



Global Medics



# Living and working abroad United Kingdom

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A row of red telephone booths on a city street. The booths are made of red metal with glass windows and doors. The word "TELEPHONE" is written on a white sign above each door. A crown emblem is visible on the top of each booth. The background shows a brick building with windows and a street lamp.

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A city skyline at sunset, featuring several skyscrapers and a body of water in the foreground. A large blue semi-transparent rectangle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white text. The text is centered and reads "Welcome" in a large font, followed by a horizontal line. Below the line are three paragraphs of text, each starting with a different color: green, orange, and blue.

# Welcome

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Global Medics has been a leading provider of doctors to the UK healthcare markets since it was founded in 2001.

We believe our exceptional level of service sets the standard within the medical recruitment industry. We deliver tailor-made solutions to staffing requirements and offer the most comprehensive assistance for doctors seeking international career advice.

With hundreds of new doctor jobs available every day, we use our local knowledge, coupled with our ability to work in partnership with our clients, to match the most highly skilled doctors to the most suitable vacancies.

We understand that working in the UK can be exciting opportunity to combine lifestyle with career choice. That's why we provide our international candidates with tailored support every step of the way.

# GMC Registration



The General Medical Council (GMC) is the regulatory body that maintains the official register of medical practitioners within the UK. In order to practise as a medical practitioner in the UK, you must be registered with the GMC.

Overseas doctors of all grades and specialties are welcome to register with the GMC. Holding a licence allows you to treat patients and prescribe medicine.

## Find out more

For more information on how to join the GMC, visit [www.gmc-uk.org](http://www.gmc-uk.org)

To join the UK medical register, you must complete a five-step process:

- Check you are eligible
- Complete an application
- Pay a fee
- Provide the required evidence
- Attend an identity check

## Eligibility

To find out what evidence you need to provide to support your application, consult the GMC website.

## How will my primary medical qualification be verified?

Verification is carried out by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) through their online system – known as the Electronic Portfolio of International Credentials (EPIC) service. ECFMG will verify the qualification is genuine by checking this directly with your awarding institution.

## Evidence of English language skills

Doctors relocating to the UK are required to prove that they are proficient in speaking and understanding the English language. This can be verified by passing one of the following exams:

- IELTS
- OET

Alternative methods of verifying your English language proficiency include:

- Primary Medical Qualification – If your primary medical qualification was taught solely in English and you obtained it within the last two years.

- Employer Reference – If you have worked in a country where English is the native language for the last two years
- Using your UK job offer

## Evidence of your fitness to practise

You'll need to provide us with details of all your postgraduate medical experience, non-medical experience and certain other activities for the last five years or since you graduated.

## Registration fees

Application for full registration with a licence to practise for doctors in the UK is £406.

A fixed-term discount for newly qualified doctors is available, with an application for full registration with a licence to practise costing £156.

It is worth noting that a discount is available for doctors whose gross annual worldwide income from all sources is below a specified income threshold.



## Application

If you meet the specified GMC requirements and you have successfully collated all of your documentation, you will be ready to apply for your GMC Registration.

For additional information on the documents required to complete your registration, consult the GMC website before making your application.

If you are missing any documentation, the GMC will give you the opportunity to provide them with evidence rather than denying your application.

## Identity check

If your application has been successful, you will receive an email from the GMC inviting you to an ID check.

# Visas & Work Permits

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## UK Visa

All foreign applicants travelling from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland must hold a valid visa before applying for work. You will need a Tier 2 visa which is offered to all skilled workers looking for employment in the UK.

You can apply for a visa up to three months before the day you're due to start work; this date is listed on your certificate of sponsorship. You should receive a decision on your application within three weeks.

Our clients provide full sponsorship for Tier 2 visas and we offer plenty of advice and assistance throughout the application process.

## Applying for a Tier 2 visa

The earliest you can apply for a Tier 2 visa is three months before you're due to start work in the UK. The date you can start work will be listed on your certificate of sponsorship.

You should receive a decision on your visa three weeks from the date you provide your biometric information. However, you can pay a fee to fast-track this process.

