

British Spouse Visa Guide: Requirements, Fees and Process (2026)



Here's a clear, up-to-date overview (2025/2026) of the [British spouse visa](#) and the alternative fiancé visa - covering fees, timescales, pros & cons, likely delays and tips for a successful application.

UK Spouse Visa (Partner Visa):

Application Fees in 2026:

- From outside the UK: £1,938
- From inside the UK: £1,321

Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS):

- £1,035 per year. For a typical spouse visa (2 yrs 9 mos) this can total £3,105.

Biometric Appointment:

- £19.20 for standard visa applications to cover enrollment.

Optional Priority Services:

- Priority (decision in days/weeks): £500
- Super Priority (next working day - UK only): £1,000

Processing Times for British Spouse Visa:



Standard processing (outside UK):

- 12 weeks on average (can be faster or slower).

Inside UK (switch/extension):

- 8 weeks (standard)
- Super Priority: 1–2 working days (if eligible).

Also Read: [UK Spouse Visa for Tunisian](#)

Key Requirements for British Spouse Visa:



You must prove all the following:

- Genuine and subsisting relationship.
- Sponsor meets financial requirements (usually £29,000+ per year).
- English language requirement (CEFR A1).
- Adequate accommodation in the UK.

Failing any requirement is a common cause for refusal.

UK Fiancé Visa (Prospective Marriage Visa):

This visa lets you come to the UK to marry your partner, then switch to a UK spouse visa.

UK Fiancé Visa Fees:

Most recent figures put the fiancé visa fee at around:

- £1,846 – £1,938 application fee
- No IHS required initially (because the visa is only 6 months).

Optional priority services may be available for extra cost.

Total cost is typically lower upfront than a spouse visa - but you must marry and switch visas inside the UK which triggers additional fees and IHS later.

Processing Times:

- Standard processing: 8–12 weeks (sometimes up to 24 weeks) depending on location and Home Office workload.
- Priority options can reduce this significantly where available.

Validity:

6 months - you must marry and switch to a spouse visa during this period.

Fiancé Visa vs Spouse Visa - Which Is Better?

Factor	Fiancé Visa	Spouse Visa
Work Rights	Cannot work	Can work
Path to settlement (ILR)	Time on this visa does not count	Counts toward 5-year ILR requirement
Upfront Cost	Lower	Higher
Timing Flexibility	Must marry within 6 months	No timing constraint
Processing Risk	Two stages (more complexity)	One Application

The choice depends on your situation:

When fiancé visa may be better

- You haven't married yet and need time to plan a wedding.
- You're sure you'll marry within 6 months and can prepare his/her application thoroughly.

When spouse visa may be better

- Already married.
- You want to work immediately.
- You want to avoid paying twice in two different applications.

Also Read: [Know How To Apply for UK Fiance Visa](#)

Delays & Risks - What Causes Them?

Common delay triggers:

