



Home Office

Worker and Temporary Workers: guidance for sponsors

Sponsor a Creative Worker

Version 10/23

This document forms part of the collection 'Workers and Temporary Workers: guidance for sponsors'. It provides information for employers in the creative sector on how to sponsor a person on the Creative Worker immigration route.

This version of the guidance is valid from 18 October 2023.

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About this guidance

This document provides information for employers in the creative sector on how to sponsor a person to enter or stay in the UK on the Temporary Work – Creative Worker immigration route ('Creative Worker route').

The Creative Worker route is for people who want to come to the UK to work within the creative sector and can make a unique contribution to the UK's rich cultural life – for example, as an artist, dancer, musician or entertainer, or as a model contributing to the UK's fashion industry.

Eligible workers can come to the UK for up to 12 months initially, with the option to extend their permission up to 24 months (if continuing to work for the same sponsor).

The Creative Worker route replaced the creative provisions of the T5 (Temporary Worker) Creative or Sporting Worker route from 11 October 2021.

Other guidance you must read

To make sure you meet all of the relevant requirements and fulfil your sponsorship duties, you must read the following parts of the sponsor guidance, in addition to this document:

- [Part 1: Apply for a licence](#) – this contains detailed information on how to apply for a sponsor licence and how we assess applications
- [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#) – this contains detailed information on how to sponsor Workers and Temporary Workers, including how to request and assign Certificates of Sponsorship, immigration requirements, and conditions of stay
- [Part 3: Sponsor duties and compliance](#) – this contains detailed information about your duties as a licensed sponsor and the action we can take if you fail to meet these duties
- any relevant annexes or appendices referred to in the above documents

You can access all of these documents, and other information on sponsorship, on the [Sponsorship: guidance for employers and educators](#) page on GOV.UK.

This guidance is subject to change. If you have printed or downloaded a copy of this guidance, check the version number and date on GOV.UK to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version.

Glossary

There is a glossary of terms used throughout the sponsor guidance (including this document) at the beginning of [Part 1: Apply for a licence](#).

The following additional terms used this document:

Common Travel Area

This means, collectively, the UK, Ireland, the Channel Islands (Bailiwick of Guernsey and Bailiwick of Jersey), and the Isle of Man.

Consecutive engagements

This is where all of the following apply:

- a Creative Worker is being sponsored for more than one engagement in the UK, including where the worker has engagements outside the UK that take place between those engagements in the UK
- the worker will be sponsored by more than one sponsor for those engagements
- each sponsor has issued a Certificate of Sponsorship to the Creative Worker for the relevant engagement, or engagements; and
- there is no more than 14 days between each individual engagement in the UK – for the purposes of calculating that 14-day period, time spent by the worker outside the UK (including the dates of their departure from and return to the UK) will not be counted towards this period

See '[Assigning a CoS for multiple or consecutive engagements](#)' for further information.

Creative Worker

This means a person who has, or is applying for, entry clearance or permission on the Creative Worker route; or who you are sponsoring, or intend to sponsor, on this route.

Creative Worker route

This means the route in [Appendix Temporary Work - Creative Worker](#) to the Immigration Rules.

Where the context requires, it can also refer to its predecessor routes:

- the creative provisions of Appendix T5 (Temporary Worker) Creative or Sporting Worker in place between 1 December 2020 and 10 October 2021 inclusive; or,
- the creative provisions of the Creative and Sporting sub-category of the Tier 5 (Temporary Worker) route under Part 6A of the Immigration Rules in force before 1 December 2020

See the [Immigration Rules Archive](#) on GOV.UK for previous versions of the Rules.

Multiple engagements

This is where all of the following apply:

- a Creative Worker is being sponsored for more than one engagement in the UK, including where the worker has engagements outside the UK that take place between those engagements in the UK
- the worker will be sponsored by the same sponsor for those engagements; and
- there is no more than 14 days between each individual engagement in the UK – for the purposes of calculating that 14-day period, time spent by the worker outside the UK (including the dates of their departure from and return to the UK) will not be counted towards this period

See '[Assigning a CoS for multiple or consecutive engagements](#)' for further information.

Non-visa national

This means a person who does not need a visa to visit the UK. People who need a visa ('visa nationals') are defined in [Appendix Visitor: Visa national list](#).

Contacts

If you think this guidance has factual errors or broken links, you can email the [Business Helpdesk](#).

If you have read this guidance, and the guidance referred to above, and you still have any queries, you can call us on 0300 123 4699 or email the [Business Helpdesk](#).

Version number and publication

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

- version 10/23
- published on 18 October 2023

You can view [previous versions of this guidance](#) on the National Archives website.

Changes to this guidance

This version replaces version 04/23 (published on 12 April 2023). The guidance has been updated to reflect the requirement for certain nationalities using the Creative Worker visa concession to obtain an Electronic Travel Authorisation in advance of travel. This applies to nationals of Qatar travelling to the UK from 15 November 2023, and to certain other specified nationals travelling to the UK from 22 February 2024. Some other minor corrections and clarifications have also been made.

Details of the changes are set out below. Paragraph numbers in brackets refer to the previous version of this guidance where the paragraph number was different:

- CRW1.6, CRW3.4, CRW5.13, CRW5.14 (ninth bullet point), CRW6.5: amended to reflect that some Creative Workers (e.g. those who are genuinely self-

employed) may not be subject to National Minimum Wage or the Working Time Regulations

- CRW1.22: paragraph updated to reflect the new requirement for some non-visa nationals coming to the UK as a visitor to obtain an Electronic Travel Authorisation in advance of travel
- CRW1.23, CRW2.4, CRW3.18 (CRW3.17), CRW6.7 (CRW6.6): minor drafting amendments
- CRW3.5: new paragraph clarifying what sponsors must do if they believe the sponsored worker is not subject to National Minimum Wage or the Working Time Regulations; subsequent paragraphs in this section renumbered accordingly
- CRW3.15 (CRW3.14): new sentence added to reflect the requirement for some nationals using the Creative Worker visa concession to obtain an Electronic Travel Authorisation in advance of travel
- CRW3.23: an erroneous reference to being able to switch from the Visitor route has been deleted
- CRW6.2, CRW6.4: paragraphs redrafted for clarity and to reflect the new requirement for some nationals using the Creative Worker visa concession to obtain an Electronic Travel Authorisation in advance of travel
- (CRW6.5): content combined with paragraph CRW6.4
- CRW6.5 to CRW6.6: new paragraphs on the requirement for some nationals using the Creative Worker visa concession to obtain an Electronic Travel Authorisation in advance of travel; subsequent paragraphs in this section renumbered accordingly
- throughout: hyperlinks updated or amended and other minor housekeeping changes

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CRW1. Sponsoring a Creative Worker: overview

This section provides an overview of the Creative Worker route, the sponsorship requirements you must meet, and other ways creative workers can come to the UK.

