



# SELF SPONSORSHIP GUIDE 2025

Start or bring your business  
to the UK with ease

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# Foreword

Welcome to the UK Self-Sponsorship Guide. Whether you're an experienced business owner or just starting, this guide is here to help you understand how to set up and grow your business in the UK using the Self-Sponsorship route. We've designed this guide to be clear, straightforward, and valuable, even if you're new to the UK's immigration and business processes.

At A Y & J Solicitors, we know that dealing with immigration rules can be challenging, especially when you're also trying to focus on your business. With over 15 years of experience, we've helped many entrepreneurs successfully navigate the Self-Sponsorship process. This route allows you to start and run your own business in the UK and offers a path to long-term residency and citizenship for you and your family.

This guide isn't just about the steps you need to take; it's about ensuring you feel confident and informed at every stage. We've included practical tips, real-life examples, and clear instructions to help you understand the process and make the best decisions for your situation.

We believe the Self-Sponsorship route is among the best options for business-minded individuals like you. It gives you the freedom to lead your business on your terms and the flexibility to shape your future in the UK. By the end of this guide, we aim for you to feel ready and able to take the next steps towards making your UK business dreams a reality.



# A Message from Our Director



“  
**Empowering immigrant business owners to thrive in the UK market.**

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Dear Future UK Entrepreneurs,

As someone who has handled the complexities of establishing a business in the UK, I understand your challenges, especially as a foreigner. My journey began when I moved to the UK, driven by ambition and the desire to create opportunities for myself and others like me. I encountered numerous obstacles in the immigration process, which inspired me to pursue a path in immigration law.

Many of my peers have faced similar struggles, often feeling lost in a seemingly overwhelming system. This experience ignited my passion for helping immigrant business owners thrive in the UK market without the friction that usually accompanies the immigration process. My mission is to empower you to take control of your future through the Self-Sponsorship route, allowing you to establish your business without needing a UK sponsor.

At A Y & J Solicitors, we have dedicated over 15 years to guiding clients through the Self-Sponsorship process. While a wealth of information is available online, not all are accurate or applicable to your unique situation. After hours of brainstorming sessions and data collection, my team and I designed this guide to provide reliable, tailored advice to safeguard your journey and help you make informed decisions.

In addition to my legal practice, I share insights through mainstream media outlets and educational platforms, including webinars and YouTube videos, to ensure that you have access to the knowledge you need. My expertise spans various immigration routes, including Sponsor licence, Skilled Worker Visas, and more. I also advise UK employers on compliance with the Home Office regulations.

This guide is not just a roadmap; it reflects our commitment to your success. We have included practical advice, client testimonials, and insights to empower you to achieve your UK business ambitions confidently.

Warm regards,  
**Yash Dubal**  
Director, A Y & J Solicitors



# Your Blueprint to UK Business Success: Mastering the Self-Sponsorship Route

Imagine the freedom to run your own business in the UK, all while securing your family's future in one of the world's most stable economies. The Self-Sponsorship Route offers exactly that, and it's uniquely tailored for entrepreneurs like you who want to take control of their destiny. While the term "Self-Sponsorship Visa" may not officially exist, this route combines a Sponsor Licence and a Skilled Worker Visa, allowing you to sponsor yourself and work for your company in the UK.

Here's how it works: You start by incorporating a UK company, allowing you to apply for a Sponsor Licence. Once that's secured, you can apply for a Skilled Worker Visa, effectively allowing you to sponsor yourself to live and work in the UK. This route is accessible even if you own 100% of the company's shares, and you don't need to meet a high-earner salary threshold, making it a flexible and attractive option.



But it's not just about running a business. The Self-Sponsorship Route also allows you to bring your spouse and children under 18 to the UK, with a clear path to permanent residency for your entire family. There's no minimum or maximum investment requirement, and you can operate in any sector, provided your business is actively trading and legitimate.

This guide will give you all the comprehensive information you need to pursue the Self-Sponsorship Route successfully. From setting up your business to meeting all the legal requirements, this guide ensures you're fully equipped to make your move to the UK successful.





## Why Choose the Self-Sponsorship Route?

Starting or expanding a business in the UK presents exciting opportunities but also comes with its share of challenges. As an entrepreneur, you might find navigating the complex visa options available to move to the UK and establish your venture complicated.

Traditional visa routes often require sponsorship from a UK-based company, limiting your control over your business's direction. For family business owners, your business model might not fit the "innovative" criteria required by other visa routes. Similarly, due to its stringent endorsement requirements, the Global Talent visa might not suit experienced professionals.