## Tier 2 visa fees

A Tier 2 visa for up to three years costs £232, while a visa for more than three years costs £464. The fee is the same whether you apply from inside or outside the UK.

Your dependants will also need to pay the same amount to obtain a visa.

## Applying to extend or switch a Tier 2 visa in the UK

In order to extend or switch your Tier 2 visa in the UK, you will be required to pay £19.20 to have your biometric information (fingerprints and a photograph) taken.

## Get a faster decision on your application

If you're applying to extend or switch in the UK you can pay for the priority service. This fast-track system allows you to receive a decision within five working days at an extra cost of £500.

If you require a faster service, you can pay an extra £800 for the super-priority service, allowing you to get a decision:

- By the end of the next working day after providing your biometric information, if your appointment is on a weekday

Or;

- Two working days after providing your biometric information, if your appointment is at the weekend

## How long can I stay in the UK on a Tier 2 visa?

You can come to the UK with a Tier 2 (Health and Care) visa for a maximum of five years and 14 days, or the time given on your certificate of sponsorship plus one month, whichever is shorter.

You can start your stay up to 14 days before the start date on your certificate of sponsorship.

## Eligibility

To be eligible for a Tier 2 visa, you must meet the following criteria:

- Be a qualified doctor, nurse, health professional, or adult social care professional





- Show you're being paid an appropriate salary for your job - Typically, at least £30,000 per year)
- Show you can travel and provide your travel history for the past five years
- Have tuberculosis test results if you're from a listed country
- Have a valid certificate of sponsorship for your job - A certificate of sponsorship holds your personal details and information about the job you've been offered. It's an electronic record, not a paper document. Your sponsor will give you a certificate of sponsorship reference number to add to your application. You can only use your certificate of sponsorship reference number once and it must be used within three months of entering the country.
- Provide a criminal record certificate from any country you've lived in for a period of longer than 12 months in the last 10 years if you will be working with vulnerable people
- Prove your knowledge of English by:
  - Passing an approved English language test such as the IELTS or OET
  - Having an academic qualification that was taught in English and is recognised by UK NARIC as being equivalent to a UK bachelor's degree, master's degree, or PhD
- Have personal savings so you can support yourself when you arrive in the UK - You must have at least £945 in your bank account for 90 days before you apply. This is to prove you can support yourself. You must also show that your dependants can be supported whilst they're in the UK. Each dependant



must have £630 available to them whether they apply with you or separately. This is in addition to the £945 you must have to support yourself.

It is worth noting that applications for a Tier 2 visa must be completed online.

## Apply outside of the UK

When applying for a Tier 2 visa, you'll be asked if you're eligible for the Health and Care option later in your application.

As part of the application, you'll need to have your fingerprints and photograph taken at a visa application centre (to get a biometric residence permit). You'll be able to collect your biometric residence permit within 10 days of when you state you'll arrive in the UK.

Visa decisions can be fast-tracked, but this does depend on what country you're in. Check if your visa application centre offers faster decisions and other services.

# The United Kingdom



Located off the north-western coast of Europe lies the sovereign country of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The nation, which is home to over 66 million people, is composed of four separate countries - England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – and offers a unique blend of both history and culture.

A land rich in heritage, the UK has it all. Bustling metropolitan cities, stunning rural scenery and over 7,000 miles of naturally beautiful coastline all combine to make this nation a real draw for healthcare professionals seeking an exciting new life.

Each section of this guide looks to answer the questions that we know healthcare professionals ask, in a way that is easy to understand and simple to share. If you still have unanswered questions about living and working in the UK, please feel free to contact us and we will do our best to help.



# The Country in Brief

The country is able to boast a varied landscape. The captivating cityscapes of London, Manchester and Glasgow (to name but a few) are matched by the glorious rolling hills of the Yorkshire Dales and peaceful tranquillity of the Lake District in Cumbria. What's more, in the UK, you are never more than 70 miles from the coast.

The country offers an exceptionally high standard of living, political stability and safety from natural disasters. The climate is predominately cool and cloudy with northern areas typically receiving more annual rainfall.

## Language

English is the primary language, with each region possessing unique accents and colloquialisms. As the UK embraces multiculturalism, a variety of different dialects – including Polish, Punjabi, Urdu, French, German, Spanish – are also used within smaller communities.