What is the Creative Worker route?

- CRW1.1. The Creative Worker route is a temporary immigration route for people who wish to come to the UK to work or perform as entertainers, creative artists, or fashion models, and their entourage.
- CRW1.2. The job the Creative Worker is coming to do must be one where they will make a unique contribution to the UK's rich cultural life. Areas covered include, but are not limited to, dance, music, film, theatre, television, circuses, opera and fashion modelling.
- CRW1.3. You can also sponsor technical or support staff ('entourage') to accompany eligible Creative Workers on this route, provided their employment is directly related to the work the Creative Worker will be doing in the UK – for example:
- production crew with proven technical or other specialist skills and a previous working relationship with the creative worker
 - a non-technical, non-creative personal assistant who supports a director or producer of international status in film and television and has had a significant prior working relationship with that director or producer (only one personal assistant per director or producer)
- CRW1.4. Creative Workers can be sponsored for:
- a single engagement or period of engagement
 - '[multiple engagements](#)' with the same sponsor
 - '[consecutive engagements](#)' with different sponsors
- CRW1.5. Before you can sponsor a Creative Worker, you will need to comply with the relevant [creative code of practice](#) or, where there is no code of practice for the role, ensure that you will not be displacing a suitable [settled worker](#). The only exception is if the role is in a [shortage occupation](#).
- CRW1.6. Where applicable, you must ensure the role you are sponsoring the worker for is [compliant with the National Minimum Wage and Working Time Regulations](#).
- CRW1.7. Permission to enter the UK can be granted for an initial period of up to 12 months. Creative Workers can extend their stay up to a maximum of 24 months in total, if still working for the same sponsor. It is not a route

to settlement in the UK.

CRW1.8. Creative Workers can bring their family members (dependent partner and dependent children) to the UK if they meet the relevant immigration requirements for dependants.

Who needs to be sponsored on the Creative Worker route?

CRW1.9. You will need to sponsor any overseas national you wish to employ if they are not a settled worker or do not otherwise have immigration permission to work for you in the UK. This includes most [EU, EEA](#) and Swiss nationals who arrived in the UK after 31 December 2020.

CRW1.10. You do not have to sponsor certain categories of worker, including:

- Irish citizens (with very limited exceptions)
- people who have been granted status under the [EU Settlement Scheme](#)
- people with indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK (also known as 'settlement')

CRW1.11. This is not a complete list. For further information on who does, and does not, need sponsorship, see section S1 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#).

What are the sponsorship requirements for the Creative Worker route?

CRW1.12. If you wish to sponsor a Creative Worker, you must:

- hold a valid [sponsor licence](#) for the Creative Worker route
- understand the general requirements for sponsoring a worker – see [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#)
- understand [what the Creative Worker route is](#) and who you can sponsor on this route
- follow the [relevant code of practice](#) before you sponsor the worker, or otherwise show that you have not displaced a suitable settled worker
- satisfy yourself the worker you wish to sponsor can meet the [immigration requirements](#) for this route
- ensure you have the appropriate [safeguarding measures](#) in place if you are sponsoring any workers aged under 18 – this includes applying for a child performance licence for children below school-leaving age
- assign a valid [Certificate of Sponsorship \(CoS\)](#) to the person you wish to sponsor and pay the [relevant CoS fee](#)
- keep records for each worker you sponsor, including information on how you recruited them – see [Appendix D](#) to the sponsor guidance
- have eligible key personnel in place to manage your licence and assign CoS – see section L4 of [Part 1: Apply for a licence](#) for guidance on key personnel

- understand and comply with all of your sponsor duties – see [Part 3: Sponsor duties and compliance](#)

Other ways creative workers can come to the UK

CRW1.13. There are other ways creative workers can come to the UK. You may wish to consider whether these routes better meet your (or the worker's) needs before sponsoring them on the Creative Worker route.

Global Talent

CRW1.14. The Global Talent route is for leaders, or potential leaders, in the fields of academia or research, digital technology, or arts and culture. Fields of arts and culture covered include:

- combined arts, dance, literature, music, theatre or visual arts
- architecture
- fashion design
- film and television, including animation, post-production and visual effects

CRW1.15. To be eligible, the worker must have an endorsement from a Home Office approved endorsing body, or have a prize listed in [Appendix Global Talent: Prestigious Prizes](#).

CRW1.16. Global Talent visa holders do not need to be sponsored and can settle in the UK after 3 years (if they are a leader in their field) or 5 years (if they are a potential leader).

CRW1.17. For further information, see the '[Global Talent – Arts and Culture](#)' page on GOV.UK.

Skilled Worker

CRW1.18. A creative worker can be sponsored on the Skilled Worker route if their sponsor is licensed on that route and the worker meets all of the relevant criteria (including skill level, salary and English language). The Skilled Worker route is a route to settlement and so may be more suitable if the worker intends to settle in the UK or if you wish to sponsor them beyond the [maximum periods that can be granted](#) on the Creative Worker route. For further information, see [Sponsor a Skilled Worker](#).

Global Business Mobility – Service Supplier

CRW1.19. Some workers in the entertainment or fashion modelling sectors may be eligible to be sponsored for up to 6 or 12 months (depending on the agreement) on the Global Business Mobility – Service Supplier route if their work is covered by a relevant international trade agreement. See [Sponsor a Global Business Mobility worker](#) for further information. (The Service Supplier route has replaced the contractual service supplier and independent professional provisions of the Temporary Work –

International Agreement route from 11 April 2022.)

