

# FACTSHEET: SERVICE SUPPLIER

**SMITH  
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Immigration Practice

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The Service Supplier visa forms part of the UK's Global Business Mobility (GBM) immigration route for overseas businesses who need to temporarily send workers to the UK for a specific purpose that cannot be done by a settled worker.

You can apply for a Service Supplier visa if you have a contract to provide services for a UK company, either as an employee for an overseas company, or a self-employed professional based overseas. From 11 April 2022, this visa replaces the provisions for contractual service suppliers and independent professionals on the International Agreement route.

**This guide outlines who is eligible for a Service Supplier visa and how to apply.**

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for a Service Supplier visa, you must:

- Be an employee of an overseas business, or a self-employed service provider based overseas
- Be providing a service to a UK business under a contract that is covered by a valid international trade agreement
- Be doing an eligible job (or have relevant qualifications and experience if your job is not eligible).
- Have a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) from your UK sponsor.
- Have worked for your employer for at least 12 months outside the UK, or have at least 12 months' professional experience if you're a self-employed service provider.

## HOW LONG YOU CAN STAY

How long you can stay in the UK depends on the type of trade agreement you're providing services under. You can stay for whichever is the shorter of:

- 6 months or 12 months (depending on the trade agreement you're providing services under).
- The time given on your certificate of sponsorship plus 14 days

The maximum time you can stay in the UK on a Service Supplier visa is 6 or 12 months depending on the type of trade agreement you're providing services under.

You can only stay in the UK for a maximum of 5 years in any 6 year period if you've spent time on any of the GBM routes, including the predecessor ICT routes.

## PERMITTED ACTIVITIES

With a Service Supplier visa, you can:

- Work for your sponsor in the job described in your CoS
- Study
- Bring dependant family members with you, if they are eligible
- Do voluntary work
- Travel abroad and return to the UK.

You cannot:

- Access public funds
- Change jobs, unless you update your visa
- Have a second job
- Apply to settle permanently in the UK.

If your application is successful, you will receive a full list of what you can and cannot do with a Service Supplier visa.



## HOW TO APPLY

You must apply online for a Service Supplier visa. How you apply depends on whether you are:

- [Outside the UK](#) and are coming to the UK
- Inside the UK and you want to [extend your current visa](#)
- Inside the UK and you want to [switch to this visa from another visa type](#).

As part of your application, you will need to prove your identity and provide your supporting documents. To do this, you will need to do one of the following:

- Attend an appointment at a Visa Application Centre (VAC) if you're outside the UK
- Attend an appointment at a UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services (UKVCAS) service point if you're inside the UK
- Use the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app to scan your identity document, if you are eligible.

## HOW MUCH IT COSTS

When you apply for a Service Supplier visa, you will need to have enough money to:

- Pay the visa application fee – It costs £259 to apply.
- Pay the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) – The IHS is currently £624 per year, or £470 per year for under 18s.
- Support yourself in the UK – You will usually need to show that you have at least £1,270 in your bank account (unless you're exempt).

**Note:** The visa application fee and the IHS must also be paid for any accompanying dependants.

## PROCESSING TIMES

You can apply for a Service Supplier visa up to 3 months before the day you are due to start work in the UK (this date is listed on your CoS). Once you've applied online, proved your identity and provided your documents, you'll usually get a decision on your visa within 3 weeks if you're outside the UK, or 8 weeks if you're inside the UK.

### IMPORTANT NOTES FOR SPONSORS

Employers transferring staff to the UK on a Service Supplier visa should be aware of the applicable sponsorship fees.

For sponsor licencing fee purposes, the Service Supplier route is classified as a 'Temporary Worker' route. This means that organisations applying for a licence to sponsor Service Suppliers on or after 11 April 2022 will pay the standard fee for a Temporary Worker sponsor licence, regardless of their size or charitable status. CoS assigned to workers on this route will be charged the standard Temporary Worker CoS fee (£21).

Unlike the Senior or Specialist Worker route, sponsors are **not required** to pay the Immigration Skills Charge (ISC) for Service Suppliers.

**Please contact Smith Stone Walters for more information on this route.**

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