



The Short-stay Visa Waiver Programme

The Short-stay Visa Waiver Programme (the Programme) is to continue until 31 October 2026 and may be amended at any time. In this page “travelling to Ireland” does not mean entry into Ireland (see paragraph 8 for details).

1. What does the Programme do?

You may travel to Ireland on your UK Short Stay Visas without the need to obtain a separate Irish Visa where;

- a. You are not living in the UK (“living in the UK” is having leave to remain in the UK of more than 180 days); and
- b. You are a National (passport holder) of one of the countries included in the Programme (see paragraph 2); and
- c. You have an eligible UK short stay visa (see paragraph 3); and
- d. You have travelled to the UK using this visa; and
- e. You have been granted leave to enter the UK or leave to remain in the UK¹ (of up to 180 days) using this visa (the leave is granted by a UK immigration official); and
- f. Your intended visit to Ireland ends before your leave to remain in the UK, under (e), ends.

¹ “UK leave” is used in this page to mean “leave to enter the UK or leave to remain in the UK”

See [paragraph 8](#) for information about Irish Immigration on arrival.

See [paragraph 12](#) for information on holders of diplomatic or special passports issued by one of the countries listed in paragraph 2.

As long as you meet all of the above rules, you can travel:

- Directly from the UK to Ireland; and
- Indirectly from the UK to Ireland. For example: visit the UK, then travel to another country and then to Ireland (without revisiting the UK).

2. What Nationalities are covered?

These countries will be referred to as “covered countries” in the rest of this page. Nationals of the following countries are included in the Programme:

- **Eastern Europe:** Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, Russian Federation, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine
- **South America:** Columbia, and Peru
- **Middle East:** Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia
- **Other Asian:** India, , Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Peoples Republic of China², Philippines, Thailand, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam



² Nationals of the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau do not require a visa to travel to Ireland.

No other Nationals may travel to Ireland using a UK visa.

3. What type of UK visas are covered³?

Short stay visit visas granted to people seeking leave to enter or remain in the UK (for up to 180 days) except as:

- a. A visitor in transit; or
- b. A visitor for the purpose of marriage or entering into a civil partnership.

Entry Clearance granted to people for the purpose of “Visit” or “Business” seeking leave to enter or remain in the UK (for up to 180 days) except as:

- a. A visitor in transit; or
- b. A visitor for the purpose of marriage or entering into a civil partnership.

People who are living in the UK long term (more than 180 days) cannot use their UK Biometric Residence Permit or their UK visa to travel to Ireland (see paragraph 13). This includes those who may also have a qualifying short stay visa or Entry Clearance.

You can see what a UK visa and Entry Clearance looks like by visiting:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examples-of-uk-visa-vignettes`](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examples-of-uk-visa-vignettes)

Please see [paragraph 15](#) in relation to nationals of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar who hold an Electronic Visa Waiver (EVW) Document issued by the UK.

³ See question (n), towards the bottom of this page, in relation to a possible restriction if you are under 18 years of age.

4. How long will I be able to stay in Ireland under the Programme?

The maximum stay in Ireland will be the shorter of:

- The end of the period of validity of your UK leave to remain; or
- Up to 90 days from your arrival in Ireland.

There are other rules when you travel to Ireland for business. “Rules for working 14 days or less” has [more information](#) [link to <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/coming-to-work-in-ireland/what-are-my-options-for-working-in-ireland/coming-to-work-for-less-than-90-days/short-stay-business-visa/#rules>]

See [paragraph 8](#) for details on Irish Immigration when you arrive in Ireland.

5. Are there circumstances where I would still need an Irish visa?

The need for a visa to visit Ireland is **not** eliminated in all circumstances by this Programme. Nationals from the covered countries will require an Irish visa for travelling to Ireland unless they qualify under this Programme. What the Programme eliminates, once the rules in paragraph 1 are met, is the need to have an Irish visa when visiting Ireland following a visit to the UK.



6. What rules will a person have to fulfil to use the Programme?

You must have landed in and gained lawful entry to the UK, using your current visa, prior to travelling to Ireland. Each distinct period of leave to remain in the UK requires a prior lawful entry by you into the UK before travel to Ireland - no matter what the duration of the UK visa. Lawful entry to the UK will be shown by the appropriate entry stamp of the UK Border Agency. Therefore, you need an Irish visa if you do not pass through immigration in the UK. There is no minimum length of stay in the UK required before travel to Ireland. Your journey to Ireland must take place within the dates provided by your current UK permission.

7. Can I visit Ireland from the UK more than once during my stay?

Yes. You may return to Ireland within the period of validity of the UK leave to remain but will not be able to stay in Ireland for more than 90 days in any one visit. As set out at paragraph 8, the immigration officer at port of entry decides on the length of your stay (if any) in Ireland.

