



Home Office

Transit

Version 5.0

This guidance is intended for Entry Clearance and Border Force staff and covers:

- 'Transit visitors'
- 'Standard visitors' and 'Marriage/Civil Partnership visitors' wishing to transit
- Transit without visa (TWOV) scheme
- Direct Airside Transit

It is based on the:

- Immigration Rules
- Immigration (Passenger Transit Visa) Order 2014 (as amended)

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About this guidance

This guidance tells Entry Clearance and Border Force staff about the four ways people can seek to transit the UK.

The crew of a ship, aircraft, hovercraft, hydrofoil, or train are not covered by the Immigration Rules as 'Transit visitors'. See related links for more information.

Transit provisions can be found in [Appendix V: Visitor of the Immigration Rules](#) and in the [Immigration \(Passenger Transit Visa\) Order 2014 \(as amended\)](#).

Contacts

If Border Force officers have questions about the guidance and your line manager or duty Border Force manager cannot help, contact the relevant BF Regional Command & Control Units (RCCUs). If Entry Clearance officers have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or Entry Clearance manager cannot help, email Visit Policy. If you think that the guidance has factual errors, email Visit Policy.

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email the Guidance Rules and Forms team.

Publication

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was published:

- version **5.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **1 December 2020**

Changes from last version of this guidance

- updating the term 'leave' to 'permission' in line with the simplified Immigration Rules
- rule numbering updated to reflect the simplified Immigration Rules
- reference to new validity rules added
- Irish citizens section added
- updating references to suitability to tie in with the new Part 9 and guidance that will now apply to the Visitor routes

Related content

[Contents](#)

Related external links

[Immigration Rules – Appendix V: Visitor](#)

[Immigration Rules – Part 9](#)

Original [Immigration \(Passenger Transit Visa\) Order 2014](#)

[All amendments to Immigration \(Passenger Transit Visa\) Order 2014](#)
Crew members: [section 8\(1\) of the Immigration Act 1971](#)
[UK visa requirements: list for carriers](#) – useful desk aide

Introduction

This section gives Home Office staff an overview of the different ways an individual can transit through the UK and provides some definitions of terminology used throughout this document.

Depending on the circumstances, a person can transit:

- as a ['Transit visitor'](#)
 - a 'Transit visitor' is a person who seeks to travel through the UK on their way to another destination country outside the [Common Travel Area \(CTA\)](#) – see CTA guidance for more information
 - this route allows individuals to transit the UK [landside](#) (such as passing through Immigration Control), leaving within 48 hours
 - this route allows individuals to transit the UK **only**
- as a ['Standard' or 'Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor'](#)
 - transit is one of the permitted activities for 'Standard visitors' and 'Marriage/Civil Partnership visitors', as set out in [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities of the Immigration Rules](#)
 - this means that a person who has, or is applying for, a visit visa or permission as a 'Standard visitor' or 'Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor' does not need separate 'Transit visitor' permission to transit the UK
- under the [Transit without visa \(TWOV\) scheme](#), some visa nationals do not require a 'Transit visitor' visa to transit the UK [landside](#) if they meet specific eligibility requirements and hold an exemption document
- as a [Direct Airside Transit](#) passenger, certain nationalities require a visa to transit the UK [airside](#)

Transiting landside means:

- the passenger is applying to enter the UK
- a passenger passing through the UK must depart within 48 hours of arrival, but can arrive at one port or airport, and transfer to another port or airport to continue their journey or spend time between their arrival and embarkation outside the transit area, perhaps to re-check in baggage

Transiting airside means:

- a passenger does not pass through UK border control and is not deemed to have entered the UK
- for example, catching an onward flight from the same UK airport at which they arrived – arriving at Heathrow Terminal 3 and departing from Heathrow Terminal 5

Related content

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Transit visitors

This section tells Entry Clearance Officers and Border Force Officers about the requirements under paragraphs V 14.2. of [Appendix V: Visitor of the Immigration Rules](#).

‘Transit visitors’: eligibility requirements

This section tells Entry Clearance Officers (ECOs) and Border Force officers (BFOs) things they may want to consider when assessing whether an individual meets the ‘Transit visitor’ eligibility requirements under paragraphs V 14.2. of [Appendix V: Visitor of the Immigration Rules](#).

The burden of proof is on the applicant to satisfy you that they meet the requirements of the rules. The standard of proof is the balance of probabilities (i.e. it is more likely than not the requirements are met).

You must be satisfied that the individual meets all the requirements of V 14.2. The following factors will help you assess if an individual is a genuine ‘Transit visitor’:

- reasonable transit route:
 - is it reasonable for an individual to be travelling from the country of departure to their destination through the UK
 - the Home Office does not specify what routes are acceptable for this purpose, however, there should be a clear reason why they are travelling through the UK, such as it forming part of a journey from east to west
 - an example of an unreasonable transit route may be an individual travelling from Australia to New Zealand, seeking to transit through the UK
 - must be on their way to another destination country outside the common travel area (CTA) – see CTA guidance for further information
- the credibility of the application as a whole:
 - the main purpose of the journey
 - the applicant’s circumstances, including travel history
- intention and ability to leave the UK within 48 hours after arrival:
 - details and availability of connecting flights
 - confirmed onward bookings in applicant’s name
- any evidence to suggest that an applicant intends to undertake prohibited activities such as accessing public funds or medical treatment or intends to work or study in the UK, for example, an admission, intelligence, supporting documents
- assurance of entry to their country of destination and any other countries they are transiting on their way there, for example:
 - entry or visa requirements for applicant's nationality to destination – refer to Travel Information Manual or embassy websites
 - if needed, does the applicant have a valid visa or entry clearance for the country they are travelling to or documentary evidence of acceptability in that country

- if a person intends to transit through the UK on their return, does the applicant's travel document guarantee return to their country of residence
- consider that some countries enforce minimum passport validity and refuse entry if a passport is valid for less than 6 months
- other considerations:
 - remember your duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children – [Section 55 of the Border and Citizenship Act](#)
 - Vulnerable Adults and Children guidance
 - UKVI Adult Safeguarding Strategy
 - Border Force guidance on Children
 - Modern Slavery guidance and considerations
 - Border Force guidance on Modern Slavery

There are no specified documents for 'Transit visitors' (other than a valid passport or travel document) and an applicant or passenger should not be refused a visa or leave to enter on the sole basis that a particular document has not been provided. Failure to provide a valid travel document that satisfies you of the applicant's identity would be grounds for rejection under validity or refusal suitability: see Validity guidance and Part 9: grounds for refusal guidance.