### Did you know?

On average, 165 million cups of tea are consumed in Britain every day.



# Major Cities



## London

Home to a population of approximately eight million, London is the capital city of the UK. It is also the country's largest city and a primary destination for foreign workers.

Located in the south-east of England, the city stands on the River Thames and boasts a plethora of world-famous landmarks, including Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, the London Eye and the Tower of London.

Steeped in history dating back over two millennia, London was founded by the Romans in AD 43 and has provided the backdrop for countless historic events, including the tyrannical reign of Henry VIII, Guy Fawkes' Gunpowder Plot and the

crimes of the mysterious Jack the Ripper.

Of course, these days London is a very different place. While the city remains at the heart of the UK in an economic and political sense, the area has blossomed into a multicultural melting pot and is home to people from all walks of life.

As one of the most popular travel destinations in Europe, London offers Michelin-starred dining, electrifying entertainment and truly vibrant nightlife, not to mention first-class transport links.

The famous London Underground and iconic red buses are always on hand to transport you around the city, while St Pancras International railway station and six airports - including Heathrow,



Gatwick and Stansted - ensure smooth transitions both in and out of the UK.

## Edinburgh

Edinburgh is the capital of Scotland and one of the UK's most historic cities. Home to an estimated population of 489,000, Edinburgh welcomes around 13 million tourists every year and boasts a number of fascinating attractions including Edinburgh Castle and the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the official Scottish residence of the British monarch.

There are two parts to the city; the Old Town, notable for its medieval roots and the elegant Georgian New Town, which combined are listed as a

UNESCO World Heritage site. As a whole, the city is home to more listed buildings than anywhere else in the world.

Edinburgh is also renowned for its modern pleasures. Princes Street offers an array of shops stocking world-famous brands, while nearby restaurants and bars are famed for their high-quality cuisine and lively nightlife.

### Did you know?

One of the oldest castles in the world, Edinburgh Castle is built on top of an extinct volcano.





## Belfast

Standing on the banks of the River Lagan, Belfast is the capital of Northern Ireland and an area that possesses a rich and complex history. The city's streets are full of well-preserved architecture, while the stunning murals that remain on the side of some buildings act as a window into the region's troubled past.

The city's maritime heritage still remains clear for all to see. The Titanic Belfast, a stunningly designed museum built on the site of the Harland and Wolff shipyard, the birthplace of the doomed Titanic liner, dominates the skyline. An array of bars and restaurants are also widely available, while traditional music can often be heard throughout the night air. The city is also home to the world's largest dry dock and over 3,000 acres of parkland.

## Cardiff

Located on the south coast of Wales, Cardiff is built on the River Taff and extends around the Severn Estuary. A two-hour drive from London, the Welsh capital is one of the flattest cities in the UK and famed for its unique blend of innovative architecture and historic buildings.

The city offers plenty of attractions including Cardiff Castle, Bute Park and Cardiff Bay. Cardiff is also an ideal destination for sports enthusiasts, with international football and rugby fixtures held regularly, while other activities such as ice hockey, cricket and basketball are widely accessible to view or to play.

The city caters to cultured tastes too, with St David's Hall staging a diverse programme of performing arts and the Motorpoint Arena, which regularly plays host to a wide variety of concerts, conferences and exhibitions.

### Did you know?

Cardiff became the capital of Wales in 1959, making it the youngest capital cities in Europe.



## Birmingham

Deep in England's West Midlands region is Birmingham, a city that is geographically central within the UK. This bustling metropolis is the country's second-largest city after London and famed for its rich culture, outstanding attractions and fine dining. Roughly 90 per cent of the UK is within a four-hour drive of Birmingham.

Once labelled 'the city of a thousand trades', Birmingham is now one of the

greenest cities in the UK, packed with parks and open spaces and miles of waterways. In fact, the canals of Birmingham stretch for around 35 miles, roughly nine miles further than those of Venice. The city is also the birthplace of Cadbury chocolate and home to Cadbury World, a must-see attraction for all chocolate lovers.

