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UK INNOVATOR FOUNDER VISA

The secret of setting up a business in the UK



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What is the Innovator Founder Visa?

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What is the Innovator Founder Visa?

The UK Innovator Founder Visa is designed for ambitious entrepreneurs who want to build businesses that bring value to the UK economy. It replaced both the Innovator Visa and the Start-up Visa in April 2023, combining flexibility with a faster settlement route.

Unlike traditional investor visas, this route does not require a fixed minimum investment. Instead, the emphasis is on the quality of your business plan and your ability to deliver.



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Who is the Innovator Founder Visa for?

The Innovator Founder Visa is designed for entrepreneurs who want to set up and run a business in the UK. It is best suited for:

- Experienced businesspeople with a proven track record.
- Entrepreneurs who can show their business idea is innovative, viable, and scalable.
- Applicants seeking a fast-track to settlement (ILR) in just 3 years.
- Those wishing to contribute to the UK economy while gaining access to its global market.



Eligibility Criteria

03 To apply, you must:

Be 18 years or older.

Have a business idea endorsed by an approved endorsing body.

Show your business is:

- **Innovative** – offering a new product, service, or approach to the UK market (different to what is in the current market).
- **Viable** – realistic, achievable, and supported by your skills and experience.
- **Scalable** – with potential for growth, job creation, and expansion into international markets.

Meet the **English language requirement (B2 level)**.

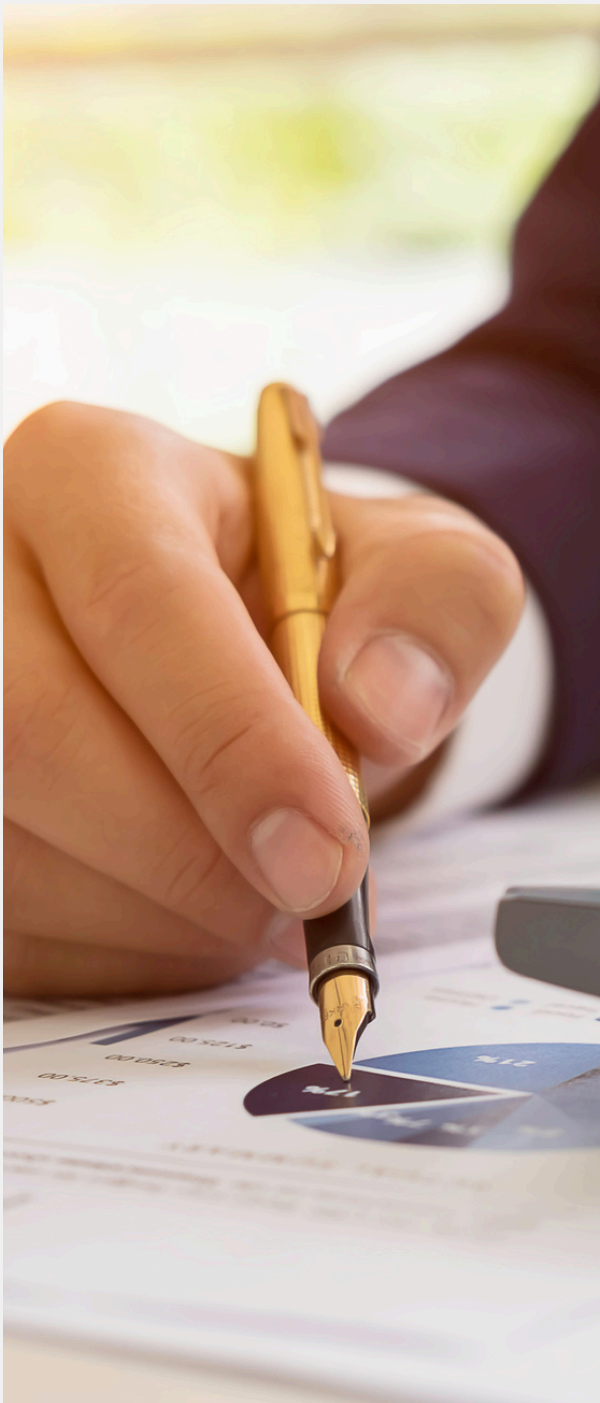
Show proof of **financial maintenance**:

- **£1,270** for yourself.
- **£285** for partner.
- **£315** for first child.
- **£200** for each additional child.