Visitors

- CRW1.20. Artists, entertainers and musicians may be allowed to come to the UK on the [Visitor route](#) without needing to be sponsored, if they meet the relevant requirements. This could be as either a:
- ‘[Standard Visitor](#)’: this allows artists, entertainers and musicians to come to the UK for up to 6 months to undertake ‘permitted activities’ in the creative sector
 - ‘[Permitted Paid Engagement \(PPE\) visitor](#)’: this allows a professional artist, entertainer, or musician aged 18 or over to come to the UK for up to one month to carry out an activity directly relating to their profession, where they have been invited by a creative (arts or entertainment) organisation, agent or broadcaster based in the UK
- CRW1.21. Artists, entertainers and musicians who enter the UK as visitors must not receive payment from a UK source for any activities undertaken in the UK, except as permitted under paragraph V 4.6 of [Appendix V: Visitor](#).
- CRW1.22. Nationals of countries listed in [Appendix Visitor: Visa national list](#) (‘visa nationals’) must apply for entry clearance (a visa) in advance of travel if coming to the UK on the visitor routes. Non-visa nationals do not need to apply for a visa in advance but may need to obtain an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) before they travel. The ETA will be rolled out to non-visa nationals in stages, beginning with nationals of Qatar travelling to the UK on or after 15 November 2023. For further information, see the [Electronic Travel Authorisation guidance](#) on GOV.UK.
- CRW1.23. For detailed information on the requirements for visitors, read the [Visit guidance](#) on GOV.UK.
- CRW1.24. There are different immigration arrangements for creative visitors who enter the UK via Ireland. Further information can be found in the [Common Travel Area guidance](#) on GOV.UK.

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CRW2. How to get a Creative Worker sponsor licence

This section tells you about the requirements you must meet to be eligible for a Creative Worker sponsor licence.

General requirements

- CRW2.1. If you wish to sponsor a creative worker, you must hold a valid sponsor licence for the Creative Worker route. If you do not already hold such a licence, you must apply for one by completing the [online application form](#), paying the relevant [application fee](#), and submitting the supporting evidence specified in [Appendix A](#) to the sponsor guidance.
- CRW2.2. Before applying for your licence, you should read:
- [Part 1: Apply for a licence](#) for detailed information on the general requirements and the application process
 - this section for guidance specific to the Creative Worker route
- CRW2.3. If you already hold a valid licence to sponsor workers, but it does not include the Creative Worker route, you can apply to add this route to your existing licence. For further information on adding routes to your licence, see section L10 of [Part 1: Apply for a licence](#).
- CRW2.4. If your licence is due to expire within the next 90 days, you should apply now to renew it. See section C5 of [Part 3: Sponsor duties and compliance](#) for guidance on renewing your licence. If you need to increase your allocation of Certificates of Sponsorship, you can do so via your sponsorship management system (SMS) account: see [SMS Guide 2: Manage your sponsor licence](#).

Specific criteria for a Creative Worker sponsor licence

- CRW2.5. In addition to the general requirements for a sponsor licence set out in [Part 1: Apply for a licence](#), to be eligible for a Creative Worker sponsor licence, you must be operating, or intend to operate, in the creative sector. Examples include, but are not limited to:
- a national arts body
 - an events organiser
 - a producer
 - a venue
 - an agent
 - a promoter or promotion company
 - a production company
 - a media organisation

Relationship between sponsor and worker

- CRW2.6. We recognise that, in the creative sector, the sponsor may not always be the employer. Even though an employer-employee relationship may not exist, there must be a sponsor who is able and willing to take responsibility for the sponsored worker and meet all of the duties associated with being their sponsor. If you are taking on this role, you will be responsible for the workers you sponsor, even if you are not their direct employer.
- CRW2.7. Below are two examples of how a sponsor who is not the direct employer can meet the requirements.

Example 1

In parts of the arts and entertainments sector, an individual may be employed through an entity known as a Special Purpose Vehicle. In this case, we expect the sponsor to be a producer, co-producer or general management company, even though they do not directly employ the individual.

Example 2

Where a musical group or theatre troupe, and their support entourage, is on tour in the UK, they may be sponsored by, for example, a venue, a promoter, or an agent, but will not usually be direct employees of that sponsor.

- CRW2.8. Where a sponsored worker is not your direct employee, we will look closely at your arrangements and monitor you to make sure that you are fulfilling your sponsor duties.

Sponsoring children on the Creative Worker route

- CRW2.9. There is no minimum age requirement for the Creative Worker route. However, if you are, or will be, sponsoring any workers under the age of 18, we must be satisfied you have the appropriate measures in place to safeguard their welfare. See section L2 of [Part 1: Apply for a licence](#) for further information on this requirement. Applicants aged under 18 must also have [parental consent](#).
- CRW2.10. You have additional responsibilities if you are, or will be, sponsoring a child who is under school-leaving age to take part in:
- films, plays, concerts or other public performances that an audience pays to see, or that take place on licensed premises; or
 - modelling assignments where the child is paid
- CRW2.11. You must ensure that you comply with the relevant legislation below:
- [The Children \(Performance and Activities\) \(England\) Regulations 2014](#)

- [The Children \(Performance and Activities\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2014](#)
- [The Children \(Performance and Activities\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2015 / Rheoliadau Plant \(Perfformiadau a Gweithgareddau\) \(Cymru\) 2015](#)
- [Children \(Public Performances\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 1996](#)

CRW2.12. This legislation requires you to apply for and obtain a child performance licence if you are responsible for:

- producing the performance the child will take part in (this applies to all UK nations); or
- organising, or engaging the child in, a modelling event (applicable to England, Wales and Scotland)

CRW2.13. You should [apply for a child performance licence](#) via the local council at least 21 days before the event.

CRW2.14. If you are not responsible for producing or organising the event, you must take the necessary steps to ensure that a licence has been obtained for that child before the event takes place.

CRW2.15. We will not grant you a licence (or we will revoke your licence, if you already have one) if we are not satisfied you have the necessary measures in place to meet these requirements.

