



[What You Will Find In This Guide](#)

The COP26 Coalition has established a Visa Support Service in order to assist people from predominantly Global South countries who are applying for visas for COP26. This document is part of our Public Resource Center, and should serve as a comprehensive guide to filing your visitor visa application for COP26.

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Introduction to the Visit Visa Category

Many people from the global south will need to apply for a Standard Visit Visa in order to travel to the UK for COP26. You can confirm if you need a UK visa by [clicking on this link](#).

Even if you do not need to obtain a visa before entering the UK, you should still be prepared to answer questions at the UK border, including the length and purpose of your trip. We suggest you have comprehensive supporting documents available to help things run as smoothly as possible. Examples of these documents can be found on pages 2-3 of this guidebook. You should also be prepared to explain when you are leaving the UK and will ideally be able to provide evidence of this, for example in the form of return flight tickets.

A standard visitor visa will allow you to stay in the UK for up to 6 months.

In an ideal world, after you have had an appointment to confirm your biometrics (a process more fully explained on pages 4-5) it should take around 3 weeks to receive an answer from the Home Office about whether or not your application was a success. However, we suggest filing your application as soon as possible. Complicated cases can take up to 5 weeks to receive an answer, and it can take 1-2 weeks to secure a biometric appointment in your home country before that.

Understanding Accreditation and Finding the Correct Visa Application

Receiving accreditation means that you have been given a badge by the UNFCCC to attend COP as a delegate (the Blue Zone) or to participate in civil society events (the Green Zone). It is important to note that not everyone who is trying to come to the UK for COP will have accreditation. Legally, it is still possible for you to be granted a visit visa by the UK government even if you do not have accreditation. However, people with accreditation and people without accreditation will need to apply through different visa application forms. This is because the Home Office has removed the application fee for individuals who hold UNFCCC accreditation.

- **Option 1:** If you have received UNFCCC accreditation, please apply for a visa using this link [here](#). You should have already been given an official delegate reference number by the UNFCCC. You will use this number on your application.
- **Option 2:** if you know you will NOT receive UNFCCC accreditation, please apply for a visa using this link [here](#).

Application Process

The following section outlines in detail the 8 steps involved in submitting your visa application and travelling to the UK.

1: Gather Supporting Documentation

Supporting documents are documents which help to confirm your identity, reason for travel, evidence that you are a genuine visitor, and evidence that you have personal economic ties in your country of residence. It is important to have these documents prepared *before* you submit your visa application in case the Home Office requests to see them. These documents must also be officially translated into English.

List of Supporting Documents

Category	Information about Specific Documents
Proof of Identity	Valid Passport - the passport must have at least one page that is blank on both sides for the visa to be endorsed.
Evidence of Reason to Travel	<p>Letter of invitation to COP. This can take the form of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An official letter of invitation from the UNFCCC (if you are a delegate)• Letters of Support from the network, organization, or constituency group that is hosting you in the UK and/or supporting you from your home country. This is not required, but will make your case stronger.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Template letters can be found in the Visa Service's Public Resource Center○ It is also possible to provide evidence of correspondence with organizations securing your invitation. <p>You may also provide sufficient evidence of funds for flights and accommodation. Where any homestay networks are being used, accommodation evidence must be shown.</p> <p><i>It is okay if you have not secured flights or accommodation yet. What the Home Office needs to see is proof that you have secured funds that will be used to support these things. If you are not using personal funds, you will need evidence that you are being financially supported for this trip.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our Public Resource Center has template examples of how this support can be shown.