Related content

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Transiting as a ‘Standard’ or ‘Marriage/Civil Partnership’ visitor

This section tells Entry Clearance Officers and Border Force Officers about transiting as a permitted activity.

Transit is a permitted activity for ‘Standard visitors’ and ‘Marriage/Civil Partnership visitors’, as set out in [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities of the Immigration Rules](#). This means that a person who has, or is applying for, a visit visa or permission as a ‘Standard visitor’ or ‘Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor’ does not need separate ‘Transit visitor’ permission to transit the UK and can undertake any of the permitted activities in Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities.

For example, a visitor who holds a long-term ‘Standard visitor’ visa valid for 10 years can come to the UK to transit using that visa, without the need to obtain a ‘Transit visitor’ visa and for the long-term ‘Standard visitor’ visa to be cancelled.

Another example could be a visitor who applies for a ‘Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor’ visa valid for 6 months can, if issued, come to the UK to get married or form a civil partnership, leave the UK to honeymoon in a third country and transit the UK on their way to returning to their home country using the same visa.

Transiting as a ‘Standard’ or ‘Marriage/Civil Partnership’ visitor: eligibility requirements

You must be satisfied that the individual meets all the requirements of V 14.1. and V 14.2. – see [‘Transit visitor’ eligibility requirements](#) for considerations.

You must also be satisfied that the individual meets the requirements of V 4.1. to V 4.6. if applying for a visit visa or permission as a ‘Standard visitor’ or V 4.1. to V 4.6. and V 12.1. and V 12.2. if applying for a visit visa or permission to enter as a ‘Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor’. See Visit guidance for further information.

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Visa applications for those intending to transit the UK landside

This section tells Entry Clearance Officers (ECOs) about assessing applications for those intending to transit the UK.

Visa nationals, whose main purpose for coming to the UK is to transit landside can decide to apply for either of the following visas:

- a 'Transit visitor' visa, which will allow them to transit the UK only
- a 'Standard visitor' visa, which will allow them to transit the UK and undertake any of the permitted activities listed in [Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities of the Immigration Rules](#)

The cost of a 'Transit visitor' visa is less than a 'Standard visitor' visa.

It is unlikely that an applicant will apply for a 'Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor' visa if their primary purpose is to transit the UK. However, holders of 'Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor' visas will be able to transit using that visa.

'Transit visitor' visas

If applying under the 'Transit visitor' visa route, a visa national who seeks to enter the UK for the purpose of landside transit (that is, to enter the UK) must have a visa that allows them to enter the UK as a 'Transit visitor' under paragraph V 14.1. and V 14.2. of [Appendix V: Visitor of the Immigration Rules](#).

When considering an application, you must do the following:

1. Check that the application is valid by referring to the validity requirements contained in paragraphs V 2.1. to V 2.6. of [Appendix V: Visitor](#) – see Validity guidance for more information.
2. Check the application in line with the mandatory identity checks.
3. Assess whether the applicant falls to be refused on suitability grounds of [Part 9: grounds for refusal](#) – see Part 9 guidance for more information.
4. Assess whether the applicant meets the [eligibility requirements](#) for a Transit visitor under paragraph V 14.2. of [Appendix V: Visitor](#). The applicant must intend to transit the UK only.

'Transit visitor' visas: validity period: multiple and single entry

You should normally issue a 'Transit visitor' visa if you are satisfied that the passenger:

- meets all the eligibility requirements of paragraph V 14.2. of [Appendix V: Visitor](#)

- should not be refused under any of the suitability rules in [Part 9: grounds for refusal](#)

You should normally issue a multiple entry 'Transit visitor' visa valid for 6 months (long-term 'Transit visitor' visas are not available). The length of permission to enter the UK for 'Transit visitors' is 48 hours.

Single entry 'Transit visitor' visas would be issued on rare occasions for a maximum validity period of 6 months, conferring permission to enter for 48 hours, but allowing the applicant to enter the UK only once – for example, the applicant only has limited validity left on their visa for the country of destination.

An example of when it may be appropriate to reduce the validity period to less than 6 months is where evidence of acceptability in the country of destination (outbound or return journey) expires in less than 6 months.

Where you intend to issue a visa for less than 6 months, it must be referred to an entry clearance manager (ECM) for approval. The details and record of authority should be recorded on the casework system.

Where an applicant has requested 6 months, but has been issued a shorter validity, you must provide a written explanation clearly setting out your reasons for this. In such cases, no refund (full or partial) of the fee is available.

'Transit visitor' visas: endorsement

Category B
VISIT – IN TRANSIT

'Transit visitor' visas: refuse a visa

You should normally refuse a 'Transit visitor' visa if you are:

- satisfied that the applicant should be refused under any of the suitability requirements in [Part 9: grounds for refusal](#)
- not satisfied that the applicant meets all the requirements of paragraph V 14.2. of [Appendix V: Visitor](#)

To refuse a 'Transit visitor' visa:

1. Select the appropriate refusal template –Visit_NRA
2. Check applicant's details are correct.
3. Clearly explain to the applicant why they do not meet the rules to be issued a 'Transit visitor' visa, with reference to the relevant requirements of [Appendix V: Visitor](#) (V 14.2.(a) - (d) or appropriate suitability rules under Part 9: grounds for refusal).
4. The reasons for refusal must be factual, clear and relevant to the application. See Visit Refusal Notice Guidance for more details.

‘Transit visitor’ visas: suggested eligibility refusal wording examples

Reasonable routes – V 14.2.(a)

You intend to transit the UK from [xx] to [yy].

[Give details about why this is not a reasonable transit route. Give details of alternative reasonable routes that are available.]

Work/study/accessing public funds/medical treatment – V 14.2.(b)

The documents you have provided / the information on your visa application form demonstrate/s that you intend to [work/study/access public funds/medical treatment] in the UK. [Give details.]

Intention and ability to leave within 48 hours – V 14.2.(c)

You state you intend to transit the UK from [xx] to [yy]. You have presented [x], [y] and [z], however, the documents you have provided and information on your visa application form do not demonstrate that you intend to leave the UK within 48 hours of arrival. [Give details.]

Assurance of entry – V 14.2.(d)

You state you intend to transit the UK from [xx] to [yy]. You have presented [x], [y] and [z], however, the documents you have provided and information on your visa application form do not demonstrate that you are assured entry to [the country of destination].

Credibility

[Give details about why you are not satisfied that the applicant is a genuine transit visitor, for example on grounds of credibility, intention to leave, funds. You should make a rounded assessment of the applicant’s circumstances and intentions against the requirements of V 14.2.(a) to (d).]

