.

Requirements for joining an amateur club or team

The applicant must:

- Meet the definition of amateur (see above).
- Be joining a club or team recognised as amateur.
 - for a team to be considered amateur, it must have no more than one or two professional players, and players who are not normally paid or contracted to play.
- Be able to show that the club or team they are joining is a non-professional league club or team.
- Not be receiving payment or sponsorship from the club or team, except for board, lodging and living expenses. They may receive cash prizes.

Amateurs may take part in some informal or unpaid coaching if it is secondary to their playing with a club or team.

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Technical or support staff and officials

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This page tells you which technical, support staff or officials can enter the UK in the sports visitor category.

Members of the technical or personal staff of a sports person or team, or officials, can enter the UK as sports visitors providing they are attending the same event as a:

- visiting sports person coming to take part in a sports event that meets the requirements, or
- sports person carrying out a permitted paid engagement as a visitor.

Examples of technical or support staff include but are not restricted to:

- physiotherapists
- coaches
- dieticians
- bodyguards
- press officers
- polo grooms:
 - but only when they are accompanying a polo player, and
 - not intending to base themselves in the UK for the sporting season to take up employment in the stables.

Examples of officials

- linespeople
- umpires.

Officials must be officiating at a 'particular event'. For more information, see related link: [Taking part in a particular sporting event](#).

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Granting or refusing

<p>About this guidance</p> <p>Key facts</p> <p>Entry or extension requirements</p> <p>Granting or refusing</p>	<p>This section tells you when to grant or refuse entry or extension in the sports visitor category.</p> <p>For more information, see related links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grant or refuse entry clearance• Grant or refuse entry at UK port• Grant or refuse extension.	<p>In this section</p> <p>Grant or refuse entry clearance</p> <p>Grant or refuse entry at UK port</p> <p>Grant or refuse extension</p> <p>Links to staff intranet removed</p>
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Grant or refuse entry clearance

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This page tells you when to grant or refuse an application for entry clearance in the sports visitor category.

Grant entry clearance

You must grant entry clearance if:

- the applicant meets all the requirements of paragraph 46M of the Immigration Rules, and
- none of the general grounds for refusal in paragraphs 320 to 324 apply.

For more information, see related links:

- [Entry or extension requirements](#)
- [General grounds for refusal](#).

Length of leave

Up to six months.

Endorsements

Visa nationals	C: VISIT: 6 MONTHS: SPORTSPERSON: LTE SIX MONTHS: CODE 3
Non visa nationals	D: VISIT: 6 MONTHS: SPORTSPERSON: LTE SIX MONTHS: CODE 3

The endorsement must be valid for the date the applicant intends to travel to the UK.

Refusing entry clearance

When the applicant has not provided the required evidence that they meet all the requirements of paragraph 46M, or if any of the general grounds for refusal in paragraphs

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	320 to 324 apply, you must refuse the application.	
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Grant or refuse entry at UK port

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This page tells you when to grant or refuse an application for entry at a UK port in the sports visitor category.

Granting leave to enter

Before you grant leave to enter, you must be satisfied that the applicant meets the requirements of paragraph 46N of the Immigration Rules:

- they meet all the requirements of paragraph 46M of the Immigration Rules, and
- none of the general grounds for refusal in paragraphs 320 to 321 of the Immigration Rules apply.

For more information, see related links:

- [Entry or extension requirements](#)
- [General grounds for refusal](#).

For visa nationals, you must be satisfied that:

- the applicant has a valid entry clearance
- there are no reasons to believe the applicant gave false information to obtain the entry clearance, nor that circumstances have changed since it was issued.

For more information on UK visa requirements, see related link: [Immigration Rules: Appendix 1](#).

Non visa nationals

If you are satisfied that the person meets all the requirements you must grant leave to enter for up to six months with employment prohibited using code 5N. Only use code 3 when you have doubts about the person but not enough evidence to refuse leave to enter.

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	<p>Visa nationals If you are satisfied that the person meets all the requirements, endorse the entry clearance with an open date stamp, and record the statistical code 'STV' on the landing card.</p> <p>Refusing leave to enter You must refuse leave to enter as a sports visitor if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the applicant has not provided the required evidence that they meet all the requirements of paragraph 46N of the Immigration Rules, or• any of the general grounds for refusal in paragraphs 320 to 321 apply.	
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Grant or refuse extension

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This page tells you when to grant or refuse an application for an extension in the sports visitor category.

Grant extension

Before you grant an extension, you must be satisfied that:

- The applicant meets all the requirements of paragraph 46P of the Immigration Rules. They must:
 - meet the requirements of paragraph 46M (ii)-(iii)
 - have been last granted, entry clearance, leave to enter or leave to remain as a sports visitor
 - not have spent more than six months in total in the UK (or would do so if granted an extension of stay)
 - not be in breach of immigration laws, except for any period of overstaying for 28 days or less which will be disregarded, or for any period of overstaying if the application was submitted before 9 July 2012.
- None of the general grounds for refusal in paragraphs 322 to 324 applies.

If the applicant was granted less than the maximum six months on entry, you must make enquiries to find out why before you grant an extension.

For more information on the above, see related links:

- [Entry or extension requirements](#)
- [General grounds for refusal](#)
- [Immigration Rules - paragraphs 40-56Z.](#)

Refuse extension

You must refuse an extension as a sports visitor if:

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- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the applicant has not provided the required evidence that they meet all the requirements of paragraph 46P of the Immigration Rules, or• any of the general grounds for refusal in paragraphs 322 to 324 apply. | |
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Contact

<p>About this guidance</p> <p>Key facts</p> <p>Entry or extension requirements</p> <p>Granting or refusing</p>	<p>This page tells you who you must contact for help with a specific case relating to sports visitors.</p> <p>If you have read the relevant Immigration Rules and this guidance and still need more help with this category, you must first ask your senior caseworker or line manager.</p> <p>If the question cannot be answered at that level, you may email the Study and visit operational policy team (see related link), for guidance on this policy.</p> <p>Changes to this guidance can only be made by the modernised guidance team (MGT). If you think the policy content needs amending you must contact the study and visit operational policy team, who will ask MGT to update the guidance, if appropriate.</p> <p>The MGT will accept direct feedback on broken links, missing information or the format, style and navigability of this guidance. You can send these using the link: Email: Modernised guidance team.</p>	<p>Related links</p> <p>See also</p> <p>Changes to this guidance</p> <p>Information owner</p> <p>Links to staff intranet removed</p>
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This page tells you about this version of the 'Sports visitors' guidance and who owns it.

Version	9.0
Valid from date	19 March 2014
Policy owner	Study and visit operational policy team
Cleared by director	Sonia Dower
Director's role	Director, operational policy and rules
Clearance date	28 May 2013
This version approved for publication by	Richard Short
Approver's role	Grade 7, Modernised guidance team
Approval date	18 March 2013

Changes to this guidance can only be made by the modernised guidance team (MGT). If you think the policy content needs amending you must contact the study and visit operational policy team, see [related link](#), who will ask the MGT to update the guidance.

The MGT will accept feedback on broken links, missing information or the format, style and navigability of this guidance. You can send these using the link: Email: Modernised guidance team.

Related links **See also**

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