<p>Evidence of Being a Genuine Visitor</p>	<p>The Home Office wants to ensure that once you enter the country you will not disappear to become an illegal resident.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bank statements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you do not have a bank account, you must share any documents you have which show financial support from friends, family, or organizations who you mobilize with ○ For example: If someone else is financially supporting you in respect of your trip, it is important to provide their bank statements for the past three months, a supporting letter from them and a copy of their passport ID page. <p>Bank statements must be shown for the last 6 months and show income or savings. Statements can be downloaded electronically but must show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the date it was issued ● your name (or the account holders name) ● the name of the bank or building society ● balance on the account <p>You must be able to show that you are able to meet the cost of any return flight and your expenses whilst in the UK. The UK government does not state how much money you need to show, however, the amount that you show will need to be enough to support you - without needing to access funds from the UK government or working in the UK to cover costs. It is advisable that you show as much as must funding evidence as possible,</p> <p>However neither you nor anyone providing you with financial support should place a large amount of money into your own account right before you submit your application purely to demonstrate that funds are present. The government may mistrust this.</p>
<p>Evidence of Personal and Economic Ties to Country of Residence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pay slips and/or letter from employer/university/etc... ● Evidence of home ownership ● Copies of passports of people supporting you financially ● Evidence of family ties such as: marriage certificate/birth certificates of any children, supporting letters from friends and family in country of residence ● Copies of passport ID pages for anyone who is giving you a supporting letter from your country of residence. ● If you have any other ongoing commitments in your country of residence, this will be helpful for your application.

Special Note: Document Translation

Where any documents provided are not in English or Welsh, you must provide 2 copies of the documents. One must be in the original language, and the other must be a full translation that can be independently verified. The translation must be dated and include:

- Confirmation that it is an accurate translation of the original document;
- The full name and signature of the translator or an authorised official of the translation company; and
- The translator or translation company's contact details.

2: Prepare an Online Application Form

While the earliest you can apply for a Visa is 3 months before you intend to travel, for COP26, that start date has long since passed. It is urged that you apply for your visa as quickly as possible.

As stated in the 'Understanding Accreditation' Section of this guide, you will need to submit your application through an online portal. Which portal you use depends on if you have a UNFCCC badge.

- **Option 1:** If you have received UNFCCC accreditation, please apply for a visa using this link [here](#). You should have already been given an official delegate reference number by the UNFCCC. You will use this number on your application.
- **Option 2:** if you know you will NOT receive UNFCCC accreditation, please apply for a visa using this link [here](#).

3: Submit and Pay the Online Application Fee

If you are a delegate and/or you have a UNFCCC badge, you will not have to pay an application fee. If you are not a delegate, you will have to pay the application fee. If you are worried about whether your application will be processed in time, and you have the funds, this is where you can choose to expedite (speed up) your application. Please be aware however that it is not possible for individuals from all countries to speed up their application processing time. For example, it is possible to expedite your application if you live in Tunisia, but not if you live in Kenya.

4: Book a Visa Application Appointment

You will need to book an appointment to give your fingerprints and photograph once your application has been submitted online. There will normally be a visa centre in the country where you are applying, however some countries do not have a centre that is open at the moment. For Example if you are living in Haiti you will need to travel to the Dominican Republic to attend your appointment.

Once you have submitted your application, you will be taken to a page titled: What To Do Next. Please follow the instructions on this page. There is a section which will help you book your biometric appointment. You will select your country and/or your local area and be able to make an appointment.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, many biometric appointments take longer to schedule. Please understand that you may only be able to book an appointment for 1-2 weeks after you submit your visa application.

This is partially why it is so important to submit your application as soon as possible. Your application is only reviewed by the Home Office *after* you have had your biometric appointment.

Please note that this is the point in the process where you can choose to pay for additional support services. This includes document scanning and assistance during your appointment.

5: Attend Your Visa Application Appointment

This is where you will need to provide your biometric data. The biometric data you will be give at your appointment will be: finger prints ("finger scans") and a digital photograph of your face. These two things are explained in more depth below.

Finger Scans: The Visa Application Centre will take scans of your finger prints. This is an electronic process which does not require the use of any ink, liquid or chemicals. It is important to note that any decoration (such as henna), or any cuts or other markings on the fingertips can prevent the successful capture of the required finger scans.

Digital Photograph: The Visa Application Centre will also take a digital photograph of your face and you should not wear sunglasses, a hat or any other head covering (unless for cultural or religious reasons). Please note that any cuts, bruises or abrasions on the face may prevent the image from being successfully taken.

You should also bring all of your supporting documentation (as listed above) with you to your appointment. This document will demonstrate that:

- You will leave the UK at the end of your visit;
- You are a delegate of COP26 or COY16 or another fringe event
- You will not live in the UK for extended periods through frequent successive visits, or make the UK your main home;
- You are able to support yourself and your dependants during your trip (or have funding from someone else to support you);
- You are able to pay for your return or onward journey (or have funding from someone else to pay for the journey)

Please see the full list of documents listed above

Important Note: **Your biometric appointment is *not* an interview.** These are appointments run by private companies on behalf of the UK Government. You should not be asked any personal questions.