‘Transit visitor’ visa: right of appeal

There is no right of appeal or right to administrative review of a refusal of a Transit visitor visa.

For further information on human rights claims see the following link – [Considering human rights claims in visit applications](#). You will need to use the Visit ROA refusal template if you are refusing a Transit visitor who does have a right of appeal.

‘Transit visitor’ visa: discretion to grant leave outside the rules

Where an applicant does not meet the requirements of the Immigration Rules, but there is nonetheless a clearly established and verifiable reason for transiting the UK and compelling or compassionate circumstances, the case must be referred to the Referred Casework Unit (RCU). You must refer to guidance on leave outside the rules and referral processes.

‘Standard visitor’ visas

Where a visa national applies to transit the UK landside (that is, to enter the UK) as their primary purpose under the ‘Standard visitor’ visa route, they must meet the requirements under V 14.2. of [Appendix V: Visitor of the Immigration Rules](#) and the relevant paragraphs of V 4.1. to V 4.6.

When considering an application, you must do the following:

1. Check that the application is valid by referring to the validity requirements contained in paragraphs V 2.1. to V 2.6. of [Appendix V: Visitor](#) – see Validity guidance for more information.
2. Check the application in line with the mandatory identity checks.
3. Assess whether the applicant falls to be refused under suitability grounds of [Part 9](#): grounds for refusal – see Part 9 guidance for more information.
4. Assess whether the applicant meets the [eligibility requirements](#) of V 14.2. of Appendix V as well as the eligibility requirements for ‘Standard visitors’ under V 4.1. to V 4.6. of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).

Further guidance on assessing applications for ‘Standard visitor’ visas for other permitted activities can be found in the Visit guidance.

‘Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor’ visas

It is unlikely that an applicant will apply for a ‘Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor’ visa, with their primary purpose being to transit the UK. However, if they do, you will need to assess whether the applicant meets the requirements under V 4.1. to V 4.6., V 12.1. and V 12.2. and V 14.2.

You should assess applications for ‘Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor’ visas where the main purpose is to marry or form a civil partnership, or give notice of this as detailed in the Visit guidance.

‘Standard’ or ‘Marriage/Civil Partnership’ visitor visas: validity period: multiple and single entry

You should normally issue a ‘Standard visitor’ visa or a ‘Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor’ visa where the applicant is seeking to transit the UK if you are satisfied that the passenger:

- meets all the eligibility requirements of paragraph V 14.2. of [Appendix V: Visitor](#)
- meets all the eligibility requirements of paragraph V 4.1. to V 4.6. and V 12.1. to V 12.2. respectively
- should not be refused under any of the suitability rules of [Part 9: grounds for refusal](#)

You should normally issue a multiple entry ‘Standard visitor’ or ‘Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor’ visa.

The 'Standard visitor' visa should be issued for the duration paid for, unless you have reasons to limit the validity – see Visit guidance for further details.

'Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor' visas are issued with a validity up to 6 months.

Standard' or 'Marriage/Civil Partnership' visitor visas: endorsements

If issuing a 'Standard visitor' visa for the purposes of transit, select the following endorsement on Proviso:

Category D
VISIT

If issuing a 'Marriage/Civil Partnership visa, select the following endorsement on Proviso:

Category D
VISIT – MARRIAGE/CP
Add initials and surname of fiancé(e)/partner

'Standard' or 'Marriage/Civil Partnership' visitor visas: refuse a visa

You should normally refuse a 'Standard visitor' visa or a 'Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor' visa for the purposes of transit if:

- you are satisfied that the applicant should be refused under any of the suitability requirements of [Part 9: grounds for refusal](#).
- you are not satisfied that the applicant meets all the requirements of paragraph V 14.2. of [Appendix V: Visitor](#)
- you are not satisfied that the applicant meets all the requirements of V 4.1. to V 4.6. and V 12.1. to V 12.2. (where applicable)

Where an individual fails to meet the criteria set out above, it will only be in exceptional circumstances that the decision to maintain the refusal will be outweighed by compelling factors.

To refuse a 'Standard visitor' visa or a 'Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor' visa:

1. Select the appropriate refusal template –Visit_NRA or Visit_ROA.
2. Check applicant's details are correct.
3. Clearly explain to the applicant why they do not meet the rules to be issued a 'Standard visitor' or 'Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor' visa, with reference to the appropriate sub-paragraphs of [Appendix V: Visitor](#) or appropriate suitability rules under [Part 9: grounds for refusal](#).

4. The reasons for refusal must be factual, clear and relevant to the application.
See Visit Refusal Notice Guidance for more details.

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Passengers wishing to transit the UK landside: at the border

This section tells Border Force Officers (BFOs) about how to consider passengers seeking permission to enter for landside transit.

