

# Bringing your Business Event to the UK

Frequently asked questions



© Visit Britain / Hand Luggage Only



# Attending a Business Event in the UK

## ••••• Will EU, EEA or Swiss citizens need visas to travel to the UK?

If you're an EU, EEA and Swiss citizen, you can travel to the UK for short trips without needing a visa. You can cross the UK border using a valid passport which should be valid for the whole time you are in the UK.

Find out more: [click here](#).



## ••••• If a speaker is being paid by a UK company to speak at a conference, do they need to apply for a specific type of visa and if so, which visa?

It is for organisers to use their discretion in identifying whether visas are required depending on the nature of the event that an individual is being paid to speak at.

Published UK Government guidance notes that a visitor to the UK may attend meetings, conferences, seminars, interviews and give a one-off or short series of talks and speeches provided these are not organised as commercial events and will not make a profit for the organiser.

Further information can be found under the 'General Business Activities' heading in the 'Immigration Rules Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities', [click here](#).

Please see the published gov.uk guidance outlining the eligibility requirements for Visitors coming to the UK for Permitted Paid Engagements, [click here](#) and [here](#).

Visas should be applied for before travelling to the UK, if required, as there is no facility for a 'visa on arrival'. However, as above, EU, EEA and Swiss citizens can travel to the UK with a valid passport for short trips without needing a visa.

Find out more: [click here](#).

## ••••• Can European delegates enter the UK to attend a Business Event without applying for a visa, and do they only need to give details of the event they are attending if asked?

Since 1 January 2021, the UK has implemented a new points-based immigration system.

If you're an EU, EEA and Swiss citizen, you can continue to visit the UK without applying for a visa and in most cases, will be able to stay for up to six months. You may participate in a wide range of activities, including business-related activities such as meetings, events and conferences.

Find out more: [click here](#).



## ••••• What are the travel rules for event organisers, i.e. a PCO, Events agency?

As above, if you're an EU, EEA and Swiss citizen, you can continue to visit the UK without applying for a visa and in most cases, will be able to stay for up to six months. You may participate in a wide range of activities, including business-related activities such as meetings, events and conferences.

As stated in the published Immigration Rules Appendix V, visitors cannot work in the UK unless this is expressly allowed under the permitted activities set out in Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities.

Find out more: [click here](#).

## ••••• Can EU/EEA/Swiss citizens still enter the UK with a passport that expires in less than six months?

You must provide a valid passport or travel document. Your passport should be valid for the whole of your stay in the UK.

Find out more: [click here](#).

## ••••• How long will EU, EEA and Swiss citizens be able to stay in the UK without a visa?

If you're an EU, EEA and Swiss citizen, you can continue to visit the UK without applying for a visa and in most cases, will be able to stay for up to six months. You may participate in a wide range of activities, including business-related activities such as meetings, events and conferences.

If you are travelling to the UK to carry out business activities, check if you need a visa before travel, [click here](#).

You can also check the UK visitor rules, which list activities that you can carry out in the UK without a visa, [click here](#).



## ••••• If delegates arrive in Dublin airport for an event in Belfast, will there be any border checks when they go from the Republic of Ireland into Northern Ireland?

The Common Travel Area (CTA) facilitates free movement of people between the United Kingdom, Jersey, Guernsey, Isle of Man and Ireland.

The UK does not operate routine immigration controls on journeys from Ireland, with no controls at the land border between Ireland and Northern Ireland. This means that there are no immigration checks at the Northern Ireland – Ireland land border. However, it is still a requirement for individuals who wish to enter the UK to do so in line with the UK's immigration framework.

Find out more: [click here](#).

## ••••• Are EU, EEA or Swiss ID cards valid?

You are not able to use an EU, EEA or Swiss national ID card to enter the UK, unless you:

- Have settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme
- Have an EU Settlement Scheme family permit
- Have a frontier worker permit
- Are an S2 Healthcare Visitor
- Are a Swiss Service Provider

In these cases, you can continue to use your national ID card to enter the UK until at least 31 December 2025.

In other cases, find out if you need to apply for a visa to enter the UK.

Find out more: [click here](#).