8. What will happen when I arrive in Ireland?

Travelling to Ireland does not mean entry into Ireland and entry into Ireland is granted (or refused) by an Irish immigration officer at the port of entry⁴. If you are travelling to Ireland under the Programme, you will have to satisfy Irish immigration officers as to the purpose of your visit in the normal way. This Programme does not mean that entry into Ireland will be granted by the Irish immigration officer. If you are granted entry to Ireland then your passport will be stamped by the Irish immigration officer with an entry stamp and a date until which you are allowed to stay in Ireland. More information [link to <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/border-management-unit/>]

⁴ If you arrive in Ireland via the border with Northern Ireland, you must report to an Immigration Officer at Burgh Quay, Registration Office, Dublin or local Immigration Office at a Garda Síochána (police) station [link to <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/contact-immigration-service-delivery/#immigration-registration>] as soon as possible.

9. What if I want to visit Northern Ireland (or any other part of the UK)?

Subject to the rules set out on this page, the following examples will apply.

- If arriving in Northern Ireland and travelling to Ireland, only a UK visa will be required.
- If arriving in Northern Ireland, travelling to Ireland and then returning to Northern Ireland, you will not need an Irish visa to travel to Ireland.
- If arriving in Ireland and then travelling to Northern Ireland, both an Irish visa and UK visa will be required.
- If arriving in Ireland, travelling to Northern Ireland and then returning to Ireland, both an Irish visa and a UK visa will be required. In this example, you can use your UK visa for the return visit to Ireland once you can show the appropriate entry stamp from the UK Border Agency.

10. Can I travel home directly from Ireland?

Yes. You may travel out of the Common Travel Area (Ireland and the UK) from Ireland and you must leave Ireland before the expiry of the stamp issued by the immigration officer on your arrival in Ireland.



11. I am living in a country covered by the Programme (and I am a National of another country not covered by the Programme) can I use the Programme?

No. If you are living in a covered country and you are not a National of a covered country, you cannot use the Programme. For example, an Egyptian living in Turkey cannot use the Programme.

12. Can I use the Programme as a holder of a diplomatic or special passport issued by a covered country?

- (a) If you hold a diplomatic or special passport and can travel to the UK without a visa, you may travel to Ireland without an Irish visa under the following rules:
- If you are posted to the UK, you must have the appropriate “exempt vignette” in your passport from the UK authorities.
 - If you are not posted to the UK, you must have a UK entry stamp on your passport.
- (b) If you hold a diplomatic or special passports you can travel to the UK without a visa from the other countries listed in paragraph 2 and not covered in (a):
- You can use the Programme in the same way as holders of ordinary passports from your country.

13. I am a National of a covered country and I am living in the UK, can I use the Programme?

If you are a National of a covered country and you are living legally long-term (more than 180 days) in the UK, you will need an Irish visa to travel to Ireland. However, as part of the Programme, you will not have to pay the visa application fee.

14. How does the Programme work for a National of a covered country who is living in the Schengen area?

If you are living in the Schengen area you can use the Programme in the usual way. In addition, as part of the Programme, if you:

- Are a National of a covered country; and
- Are a long-term (more than 90 days) legal resident in the Schengen area; and
- Do not qualify under the Programme (under the rules in paragraph 1),

you will not have to pay the visa application fee for an Irish short-stay visa you need to travel to Ireland.

15. I am a national of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman or Qatar and have obtained an Electronic Visa Waiver (EVW) document for travel to the UK. Can I avail of the Programme?

If you are a National of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, or Qatar you are able to travel to the UK using an Electronic Visa Waiver (EVW) document which you get online. The Programme operates in a modified way if you are one of those nationals and you have an EVW document for the UK (and not a UK visa or UK Entry Preclearance). You may travel to Ireland without an Irish visa if:

- You have travelled to the UK using the EVW document; and
- You travel directly from the UK to Ireland after using the EVW document to travel to the UK (you cannot travel to Ireland from any other country to Ireland using the EVW document).



If you have an EVW document and wish to use the Programme, then you should have a copy of the EVW document for presentation, on request, at an Irish port of entry.

16. Can I use an Irish visa to go to the UK?

This Programme does not allow you, if are required to have a UK visa to travel to the UK, to travel to the UK using an Irish visa. If you wish to enter the UK (including Northern Ireland), you must be in possession of a valid UK visa. The British Irish Visa Scheme (BIVS) is the exception where you can travel to the UK with an Irish visa. BIVS visas are only available to Chinese nationals (who are living in China) and to Indian nationals (who are living in India). More information on BIVS is available at: <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/coming-to-visit-ireland/british-irish-visa-scheme/>

Do I need an Irish Visa? Some examples:

Note 1: All of these examples assume that the people in question are Nationals of a covered country (see paragraph 2).

Note 2: These examples do not apply to holders of EVW documents (see paragraph 15).

(a) I have an unused UK Visa, but would firstly like to make a trip to Ireland before I go to the UK. I hope to fly into London and then transit (without passing through UK immigration) to Dublin. Do I need an Irish Visa?

A – Yes. You will not have entered the UK before arrival in Ireland, only transit it, and you must have a valid Irish Visa.

(b) I have an unused UK Visa and would like to go to Ireland first. I am hoping to fly direct to Ireland or via a Schengen/3rd country to get there. Do I need an Irish Visa?