How to keep your licence

CRW2.16. If you are granted a licence, you must comply with all of your sponsor duties. If you do not, we may take action against you, including:

- downgrading your licence
- suspending your licence
- revoking your licence
- reporting you to the police or other relevant authorities

CRW2.17. For details, read [Part 3: Sponsor duties and compliance](#).

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CRW3. Immigration requirements for Creative Workers

This section tells you about the immigration requirements applicants must meet to qualify on the Creative Worker route and where you can find further information.

Overview

CRW3.1. People who wish to come to the UK on the Creative Worker route must meet all the requirements in [Appendix Temporary Work - Creative Worker](#) to the Immigration Rules.

CRW3.2. These requirements include that the applicant:

- has a valid [Certificate of Sponsorship](#) (CoS) from an [approved sponsor](#) for the role they will undertake – if they are undertaking ‘[consecutive engagements](#)’, they will need a separate CoS from each sponsor
- is being sponsored for a role which complies with National Minimum Wage and the Working Time Regulations
- genuinely intends, and is able, to do the role for which they are being sponsored
- does not intend to intend to undertake employment other than in the role for which they are being sponsored, or as otherwise permitted by their conditions of stay – see section S8 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#) for information on conditions of stay
- where relevant, meets the [financial requirement](#)
- if aged under 18, meets the [parental consent requirement](#)
- meet the requirements for [entry to the UK](#), [extensions](#) or ‘[switching](#)’ as appropriate

CRW3.3. This is not the full list of requirements – you must refer to the relevant [Immigration Rules](#) for these.

Compliance with National Minimum Wage and the Working Time Regulations

CRW3.4. Where the person you are sponsoring is [an employee, or is otherwise classified as a ‘worker’ under UK employment law](#), you must ensure the role you are sponsoring them for complies with both the National Minimum Wage Regulations 2015 and the Working Time Regulations 1998. We will refuse any application for entry clearance or permission, and consider revoking your licence, where these regulations apply and we have reasonable grounds to believe the role does not comply with them.

CRW3.5. If you believe these regulations do not apply (for example, because the person you are sponsoring is genuinely self-employed), you should

make this clear when you assign a CoS. Even if these regulations do not apply, you must ensure you treat the worker fairly and comply with any relevant UK employment law that may apply.

CRW3.6. For further information, see ‘Compliance with National Minimum Wage and the Working Time Regulations’ in section S4 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#).

Financial requirement

CRW3.7. If the applicant is applying for entry clearance from outside the UK or has been in the UK for less than one year at the date of application, they must show they have enough funds to support themselves and any family members in the UK.

CRW3.8. If you are an A-rated sponsor, you can certify this requirement is met when you assign a CoS to them (also known as ‘certifying maintenance’). Otherwise, the applicant must provide evidence of funds as specified in [Appendix Finance](#) to the Immigration Rules.

CRW3.9. For further information, see section S7 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#).

Parental consent requirement

CRW3.10. There is no minimum age requirement for this route but if the worker you wish to sponsor is aged under 18 on the date of application, they must have written consent from:

- both of their parents
- one of their parents, if that parent has sole legal responsibility for the applicant; or
- their legal guardian

CRW3.11. The written consent must confirm support for:

- the application for entry clearance or permission to enter or stay
- the applicant’s living and care arrangements in the UK; and
- if the application is for entry clearance, the applicant’s travel to, and reception arrangements in, the UK

CRW3.12. As the sponsor, you must have regard to your duty to safeguarding children if you are sponsoring any workers aged under 18 – see section L2 of [Part 1: Apply for a licence](#) for further information.

CRW3.13. There are [additional sponsorship duties you must meet](#) if you are sponsoring a child below school-leaving age to take part in films, plays, concerts or other paid public performances, or paid modelling assignments.

Entry requirement

- CRW3.14. Applicants must normally apply for entry clearance (a visa) to be able to come to the UK on this route. If they arrive in the UK without the relevant visa, they will be refused entry, even if they otherwise meet the requirements.
- CRW3.15. The only exception to this is if the worker is a [non-visa national](#) and they are eligible to enter the UK for up to 3 months without a visa under the Creative Worker visa concession. Some people who are eligible to enter under this concession may need to apply for an Electronic Travel Authorisation before they travel to the UK. See [section CRW6](#) for further details.

Extension of permission

- CRW3.16. Those already in the UK with entry clearance or permission to stay as a Creative Worker can apply to extend their stay, up to the [maximum permitted period](#), if they continue to meet the requirements.
- CRW3.17. Those who entered under the [Creative Worker visa concession](#) cannot extend their stay in the UK on this route.

‘Switching’ to the Creative Worker route

- CRW3.18. People in the UK on another immigration route are not permitted to switch (change immigration category) to the Creative Worker route. We will normally reject an application where the person was last granted permission on a route other than Creative Worker.
- CRW3.19. If you wish to sponsor a person on the Creative Worker route but they are in the UK on another route, they must normally leave the UK and either:
- apply for entry clearance as a Creative Worker from overseas; or
 - if eligible, apply for permission to enter under the [Creative Worker visa concession](#)

How long Creative Workers can stay

- CRW3.20. If the applicant makes a successful application for entry clearance on the Creative Worker route, they will be granted entry clearance for whichever is the shorter of:
- a period starting up to 14 days before the first engagement and ending 14 days after the final engagement, if the applicant has [consecutive engagements](#)
 - the period of the role on the CoS plus 14 days before and after, if the applicant does not have consecutive engagements; or
 - 12 months

CRW3.21. If the applicant is a [non-visa national](#) who is eligible to apply for permission to enter at the border, they can be granted permission to enter for a maximum of 3 months – see [Creative Worker visa concession](#) for further information.