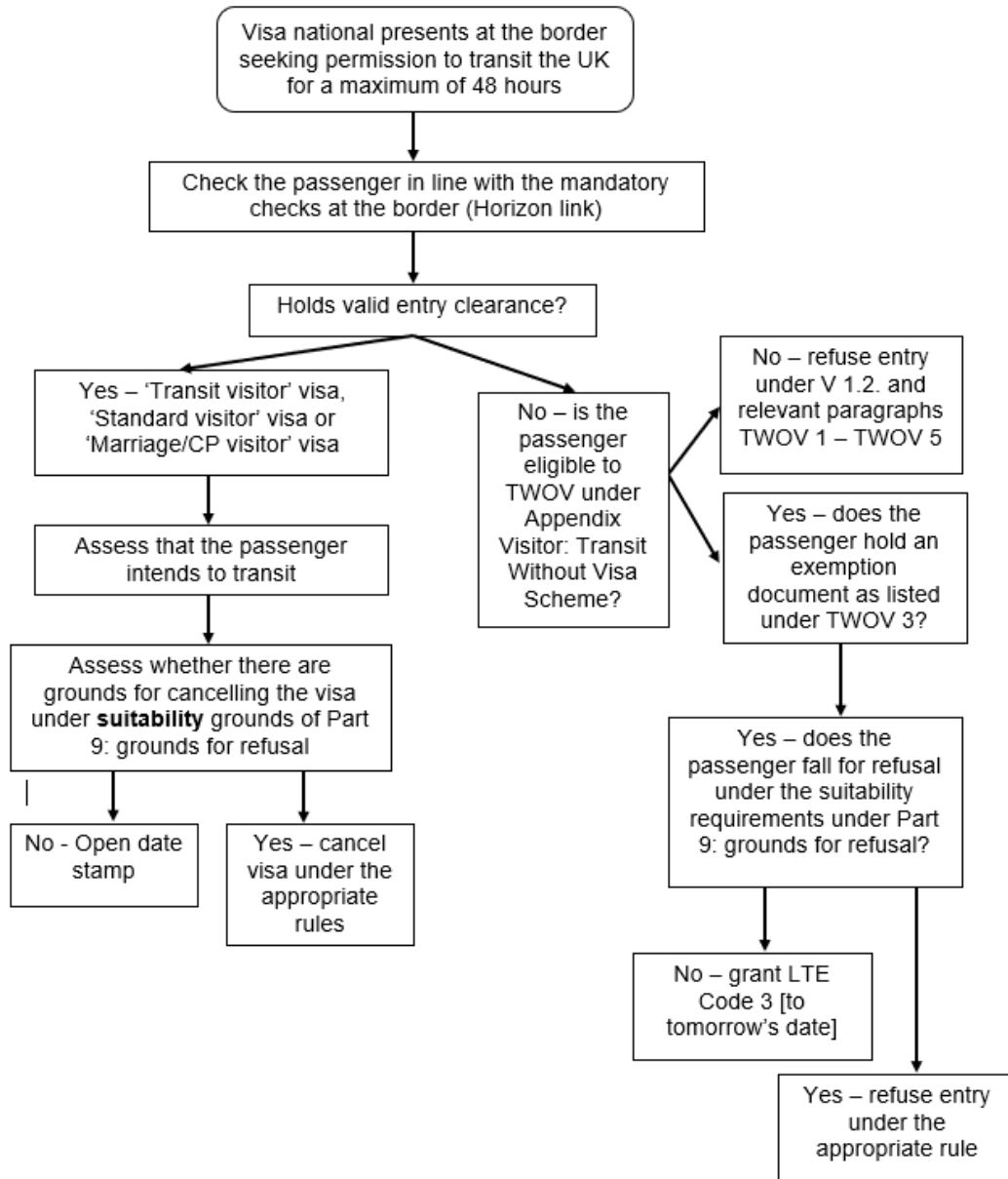
Visa nationals

When a visa national presents at the border for the purpose of transiting the UK landside for a maximum of 48 hours, you must:

1. Check the passenger in line with the mandatory checks at the border.
2. Check that the passenger holds valid visa.
3. If not, is the passenger eligible to benefit from the Transit without visa (TWOV) scheme? See the [TWOV section of this guidance](#) for further information.
4. Check that the passenger intends to transit, including that their onward flight is within the required timeframe.
5. If the passenger holds a 'Transit visitor' visa, 'Standard visitor' visa or 'Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor' visa, assess whether there are [grounds for cancellation](#) of the visa under [Part 9: grounds for refusal](#).

Landing visa nationals for transit: stamp and LTE code

If you are satisfied that there are no grounds for cancellation of a passenger's 'Transit visitor' visa, 'Standard visitor' visa or 'Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor' visa and you are satisfied that they intend to transit, you should open date stamp the vignette (clipping visa if first presentation).



Refuse entry to visa nationals

The following steps detail how to refuse entry:

1. Visa national without a 'Transit visitor' or 'Standard' or 'Marriage/Civil Partnership' visa arrives in the UK to transit.
2. Check whether they meet the requirements for the [Transit without visa \(TWOV\)](#) scheme.
3. If not, refuse the applicant under V 1.1.(a) and the relevant paragraphs of [Appendix Visitor: Transit Without Visa Scheme](#) (TWOV 1 - 5) of [Appendix V: Visitor of the Immigration Rules](#), making it clear that you have also considered the TWOV route.

See casework system for suggested refusal wordings.

See Border Force guidance on Refusal of leave to enter and Removals at port for more information.

Cancel a visitor visa

The rules in [Part 9: grounds for refusal](#) of the Immigration Rules on cancellation of entry clearance (visit visa) apply to Visitors. Refer to Part 9: grounds for refusal guidance for more information on when to cancel a 'Transit visitor', 'Standard visitor' or 'Marriage/civil partnership visitor' visa.

See also Border Force guidance on Refusal of leave to enter and Removals at port for more information.

Border Force administrative review (AR)

Border Force AR is only available in certain cases when an entry clearance or permission is cancelled. There are only 3 Border Force decisions eligible for AR and these are cancellation of entry clearance on the grounds of:

- change of circumstances
- false representations
- failure to disclose material facts

For more information, see:

- Administrative Review guidance
- Border Force administrative review: checklist
- Border Force administrative review: dealing with applications
- Border Force administrative review: process maps and scenarios

Related content

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Non-visa nationals

When a non-visa national presents at the border seeking permission to enter to transit the UK landside for a maximum of 48 hours, you must:

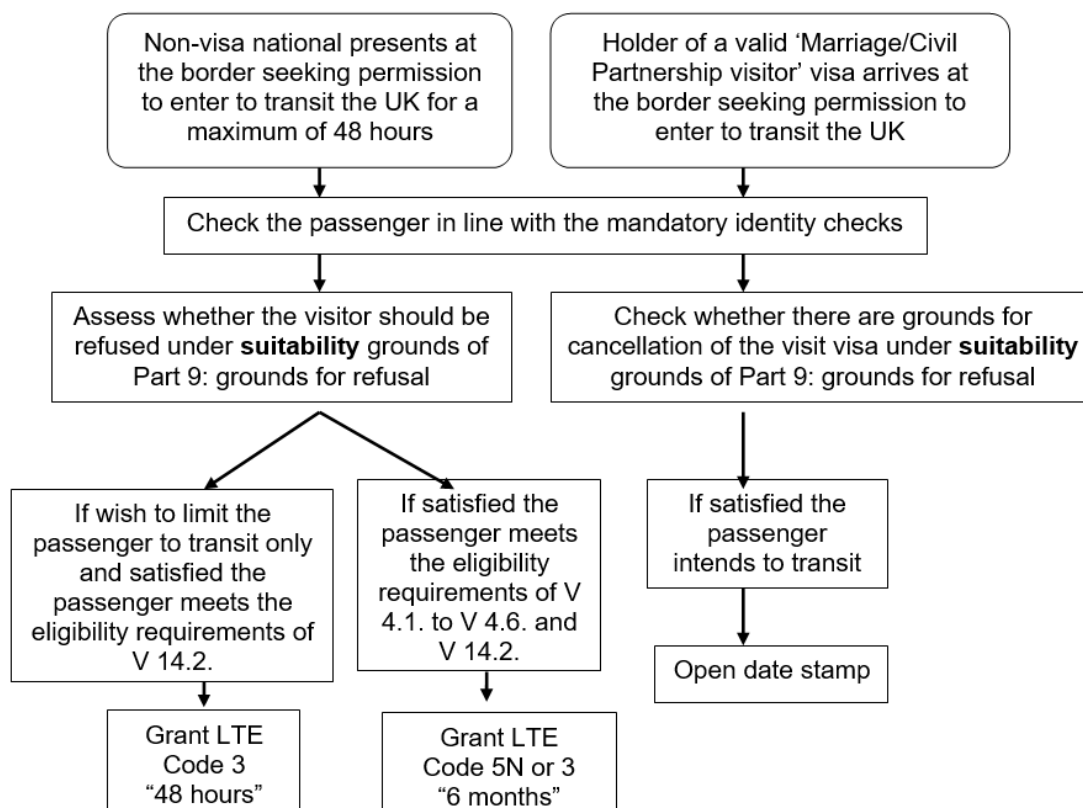
1. Check the passenger in line with the mandatory checks at the border.
2. Assess whether the visitor should be refused under suitability grounds of [Part 9: grounds for refusal](#) – see Part 9 guidance for more information.

