What to check before applying for a UK family visa

Understanding the UK family visa application process

Applying for a UK family visa is a significant step for anyone wishing to join a partner, parent, or other close relative who is already settled in the UK. The process involves meeting several legal requirements, and the documentation you provide forms the backbone of your application. Missing or incorrect documents can lead to delays or even a refusal. Knowing exactly what to prepare in advance can save time, stress, and money.

This article outlines the key documents you should have ready when applying for a family visa from outside the UK or extending a stay. While every case is different, the checklist below covers the core evidence most applicants will need to submit.

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Proof of your relationship

Immigration rules require you to prove that your relationship is genuine and subsisting. For partners, this usually means providing a marriage or civil partnership certificate if you are married. If you are unmarried partners, you need to show that you have been living together in a relationship akin to marriage for at least two years. Documents that can help include joint bank account statements, joint tenancy agreements, utility bills in both names, and correspondence addressed to both of you at the same address over a period of time. Photographs together, travel bookings, and evidence of regular communication can also support your case. The Home Office looks for consistency and genuine commitment, so every piece of relationship evidence should be dated and clearly linked to both applicants.



Meeting the financial requirement

One of the most common reasons for a family visa refusal is failing to meet the financial requirement. As of the current rules, the sponsoring partner must typically have a minimum income of £18,600 per year (with higher thresholds if there are dependant children). This can be met through salaried or non-salaried employment, self-employment, savings above £16,000, or a combination of these. You will need to provide payslips covering at least six months, corresponding bank statements, and an employer letter confirming your job and salary. If you are relying on savings, you will need bank statements showing the required amount has been held for at least six months. Self-employed applicants must provide tax returns and accounts.

It is wise to calculate your total income carefully and check that it meets the threshold before you apply.

View the location on Google Maps

English language requirement

Most family visa applicants from outside the UK must pass an approved English language test at level A1 or higher, unless they are from a majority English-speaking country or have a degree taught in English. The test must be taken with a Home Office-approved provider. You will need to include your test certificate with your application. If you hold a degree that was taught or researched in English, you will need to provide the original certificate and a statement from the awarding body confirming that the course was conducted in English. The English language requirement also applies when extending a family visa, though the required level rises to A2 for extensions and B1 for settlement.

Accommodation evidence

You must show that you have suitable accommodation for you and your dependants to live in without overcrowding. This means providing a recent mortgage statement or tenancy agreement for the property where you will live, along with a property inspection report or a letter from the landlord confirming that the property is suitable and that you are permitted to live there. If you are living with family or friends, you will need a letter from the homeowner giving permission for you to stay, along with evidence of their ownership or tenancy and a description of the property's size and layout. The Home Office will check that the property meets housing standards and that it will not be overcrowded once you and your dependants move in.

For complex cases, such as those involving previous refusals, criminal convictions, or applications from outside the UK, professional guidance can be helpful. Adamir Immigration Solicitors London offers advice on family visa applications and can help you prepare the correct documentation for your specific circumstances.

Dependants and children

If you are applying with children, you will need their full birth certificates, passport copies, and evidence that you have sole or shared parental responsibility. If only one parent is applying, you may also need a letter of consent from the other parent, along with proof that they are not travelling with the child. For children over 18 who are applying as dependants, you must provide evidence that they are still financially dependent on you, such as proof of ongoing

financial support, their student status, or medical evidence if they cannot support themselves. Every dependant must meet the English language and financial requirements unless exempt.



Visa extension and settlement documents

If you are already in the UK on a family visa and applying for an extension, you will need to show that your relationship is still genuine and ongoing. This means providing updated relationship evidence, recent financial documents, and proof that you continue to meet the English language requirement at the appropriate level. For settlement (indefinite leave to remain) after five years, you will need to provide evidence of continuous residence in the UK, such as travel records, payslips, and council tax bills covering the full period. You will also need

to pass the Life in the UK test and provide your certificate. The Home Office will check that you have not spent more than the allowed number of days outside the UK during the qualifying period.

Common pitfalls to avoid

One common mistake is submitting documents that are not translated into English or Welsh. Any document in another language must be accompanied by a certified translation from a professional translator. Another issue is failing to provide enough evidence to prove cohabitation for unmarried partners. The Home Office expects at least six pieces of correspondence addressed to both of you at the same address, spread evenly over the two-year period. Missing payslips or bank statements, or providing documents that are out of date, can also cause problems. Always check the validity period of test certificates and financial documents before submitting your application.

For those who prefer to have their application reviewed by professionals, Adamir Immigration Solicitors London can assist with document preparation and submission. Their team understands the nuances of UK immigration law and can help ensure your application is complete and accurate.



If you need further guidance, you can contact the firm at Unit-1, 5 Norman Rd, London N15 4ND, UK, or call +44 20 3302 0074.