A – Yes. You will not have entered the UK before arrival in Ireland and you cannot use the UK visa to travel to Ireland without having used the visa to enter the UK.

(c) I spent two weeks in the UK on holidays on my UK Visa and I would like to visit Ireland for one week before returning to Russia. My visit to Ireland will be within the dates covered by my UK leave. Do I need to have an Irish Visa?

A – No. You have successfully entered the UK and you can use the UK Visa to travel to Ireland. You do not need to apply for an Irish Visa.

(d) I visited the UK 2 months ago and returned to my home country. I want to visit Ireland next month and plan to fly directly to Ireland without going to the UK again. My UK leave is still valid for another 3 months. Do I need to have an Irish Visa?

A – No. You have previously successfully entered the UK on this visa so you can use this visa to travel to Ireland, either travelling direct to Ireland or transiting a UK/Schengen/3rd country.

(e) I am an Indian national with a long-term resident's visa in the UK and would like to visit Ireland. Do I need a visa to do so?

A – Yes. This Programme does not apply to residents of the UK so you must apply for an Irish Visa. However, as part of the Programme, you will not have to pay the visa application fee.

(f) I have spent 150 days in the UK and would like to visit Ireland. Will I get 90 days to stay in Ireland?

A – The length of time you get to stay in a country is decided by the Immigration Officer at the



port of entry. On the basis of a maximum allowable stay of 90 days in Ireland and a combined total of 180 days within the Irish/UK Common Travel Area, you **may be** given a maximum of 30 days to stay in Ireland.

(g) I am organising a group to travel to a Schengen country first, then the UK and, finally, Ireland. Will my group members need Irish Visas?

A – No. They have previously successfully entered the UK on their visas so they can use these visas to travel to Ireland, either travelling direct to Ireland or transiting a UK/Schengen/3rd country.

(h) I am a tour operator and would like to bring a group from one of the countries covered by the Programme to Ireland first and then to the UK. They have not been in the UK previously. Will my group need an Irish Visa?

A – Yes. The members of the group who will not have entered the UK before arrival in Ireland cannot use the UK visa to travel to Ireland.

(i) I have an expired UK visa which I used to travel to the UK and afterwards made a short trip to Ireland on that visa. I have a new UK visa and would like to visit Ireland first using this visa. Do I need an Irish visa on this occasion?

A – Yes. The requirement to have entered the UK applies to each visa issued. So, if you wish to travel to Ireland, you will have to make at enter the UK using the new visa in order to be able to use it to travel to Ireland. If you wish to go to Ireland first, you will have to apply for an Irish visa.

(j) I have a UK visitor visa valid for 5 years which I have used 3 months ago and was given 180 UK leave at that time. I left the UK after 2 weeks. I have since been granted residency in the UK. Can I use my UK visitor visa to travel to Ireland?

A - No. Once you were granted a visa to live in the UK (under any circumstances) you will not qualify for the Programme and you will have to apply for an Irish visa to travel to Ireland.

(k) I spent two weeks in the UK on holidays using my UK Visa. I returned to my home country and my UK leave now has 10 days left. Do I need to have an Irish Visa?

A - No. Bear in mind that the length of time you get to stay in Ireland is decided by the Immigration Officer at the port of entry. The maximum allowable stay in Ireland would be the lower of

- 90 days, or
- The time remaining on your UK leave.

In this instance, the maximum stay in Ireland would be 10 days.

(l) I spent two weeks in the UK on holidays using my UK Visa. I returned to my home country and my UK leave has ended. My UK visa is a multi-entry visa and is valid for another 2 years. Do I need to have an Irish Visa?

A - Yes. As your UK leave has ended, you do not meet all of the rules for the Programme.

(m) I have a multi-entry UK visa and it is valid for 4 years. I used it 3 months ago and was given 180 days UK leave. I went to my home country after 2 weeks and then went to the UK again after another 3 weeks. On that occasion I was given 10 days UK leave. That 10 days is now ended but the original 180 days is not. Do I need an Irish visa?

A – Yes. Your most recent UK leave has ended so you do not meet all of the rules of the Programme.

(n) I have a UK visa endorsed with “Only valid when accompanied by ...”. However, the



person who accompanied me to the UK will not be travelling to Ireland with me. Do I need an Irish visa to travel to Ireland?

A – Yes. As the UK visa is only “valid when accompanied by...” then it is not valid when you are not accompanied by that person(s).

(o) I spent two weeks in the UK on holidays using my UK Visa. I returned to my home country and my UK leave has ended. My UK visa is a multi-entry visa which is valid for another 2 years. I hope to fly into London and then transit (without passing through UK immigration) to Dublin. Do I need an Irish Visa?

A – Yes. As you are not proposing to enter the UK, only transit it, and your UK leave has ended you must have a valid Irish Visa.

(p) I do not need a visa to go to the UK and plan to travel to Ireland from the UK. Do I need an Irish Visa?

A – Yes. As you do not have a UK visa (including where the UK changes its visa rules) you do not qualify for the Programme.



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice