

GETTING STARTED · APPLICATION GUIDE

# UK immigration advice: how to choose your route

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An orientation guide to the main UK immigration routes, the evidence they require and how to take advice, updated for 2026.

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Regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority, SRA number 558148.

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Please read first. This guide is general information about UK immigration law as at 8 August 2026. It is not legal advice, no outcome is guaranteed, and the Immigration Rules and Home Office fees change frequently. Always check the current position on GOV.UK or take advice.

## How we work

- Enquiry — you contact the firm by telephone, email or the enquiry form, and we confirm whether we are able to help.
- Advice appointment — a solicitor reviews your circumstances and explains the position, the route options and the requirements that apply on those facts.
- Scope and fees agreed in writing — no application work begins before this is confirmed.
- Evidence preparation — we set out what is needed, review what you provide and identify gaps before submission.
- Submission — the application and the written submissions are checked and approved by a solicitor before they are filed.
- After submission — we deal with Home Office correspondence and keep you updated until the matter concludes.

## SECTION 01

## Before you choose a route

Most immigration problems we see begin with the wrong route, the wrong timing, or evidence gathered for a requirement that does not apply. An initial advice appointment establishes where you stand, which routes are realistically open on your facts, and what each would require.

- Your current immigration status and the conditions attached to it
- The date any current leave expires, and whether an in-time application is possible
- Your immigration history, including any refusal, overstay or removal
- Your family circumstances and any dependants
- Your work, study or business plans in the UK
- Any criminal record, NHS debt or previous use of deception

## SECTION 02

## The main routes at a glance

## ROUTE OVERVIEW

| ROUTE                                   | TYPICAL USE                          | KEY REQUIREMENT IN 2026                             |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Partner or spouse (Appendix FM)</b>  | Joining a British or settled partner | £29,000 minimum income requirement                  |
| <b>Skilled Worker</b>                   | Sponsored employment                 | £41,700 general salary threshold, or the going rate |
| <b>Visitor</b>                          | Short visits up to 6 months          | Genuine visitor test; no work or public funds       |
| <b>Student</b>                          | Study at a licensed sponsor          | CAS, funds and English language                     |
| <b>Global Talent, Innovator Founder</b> | Talent and business routes           | Endorsement or approved innovation criteria         |
| <b>Private life and human rights</b>    | Long residence and Article 8 cases   | Route-specific residence and proportionality        |
| <b>Settlement (ILR)</b>                 | Permanent status                     | Qualifying period, absences, KoLL                   |

This table is an orientation aid only. Each route has detailed requirements in the Immigration Rules, and the correct route depends entirely on your own facts and on the Rules in force at the date of application.

## SECTION 03

## What an advice appointment covers

A solicitor reviews your immigration history and current circumstances, explains the routes that are available on those facts, sets out the requirements and evidence for each, and confirms the advice in writing so that you have a record of it.

- Confirmation of your current status and any deadline that applies
- The routes open to you, and the requirements of each
- The evidence each route requires, and the periods it must cover
- The realistic risks and the areas most likely to attract scrutiny
- The fees payable to the Home Office, and our fees for any work you decide to instruct
- Written confirmation of the advice given

Advice does not commit you to instructing us further. If you do decide to proceed, we agree the scope of work and the fees in writing before any application work begins.

## SECTION 04

## How to take advice safely

Immigration advice in the UK is a regulated activity. It may only be given by a solicitor or barrister regulated by an approved regulator, or by an adviser regulated by the Immigration Advice Authority (formerly the OISC). It is a criminal offence for an unregulated person to provide immigration advice or services.

- Check the adviser on the SRA register, or on the Immigration Advice Authority register
- Ask who will do the work and who will supervise it
- Ask for the scope of work and the fees in writing before instructing
- Be cautious of any adviser who guarantees an outcome or a processing time; no one can
- Keep copies of everything submitted on your behalf

No solicitor can guarantee the outcome of an immigration application or appeal. Decisions are made by the Home Office, or by the tribunal, on the evidence submitted and on the Rules in force at the time.

## SECTION 05

## Preparing for your appointment

- Passports, current and previous, and any biometric residence documents
- Your eVisa or UKVI account share code, if you have one
- Any previous application documents, decision letters and refusal notices
- A short chronology of your time in the UK, including absences
- Evidence of your relationship, employment or study, depending on the route
- Any correspondence from the Home Office, including requests for information

Bringing this material to the first appointment usually means the advice can be given in one meeting rather than two.