CRW3.22. If the applicant makes a successful application for permission to stay on the Creative Worker route, and they are continuing to work for the same sponsor, they will be granted permission for whichever is the shorter of:

- a period ending 14 days after the final engagement, if the applicant has [consecutive engagements](#)
- the period of the role on the CoS plus 14 days, if the applicant does not have consecutive engagements
- 12 months; or
- the difference between the period the applicant has already spent in the UK as a Creative Worker and 24 months

CRW3.23. If the applicant makes a successful application for permission to stay on the Creative Worker route, and they are applying to work for a different sponsor to the one which led to their previous grant of permission, they will be granted permission for whichever is the shorter of:

- a period ending 14 days after the final engagement, if the applicant has [consecutive engagements](#)
- the period of the role on the CoS plus 14 days, if the applicant does not have consecutive engagements; or
- the difference between the period the applicant has already spent in the UK as a Creative Worker and 12 months

CRW3.24. If you wish to sponsor a Creative Worker to remain in the UK for longer than these periods, then either:

- the worker will need to leave the UK and apply for a new visa on the Creative Worker route before returning (or apply to enter under the [Creative Worker visa concession](#), if eligible); or
- if you also hold a Skilled Worker sponsor licence, you may be able to sponsor the worker on the Skilled Worker route if they meet all of the relevant requirements (including skill level, salary and English language) – for further information, see [Sponsor a Skilled Worker](#)

CRW3.25. Alternatively, you or the worker may wish to check if they qualify to remain in the UK on the [Global Talent route](#), or if they can re-enter under either the [International Agreement](#) or [Visitor](#) routes.

Further information

CRW3.26. You can find more information about the Creative Worker route on the [Creative Worker visa](#) page on GOV.UK .

CRW3.27. You should also refer to sections S7 to S9 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#)

for further information on immigration requirements, conditions of stay, extension applications and change of employment applications.

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CRW4. Creative Worker codes of practice

This section tells you how to ensure you have complied with the relevant creative code of practice or are not otherwise displacing a suitable settled worker.

Overview

- CRW4.1. Before you assign a [Certificate of Sponsorship \(CoS\)](#) to a Creative Worker, you must ensure that:
- you have complied with the relevant code of practice in [Appendix Creative Worker Codes of Practice](#), where one exists for the worker's occupation
 - the role appears in [Appendix Shortage Occupation List](#); or
 - you have otherwise taken into account the needs of the resident labour market in that field and are satisfied the work could not be carried out by a settled worker – for a definition of “settled worker”, see section S1 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#)

Where there is a code of practice

- CRW4.2. The codes of practice in [Appendix Creative Worker Codes of Practice](#) cover the following 7 areas:
- ballet dancers
 - dancers other than ballet dancers
 - performers in film and television
 - performers in opera
 - performers in theatre
 - workers in film and television
 - fashion models
- CRW4.3. You must follow the relevant code of practice if you wish to sponsor a Creative Worker or their entourage in any of these areas, unless the job is in a shortage occupation.

Shortage occupations in the creative sector

- CRW4.4. You do not need to follow a code of practice, or otherwise take into account the needs of the resident labour market, if you are sponsoring a Creative Worker in an occupation code or job role specified in [Appendix Shortage Occupation List](#) to the Immigration Rules.
- CRW4.5. This list is subject to change and you should always check Appendix Shortage Occupation List before concluding that the role is in a shortage occupation.

Where there is no code of practice

CRW4.6. If there is no code of practice, and the job is not a shortage occupation, you must show that the sponsored worker will not be displacing a [settled worker](#). This could be through having advertised the post to let settled workers apply, or by virtue of the worker being who they are – for example, a musician with international status, or a member of a unit company (see [Appendix Creative Worker Codes of Practice](#) for a definition of ‘unit company’). Alternatively, you can apply the principles set out in Appendix Creative Worker Codes of Practice to sectors for which there is no code of practice.

Proving you have met the requirements in this section

CRW4.7. You must explain on the CoS how you have met the requirements in this section. You can include this information either in the relevant free text box or by returning to the CoS after you have assigned it to add a ‘sponsor note’.

CRW4.8. You must also retain any documentary evidence as set out in [Appendix D](#) to the sponsor guidance. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- evidence of recruitment activity, such as advertisements placed in appropriate media
- written support from a suitable industry body, or sector labour-market information showing that the role couldn’t be filled by a settled worker
- evidence the worker has international status in their field – this is different to being well known only in one country
- evidence the worker is part of a unit company which exists in another country outside the UK and has performed at least once in that country – examples of unit companies include: theatre, opera or dance companies; orchestras and other musical groups; circus troupes or acts, such as a troupe of acrobats
- evidence the worker has a certain attribute or appearance that is unlikely to be available in the UK – for example, a certain physical appearance or talent, or a linguistic or vocal skill
- evidence the worker is needed for continuity – this means the individual has worked for a period of one month or more during the past year on the same production outside the UK before the production came to the UK; the ‘same production’ is one that is largely the same in terms of direction and design as the production outside the UK

CRW4.9. If there is no code of practice, you must explain how the worker will not be displacing a settled worker. This could include, but is not limited to:

- a statement that the individual has international status
- evidence of any advertisements you have placed
- confirmation that the worker is a member of a unit company or needed for continuity

- confirmation that the job is in a shortage occupation

CRW4.10. If you are assigning a [group CoS for a unit company](#), you only need tick the box confirming that the group is established and has performed outside the UK.

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CRW5. Certificate of Sponsorship for Creative Workers

This section provides information on how to assign a valid Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) to a Creative Worker.

Overview

- CRW5.1. If you have followed all the rules in this guidance and you wish to sponsor a person on the Creative Worker route, you must assign them a valid Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS), using your [sponsorship management system \(SMS\)](#) account.
- CRW5.2. Before assigning a CoS, you should satisfy yourself that the worker can meet the relevant [immigration requirements](#).
- CRW5.3. You cannot assign a CoS if you are a B-rated sponsor, unless you sponsored the application which led to the worker's last grant of permission and you are continuing to sponsor them. In all other cases, you must have an A-rating. For information on sponsor ratings, see section L8 of [Part 1: Apply for a licence](#).
- CRW5.4. For detailed information on what a CoS is, and how many you can assign, see section S2 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#).
- CRW5.5. You can find detailed technical guidance on how to assign a CoS in [User manuals: sponsorship management system \(SMS\)](#) – see in particular manuals 8 and 11.

Fees

- CRW5.6. You must pay a fee for each CoS you assign – see the [UK visa fees](#) page on GOV.UK for information on current fee levels.