It is then for the Border Force officer to decide whether, and on what basis, to grant entry to the passenger.

Granting entry to non-visa nationals for transit: stamp and LTE code

If satisfied that the applicant meets the eligibility requirements of V 4.1. to V.4.6. and V 14.2., grant the following: LTE Code 5N “6 months” or Code 3 “6 months”.

LTE Code 3 “forty-eight hours” can be used where the Border Force Officer is only satisfied that the passenger meets the transit eligibility requirements and wishes to limit the passenger to transit only.



EU, EEA, Swiss and B5JSSK nationals

Visitors who are nationals of Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, and the United States of America (B5JSSK), EEA states and Switzerland, do not routinely receive endorsements in their passports. If you are granting permission to enter to an EEA, Swiss or B5JSSK national for 6 months as a Standard visitor, you should not endorse a code 5N but rather grant permission verbally in line with the B5JSSK guidance. If you wish to grant permission as a Transit visitor for 48 hours then you should continue to endorse using a code 3.

Refuse entry: non-visa nationals

If the passenger is seeking to transit, you should normally refuse permission to enter if:

- you are satisfied that the applicant should be refused under any of the suitability requirements of [Part 9: grounds for refusal](#)
- you are not satisfied that the applicant meets all the requirements of paragraph V 14.2. and/or V 4.1. to V 4.6. of [Appendix V: Visitor](#)

See casework system for suggested refusal wordings.

See Border Force guidance on Refusal of leave to enter and Removals at port for more information.

See Part 9 guidance for further information.

Holders of 'Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor' visas

If you are satisfied that there are no grounds for cancellation of a holder's 'Marriage/Civil Partnership visitor' visa and you are satisfied that the applicant intends to transit, you should open date stamp the vignette (clipping visa if first presentation).

See Visit guidance for further information on marriage/civil partnership considerations.

Visitors: conditions attached to entry clearance/permission to enter

No work, study, medical treatment or recourse to public funds.

Related content

Border Force guidance: endorsements and signals

National referral mechanism: guidance for child first responders

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Related external links

Irish citizens

The Common Travel Area (CTA) is a long-standing arrangement between the UK, the Crown Dependencies (Bailiwick of Jersey, Bailiwick of Guernsey and the Isle of Man) and Ireland.

Under the CTA, British and Irish citizens can move freely and reside in either jurisdiction. British and Irish citizens enjoy associated reciprocal rights and privileges, including the right to work, study and vote in certain elections, as well as to access social welfare benefits and health services.

Once free movement ends on 1 January 2021, Irish citizens' status will continue to be protected. This will be provided for under section 3ZA of the Immigration Act 1971, and is reflected in paragraph 5C of the Immigration Rules, which means that they will not require leave to enter or remain in the UK for any reason, including to transit, except for in a [limited number of circumstances](#).

As a result, Irish citizens will not be eligible to apply for a visit visa or permission (leave) to enter or stay under the Transit visitor rules once free movement ends and their new status comes into force. You must therefore void any application for a Transit visitor visa from an Irish citizen when made at or after 11pm on 31 December, except where they are subject to any of the following:

- a deportation order made under section 5(1) of the Immigration Act 1971
- an exclusion decision, or an exclusion order made under regulation 23(5) of the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2016
- a travel ban implemented under section 8B of the Immigration Act 1971

In the event that an Irish citizen falls within one of the above categories, section 3ZA of the Immigration Act 1971 states that they require permission to enter or stay. You should therefore consider their application in line with the relevant Immigration Rules in the same way as any other applicant, noting that Part 9: grounds for refusal is likely to apply.

Where an Irish citizen chooses to apply before 11pm on 31 December, you should contact the applicant to explain that if they intend to arrive in the UK before 11pm on 31 December they can enter the UK exercising their free movement rights and do not need permission and their application for a Transit visitor visa will not take effect until after 1 January 2021, but from 1 January they will have rights under section 3ZA and will not require permission. They may therefore want to withdraw their application. Please contact the CTA Policy Team for further information before you do so. If despite this they wish to proceed, then you must consider their application for a Transit visitor visa in the same way as any other applicant, except that it cannot be granted for entry before 1 January 2021.

If an Irish citizen applies for permission under the Transit visitor or Standard visitor rules at the border from 11pm on 31 December 2020, they must not be granted that permission unless they fall under one of the exceptions, but instead should be

allowed to enter freely, with no endorsement, on the basis of proof of their status as an Irish Citizen. If they fall under one of the above exceptions, then they require permission to enter and should be considered in the same way as any other passenger, noting that Part 9: grounds for refusal is likely to apply. Until 11pm on 31 December, Irish citizens should continue to be treated as other European Economic Area (EEA) citizens and considered under EEA regulations.

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Transit without visa (TWOV) scheme

This section tells Border Force Officers at airports about the requirements of the TWOV scheme under [Appendix Visitor: Transit Without Visa Scheme](#) of the Immigration Rules for visa national passengers seeking permission to enter as 'Transit visitors'.

The TWOV scheme allows visa nationals who meet all the requirements of paragraph TWOV 2 and who hold one of the documents specified in paragraph TWOV 3 of [Appendix Visitor: Transit Without Visa Scheme](#) of the Immigration Rules to transit the UK landside without a visa.

When considering a passenger, you must check:

- the passenger in line with the mandatory checks at the border
- whether they should be refused under suitability grounds of [Part 9: grounds for refusal](#) - see Part 9 guidance for more information
- whether the passenger meets the [requirements](#) of the TWOV scheme

A person is not regarded as transiting the UK if they are going to Ireland. This is because the UK's approach to the Common Travel Area (CTA) is to exercise immigration control at the first point of entry to the CTA. Therefore, a person who arrives in the UK on their way to Ireland is considered to be seeking entry to the UK. For example as a 'Standard visitor' and not as a 'Transit visitor'.

