

PROGRAMME BROCHURE

CORPORATE MOBILITY | UNITED KINGDOM

UK Expansion Worker Visa

Send a senior manager or specialist to open your company's first UK branch or subsidiary: a sponsored Global Business Mobility route for up to two years, with a £52,500 minimum salary and no path to settlement.

TIMELINE

Two stages: sponsor licence, then visa

XIPHIAS Immigration DMCC
www.xiphiasimmigration.ae

Updated 1 October 2026
+971 52 727 5101 | dubai@xiphiasimmigration.com

At a glance

COUNTRY **United Kingdom**	ROUTE **Corporate Mobility**
TIMELINE **Two stages: sponsor licence, then visa**	COMPANY STRUCTURE **UK branch or subsidiary of an overseas business**
OWNERSHIP **Owned by the overseas business**	OFFICE **UK footprint in place; no UK trading yet**
BANK ACCOUNT **Yes, once the UK entity is set up (subject to bank checks)**	LAST UPDATED **1 October 2026**

Overview

The **UK Expansion Worker visa** lets an established overseas business send a senior manager or specialist employee to the UK to set up its first UK branch or subsidiary. It is one of the Home Office's Global Business Mobility routes.

The rules are specific. The overseas business must not yet be trading in the UK, the UK branch or subsidiary must hold a sponsor licence, and the worker must be paid at least **£52,500 a year or the going rate for the job, whichever is higher**. The route allows a **maximum of two years** in the UK in total, and it **does not lead to settlement**.

For an Indian or UAE company that has decided to open in the UK, it is the most direct way to put a trusted senior person on the ground to build the UK operation.

Who the route is for

The business

- It must be actively trading outside the UK.
- It must have **no active trading presence in the UK**. A business that is already trading here cannot use this route.
- It must have established a UK **footprint** for the expansion, as the Home Office puts it. XIPHIAS checks what your business already has in place against the sponsor guidance before any application is made.

The worker

- A senior manager or specialist employee who will set up the UK operation.
- At least **12 months' service** with the overseas business. Three groups are exempt from this requirement: workers earning more than **£73,900** a year; **Japanese nationals**, under the UK–Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement; and **Australian nationals and permanent residents**, under the UK–Australia Free Trade Agreement.
- A UK salary of at least **£52,500**, or 100% of the going rate for the occupation if that is higher. No going-rate discount applies on this route.

How the sponsor licence works

The UK branch or subsidiary applies to the Home Office for an Expansion Worker sponsor licence. The licence is granted as a **provisional** licence rather than an A-rated one, and the first Certificate of Sponsorship is assigned to the **Authorising Officer**, the senior person responsible for the licence. The worker then applies for the visa using that certificate.

Costs: official Home Office fees

Fee	Amount
Sponsor licence application	£611
Certificate of Sponsorship	£55 per worker
Visa application fee	£340
Immigration Health Surcharge, adults	£1,035 per person, per year
Immigration Health Surcharge, children under 18	£776 per child, per year
Immigration Skills Charge	Not payable on this route

The Immigration Skills Charge applies only to the Skilled Worker and Senior or Specialist Worker routes, so an Expansion Worker sponsor does not pay it. XIPHIAS confirms the licence fee that applies to your organisation before filing.

Company formation, UK accountancy and XIPHIAS professional fees are separate from the Home Office fees above; we quote them for your case.

Timeline

The process runs in two stages, each decided by the Home Office: first the sponsor licence, then the visa. The visa application can only be made once the licence is granted and the Certificate of Sponsorship has been assigned. XIPHIAS confirms the current processing position for both stages when we plan the move.

Family

The worker's partner and children can apply to join as dependants. Each pays their own visa application fee and the Immigration Health Surcharge: £1,035 per adult and £776 per child, for each year of the visa.

How long you can stay, and settlement

The route allows a **maximum of two years** in the UK in total. Expansion Worker **does not lead to settlement**: holders cannot apply to settle permanently on this route.

If the business will need the worker for longer, plan the next step early. The worker would have to qualify separately under another route, for example Skilled Worker, which requires a degree-level (RQF 6) role, a salary of at least £41,700 or the going rate if higher, and English at B2, and which carries its own fees.

Risks and compliance

- **Two-year limit.** The route is built for the set-up phase only. Plan who will run the UK business after two years, and under which route.
- **No UK trading before the application.** A business that has already started trading in the UK needs a different sponsorship route.
- **A genuine expansion.** The Home Office expects both the role and the UK expansion to be genuine. A thin or unsupported plan puts the licence and the visa at risk.
- **Sponsor duties.** The provisional licence carries the usual sponsor duties: accurate records, reporting changes to the Home Office and cooperating with compliance checks.
- **Changing figures.** UK salary thresholds rose on 22 July 2025 and Home Office fees on 8 April 2026. XIPHIAS checks every figure on the date we file.

Fees and rules on this page reflect the official sources listed below as at 1 October 2026.

Key benefits

- Puts a trusted senior person on the ground before the business starts trading in the UK.
- Lower Home Office fees than the Skilled Worker route: a £340 visa fee and a £55 Certificate of Sponsorship.
- No Immigration Skills Charge.
- Partners and children can join as dependants.