Funds & Costs



04 How much Funds & Costs

Visa application fee:

- **£1,274** (if applying outside the UK).
- **£1,590** (if applying inside the UK).
- Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS): **£1,035** per year, per applicant.
- Maintenance funds: **£1,270+** as noted above.
- Business funds: No official minimum.



Application Process

05 **Develop your business plan**

Must clearly demonstrate innovation, viability, and scalability.

06 **Secure endorsement**

Apply to one of the Home Office approved endorsing bodies for approval of your plan.

07 **Prepare supporting documents**

ID, bank statements, English language evidence, endorsement letter.

08 **Apply online**

For your Innovator Founder visa.



09 **Biometrics & Decision**

Attend a visa appointment and await the Home Office decision (3–8 weeks on average).



Your Position in the UK

10 Your Position in the UK:

With an Innovator Founder Visa, you gain much more than entry rights you gain the legal foundation to build your entrepreneurial life in the UK:

- **Run your own business** – set up and manage your company on a day-to-day basis.
- **Work in skilled employment** – you can take on a second job outside your business, but it must be at least RQF Level 3 (skilled work such as management, professional, or technical roles).
- **Bring your family** – your partner and dependent children can accompany you. They can work, study, and integrate into UK life.
- **Healthcare & education** – you and your dependants can access the NHS, and children can attend UK schools without restrictions.
- **Freedom to travel** – you can leave and re-enter the UK freely during the visa validity.



Business Performance Requirements

11 Business Performance Requirements:

Your visa is not only about entering the UK it's about demonstrating progress. As an Innovator Founder, you're required to show measurable business results. Endorsing bodies will monitor your progress through two contact point meetings, typically held around **12 and 24** months after your endorsement or approval.



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Milestones achieved

As outlined in your endorsed business plan.

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Job creation

Hiring UK-based employees or contractors.

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Revenue growth & market share

Evidence of strong business activity.

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Scalability

Plans or results showing national and/or international expansion potential.



Duration & Settlement Pathway

- **Initial Visa:** Granted for 3 years.
- **Settlement (ILR):** After 3 years, you can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain if your business meets performance criteria.
- **Citizenship:** You must have lived in the UK for a minimum of five years before applying for citizenship, even if you've been free from immigration control for 12 months.

This route is faster than the Skilled Worker Visa or other long-term visas, which typically require 5 years before settlement.





Benefits of the Innovator Founder Visa

16 What are the Benefits of the Innovator Founder Visa



- **Fast-track settlement**
Apply for ILR in just 3 years.
- **No fixed minimum investment**
Focus is on your business idea, not your finances though adequate funds are still required.
- **Entrepreneurial freedom**
Full rights to run and grow your business.
- **Family-friendly**
Your partner and children enjoy the same rights to work, study, and healthcare.
- **Direct path to citizenship**
Permanent residence first, with eligibility for a UK passport after a qualifying period.
- **Global opportunity**
Launch your company in one of the world's strongest economies and most diverse markets.



How Lexen Law Can Help

Navigating this visa requires expertise. At Lexen Law, we act as your strategic partners, guiding you through every stage:

- **Business Plan Drafting:** Creating a professional, compliant, and convincing plan that satisfies endorsing bodies.
- **Endorsement:** Helping you secure approval from a UK endorsing body by tailoring your application.
- **Application Preparation:** Ensuring every document is complete, accurate, and meets Home Office standards.
- **Family Applications:** Supporting your dependants so they can join you seamlessly in the UK.
- **Compliance & Monitoring:** Advising you on progress checks at 12, 24, and 36 months to avoid issues.
- **Long-term Strategy:** Guiding you all the way to ILR and British citizenship.

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