It follows therefore, that a visa national seeking to enter the UK before going on to Ireland would need a UK visa (a visit visa not a transit visa). However, the holder of an Irish biometric visa can enter the UK on their way to Ireland as a visitor without a UK visa.

TWOV: requirements

You must be satisfied that the individual meets all the requirements of TWOV 2(a) to (f).

The following factors will help you assess if an individual is a genuine TWOV passenger:

- the applicant must have arrived and will be departing by air
- the applicant must have a confirmed booking on a flight departing the UK before 11:59pm hours on the day after they arrived
- reasonable transit route:
 - is it reasonable for an individual to be travelling from the country of departure to their destination through the UK
 - the Home Office does not specify what routes are acceptable for this purpose, however, there should be a clear reason for why they are travelling through the UK, such as it forming part of a journey from east to west

- you must make sure that the route is not being used in order to gain short term entry to the UK without needing a visa
- an example of an unreasonable transit route would be an individual travelling from Australia to New Zealand and is seeking to transit through the UK
- the credibility of the application as a whole:
 - the main purpose of the journey
 - the applicant's circumstances, including travel history
- is there evidence to suggest that an applicant intends to access public funds or medical treatment or intends to work or study in the UK, for example, an admission, intelligence, supporting documents
- intention and ability to leave the UK before 11:59pm hours on the day after the day they arrived:
 - details and availability of connecting flights
 - confirmed onward bookings in applicant's name
- assurance of entry to their country of destination and any other countries they are transiting on their way there:
 - entry or visa requirements for applicant's nationality to destination – refer to Travel Information Manual or embassy websites
 - if needed, does the applicant have a valid visa or entry clearance for the country they are travelling to or documentary evidence of acceptability in that country
 - if a person intends to transit through the UK on their return, does the applicant's travel document guarantee return to their country of residence?
- other considerations:
 - remember your duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children: [Section 55 of the Border and Citizenship Act](#)
 - Vulnerable Adults and Children guidance
 - UKVI Adult Safeguarding Strategy
 - Border Force guidance on Children
 - Modern Slavery guidance and considerations
 - Border Force guidance on Modern Slavery

Specified documents

You must also be satisfied that the individual meets at least one of the requirements of TWOV 3.

Electronic versions of any documents listed in paragraph TWOV 3, such as electronic visas (including printed versions), are not acceptable.

TWOV 4 states that paragraph TWOV 3(a) and (b) do not apply where the transit passenger is a citizen or national of Syria holding a B1 or B2 category visa for entry to the United States of America.

TWOV: grant permission to enter

You should normally grant permission to enter as a Transit visitor if you are satisfied that the passenger:

- meets all the requirements of paragraph TWOV 2 and one of the requirements of TWOV 3 of [Appendix Visitor: Transit Without Visa Scheme](#)
- does not fall to be refused under any of the suitability rules of [Part 9: grounds for refusal](#)

TWOV: entry stamp and LTE code

LTE Code 3 [to tomorrow's date]

TWOV: conditions attached to permission to enter as a Transit visitor

No work, study, medical treatment or recourse to public funds.

TWOV: refuse permission to enter

You should normally refuse permission to enter if:

- you are satisfied that the applicant falls to be refused under any of the suitability requirements of [Part 9: grounds for refusal](#)
- you are not satisfied that the applicant meets the requirements of paragraphs TWOV 2 and TWOV 3 of [Appendix Visitor: Transit Without Visa Scheme](#)

Refuse the applicant under the relevant suitability rules and/ or V 1.1.(a) and the relevant paragraphs TWOV 1 – TWOV 5 of [Appendix Visitor: Transit Without Visa Scheme](#) of the Immigration Rules.

Suggested TWOV refusal wordings

Reason you are not satisfied the person meets the requirements	Suggested refusal wordings
Standard introductory line	You are a visa national (as defined in Appendix Visitor: Visa national list of the Immigration Rules). You therefore require a valid entry clearance for the purpose for which you are seeking entry. You have stated that you are seeking to transit the UK. I am not satisfied that you have valid entry clearance for this purpose, and I am not satisfied you meet the requirements for Transit without Visa in Appendix Visitor: Transit Without Visa Scheme. [Explain which parts of TWOV 2 and TWOV 3 have not been met using the paragraphs below.] You are therefore refused leave to enter under paragraphs V 1.1.(a) of Appendix V: Visitor and TWOV 1 of Appendix Visitor:

Reason you are not satisfied the person meets the requirements	Suggested refusal wordings
	Transit Without Visa Scheme of the Immigration Rules.
Not arrived by air	You have not arrived by air as required by paragraph TWOV 2(a).
Does not intend to depart by air	I am not satisfied, as required by paragraph TWOV 2(a), that you will depart by air because [give details].
Not in transit to another country on a reasonable transit route	I am not satisfied, as required by paragraph TWOV 2(b), that you are genuinely in transit to another country and are taking a reasonable transit route because [give details].
Intends to claim public funds, access medical treatment, undertake employment or study in the UK	I am not satisfied, as required by paragraph TWOV 2(c), that you do not intend to access public funds / access medical treatment / undertake employment / study in the UK because [give details].
Does not intend to leave the UK by 11:59pm on the day after arrival	I am not satisfied, as required by paragraph TWOV 2(d), that you intend and are able to leave the UK before 23:59 hours on the day after the day you arrived in the UK because [give details].
Does not have a confirmed onward booking to depart before 23:59 the day after arrival	I am not satisfied, as required by paragraph TWOV 2(e), that you have a confirmed booking on a flight departing the UK before 23:59 hours on the day after you arrived in the UK because [give details].
Not assured entry to country of destination or to a country which they will transit through	I am not satisfied, as required by paragraph TWOV 2(f), that you are assured entry to your country of destination [and other countries you are transiting through on your way there] because [give details].
Does not hold required document	You have not been able to present to me one of the documents listed in paragraph TWOV 3 and I am therefore not satisfied you meet the requirement of paragraph TWOV 3.

See Border Force guidance on Refusal of leave to enter and Removals at port for more information.