Use of the CoS

- CRW5.7. Once you have assigned a CoS, the worker must use it within 3 months to apply for:
- entry clearance (a visa) if they are outside the UK
 - permission to enter if they are a non-visa national applying at the UK border under the [Creative Worker visa concession](#)
 - permission to stay if they are in the UK and are eligible to extend their stay on, or switch to, the Creative Worker route
- CRW5.8. If the CoS was issued more than 3 months before the date of application, we may reject their application and not consider it.

CRW5.9. The worker must not apply for a visa or permission more than 3 months before the start date recorded on their CoS. If they do, we will refuse their application.

CRW5.10. We will also refuse the application if the CoS:

- has been withdrawn by you or cancelled by the Home Office – see section S6 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#) for information on when a CoS can be withdrawn or cancelled
- was used in a previous application that was refused

What the CoS must confirm

CRW5.11. For a CoS to be valid, it must meet the requirements of paragraphs CRV 4.1 to CRV 4.7 in [Appendix Temporary Work - Creative Worker](#).

CRW5.12. By assigning a CoS to a Creative Worker, you confirm that, to the best of your knowledge, they:

- are seeking entry to the UK to work or perform in the creative sector
- are not intending to establish a business in the UK
- pose no threat to the resident labour market
- genuinely intend and are able to do the role for which they are being sponsored
- will comply with the conditions of their entry clearance or permission – see section S8 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#) for guidance on this
- will leave the UK when their permission expires, unless they qualify for an extension of stay or permission to stay on another route

CRW5.13. You also guarantee that:

- the role the worker is being sponsored for will comply with the National Minimum Wage Regulations and the Working Time Regulations, where these regulations apply – see section S4 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#) for details of this requirement
- you have appropriate [safeguarding measures](#) in place if you are sponsoring children under the age of 18
- you will meet your [additional sponsorship duties](#) if you are sponsoring a child below school-leaving age

CRW5.14. The CoS must confirm all of the following:

- that you are sponsoring the worker on the Creative Worker route
- the worker's personal information (such as name, date of birth, nationality), passport details and contact details
- the start and end date of their employment – note that the maximum period a CoS can be assigned for on this route is 12 months (see section S3 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#) for further information on start and end dates)

- where the worker will carry out their employment – this should include their main work address and any other regular work addresses, if relevant
- whether you used an agent (such as a recruitment agency, employment business or other intermediary) to find the worker and, if so, details of that agent
- the job title
- the occupation code for the role (choose from the drop-down list under ‘Job type’) – see section S3 of [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#) for more information on occupation codes; common occupation codes used on the Creative Worker route include (but are not limited to):
 - 3411: Artists
 - 3412: Authors, writers and translators
 - 3413: Actors, entertainers and presenters
 - 3414: Dancers and choreographers
 - 3415: Musicians
 - 3416: Arts officers, producers and directors
 - 3417: Photographers, audio-visual and broadcasting equipment operators
- details of the role for which the worker is being sponsored
- how much the worker will be paid, including any allowances and guaranteed bonuses – this must comply with UK [National Minimum Wage](#) requirements:
 - if the worker will not be paid National Minimum Wage because they are exempt from this requirement (for example, if they are genuinely self-employed), you must provide an explanation of this in the “allowances” free-text box, or by adding a sponsor note after you have assigned a CoS
- that you have complied with the [relevant creative code of practice](#), the role is in a shortage occupation, or you have otherwise taken into account the needs of the resident labour market
- whether you wish to [certify maintenance](#) for the worker (and, if relevant, their dependants) – you can only do this if you’re an A-rated sponsor

Assigning a CoS for multiple or consecutive engagements

CRW5.15. Due to the nature of the creative sector, Creative Workers are sometimes needed to do a number of engagements at different venues. If you will be the worker’s only sponsor in the UK and there are no more than a maximum of 14 days between each engagement (excluding [time spent outside the UK](#)), you can assign a single CoS to cover the whole period. This is known as assigning a CoS for [‘multiple engagements’](#).

CRW5.16. If the worker will have more than one sponsor while in the UK – for example, a number of venues, producers or promoters – then each one of those sponsors must assign a CoS to cover its own engagement. Where this is the case, none of the CoS can overlap and there must not be a gap of more than 14 days (excluding [time spent outside the UK](#)) between each CoS assigned. This is known as having [‘consecutive](#)

[engagements](#)'.

Calculation of the 14-day period between engagements

CRW5.17. When calculating the 14-day period between engagements, any time spent by the worker outside the UK (including the dates of their departure from and return to the UK) will not count towards the 14 days. For example, if the worker has an engagement in the UK on 1 June, they leave the UK on 8 June and return on 15 June, the period from 8 to 15 June inclusive will not count towards the 14-day period. In this scenario, the worker's next engagement must take place no later than 24 June (assuming they spend no further time outside the UK during this period).

CRW5.18. If, in the above scenario, the worker had not spent any time outside the UK, their next engagement must take place no later than 15 June (14 days after the first engagement).

Assigning a CoS for rehearsal periods

CRW5.19. Any CoS you assign to Creative Workers can include rehearsal periods in the UK. You must make sure you assign a CoS only for the period necessary, covering only the period of engagements the worker has in the UK as described in the paragraphs above. If we find that you have exaggerated the period of engagement on the CoS to falsely extend a sponsored worker's stay in the UK, we will take action against you – this could include revoking your licence.

Group CoS for a unit company

CRW5.20. You can assign a group CoS to all members of a group (including their entourage) where appropriate – for example, to:

- all members of a unit company, such as a ballet company or dance group, circus troupe, orchestra or group of musicians, or theatre group who wish to come to the UK to perform as a group
- people whose work is directly related to the employment of an entertainer, cultural artist, or a dramatic production – any sponsored worker who is part of an entourage must have proven technical or other specialist skills

CRW5.21. You must assign a CoS to each member of the group confirming they are a member of the named group and fill in all relevant details. However, you only have to pay one CoS fee to cover the entire group.