An hour from London by train, the city is within reach of some of the UK's top beauty spots such as Snowdonia and the Brecon Beacons to the west, the Peak District national park to the north, and the Cotswolds to the south. The area also includes historic towns such as Warwick, famous for its castle, and Stratford-Upon-Avon, the birthplace of William Shakespeare.

## Manchester

Situated in the north-west of England, Manchester is rich in industrial heritage and brimming with character. The city is home to over 530,000 residents, making it the sixth-largest city in the UK, and has a proud and illustrious history in the fields of politics, science, music and art. Sport also plays a major part in Manchester's culture with the city home to two Premier League football clubs - Manchester City and





and Manchester United - as well as the National Football Museum.

### Did you know?

Manchester is home to more university students than any other city in Europe.



The city is one of ten metropolitan boroughs that make up Greater Manchester, an area that includes the revitalised city of Salford and larger towns such as Bolton,

Oldham and Wigan. Greater Manchester boasts world-class sporting facilities, a vibrant music and arts scene, lively nightlife and restaurants serving food from every corner of the globe.

# Health & Lifestyle

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## Healthcare

The UK's National Health Service (NHS) is arguably one of the best healthcare systems in the world and is envied around the globe. The service offers free hospital treatment at the point of use. Alternatively, private healthcare is available however, charges do apply.

To receive any kind of treatment through the NHS, you must be registered with a family doctor, more commonly known as a general practitioner (GP). You should do this as soon as possible after you have arrived in the UK.

In England, you don't pay to see a GP but you do pay a standard charge of £9.15 for prescriptions (medicines). However, in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, prescriptions are free.

## Registering with a GP

GPs are your first point of contact when you feel unwell. Surgeries work on an appointment basis, which means that you must phone ahead and make an appointment. Opening times are usually available online. If possible, select a GP surgery within walking distance of your home.

When registering, you will need to provide the following details:

- Name
- UK address
- Date of birth
- Medical card details (if you have one)

To receive any kind of treatment through NHS, you must be registered



with a doctor or general practitioner (GP).

Prior to your first appointment with a GP, you will need to provide details of your medical history. A nurse will also record your height, weight and blood pressure.

## Walk-in clinics

If you have an emergency and cannot get an appointment with your doctor or have not yet registered, then you can visit a walk-in clinic. Once there you will have to complete a form and wait in a queue. You are guaranteed to see a doctor that day and it is a free service.

## Sexual health clinics

These clinics provide free and confidential advice on sexual matters. Usually, you can just walk in, but sometimes an appointment is required. Here you can receive free condoms, contraceptive pills, the morning after pill and a pregnancy test. Some clinics will also test for sexually transmitted diseases.

## Dentists

Make sure the dentist you choose offers NHS (National Health Service) treatment. Normally you are expected to pay towards the cost of NHS dental treatment so it is important you agree to charges before treatment begins.

## Childcare

Childcare is available throughout the UK with prices varying dependent on the level of service provided, the child's age and location. Typically, childcare providers such as private nurseries will take children from the age of six months and charge between £30 and £100 per day. Other options for private childcare include an au pair (who usually lives in the family home and can also help with domestic cleaning and cooking) or a nanny.

Help with childcare costs is available. Many employers offer a Childcare Voucher scheme which is where you sacrifice a portion of your salary that isn't tax-deductible and put it towards childcare payments.

Alternatively, you can receive financial help from the Tax-Free Childcare scheme which is available to parents dependent on various factors such as household income. Also, when a child turns three years old, they are eligible for 30 hours' free childcare.

## Education

The school year usually begins in September and concludes in July and is split into three terms. Children are

required to attend primary school from the age of five, although four-year-olds are eligible to be registered, too. Children between the ages of 11 and 16 must attend secondary education. State education is free, however, private school fees vary depending on the establishment.



Once compulsory education has been completed, students may seek further education at college or university, or find employment.

## Finding Accommodation

In the UK, you have the option to either buy or rent a home. Purchasing a property can be a lengthy process, so you may need to rent ahead of completing your move.

Should you decide to rent, you will have two options:



Option one is to live in a shared property. Shared accommodation allows you to cut the cost of rent and utilities in exchange for a single or a double bedroom. Other facilities, such as the living room, kitchen, bathroom and garden are all communal.