TWOV: right of appeal

There is no right of appeal or right to an administrative review of refusal of entry as a Transit visitor.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Transit extensions

Where an individual is granted permission to enter under the Transit visitor rules, including transit without visa (TWOV), they should normally have been given the maximum period of permission permitted. A person who has entered as a Transit Visitor cannot apply to extend their stay in the UK by applying for permission to stay. If they seek to extend their stay, their application should be rejected as invalid using the following wording:

“Transit visitors are not eligible to apply for an extension of stay. Your application for an extension of permission to stay is therefore rejected as invalid under V 2.5.(b) of Appendix V: Visitor of the Immigration Rules.”

Related content

[Contents](#)

Related external links

[Immigration \(Passenger Transit Visa\) Order 2014](#)

[Immigration \(Passenger Transit Visa\) Order 2014 \(as amended\)](#)

Direct Airside Transit Visa (DATV)

This section tells **Entry Clearance** and **Border Force** staff about the requirements for DATVs based on the [Immigration \(Passenger Transit Visa\) Order 2014 \(as amended\)](#).

A 'Transit visitor' is a person who seeks to travel via the UK on their way to another destination country outside the [Common Travel Area \(CTA\)](#).

A traveller who uses Direct Airside Transit is **not** deemed to have entered the UK. They therefore do not require permission to enter or stay in the UK for that journey. As such, they fall outside the scope of the Immigration Rules and are governed by the [Asylum and Immigration Act 1999](#) and the [Immigration \(Passenger Transit Visa\) Order 2014](#).

Certain nationals must hold transit visas even when they transit airside, for example to change aircraft without passing through UK immigration controls at a UK airport.

An airside transit passenger who on arrival in the UK passes through to another country or territory without entering the UK requires a DATV, if they are one of the following:

- a national of a country or territory listed in [Schedule 1](#) of the Immigration (Passenger Transit Visa) Order 2014 (as amended):
 - Afghanistan
 - Albania
 - Algeria
 - Angola
 - Bangladesh
 - Belarus
 - Burma
 - Burundi
 - Cameroon
 - Congo
 - Democratic Republic of the Congo
 - Egypt
 - Eritrea
 - Ethiopia
 - Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
 - Gambia
 - Ghana
 - Guinea
 - Guinea-Bissau
 - India
 - Iran
 - Iraq
 - Ivory Coast
 - Jamaica
 - Kenya

- Kosovo
- Lebanon
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Libya
- Malawi
- Moldova
- Mongolia
- Nepal
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Palestinian Territories
- People's Republic of China
- Rwanda
- Senegal,
- Serbia
- Sierra Leone
- Somalia
- South Africa
- South Sudan
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Swaziland
- Syria
- Tanzania
- Turkey
- Uganda
- Vietnam
- Yemen
- Zimbabwe
- a person holding a travel document issued by the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus'
- a person who holds a passport issued by the Republic of Venezuela that does not contain biometric information in an electronic chip

A Direct Airside Transit Visa is not entry clearance and does not confer leave to enter.

DATV: holders of non-national refugee documents

When considering whether a passenger who wishes to transit airside and who holds a non-national refugee travel document requires a DATV, you must refer to the nationality of the person, and not the country where the non-national refugee document was issued.

Most refugee documents will tell you the country a person was originally a national of by stating it as one or both of:

- the country they are not allowed to return to

- their country of birth

Although not conclusive evidence of their true nationality, this information will be enough to allow you to decide whether or not the person requires a DATV.

If their nationality is one which requires a DATV, they may be eligible to transit airside without a visa but only if they hold one of the specified exemption documents for airside transit as listed in the section [DATV: transiting without a DATV](#).

Persons recognised as stateless under the 1954 UN Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons are not required to hold a DATV, and may transit airside without a DATV.

DATV: consider an application

This section tells Entry Clearance Officers (ECOs) about assessing applications for DATVs.

When considering an application, you must check the application in line with the mandatory identity checks.

Those who are transiting airside are **not** subject to the Immigration Rules, however you still need to be satisfied that the applicant is a **genuine** Direct Airside Transit Visa applicant and there are no reasons that make it inappropriate to issue a DATV.

The following factors may help you assess if an applicant is a genuine airside transit visitor:

- entry or visa requirements for destination depending on applicant's nationality – refer to Travel Information Manual or embassy websites
- if needed, does the applicant have a valid visa or entry clearance for the country they are travelling to or documentary evidence of acceptability in that country
- the credibility of the application as a whole:
 - the main purpose of the journey
 - the applicant's circumstances, including travel history
- confirmed onward bookings in applicant's name from the same airport as they arrived at
- details and availability of connecting flights
- destination
- reasonable transit route:
 - is it reasonable for an individual to be travelling from the country of origin to their destination through the UK
 - the Home Office does not specify what routes are acceptable for this purpose, however, there should be a clear reason for why they are travelling through the UK, such as it forming part of a journey from east to west
 - an example of an unreasonable transit route may be an individual travelling from Australia to New Zealand, seeking to transit through the UK

- on their way to another destination country outside the common travel area (CTA) – see CTA guidance for further information
- is there evidence to suggest that an applicant intends to attempt to enter the UK (for example to work, study, access medical treatment or public funds)
- any local intelligence or results of checks

Other considerations:

- remember your duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children: [Section 55 of the Border and Citizenship Act](#)
- Vulnerable Adults and Children guidance
- UKVI Adult Safeguarding Strategy
- Border Force guidance on Children
- Modern Slavery guidance and considerations
- Border Force guidance on Modern Slavery

The applicant should not be intending to:

- or need to, pass through UK Immigration Control for any reason, including to collect luggage
- change airport
- transit to anywhere in the [Common Travel Area \(CTA\)](#)

You must look carefully at applications with unusual routings or destinations. For example when there is no obvious need to transit through the UK, such as, an applicant travelling from south east Asia to the Middle East passing through London. Or an unusual final destination and the applicant has no plausible explanation for travelling to that country, particularly where they are travelling on to a country where they do not have visa requirements and bookings might be made simply to enable the person to land in the UK and present themselves to a Border Force officer.

If an applicant holds any of the documents listed in [article 4 of the Immigration \(Passenger Transit Visa\) Order 2014 \(as amended\)](#), they are not required to hold a DATV. See [DATV: transiting without a DATV](#) for further information.

DATV: issue visa

DATVs are not issued under the Immigration Rules. In order to issue a person with a DATV the above factors should be considered and you must be satisfied:

- they genuinely intend to transit the UK airside
- they intend to proceed to their country of final destination
- the reason for choosing such a routing is reasonable and credible
- the reasons for travelling to the final destination are credible
- they will be admissible in the country of final destination (and on the return journey if transiting through the UK)
- they can remain airside in transit – for example, passengers cannot remain airside at some airports

- there are no other reasons why it would be inappropriate to issue a DATV:
 - for example, criminal history, previous deception or breaches of UK immigration law – you can use the suitability requirements in [Part 9 of the Immigration Rules](#) as a guide, but you cannot refuse under these rules as DATVs are not governed by the Immigration Rules (see [DATV: refuse a visa](#) for more details)

DATVs must not be issued to anyone travelling to anywhere in the [Common Travel Area \(CTA\)](#).

DATV: validity period

The minimum period of validity is one month and the maximum is 2 years. A DATV is valid for any number of journeys within the period of validity.

You have discretion to vary the period of validity of the DATV within set limits, depending on the applicant's travel details, as follows:

- first time travellers must be issued a DATV valid for 3 months
- regular travellers, for example, those on business, can routinely be issued with a DATV with a validity of the maximum of two years if the ECO is satisfied that there is a continuing need to transit the UK airside

DATV: endorsement

Category A
DIRECT AIRSIDE TRANSIT

DATV: refuse a visa

You must refuse a DATV application if you are not satisfied:

- they genuinely intend to transit the UK airside
- they intend to proceed to their country of final destination
- the reason for choosing such a routing is reasonable and credible
- the reasons for travelling to the final destination are credible
- they will be admissible in the country of final destination (and on the return journey if transiting through the UK)
- they can and intend to remain airside in transit
- there are other reasons why it would be inappropriate to issue a DATV:
 - for example, criminal history, previous deception or breaches of UK immigration law – you can use the suitability requirements in [Part 9 of the Immigration Rules](#) as a guide, but you cannot refuse under these rules as DATVs are not governed by the Immigration Rules

If satisfied the applicant should be refused:

1. Select the notice of decision template – DATV NRA.

2. Check applicant's details are correct.
3. Complete the template. You must not refuse the applicant under the Immigration Rules or refer to those rules.
4. In Proviso notes, clearly explain why you are not satisfied that the applicant is a genuine 'direct airside transit visitor' and does not qualify for a DATV. You can use the above and the suitability and transit eligibility requirements as a guide when considering the applicant's circumstances and intentions.

DATV: right of appeal

A DATV is not entry clearance, does not confer leave to enter and an applicant does not have a right of appeal or right to administrative review against refusal. Although there is no statutory requirement to do so you must give a written notice of a decision to all applicants you refuse.

DATV: transiting without a DATV

The [Immigration \(Passenger Transit Visa\) Order 2014](#) allows DATV nationals, who hold one of the documents listed in Article 4 of the Order (and subsequent amendments) to transit the UK airside without a visa. These are:

- valid visa for entry to Australia, Canada, New Zealand or the USA – the passenger does not have to be on their way to the country for which the visa is held – Syrian nationals and citizens cannot benefit from an airside transit visa exemption under this provision if they hold a US visit visa (category B1 and B2)
- an expired visa for entry to Australia, Canada, New Zealand or the USA provided it is less than six months since the transit passenger last entered that country with a valid visa – Syrian nationals and citizens cannot benefit from an airside transit visa exemption under this provision if they hold a US visit visa (category B1 and B2)
- valid Australian or New Zealand Permanent Resident Visa
- valid Canadian Permanent Resident Card issued on or after 28 June 2002
- valid USA I-551 Permanent Resident Card issued on or after 21 April 1998
- expired USA I-551 Permanent Resident Card provided it is accompanied by a valid I-797 letter authorising an extension of the period of permanent residency
- valid temporary USA I-551 machine readable Immigrant Visa
- valid standalone US Immigration Form 155A/155B attached to a brown sealed envelope
- valid common format Category D visa for entry to an EEA state or Switzerland
- valid common format residence permit issued by an EEA State pursuant to Council Regulation (EC) No 1030/2002(1) or Switzerland
- valid biometric visa issued by the Republic of Ireland
- valid visa issued by a Schengen Acquis State under the Approved Destination Status Scheme where the transit passenger is undertaking a journey via the UK to that Schengen Acquis State
- valid airline ticket for travel via the UK as part of a journey from a Schengen Acquis State to another country or territory, provided that the transit passenger does not seek to travel via the UK on a date more than 30 days from the date

on which they last entered a Schengen Acquis State with a valid visa issued by a Schengen Acquis State under the Approved Destination Status Scheme

- diplomatic or service passport issued by the People's Republic of China
- diplomatic or official passport issued by India
- diplomatic or official passport issued by Vietnam
- valid diplomatic passport issued by Turkey
- valid diplomatic passport issued by South Africa
- valid alien's passport issued by Estonia or Latvia (non-citizen passport)
- valid Convention Travel Document
- valid laissez-passer issued by the UN or the International Committee of the Red Cross

All documents listed in Article 4 are not acceptable in electronic format or in hardcopy format which comes from electronic format unless they can be verified by the airline.

The following documents do not allow a DATV national to travel airside without a visa:

- a transportation letter instead of a valid USA permanent residence card issued on or after 21 April 1998
- a valid travel document with a USA ADIT stamp which says 'Processed for I-551 TEMPORARY EVIDENCE OF LAWFUL ADMISSION FOR PERMANENT RESIDENCE VALID UNTIL [...] EMPLOYMENT AUTHORISED'
- a USA visa foil endorsed category 'YY' or 'ZZ' and endorsed 'This is not a visa, and the foil prepared at DHS request'
- a non-national (including refugee) travel document where the holder is determined to be originally from a DATV country (unless they are free from the need for a DATV because of one of the exemptions above)

DATV: permission to enter

Passengers holding a DATV should not normally present themselves to a Border Force Officer because passengers transiting airside should not need to enter the UK. A DATV is not entry clearance and does not confer leave to enter.

In exceptional circumstances, for example where a passenger's flight has been cancelled, it may be necessary to allow the passenger to enter the UK landside and in such cases you should consider granting leave outside the rules (LOTR) in line with the Border Force guidance on LOTR.

A decision in the case of exceptional wider disruption to travel is usually taken by National Command Centre (NCC), who will advise on granting leave to enter if you are satisfied that the passenger left their port of embarkation with the means and intention of travelling onwards and not entering the UK. In such an event please contact Border Force NCC:

Official – sensitive: start of section

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: end of section

Related content

[Contents](#)

Seamen

This page tells staff about the requirements for seamen in transit.

A seaman travelling on duty, who is a visa national (including those in transit through the UK) does not need a UK Transit visitor visa if they hold a seaman's book issued in line with International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 108 (and No. 185 where the country, as a result of ratifying ILO No. 185, has now denounced ILO No. 108).

The seaman does not need to be a national of the country that issued the document.

For Seamen guidance for further information.

Related content

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