CRW5.22. Each group member's CoS must show their share of any group fee. If you are not their direct employer, you must find out what share of the group fee each individual will be paid. The exception to this is where there is no code of practice in [Appendix Creative Worker Codes of Practice](#). In these cases, you may enter a nominal rate of £0.01.

CRW5.23. For further guidance on assigning a group CoS, see [SMS Manual 11](#).

Reporting duties and record keeping

- CRW5.24. Once you have assigned a CoS to a worker, you must tell us if they fail to start their employment, are absent without permission, or there are any significant changes to the nature of their work or salary, or to your organisation. For full details of your reporting and other duties, see: [Part 3: Sponsor duties and compliance](#).
- CRW5.25. You must also keep records for each worker you sponsor as specified in [Appendix D](#) to the sponsor guidance.
- CRW5.26. If you fail to meet these duties, we may revoke your sponsor licence.

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CRW6. Creative Worker visa concession

This section tells you about the circumstances in which a Creative Worker can enter the UK without getting entry clearance (a visa) before they travel to the UK.

Overview

- CRW6.1. If a worker you wish to sponsor is outside the UK, they must normally make a successful application for entry clearance (a visa) before they travel to the UK. If they do not, they will be refused entry, even if they otherwise meet the requirements of the Immigration Rules.
- CRW6.2. There is, however, an exception for some people on the Creative Worker route (referred to as the 'Creative Worker visa concession' in this guidance). This concession applies where the worker:
- is a non-visa national – that is, they are not from a country or territory whose nationals normally need a visa to visit the UK
 - is seeking entry to the UK as a Creative Worker for a maximum of 3 months – if they wish to come to the UK for longer than this, they must get a visa
 - has a valid Certificate of Sponsorship (or Certificates of Sponsorship if coming for consecutive engagements)
 - where required, has an Electronic Travel Authorisation (see below for further information)
 - otherwise meets the requirements of the Creative Worker route
- CRW6.3. [Appendix Visitor: Visa national list](#) specifies the countries and territories whose nationals always require visas to come to the UK (known as 'visa nationals'). Visa nationals are not eligible to use this concession.
- CRW6.4. Non-visa nationals who qualify under this concession can travel to the UK without a visa and ask for 'permission to enter' (also known as 'leave to enter') when they arrive at the UK border. However, if you are sponsoring a worker who could benefit from this concession, you must make them aware that:
- if they are a national of a specified country travelling on or after a specified date, they must apply for (and be granted) an Electronic Travel Authorisation before they travel to the UK (see below for further information)
 - if they will be entering the UK directly from Ireland, they must ask for permission to enter in advance using the '[remote clearance process](#)' (or else apply for a visa in advance of travel)
 - when they arrive at the UK border (or when applying for remote clearance from Ireland), they must satisfy the Border Force officer

(immigration officer) they qualify for entry under this concession – see [Process at the border](#) below

- they must not use [automated ePassport Gates \('e-Gates'\)](#), even if they are of an eligible nationality
- their permission will lapse (end) as soon as they [leave the Common Travel Area](#)

Electronic Travel Authorisation

CRW6.5. Non-visa nationals seeking to enter the UK under the Creative Worker visa concession will soon need to obtain an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) before travelling to the UK. The ETA scheme is being rolled out in phases, as follows:

- nationals of Qatar will need an ETA if travelling to the UK on or after 15 November 2023
- nationals of Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia will need an ETA if travelling to the UK on or after 22 February 2024
- the scheme will be extended to other non-visa nationals throughout 2024

CRW6.6. ETA applications will open for nationals of Qatar on 25 October 2023 (if travelling to the UK on or after 15 November 2023), and for nationals of the other countries listed above on 1 February 2024 (if travelling to the UK on or after 22 February 2024). For further information on the requirements, and how to apply, see the [Electronic Travel Authorisation guidance](#) on GOV.UK. The relevant Immigration Rules are set out in [Statement of Changes HC 1160](#) (APP ETA1).

Process at the border

CRW6.7. When the worker arrives at the UK border, they must give their [Certificate of Sponsorship \(CoS\)](#) number (or numbers, if they are undertaking [consecutive engagements](#)) to the Border Force officer. If you have not [certified the worker's maintenance](#) on their CoS, the worker must also provide evidence they have at least £1,270 in personal savings (plus additional funds for any dependants who are travelling with them), which they must have held for at least a consecutive 28-day period ending no more than 31 days before the date of arrival. The evidence must meet the requirements of [Appendix Finance](#) to the Immigration Rules. For further information on the financial requirement, see section S7 in [Part 2: Sponsor a worker](#).

CRW6.8. We recommend that when you assign a CoS under this concession, you make sure the worker understands what will happen at the border and that it may take them a little longer to be admitted to the UK due to the checks the Border Force officer must make. We also recommend that the worker has your contact details and those of any representative (if applicable) in case the worker or the Border Force officer needs to

contact you (or the representative).

CRW6.9. You should also be aware that, on entry to the UK, non-visa nationals using this concession will be subject to the grounds for refusal set out in [Part 9 of the Immigration Rules](#). This means that even if they might otherwise qualify for entry, they could be refused entry for other reasons, such as their previous immigration history or criminal convictions.

CRW6.10. If you or the worker are concerned that their entry may be prevented or delayed, non-visa nationals who could benefit under this concession may choose to apply for a visa before they travel instead.

How long permission to enter will be granted for

CRW6.11. If the worker qualifies for entry under this concession, they will be given permission to enter for whichever is the shorter of:

- a period starting up to 14 days before the first engagement and ending 14 days after the final engagement, if the worker has [consecutive engagements](#)
- the period of the role on the CoS plus up to 14 days before and 14 days after, if the worker does not have consecutive engagements; or
- 3 months

CRW6.12. Three months is the maximum period permitted under this concession. A worker admitted to the UK under this concession cannot extend their stay on the Creative Worker route while they are in the UK. If, after the worker enters the UK, you decide you wish to sponsor them for a longer period on the Creative Worker route, or the worker wishes to stay in the UK for longer than 3 months on this route, you must assign them a new CoS and the worker must leave the UK and apply for entry clearance.