Option two is to rent accommodation of your own. This means that you must pay all costs, but you do not need to share facilities.

Rental flats (apartments) or houses can be furnished or unfurnished. Furnished accommodation usually includes a bed, wardrobe, kitchen appliances and a sofa.

The best way to find accommodation to buy or rent is by using a local estate agent.

There are usually several agencies in towns and cities, mainly located on the high street. You can also conduct your own searches for property to buy or rent on the internet.

## We recommend

- Rightmove
- Zoopla
- PrimeLocation
- Gumtree

If you opt to rent, you will sign a contract with the estate agency once you have found a suitable place to live. You must provide your passport, proof of addresses from your own country (e.g. a utility bill or bank statement) and the offer letter from your employer. They will then request references from your employer in order to confirm your salary and the length of your contract. This process can take a week to complete.

If you are looking to buy, property prices vary depending on size and location, with



houses and flats in London and the south of England generally being more costly than those in northern areas. House prices in London are amongst the highest in the country, while areas in the North East of England are considerably lower.

The majority of homeowners in the UK do not buy their property outright. Instead, they opt to borrow money from a bank or building society. This is referred to as a 'mortgage' and is paid back in monthly instalments.

Buying a home is a huge financial commitment, so for some, renting may provide a more affordable option. Much like purchasing a home, the amount you pay in rent will fluctuate depending on size and location. Costs in and around city centres are around £650 per month while renting in more rural locations can cost about £550.

Expect prices in London and larger cities such as Manchester and Leeds to be considerably more.

## Average house prices in the UK

Sharing accommodation will help to cut costs. Prices can be between £70 and £200 per week, depending on the size and location of the accommodation.

Rental prices can often include utilities such as gas, electricity and water; however, it is advisable to consult with the landlord before signing a lease.

## Cost of living

The cost of living is dependent on where you live in the UK. The prices of accommodation, goods and services are generally more expensive in the south of



England, particularly in London. In contrast, living in the north of England or in Scotland can prove much more affordable, although public transport can be far less reliable in more rural areas.

In addition to monthly mortgage repayments/rent payments, you must pay council tax (to fund local services) and monthly utility bills, including gas, water and electricity, all of which are dependent on usage. Further costs may include annual payments of £150.50 for a television licence, monthly phone and broadband charges and travel expenses.

The cost of groceries also varies. Supermarkets such as Aldi and Lidl are considered the cheapest, while Asda, Tesco, Sainsbury's and Morrisons are mid-range and offer more globally recognised brands. On average, a weekly shop for one can cost around £20 to £30, whilst feeding a family of four can be upwards of £80.

## Tax

Whether you own or rent a house in the UK, you must pay Council Tax on a monthly basis. If you rent, this is sometimes included in your rent, although the majority of times you will need to register with the Local Council, who will be able to give you advice on how to pay.

The amount of Council Taxes you will need to pay depends on the size of the property, its value and the location. Council Tax is the system of local taxation used in England, Scotland and Wales to part-fund the services provided by local government in each country.

Local governments provide services such as police, fire, recycling, refuse collection and removal, schools, leisure centres, parks and open spaces, street cleaning, subsidising of public transport, sports facilities, and many others.

The quickest way to pay for your utility and general bills is by setting up a Direct Debit with your bank account provider. Every month the money will be taken automatically from your bank account and bills will be sent to your postal or email address.





# Culture & Lifestyle



Britain offers some of the most delicious dishes in the world, with the types of food available ranging from Michelin-starred cuisine to tantalising street food.

## Dining, tipping & service

When people think of British food, they immediately pick out traditional dishes like roast beef and Yorkshire puddings, fish and chips, and sausage and mash potato. However, there are so many more options to choose from.

Chicken tikka masala may be more closely associated with Indian dining, but this dish is a huge hit amongst the British population and is a perfect example of how the country adapts and absorbs

external influences. The nation has also embraced dishes from across Europe, with Italian and Greek food proving popular, while Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Mexican restaurants are all easily accessible.



