



FARANI TAYLOR
SOLICITORS

Moving to the UK

Immigration Routes for Investors, Entrepreneurs & Professionals

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Can I Live and Work in the UK?

Yes. The UK has several visa routes that allow people from other countries to live, work, and eventually settle permanently in the United Kingdom. You do not need to be an EU citizen. You do not need family connections in the UK. What you need is the right visa, and there are clear rules about how to get one.

This guide explains three routes that are most relevant for investors, business owners, and skilled professionals. We handle the full application process for each of these, from the initial assessment through to receiving your visa.

✔ What Does "Settlement" Mean?

In UK immigration law, "settlement" means **Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)**. It gives you the right to live and work in the UK permanently, with no time limit. After holding ILR for 12 months, you can apply for British citizenship if you wish. Settlement is the final goal for most people using these routes.

Route 1: Innovator Founder Visa

BUSINESS OWNERS & ENTREPRENEURS



What Is It?

This visa is for people who want to start or run a business in the UK - a property management company, a trading business, a tech startup, or any other type of business. The key requirement is that your business idea must be **genuinely new or different** from what already exists in the UK market.

What Is "Endorsement"?

This is the most important part. Before you can apply for the visa, you must be **endorsed** by an approved organisation - a stamp of approval for your business plan. The endorsing body will assess your idea thoroughly:



Interview

Usually by video call to understand your business idea in depth



Business Plan Review

Checked for realism and commercial viability



Innovation Check

Assessed as genuinely new or different in the UK market



Growth Potential

Evaluated for ability to grow and create jobs in the UK

A list of approved endorsing bodies is published on GOV.UK. We help you choose the right one for your sector, prepare your business plan, and get you ready for the interview.

Innovator Founder: Key Requirements & Timeline

English Language

You must pass an English test at **B2 level** (upper-intermediate). Common tests include IELTS - you need at least 5.5 in each section. This is roughly equivalent to being able to hold a detailed conversation and write clearly in English.

Maintenance Funds

You need at least **£1,270** in your bank account for **28 consecutive days** before you apply. This proves you can support yourself when you first arrive.

Visa Length

3 years - one of the fastest paths to permanent settlement in the UK

Settlement (ILR)

After **3 years**, if your endorsing body confirms your business has grown well, you can apply for permanent settlement

 **Who Is This Best For?** Experienced business people with a concrete idea. If you want to set up a property development firm, an import/export company, a consultancy, or any other business in the UK - and you can demonstrate it brings something new - this is your route.

Route 2: Global Talent Visa

RECOGNISED LEADERS & RISING STARS

This visa is for people who are recognised as **leaders or rising stars** in specific professional fields. It is the most flexible visa the UK offers: you don't need a job offer, there is no minimum salary, and you are free to work for anyone, start a business, or be self-employed.



Academia & Research

University professors, published researchers, scientists with a strong track record of peer-reviewed publications



Arts & Culture

Recognised artists, filmmakers, musicians, writers, designers, architects with international recognition



Digital Technology

Tech founders, CTOs, lead engineers, data scientists, people who have built products or raised investment



Sciences & Engineering

Established professionals with significant contributions to their discipline

Global Talent: Endorsement Levels & Evidence

Two Levels of Endorsement

What About English Language?

Surprisingly, there is **no English language test** required for the initial Global Talent visa application. However, you will need to pass an English test later if you apply for permanent settlement.

Evidence That Counts

- Awards and prizes in your field
- Published work, research, or media coverage
- Recommendation letters from established figures
- Products you have built or contributed to
- Revenue generated or investment raised

Exceptional Talent

You are **already a recognised leader** in your field. You can apply for permanent settlement after **3 years**.

Exceptional Promise

You are at an **earlier stage** but show strong potential. You can apply for permanent settlement after **5 years**.

i Who Is This Best For? People who have already achieved recognition in their field. If you are a tech entrepreneur who has built a successful product, an academic with published research, or an artist with international exhibitions, Global Talent is probably your strongest option. The freedom to work in any capacity, with no salary restrictions, makes it uniquely attractive.

Route 3: Self-Sponsorship

INVESTOR-OPERATORS & PROPERTY INVESTORS

What Is It?

Self-sponsorship is not an official visa category - it is a **practical strategy** that uses the Skilled Worker visa rules. The idea is simple: you set up your own UK company, that company gets permission to hire workers from overseas (a "**sponsor licence**"), and then the company hires you.

You are both the business owner and the employee. You control the company, and the company sponsors your visa.

Why Would I Do This?

This route is especially useful for **property investors**. If you are buying UK property and want to set up a property management company, a lettings agency, or a development firm, self-sponsorship allows you to:

- Live and work in the UK legally
- Run your own business on a day-to-day basis
- Manage your property portfolio directly
- Build towards permanent settlement after 5 years

Self-Sponsorship: How It Works



Each step is straightforward with the right legal support. We manage the company registration, sponsor licence application, and visa submission on your behalf.

Self Sponsorship

Key Requirements

Salary

You must pay yourself at least **£41,700/year**. In some cases, the threshold can be lower if the job is on the Immigration Salary List.

Job Level

The role must be at **RQF Level 3 or above** - a skilled job requiring qualifications or significant experience, not manual or entry-level work.

English

B2 level (intermediate) - a lower requirement than the Innovator Founder route.

Genuine Business

The Home Office scrutinises self-sponsorship closely. Your company must be **real, trading, and genuinely active**. A company that exists only on paper will be refused.

 **How Long Until I Can Settle?** 5 years. After 5 continuous years on a Skilled Worker visa, you can apply for permanent settlement (ILR), provided you are still employed, still meeting the salary threshold, and have not been out of the UK for more than 180 days in any 12-month period.

Which Route Is Right for Me?

Here is a quick comparison to help you decide which immigration route best fits your situation:

	Innovator Founder	Global Talent	Self-Sponsorship
Need a job offer?	No	No	Yes (your own company)
Need endorsement?	Yes	Yes	No (sponsor licence)
Minimum investment?	None	None	Company setup costs
Minimum salary?	None	None	£41,700/yr
English level?	B2 (upper-intermediate)	None initially	B2 (upper-intermediate)
Visa length?	3 years	Up to 5 years	Up to 5 years
Permanent settlement?	After 3 years	After 3 or 5 years	After 5 years
Can I run a business?	Yes (required)	Yes (optional)	Yes (required)
Best for?	Entrepreneurs	Recognised professionals	Investor-operators

Contact Us : How We Can Help

01

Initial Assessment

We review your background and identify the strongest visa route for your circumstances

03

Submission & Follow-Up

We submit your application and manage all correspondence with the Home Office

02

Application Preparation

We prepare your business plan, gather evidence, and handle all documentation

04

Settlement Support

We guide you through to ILR and, if you wish, British citizenship

Contact Information

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Consultations can be arranged by video call, so you do not need to travel to London to get started.