## ••••• Can EU/EEA/Swiss citizens visiting the UK still use eGates?

You can use automatic eGates at some airports if you have a biometric symbol on the cover of your passport and you are 12 or over. Using the eGates is usually faster. Read the guide to faster travel through the UK border.

Find out more: [click here](#).

## When will the ETA system be in place for EU visitors?

The Government will introduce Electronic Travel Authorisations (ETAs) for visitors and passengers transiting through the UK who do not currently need a visa for short stays or who do not already have an immigration status prior to travelling.

The ETA scheme will be fully in place by the end of 2024.

**How to apply?** You'll need to apply on the UK ETA app, or online on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

**How long is the application process?** You'll usually get a decision within 3 working days. You'll get an email confirmation if your application is approved.

**How much will it cost?** ETA cost will be confirmed shortly.

**How long is it valid for?** Your ETA will last for 2 years.

See [here](#) for further FAQs on the Electronic Travel Authorisation scheme.



# Staff involved in a Business Event in the UK

..... If you are an exhibition stand builder or a company constructing a conference set to include AV are you and your team allowed to travel to the UK on a normal passport without any restrictions for up to 6 months?

If you're an EU, EEA and Swiss citizen, you can travel to the UK for holidays or short trips without needing a visa for up to six months. You can cross the UK border using a valid passport which should be valid for the whole time you are in the UK.

As stated in the published Immigration Rules Appendix V, visitors cannot work in the UK unless this is expressly allowed under the permitted activities set out in Appendix Visitor: Permitted Activities.

Find out more: [click here](#) and [here](#).



# Sales & Promotion

## ..... Promoting an organisation at exhibitions

You can promote your business at exhibitions, but are not allowed to sell directly to the public or intended audience (goods and funds being exchanged at the exhibition). EU, EEA and Swiss citizens are permitted to promote their own business at conferences/exhibitions without needing to apply for a visa, as this is allowed under the permitted general business activities for visitors.

Find out more: [click here](#).

## ..... If you are employing musicians and entertainers from Europe for your event, do you have to have a special permit?

No. Exemptions for professionals in academia and other professions according to the Immigration Rules Appendix V: Visitor, which states that the following are permitted paid engagements:

A professional artist, entertainer, or musician coming 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.

Find out more: [click here](#).





# VAT/TAX

## ..... When does an Events Business pay VAT when working abroad?

If you're in the UK and the place of supply of your service is in the UK, you charge and account for VAT according to UK VAT rules.

If you're in the UK and the place of supply of your service is in an EU country, you do not pay UK VAT.

But for some supplies, you may need to register and account for VAT in the country of supply.

You must check with the tax authority in that country to find out how to treat the services you're supplying.

Find out more: [click here](#).

If the place of supply of your service is not in the EU, you do not have to charge EU VAT but you should include the sale in box 6 on your VAT Return.

Find out more: [click here](#).



# Freight

## ••••• What is the process for bringing goods into the UK?

Individuals are advised to consult the guidance published by the UK Government regarding import duty relief on goods temporarily imported into the UK.

This guidance notes that when temporarily transporting business samples or goods to the UK, you may be able to get import duty relief on goods using Temporary Admission.

Find out more: [click here](#).

## ••••• What is the temporary freight guidance for exhibition stands and sets?

Full relief can be given when these goods are exhibited or used at a public event, not purely organised for commercial sale, delivered by the owner for inspection to a person in the UK who has the right to purchase them after inspection. Sample goods must be solely used for being shown or demonstrated in the UK. The imported sample quantities must be of a reasonable amount and in line with their use. You can be established in the UK to declare goods to this relief although prior authorisation is needed.

Professional equipment must be:

- Owned by a person established outside the UK
- Imported by a person established outside the UK or by an employee of the owner
- Used by the importer or under their supervision, except in cases of audio-visual co-productions

## ••••• What are the rules and processes for bringing in promotional materials?

Full relief can be given when these goods are exhibited or used at a public event, not purely organised for commercial sale.

Sample goods must be solely used for being shown or demonstrated in the UK. The imported sample quantities must be of a reasonable amount and in line with their use.