As the UK welcomes cultures from around the world, halal meat is widely available in city restaurants and is clearly marked.



Most restaurants also cater to vegetarian and vegan diners. When eating out, it is customary to leave a tip of around 10 to 15 per cent of your total bill however, this is not mandatory. Occasionally, this additional charge will be incorporated into your bill, so it's always a good idea to check carefully before paying.

## Entertainment

When it comes to entertainment, the UK is a real hive of activity.

From award-winning theatre productions to calming walks through the countryside, the UK has something to suit everyone.

Regardless of how you like to spend your free time, there is always plenty to keep you entertained. Dining out, socialising with friends or dancing through the night are all options, especially in some of the larger towns and cities.

Naturally, when you're away from work you may wish to explore more of the UK. London has many world-famous attractions to offer, but it's also worth venturing out of the capital in search of fun.

The Somerset city of Bath houses Roman-built spas and is renowned for its natural hot springs, while the natural beauty of the Yorkshire Dales in the north of the country attracts visitors throughout the year. Further west, Cornwall and Devon offer their fair share of wonder, and the Scottish city of Edinburgh hosts an annual comedy event that is certain to leave you smiling.





## Sports and Culture

Sport is a huge part of life in the UK. Many British people enjoy going to a gym or exercising at home, while sports like football, cricket, rugby and tennis are very popular. Activities such as cycling and swimming have also witnessed a surge in popularity following the London 2012 Olympic Games.

However, by far the most popular sport is football (soccer), a game that was invented in the UK and remains the national pastime. Around one in five people play regularly, and there are facilities available in both rural and urban areas.

The UK is also home to the Premier League, the most-watched sports league in the world, which regularly attracts TV audiences from across the globe. If you want to attend a match, tickets are available online for between £9 and £97, depending on the team you want to watch. Be warned, though, these can sell out very quickly.

## Climate

The climate is predominately cool and cloudy with regular rainfall, especially in the early and latter stages of the calendar year.

Typically, the warmest months are July and August, however, temperatures can rise in May and June. The average summer temperature is around 21°C.

Temperatures begin to drop throughout September and October before plummeting in January and

February with average daily highs reaching no more than about 7°C. Frost and snow are not uncommon during these months. It is worth noting that temperatures in cities such as London are generally higher than in more rural areas.

Weather programmes on main TV channels as well as smartphone apps such as BBC Weather and Met Office are a common means of checking what the weather has in store in any given region.

### Did you know?

The average rainfall in the United Kingdom is 885 millimetres per year.



# Travel & Transport



## Getting here

The UK is widely accessible by air and sea. The nation is even connected to mainland Europe by the Channel Tunnel, a 31 mile stretch of rail that connects Folkestone, Kent with the northern settlement of Coquelles near Calais, France.

## Major airports

The UK is home to over 40 commercial airports offering flights around the globe. London alone boasts six international airports and serves as one of the largest aviation hubs in the world for passenger traffic handling over 180 million passengers each year.

Major UK airports include:

- Belfast International Airport
- Birmingham Airport
- East Midlands Airport
- Edinburgh Airport
- Glasgow Airport
- Heathrow Airport
- Leeds Bradford Airport
- Liverpool John Lennon Airport
- London Gatwick
- London Luton Airport
- London Stansted Airport
- Manchester Airport





## Driving in the UK

Depending on where you live and work in the UK will determine whether or not you will need to drive. If you live in a city with good transport links, a car may be unnecessary and could prove very costly, especially if you need to pay for parking. However, if you are based outside of a city centre, public transport may not always be available, meaning a car is essential.

Cars are available to rent across the country with prices varying depending on the organisation you choose. It is also worth taking advantage of special deals.

### The most popular car rental companies in the UK include:

- Hertz
- Avis
- Enterprise

There are three main types of road in the UK: motorways, primary roads and non-primary roads.

Motorways are high-speed roads where vehicles are permitted to drive at 70 miles per hour (mph). Pedestrians and slower modes of transportation are prohibited.

Primary roads (often referred to as single or dual carriageways) impose different speed limits which are clearly marked and are generally used to connect less populated areas. Similar speed restrictions are in place on non-primary roads, which usually offer an alternate route to primary roads.