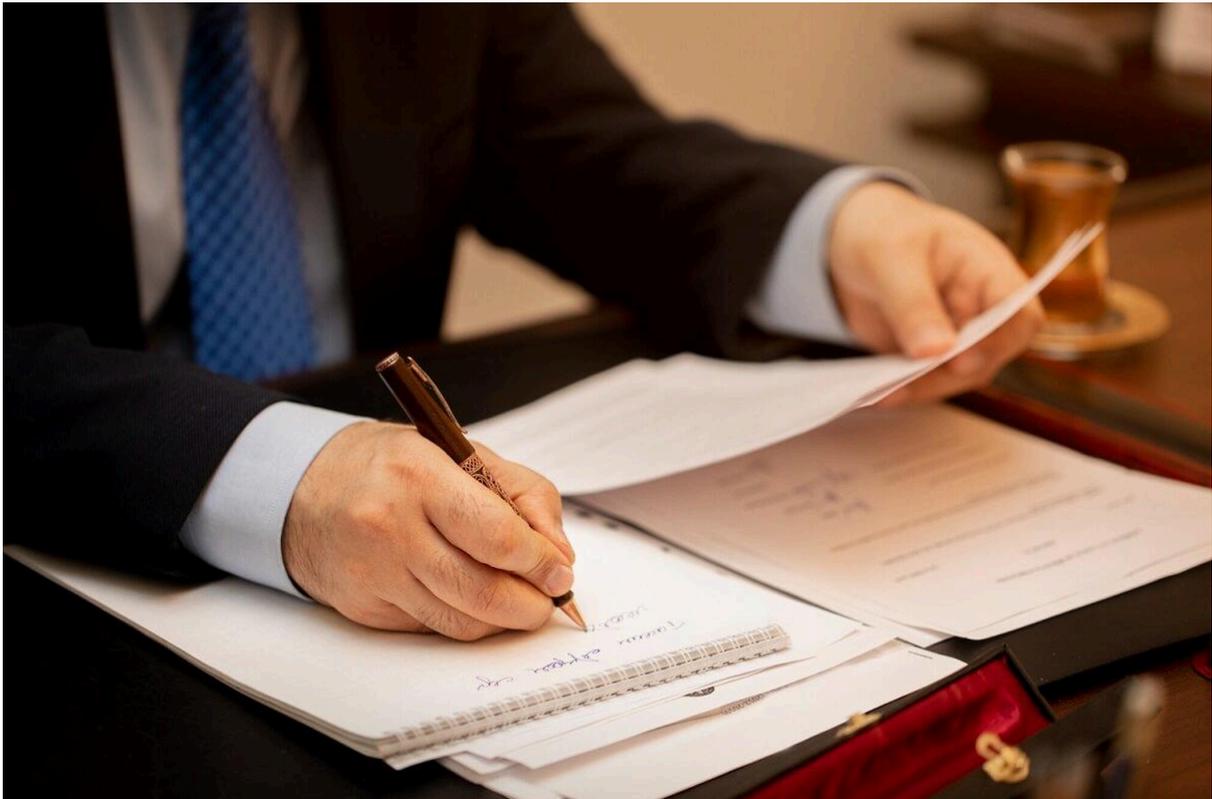
- Missing or unclear evidence (relationships, finances).

- Failing to meet financial or English requirements.
- Home Office backlog and random quality checks.

Priority services can speed decisions, but don't improve the chances of approval - they just expedite your current timeline.

Immigration Tips to Maximise Your Chance of Success:

Organise Clear Documentation:



- Relationship history (photos, chats, travel together).
- Financial evidence (payslips, bank statements).
- Accommodation proof.

Meet Every Requirement:

- Financial threshold.
- English language.
- Official translations for all non-English documents.

Prepare Early:

- Start gathering bank statements, certificates, etc., well before you plan to apply.

Also Read: [Unlocking Success: Essential Tips for a Smooth Spouse Visa Application](#)

Why instructing a immigration solicitor can be a very good idea?



The rules are strict, technical, and unforgiving:

UK spouse visas aren't decided on vibes or common sense - they're decided on [immigration rules](#) and caseworker guidance.

One missing document or tiny mismatch can mean:

- Refusal
- Loss of £5k–£10k in fees
- Months of delay
- Forced separation

An adviser's job is to make sure:

- You meet every requirement on paper
- Evidence is presented in the exact way the Home Office expects

Financial evidence is where most refusals happen:

This is the biggest danger zone.

Common DIY mistakes:

- Wrong payslip period
- Bank statements not matching payslips
- Employer letters missing required wording
- Unexplained deposits
- Using the wrong income category

An Immigration Solicitor:

- Chooses the correct financial route
- Checks your documents line by line
- Spots problems before submission
- Explains how to fix issues legally

Caseworkers do not “ask for clarification” - they refuse.

They know how caseworkers actually think:

Immigration advisers work with:

- Current Home Office guidance
- Real refusal reasons
- Patterns in delays and rejections

That means they know:

- What evidence is strong vs. ignored
- How much is enough
- What looks suspicious to a caseworker
- How to explain anything unusual

A UK visa solicitor can:

- Draft legal representations
- Reference case law
- Explain context in a way that holds weight
- Turn a borderline case into a strong one

They handle strategy, not just paperwork:

An [immigration consultant](#) helps answer questions like:

- Spouse visa vs fiancé visa?
- Apply now or wait 2 months?
- Priority or standard?

- Switch in-country or apply from abroad?
- Which documents to emphasise?

Bad strategy = wasted money, even if you qualify.

If refused, they know what to do next

If the worst happens:

- They can assess whether to appeal, reapply or do an administrative review
- They know how to fix the refusal reason
- They reduce the risk of repeated refusals (which get harder to overcome)

Conclusion:

[My Legal Services](#) are experts in helping you through each stage of your spouse or finance visa application to the UK. Call us at [020 3732 4736](tel:02037324736) or drop us an [email](#).

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<https://mylegalservices.co.uk/british-spouse-visa-guide-requirements-fees-process/>