You can be established in the UK to declare goods to this relief. Prior authorisation is needed.

Find out more: [click here](#).

## ••••• Do any goods have specific considerations?

When temporarily transporting business samples or goods to the EU, you can apply for an ATA Carnet. ATA Carnets let you temporarily export commercial samples, trade fair or exhibition goods and professional equipment to countries that are part of the ATA Carnet system

You can use an ATA Carnet in around 70 countries.

Countries have their own rules about what goods you can bring in with an ATA Carnet. Check with the issuer in the country you're exporting to.

If you cannot use an ATA Carnet (or do not want to pay the fee), use a Duplicate List to temporarily export your goods instead.

Find out more: [click here](#).

## ••••• How long does the process take and do I need an external organisation to help with paperwork or is it so straightforward that we can do it ourselves?

The ATA Carnet acts as a passport for goods. It simplifies the customs formalities by allowing a single document to be used for clearing goods through customs in the countries that are part of the ATA Carnet system. An ATA Carnet is valid for 1 year and allows for movement of the goods shown on the Carnet as many times as required during the 12 months to any of the destinations applied for.

If you're using a freight forwarder, they'll usually fill this in for you.

There is usually a fee charged for this and a security deposit.

Find out more: [click here](#).



# Healthcare for EU citizens visiting the UK

## Do EU citizens need travel insurance when they visit the UK?

The UK Government advises visitors to the UK to take out travel insurance. This means that you can reclaim any healthcare costs you are required to pay from your insurer.

Check your insurance has the necessary healthcare coverage to make sure you can get the treatment you need during your visit.

For further details, please ensure you check gov.uk before you travel, [click here](#).

## Will European Health Insurance Cards (EHICs) be phased out?

If you are a visitor to the UK from an EU country and you fall ill or have a medical emergency during your temporary stay in England, you can continue to use a valid EHIC issued by your home country to access healthcare. The EHIC is not an alternative to travel insurance. You should also have travel or health insurance that covers the duration of your trip.

Please see the UK Government website for more information for visitors on healthcare and documents you need to bring, [click here](#).

**Please note:** The way you access healthcare in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland could be different from England. Please see the links below for more information:

**For Northern Ireland** please [click here](#).

**For Scotland** please [click here](#).

**For Wales** please [click here](#).

Find out more, [click here](#).

# Roaming phone charges

## What are the changes for EU delegates/Event Organisers around using mobile phones in the UK?

How much you pay for calls, texts and mobile data in the UK and the EU will depend on your operator. Please check before you travel.

# Medical and Pharma compliance related to Business Events

## What are the main areas of difference in regulations that Event Organisers should be aware of?

Details concerning holding, sponsoring or supporting delegates from any area of the Health Sector may be found in the 2021 ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry - Clause 10 Events/Meetings and Hospitality.

Find out more: [click here](#) and [here](#).

## GDPR

### Are GDPR/data protection rules the same in the UK as in the EU – e.g. are there any special UK rules when transferring contact lists to UK suppliers?

No, the EU GDPR does not apply in the UK. This new regime is known as 'the UK GDPR'.

UK organisations need to amend their GDPR documentation to align it with the requirements of the UK GDPR. In particular, Article 30 records, privacy notices, DPIAs (data protection impact assessments), DSARs (data subject access requests) and documentation covering international data flows must all reflect the UK's independent jurisdiction and the specific scope and wording of the UK GDPR.

Any UK organisation that offers goods or services to, or monitors the behaviour of, EU residents will also have to comply with the EU GDPR, and will reflect this in its process documentation.

Find out more: [click here](#).

**DISCLAIMER:** This information is provided in good faith and the following Q&A is for guidance only. Please ensure you check the official UK Government website [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) for updates prior to booking and/or travelling to a Business Event in the UK.

This Q&A is not exhaustive and has been compiled based on our experience of the types of questions asked.

This Q&A was compiled in 2022 and updated in 2023 and reflects what we believe to be the position at that date. This information is subject to change.

VisitBritain cannot be held liable for any of the information provided and we would strongly suggest that any person using this information must use it as a guidance only and that they should at all times conduct their own research or obtain their own specialist advice.