Driving laws in the UK are quite strict. Drink driving, texting while driving and speeding can all lead to heavy fines and the possibility of you losing your licence.



Not wearing a seatbelt is also an offence, while parking in undesignated areas is prohibited.

### Did you know?

Central London operates a daily congestion charge of £15.00 between 07.00 and 22.00, Monday to Friday.



## Driving Licence

Typically, an international driving licence is valid for use in the UK for up to one year however, it is advisable to apply for an international driving permit (IDP) if your licence is not printed in English.

If you are planning on remaining in the UK indefinitely, you will need to apply for a UK driving licence.

Drivers must be over the age of 17, British people drive on the left and speed and distances are measured in miles.

## Public transport

The public transport system in the UK varies depending on your location. If you live in a city such as London, the transport links are excellent and run frequently. If you live in a rural area, there are far fewer services from which to choose.

Those living in London are advised to purchase an Oyster Card from any tube station at a cost of £5. This will give you discounted travel on the Tube, trams, buses, Docklands Light Railway (DLR), London Overground and some National Rail services in London.

Travelling around the UK is relatively simple. The country operates an extensive train network and even offers several long-distance bus (coach) services.

To view and download a map of the London Underground, visit:

- <https://tfl.gov.uk/maps/track/tube>

For further UK travel information, visit:

- [Nationalexpress.com](http://Nationalexpress.com)
- [Nationalrail.co.uk](http://Nationalrail.co.uk)





# Finance & Banking



## Money

In 1971, the UK decimalised its currency, opting to use two units – pounds (£) and pence (p).

There are 100 pennies to the pound.

Notes are in denominations of £5, £10, £20 and £50.

Coins are in denominations of £2, £1, 50p, 20p, 10p, 5p, 2p and 1p.

Each note varies in size, with £5 notes being the smallest and £50 notes being the largest. It is worth noting that £50 notes are quite rare, and some shops will not accept them because of the danger

of forgeries. Coins also vary in size, and in some cases, shape.

In conversation, shop workers often do not say pounds, and will instead say for example, “six-fifty” for something that costs £6.50. If something costs less than £1, people will often say “pee” or “pence” (e.g. 99p).

‘Quid’ is also a popular substitute for the word ‘pound’. For example, shop workers may say ‘ten quid’, which simply means £10.



## Currency conversion

One Great British Pound (GBP) roughly equates to:

- €1.12 (Euro)
- \$1.33 (US Dollar)
- ₹97.49 (Indian Rupee)
- ¥9.09 (Chinese Yuan)

### Did you know?

VAT is charged at 20 per cent.



## Applying for a bank account

In order for your employer to pay you, you must open a UK bank account. This is a straightforward process with which your employer should be able to provide assistance. UK bank accounts can be opened online or in-branch and can take up to one week to set up. To open an account, you will require a valid form of identification (ID) (e.g. a passport or driving licence) and a letter from your employer confirming your place of work, date of employment and your current salary. You will also be asked for proof of address (e.g. a utility bill). As you may not be able to provide this, your new employer can supply you with a letter confirming your address, if necessary.

We recommend using HSBC as they offer a fairly hassle-free process. Other



banks you could try include Lloyds TSB, Santander, Barclays, Halifax and NatWest.

Banks and building societies can be found in most high streets and are generally open between 09:00 and 16:30, Monday to Friday; however, opening times can vary. Some banks in larger towns and cities may also open on Saturdays.

Banks are closed on public holidays (also known as Bank holidays) and some banks in Scotland close for an hour at lunchtime. Many banks now have 24-hour banking lobbies where you can access a range of services via the ATMs (also known as cash machines), while support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week (24/7) online.

## National Insurance

As a UK worker, you must pay National Insurance (NI) in order to build up your entitlement to certain state benefits, including the state pension. These contributions are based on the amount of money you are paid and are deducted from your salary each month.

Your NI number is unique to you and ensures that your contributions and tax payments are properly recorded against your name. It also acts as your reference number in any dealings with the Department for Work and Pensions and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). It is very important to keep your NI number safe, ensuring it is not given to anyone who does not need it; this will help minimise the risk of identity fraud.