On Arrival you should be asked to provide your passport and appointment letter to confirm who you are. You will then be asked to provide all of the documents you have for your visa application and finally asked if you are happy for the application to be sent to the UK Government.

If you are asked any other questions at your appointment, please answer politely and afterwards please email us at visa@cop26coalition.org to detail what questions you were asked.

6: Receive a Decision on Your Application

You should be notified by email when a decision has been made by the Home Office. Please watch your email very closely as many of you will not be informed until very soon before COP is supposed to start. You will then need to wait until you can collect your passport or it will be posted out to you. Your passport should now have a Vignette (sticker) visa inside one page. If you have any questions about the visa you are issued please take a picture of it and email it to us to check for you.

7: If Your Visa is Approved, Check COVID-19 Requirements For Travel

It is recommended that you understand the implications of your COVID-19 restrictions well before you receive an answer from your application, however, it is important to check once you have been given an answer to make sure that they have not changed. Even if your visa is granted, the COVID-19 restrictions may prevent you from entering the UK.

To understand more about Covid-19 travel restrictions, please look at the COVID-19 Guide and the Travel Guide in our [Public Resource Center](#).

If your visa is *not* approved: If you believe that your visa refusal was an act of discrimination from the Home Office, please let us know using [this form](#). We are using this information to track any patterns of discrimination that arise, so that we may better call out the UK government and the UNFCCC for the inequalities and injustices present at COP26. Please also share this form with your networks.

8: Travel to the UK

Please read our in-depth Travel and Immigration Guidelines to understand the rules and challenges you may face as you try to enter the country. This guide will be published on the 15th of September, 2021. You will be able to find it in our Public Resource Center. This guide has information on:

- The documents you should carry
- COVID-19
- What to do before you fly
- What to do as you board the plane and interact with airline staff
- Arriving in the UK - dealing with immigration and customs
- What you may need to do after you go through customs, whether it be testing, quarantining, or isolating.

When you go through customs, please make sure that your visa vignette (the stamp in your passport) is stamped by the immigration officials when you enter the country.

Fees and Processing Times

Cost: £95 for a standard UK six month visitor visa.

Please note that additional costs may also be incurred at the Visa Application Centre e.g. photocopying fees/courier fees/appointment fees etc.

We cannot guarantee how long it will take the Home Office to process any application. Although the Home Office provides a guideline of roughly 3 weeks for a decision, processing times will vary subject to the country from which you apply, in addition to other delays such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and any complexities surrounding your application.

Please note that if your visit visa application is refused there is no right of appeal unless the grounds of appeal are on human rights grounds, which is unlikely to apply if the purpose of your trip is to attend COP26. If your visit visa is refused, the simplest way to deal with this is to likely to be to re-apply, submitting a new application form with new evidence, paying a new fee. This should also deal with the reasons for the refusal. Should your application be refused, please let us know so we may provide advice regarding the most appropriate course of action.

What You Can and Cannot Do in The UK as a Visitor

Under the terms of the visitor visa, you are able to attend a conference, such as COP26, or seminars, in addition to visiting family and friends.

It is very important that you do not undertake any work (paid or unpaid) outside of the conference. You will be allowed to report back to your organisations throughout your time in the UK. you are also allowed to attend other meetings relating to your work and to COP26 while you are in the UK as you would be expected to by your organization at home.

You are also allowed to take part in other 'tourist' activities such as sightseeing.

The UK Government has a very strict policy on working in the UK as a Visitor

Please note that while in the UK as a visitor you cannot:

1. Do paid or unpaid work for a UK company or as a self-employed person;
2. Live in the UK for long periods of time through frequent visits;
3. Claim public funds (benefits);
4. Do a course of study that lasts longer than 6 months; or
5. Marry or register a civil partnership, or give notice of marriage or civil partnership (you will need the marriage visitor visa instead).

Important Note: We understand that for many of you, the COP26 conference is considered work, which makes these rules seem misleading. But do not worry, all activities that you will partake in relating to COP26 are allowed under your visit visa, whether it be formal delegate activities or informal activist mobilizations.