## WORKING WITH US

## How we can help

Andrew Williams Solicitors is a regulated immigration law practice. Our solicitors advise on and prepare applications in this area, and every submission is checked and approved by a solicitor before it is filed.

- Initial advice appointments on any UK immigration route
- Written advice confirming the position and the options available
- Second opinions on advice received elsewhere
- Review of refusals and of the deadlines that apply to them
- Referral within the firm to the relevant specialist area

### Professional indemnity and scope of service

We use internal working methods to support our solicitors in delivering an efficient, evidence-led service. The following applies without exception:

- We are a regulated law firm providing legal services. We are not a technology or software provider.
- Any internal working methods we use support our solicitors. They are not products, and they are not supplied, licensed or made available to clients.
- Clients receive legal advice from a solicitor. Clients do not receive access to any internal system.
- No internal working method makes, replaces or influences a legal judgment. Every piece of advice and every submission is prepared and approved by a solicitor.
- We do not control Home Office decisions, processing times, eligibility or policy, and we make no representation that we do.
- Nothing in this guide is a guarantee of any outcome, timescale or eligibility.

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**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

# Disclaimer and terms of use

- This guide is general information about UK immigration law and Home Office practice as at 8 August 2026. It is not legal advice and must not be relied on as advice about your own circumstances.
- The Immigration Rules, Home Office fees, published service standards and policy guidance change regularly and often at short notice. Figures and requirements stated here were checked against GOV.UK on the date shown and may have changed since. Always check the current position on GOV.UK, or take advice, before you make an application.
- No solicitor can guarantee the outcome of an immigration application or appeal. Every case is decided by the Home Office, or by the tribunal, on its own facts and on the evidence submitted.
- Andrew Williams Solicitors accepts no liability for any loss arising from reliance on this guide. Downloading or reading this guide does not create a solicitor and client relationship. A relationship begins only once we have issued, and you have accepted, a written engagement letter.
- We strongly recommend that you take advice from a regulated immigration solicitor before making or responding to any immigration application.

## Sources checked

- GOV.UK — Visas and immigration (checked 8 August 2026)
- The Immigration Rules, as amended
- Solicitors Regulation Authority register; Immigration Advice Authority register

Content reviewed: 8 August 2026. Scheduled review: 8 February 2027. Version 2026.1. Reference: AWS-GUIDE-UK-IMMIGRATION-ADVICE.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

# Andrew Nathaniel Williams



Andrew Nathaniel  
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Andrew Nathaniel Williams is the principal solicitor and founder of Andrew Williams Solicitors, an immigration practice based in Leeds. He holds a Bachelor of Laws (LLB Hons) and a Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice, and began working in immigration law in 2001 as a caseworker at the Refugee Legal Centre in Leeds.

Andrew qualified as a solicitor in 2004 and established the practice that trades today as Andrew Williams Solicitors in 2007. He has held supervisory roles in immigration practices in Leeds, Hull and Manchester, and has acted in family, work, settlement, fee waiver and appeal matters at every level from initial application to the Upper Tribunal.

Andrew practises through the firm, which is authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority. The firm holds professional indemnity insurance as required by the SRA Indemnity Insurance Rules.

## FIRM AND REGULATORY DETAILS

| DETAIL               | INFORMATION                                                                                                      |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Practice name</b> | Andrew Williams Solicitors                                                                                       |
| <b>Legal entity</b>  | Leeds Legal Solutions Ltd, also known as Andrew Williams Solicitors                                              |
| <b>Regulator</b>     | Solicitors Regulation Authority                                                                                  |
| <b>SRA number</b>    | 558148                                                                                                           |
| <b>Office</b>        | Unity Business Centre, 26 Roundhay Road, Leeds, LS7 1AB                                                          |
| <b>Telephone</b>     | 0113 244 1911                                                                                                    |
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| <b>Opening hours</b> | Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 4.00pm                                                                               |
| <b>Website</b>       | <a href="http://www.awsolicitors.co.uk/uk-immigration-advice/">www.awsolicitors.co.uk/uk-immigration-advice/</a> |

To arrange an advice appointment, call 0113 244 1911, email [clients@awsolicitors.co.uk](mailto:clients@awsolicitors.co.uk), or use the enquiry form at [www.awsolicitors.co.uk/contact/](http://www.awsolicitors.co.uk/contact/). We confirm the scope of work and our fees in writing before any application work begins.