

NON-UK PLAYER AND/OR COACH VISA ELIGIBILITY GRID – FOR SEASON 2026-27.

The following table outlines the UK visa requirements for any individual that does not hold a British passport and intends to play or coach hockey in England and Wales from 2026-27 onwards. It is provided for guidance for player registration and eligibility purposes. If you require immigration guidance you must contact UK Visas and Immigration or a UK immigration law specialist. nb this is draft and EH will consult on a key decision regarding the levels of application see green, pink and orange boxes below.

Club Level	Permissions and Visas that permit work or participation in sport	Definition of a Professional Sportsperson (UK Visas & Immigration - UKVI)
All Club Grades	<p>No Work Restrictions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU/EEA with pre-settled/settled status (see primrose box below) Irish passport holder Certificate of right of abode UK Ancestry & UK Ancestry Dependant Family Member (spouse/partner of a pre-settled or a settled person or of a British Citizen) Settlement (Indefinite leave to enter/remain) Refugee 	<p>A player or coach falling within any of the following circumstances will be a professional:</p> <p><i>(nb for purposes of UKVI Level to be agreed is/are determined as professional level leagues in hockey)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> player or coach at a professional level whether paid or unpaid receives payment, including payment in kind, and that payment covers all, or the majority of, their costs for travelling to, and living in, the UK, or has received such payment within the previous 4 years currently registered to a professional sports team or has been so registered within the previous 4 years has represented their nation, national, state or regional team, within the previous 2 years, including all youth and development age groups from under 17s upwards has an established international reputation in sport engages an agent/representative or has engaged an agent/representative in the last 12 months is providing services as a sportsperson or coach at any level of sport, unless they are doing so at a charity event.
Agreed Level <i>(eg EHL Premier Division, EHL Division 1 N&S, EHL Conference, Area Premier Division or None. EH will set the final level these apply at following consultation)</i>	<p>Work restricted to a club registered with a Home Office sponsor licence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Sportspersons visa (see grey box below) and separate EH policy 	
Divisions below Agreed Level <i>(eg EHL Premier Division, EHL Division 1 N&S, EHL Conference, Area Premier Division or None. EH will set the final level these apply at following consultation)</i>	<p>Players who are not classed as a Professional Sportsperson (see orange box opposite) and who hold one of the following visas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Mobility and other Temporary Work routes Students[^] Visitor Other graduate and work and dependant routes listed in the Home Office Immigration Rules. <p>^{(^)Students and school pupils who are classified as a Professional Sportsperson may participate in BUCS/Schools Championships but not EHL or Area League hockey unless they also have an International Sportsperson's visa.}</p>	<p>Please see above UKVI's definition of a Professional Sportsperson for what is not considered amateur. (nb NGBs are not able to vary these)</p>

IMPORTANT NOTES.

- It is illegal to engage a player who has one of the visas as shown in the purple box at any level if they receive any payment, expense or benefit in kind, including flights, accommodation, match fees, or sponsorship.
- Clubs must check that every player and coach has the legal right to work in the UK **before** any engagement begins (with evidence of eligibility as per blue box above). Failure to do so can result in fines of up to £60,000 per individual found to be engaged illegally, reputational damage, and for clubs at tbc level sponsor licence revocations

The International Sportsperson route of the points-based system, as determined by UK Visas & Immigration, is for elite sportspeople and coaches who:

are internationally established and whose employment will make a significant contribution to the development of their sport at the highest level in the UK and who will base themselves in the UK and will be filling a post that cannot be filled by a suitable British citizen or person who has a right to enter or stay in the UK without restriction.

Pre-settled/settled status usually applies to an EU passport holder who was in the UK before 30.06.21

For more info see <https://www.gov.uk/sportsperson-visa>, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sponsorship-sporting-code-of-practice>.

For queries contact competitions.info@englandhockey.co.uk.