Requirements

- An overseas business that is actively trading, with no active trading presence in the UK.
- A UK footprint established for the expansion.
- A provisional Expansion Worker sponsor licence and a Certificate of Sponsorship.
- A senior manager or specialist with at least 12 months' service with the overseas business, unless exempt (earners above £73,900, Japanese nationals, Australian nationals or permanent residents).
- A UK salary of at least £52,500, or 100% of the going rate if higher.

When this route may not fit

- The business is already trading in the UK.
- The worker has less than 12 months' service with the overseas business and no exemption applies.
- The salary is below £52,500 or below the going rate for the role.
- The UK expansion or the role is not genuine.

How the process works

1. **Check eligibility**
   Confirm the business trades overseas, is not yet trading in the UK and has a UK footprint for the expansion.
2. **Apply for the sponsor licence**
   The UK branch or subsidiary applies for a provisional Expansion Worker licence (£611).
3. **Assign the Certificate of Sponsorship**
   The first Certificate of Sponsorship (£55) is assigned to the Authorising Officer.
4. **File the visa application**
   The worker applies (£340) and pays the Immigration Health Surcharge (£1,035 per adult per year).
5. **Set up in the UK**
   The worker establishes the branch or subsidiary within the two-year maximum.
6. **Plan beyond two years**
   A worker needed for longer must qualify separately under another route, such as Skilled Worker.

Once the worker is in the UK

- Set up the UK branch or subsidiary's operations, bank account and payroll.
- Register with HMRC for PAYE and the business taxes that apply.
- Keep sponsor records up to date and report changes to the Home Office as the licence requires.
- Plan for the two-year limit: decide early whether the business needs the worker beyond it, and under which route.

Document checklist

The business

- Evidence that the overseas business is actively trading
- Evidence of the UK footprint for the expansion
- UK expansion plan

The worker

- Valid passport
- Evidence of at least 12 months' service with the overseas business, or of the exemption that applies
- Contract and salary details for the UK role

Dependants

- Marriage or partnership evidence
- Children's birth certificates

Questions clients ask

Who can apply for the UK Expansion Worker visa?

A senior manager or specialist employee of an overseas business that is setting up its first UK branch or subsidiary and has not yet started trading in the UK.

What is the minimum salary?

£52,500 a year, or 100% of the going rate for the job if that is higher. No going-rate discount applies.

Does the worker need 12 months with the business?

Normally yes. The requirement does not apply to workers earning more than £73,900, to Japanese nationals, or to Australian nationals and permanent residents.

What are the Home Office fees?

Sponsor licence £611, Certificate of Sponsorship £55, visa application £340, and the Immigration Health Surcharge of £1,035 per adult per year (£776 per child). The Immigration Skills Charge does not apply.

How long can the worker stay?

A maximum of two years in total on the route.

Does it lead to permanent residence?

No. Expansion Worker does not lead to settlement. A worker the business needs for longer must qualify separately under another route, such as Skilled Worker.

Can the worker's family come?

Yes. Partners and children can apply as dependants; each pays their own visa fee and the Immigration Health Surcharge.

Important notes

- Home Office fees: sponsor licence £611, Certificate of Sponsorship £55, visa application £340, Immigration Health Surcharge £1,035 per adult per year (£776 per child).
- The Immigration Skills Charge does not apply to Expansion Worker. It applies to Skilled Worker and Senior or Specialist Worker only.
- Sponsor duties apply throughout: accurate records, reporting changes and cooperating with Home Office compliance checks.
- XIPHIAS confirms the current Home Office processing position for the licence and the visa when we plan your timeline.

Official sources: GOV.UK — UK Expansion Worker visa; Immigration Rules — Appendix Global Business Mobility routes; Home Office — Workers and Temporary Workers: guidance for sponsors, Part 1 (apply for a licence); Home Office — Immigration and nationality fees; GOV.UK — Immigration Health Surcharge; GOV.UK — Immigration Skills Charge.

XIPHIAS Immigration



NEXT STEP

Plan your United Kingdom application with our Dubai team

Tell us about your profile, family and timeline. We will confirm whether **UK Expansion Worker Visa** fits, set out the full cost in writing and manage the application with you from start to finish.

CALL OR WHATSAPP	+971 52 727 5101
EMAIL	dubai@xiphiasimmigration.com
WEBSITE	www.xiphiasimmigration.ae
OFFICE	Jumeirah Lakes Towers, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

CREDENTIALS

- Advising clients on global mobility since 2009; XIPHIAS Immigration DMCC in Dubai since 2017.
- Named Best Immigration Consultant by The Times of India in 2022.
- Canada files handled by a CICC-licensed Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant, licence R516194.
- Australia files handled by a registered migration agent, MARA 1680615.

This brochure is produced from the programme information published at www.xiphiasimmigration.ae/corporate/united-kingdom/expansion-worker-visa as at 1 October 2026. Rules, fees and processing times are set by the relevant government and can change, and approval is always the authority's decision. Please confirm the current position with us before you apply. XIPHIAS provides immigration consulting and documentation support. It is not a law firm, and nothing in this brochure is legal advice.