To apply for a NI number you must attend an interview at Jobcentre Plus.

You will need to call 0800 141 2075 and arrange your interview. To this appointment you will need to take the following items:

- Passport
- Proof of your address in the UK (e.g. letter confirming accommodation arrangements)
- Proof of employment (your contract of employment)

## Find out more

For more information on National Insurance, visit:

[www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number](http://www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number)



## Pension

The State Pension ensures that everyone has a solid financial foundation when they retire and is funded by National Insurance.

Once you reach the State Pension age, you will begin receiving regular payments from the government.

In order to receive the State Pension, you must have at least 35 years of NI contributions.

All payments depend on your own NI record and not your current salary.

# Registrations & Regulations



## Occupational Health Clearance

Together with the job offer, you are usually sent an Occupational Health Clearance Form. You must complete this and send it back to the Hospital Medical Staffing Department. The questions will be about your health history (e.g. vaccinations and diseases that you have had in your life). You must also provide your Hepatitis B status and evidence of immunity to Rubella, Varicella and TB.

Once your employer receives this form, it is sent to the Occupational Health Department which then performs a 'paper clearance' based on the information that you have provided.

Prior to starting your new job, you may have an appointment with the Occupational Health Department within the hospital to discuss your results further.

## DBS Check

When you arrive in the UK, your new employer will apply for a DBS check.

DBS (formerly known as Criminal Records Bureau or CRB) is similar to a police check that you already have from your native country.

Once you have arrived in the UK, you will need to provide a copy of a recent overseas police check (within the last three



months) and complete a form. You will be asked to fill in an application form and provide some original documents and detailed information with regards to your previous addresses. You will need to make sure that there are no gaps in your address history, otherwise, your application will not be processed. Once complete, your employer will check and submit your form. Within three to four weeks you will receive a certificate which is valid for one year.

## Find out more

For more information, visit  
[www.crb.gov.uk](http://www.crb.gov.uk).

# Good to Know

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## Mobile phones

The cost of owning and operating a mobile phone varies wildly in the UK and is dependent on the brand of phone you would like and the type of contract you prefer.

Both 3G and 4G services are available on competitive contracts, while sim-only deals are also available and can easily be purchased and inserted into your phone if it is unlocked.

### Top Mobile Phone Operators

- O2
- EE
- Virgin
- Three
- Vodafone



## Internet

The UK's internet connectivity is first-class and ever-improving. The country is able to offer broadband speeds of around 18.57Mbps, which means that downloading a 5GB HD movie takes roughly 36 minutes.

The cost of accessing the internet varies and is

dependent on the speed and service provider you choose, although your best option is to compare the packages offered by different providers. This can be done by using comparison websites.

### Top internet providers

- BT
- Sky
- Plusnet
- Post Office
- Virgin Media



## Utilities

There are multiple providers of gas and electricity in the UK.

### Top utility providers

- E.ON
- N-Power
- British Gas
- EDF Energy
- Scottish Power



The quickest way to pay for your utility and general bills is by setting up a Direct Debit with your bank account provider. Every month the money will be taken automatically from your bank account and bills will be sent to your postal or email address.

To find the best rates, it is worth comparing the prices of different companies. There are various comparison websites you can use to compare the costs of utilities such as gas and electricity providers based on your individual circumstances.

### Top comparison sites

- Compare the Market
- Uswitch
- Money Supermarket
- Money Saving Expert
- Confused.com
- Go Compare

## Useful information

- Plug Type: G
- Voltage: 230V
- Frequency: 50 Hz

## Emergency numbers

- Ambulance: 999
- Fire: 999
- Police: 999
- Non-urgent police calls: 101
- 24-Hour Medical Advice: 111





## Public holidays

<u>Holiday</u>	<u>Date</u>
New Year's Day	1 January
Good Friday	Date varies (March/April)
Easter Monday	Date varies (March/April)
May Day	Date varies (First Monday in May)
Spring Bank	Date varies (Final Monday in May)
Summer Bank	Date varies (Final Monday in August)
Christmas Day	25 December
Boxing Day	26 December



## Contact Us

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