

Youth Mobility Scheme Factsheet

Overview

The Youth Mobility Scheme ('YMS') allows young people between 18 and 30 years of age to come to the UK to live, work, study and travel. It was introduced to the UK Immigration Rules in 2008 when it replaced the previous 'Working Holiday Visa'. The YMS is only open to individuals of certain nationalities but is an excellent opportunity for young people looking to experience life and work in the UK.

A visa granted under the YMS (sometimes known as a 'Tier 5' visa) can be valid for up to 2 years, but cannot be extended. Anyone who wants to remain in the UK following the expiry of their YMS visa will need to apply for a visa in a different category of the Immigration Rules.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to apply for a YMS visa, an applicant must:

- have a valid passport;
- be aged between 18 and 30 years;
- show they have the required level of maintenance funds set by the Home Office. Currently, this is set at £2,530. The funds must have been held in their account for a continuous period of 28 days, with day 28 of that period being within 31 days of applying for the visa;
- not have previously spent time in the UK on the YMS;
- not have any children under 18 who live with them or are financially dependent on them; and
- provide evidence of a negative Tuberculosis screening test if their country of origin is listed on the Home Office's 'Appendix T: Tuberculosis Screening'.

The applicant also must not fall for refusal under the general grounds for refusal. The general grounds for refusal include, amongst others, restrictions on applicants with a criminal record or those who have made false representations to the Home Office.

Current Countries Participating in the YMS

There are currently 9 countries which participate in the YMS. Each country has a 'cap' on the number of applicants who can be granted a visa each year. For 2021, the caps are as follows:

- Australia: 30,000 places
- New Zealand: 13,000 places
- Canada: 6,000 places
- Japan: 1,500 places
- Monaco: 1,000 places
- Taiwan: 1,000 places
- Hong Kong: 1,000 places
- Republic of Korea: 1,000 places
- San Marino: 1,000 places

For certain countries (currently Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong and the Republic of Korea), the Home Office operates an 'Invitation to Apply' arrangement. This means that an applicant first submits an 'expression of interest' to apply for a visa under the YMS, and the Home Office randomly selects who to send an 'invitation to apply' to. The Home Office has discretion as to whether they place a time limit on that invitation and the number of invitations that may be issued in any calendar month.

Application Process and Current Fees

Applicants must submit their applications online via gov.uk. An application for a visa under the YMS scheme currently costs £244.

Applicants must also pay the Immigration Health Surcharge, which for YMS migrants costs £470 per year. The total cost of the visa application is therefore approximately £1,200.