Use of ePassport gates

CRW6.13. If you are sponsoring a worker under this concession from one of the countries listed below, you must take care to advise them that they must not use an automated ePassport gate ('e-Gate') to enter the UK:

- Australia
- Canada
- [EU countries](#)
- Iceland
- Japan
- Liechtenstein
- New Zealand
- Norway
- Singapore
- South Korea
- Switzerland
- United States of America

- CRW6.14. This is very important. Nationals of the countries listed above can normally use an e-Gate if they have a biometric passport and are coming to the UK as a Visitor (other than a Permitted Paid Engagement Visitor), or already hold a valid visa or biometric residence permit. If, however, a national of one of these countries wishes to enter the UK under this concession, they must always see a Border Force officer on arrival and have their passport stamped. If they use an e-Gate, they will not have their passport stamped and will not have permission to work in the UK. There are different arrangements if the person will be [entering the UK via Ireland](#).
- CRW6.15. You are responsible for checking the worker has been granted the correct permission to enter the UK by a Border Force officer. There should be an ink stamp in their passport clearly showing they have been granted permission to enter and are allowed to work. You must make and retain a copy of this stamp – see [Appendix D](#) of the sponsor guidance for further information on this.
- CRW6.16. If the worker uses the e-Gates in error, or their passport has not otherwise been stamped with the correct permission, you must not allow them to do any work in the UK. You must advise them to leave the [Common Travel Area](#) and to make sure they see a Border Force officer when they return to the UK.

Entry through Ireland

- CRW6.17. If a non-visa national who would otherwise qualify under this concession will be entering the UK via Ireland, they must either:
- apply to be granted permission to enter before they arrive in the UK, using the [‘remote clearance process’](#); or
 - obtain a UK visa in advance of travelling to the UK
- CRW6.18. This is because people travelling from Ireland to the UK will not encounter a Border Force officer to endorse the correct form of permission to allow them to work under this concession. Further information on travelling within the Common Travel Area can be found in the [Common Travel Area guidance](#) on GOV.UK.

Remote clearance process

- CRW6.19. The remote clearance process allows non-visa nationals who are eligible to use this concession, and will be travelling to the UK from Ireland, to apply for permission to enter (rather than a visa) before they arrive in the UK.
- CRW6.20. To use the remote clearance process, the worker must:

- meet the [general eligibility criteria](#) to enter the UK under the Creative Worker visa concession
- enter Ireland from a place outside the [Common Travel Area \(CTA\)](#)
- travel from Ireland directly to the UK
- apply for permission to enter at least 72 hours before they arrive in the UK; and
- not be subject to [‘right to work’ checks](#)

CRW6.21. The worker must enter Ireland from a place outside the CTA before proceeding directly to the UK. The worker cannot use the remote clearance process if they arrive in Ireland from another place within the CTA.

CRW6.22. At least 72 hours before they arrive in the UK, the worker must complete the [Creative Worker visa concession: immigration clearance form](#) on GOV.UK. Alternatively, you (their sponsor) can complete it on the worker’s behalf. If the application is successful, the clearance form will be endorsed with permission to enter and this will be returned to you or the worker electronically. The worker’s passport will not be stamped.

CRW6.23. The worker must have been notified of a grant of permission to enter before they arrive in the UK. If they arrive in the UK before they have been granted permission to enter, they will not have permission to work in the UK and must leave the CTA. They will then need to seek readmission to the UK, making sure that they either:

- see a Border Force officer on arrival (if re-entering the UK from outside the CTA); or
- apply for remote clearance at least 72 hours before arriving in the UK (if they will re-enter Ireland from outside the CTA before returning to the UK)

Right to work checks

CRW6.24. The remote clearance process is not available if the worker will commence a contract of employment which, because of the nature of that employment, would require you to undertake right-to-work checks. This is because permission to enter granted remotely would not provide you with a ‘statutory excuse’ under legislation to prevent illegal working. In such cases, the worker must [obtain a UK visa](#) before entering the UK. For further information, see [Right to work checks: an employer's guide](#).

CRW6.25. Where the worker is self-employed, they are not subject to right-to-work checks, but you must make and retain a copy of their remote clearance form (which will contain their permission to enter stamp). This is to comply with your record-keeping duties under [Appendix D](#) to the sponsor guidance.

Leaving the Common Travel Area

- CRW6.26. The Common Travel Area (CTA) consists of the UK, Ireland, the Channel Islands (the Bailiwick of Guernsey and the Bailiwick of Jersey) and the Isle of Man.
- CRW6.27. Permission to enter granted under this concession automatically lapses (ends) if the worker travels outside the CTA. This is the case even if the expiry date on their permission to enter stamp has not yet been reached.
- CRW6.28. If a worker's permission lapses as a result of travelling outside the CTA, and they need to come back to the UK to fulfil the engagements stated on their original CoS, they will need to ask the Border Force officer for a new grant of permission to enter when they return. They will need to give the Border Force officer their original CoS number again (or, if they are undertaking [consecutive engagements](#), the reference number of any valid CoS they still have) and prove that they meet the [financial requirement](#). The Border Force officer will carry out checks to make sure you have not withdrawn your sponsorship since the worker's original entry, or that the worker's circumstances have not otherwise changed. We may speak to you to confirm the details on the CoS.
- CRW6.29. If the worker meets all of the criteria, and their original CoS has not expired (or they still have one or more valid CoS if they are undertaking [consecutive engagements](#)), we will grant them permission to enter to allow them to finish their engagements. They will not be granted permission beyond the expiry date of their original grant of permission to enter, as explained in the example below:

Example

A non-visa national arrives at the UK border on 15 July and is given permission to enter under the Creative Worker visa concession until 15 October (of the same year).

The worker leaves the CTA on 1 September for an engagement in another country. At this point, their permission to enter lapses.

The worker returns to the UK on 8 September to complete their engagements in the UK. They must speak to a Border Force officer on arrival.

Provided they still have a valid CoS and they meet all of the requirements of this concession, they will be given a new grant of permission to enter until 15 October (the same expiry date as their original grant of permission) so that they can complete their engagements.

- CRW6.30. The worker will not be allowed to re-enter the UK under this concession if they no longer have a valid CoS, or their CoS has (or have) been withdrawn or cancelled.

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