If your ultimate goal is to settle in the UK, other routes like the Global Business Mobility (GBM) route may not offer the long-term stability and flexibility you need. The Self-Sponsorship Route, however, is a game-changer. It allows you to manage your immigration journey while setting up and growing your business on your terms. It offers a clear path to settlement, enabling you to lead and expand your venture without the restrictions of traditional visas.

This guide bridges the gap by providing you with reliable information, practical advice, and the tools necessary to succeed in the UK market. Choosing the Self-Sponsorship Route allows you to take control of your future and turn your business dreams into reality in the UK.



# Why the Self-Sponsorship Route is the Superior Choice: A Comparative Overview

When considering your options for establishing a business and settling in the UK, it is important to weigh the benefits and limitations of each visa route available to entrepreneurs. Some visas have expired or no longer accept new applications, making the Self-Sponsorship Route even more appealing.

Visa Option	Who It's For	Endorsement Required?	Validity	Path to Settlement	Termination Risk
Self-Sponsorship Route	Business owners seeking full control	No	4 years	Yes - through your own business	No - You're your own sponsor
<small>Now Closed for New Applicants</small> Investor Visa (Golden Visa)	High-net-worth individuals	No - based on investment	Conditional on investment	Yes - after 2-5 years	Yes - If investment requirements aren't met
Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur Visa	Recent graduates with a business idea	Yes - from a university or DIT	2 years	Indirect Switch to other visas	Yes - If endorsement or visa conditions aren't met
Startup Visa	New entrepreneurs	Yes - from an approved body	2 years	No direct path	Yes - If endorsement is revoked
Innovator Founder Visa	Entrepreneurs with a unique, scalable idea	Yes - from an approved body	3 years	Yes - after 3 years	Yes - If endorsement isn't renewed
Global Talent Visa	Exceptional talent in specific fields	Yes - from a recognised body	Up to 5 years	Yes - after 3-5 years	Yes - If endorsement is withdrawn
Expansion Worker Visa (GBM)	Senior managers or specialists setting up in UK	Yes - from the employer	Up to 12 months, extendable	No direct path	Yes - If endorsement is withdrawn
<small>Now Closed for New Applicants</small> Sole Representative Visa	Employees of overseas media organisations	Yes - from the employer	3 years, extendable	Yes - after 5 years	Yes - If endorsement is withdrawn



# Overcoming Challenges: Your Path to Success

Applying for the Self-Sponsorship Route can be complex, but with the right guidance, it becomes manageable. Here's a look at the common challenges and how our guide can help you overcome them:

- **Bureaucratic Maze:** The process of obtaining the right to live and work in the UK can be filled with paperwork and strict requirements.
- **Complex Regulations:** Long waiting periods and unclear guidance can make it difficult to stay on track.
- **Limited Control:** Traditional visas often require sponsorship, restricting your ability to lead and grow your business independently.
- **Facing the Unknown:** Starting fresh in a new country can be intimidating, leading to uncertainty and doubt.
- **Fear of Failure:** Worries about investing time and money into an uncertain venture can be paralyzing.
- **Overwhelming Decisions:** Making critical choices—like selecting the right visa, finding a business location, and ensuring compliance—can feel overwhelming.

## Our guide simplifies this journey:

- **Tailored for Entrepreneurs:** Specifically designed for business owners looking to take the Self-Sponsorship Route.
  - **Simplified Steps:** Clear, step-by-step instructions that make the application process manageable.
  - **Practical Tips:** Essential requirements and common pitfalls are highlighted to help you avoid mistakes.
- 💡 **Inspiring Stories:** Real-life success stories to reassure you that achieving your goals is possible.
  - 💡 **Empowerment:** Providing the confidence and knowledge necessary to establish your business in the UK.

You don't have to face this journey alone. With our guide, you can turn what seems daunting into a successful and fulfilling experience. Let's get started on making your business dreams a reality in the UK!





# Eligibility and Requirements: Are You Ready?

## Who Can Apply?

To be eligible for the Self-Sponsorship route, you need to meet several specific criteria:

### 01 Age and English Proficiency:

- You must be at least 18 years old and demonstrate proficiency in English at a minimum of CEFR Level B1.

### 02 Genuine Business Intent:

- You must have a real intent to establish or take over a business in the UK. The business should be viable and contribute to the UK economy.

### 03 Financial Preparedness:

- Be prepared to cover start-up costs from £25,000, with total estimated funds for the first year around £150,000 depending on your business type and salary allocations.

### 04 Established UK Company:

- Your company must be active and trading, and you need to secure a Sponsor Licence to hire yourself as a skilled worker.

### 05 Key Personnel:

- Appoint key personnel (such as an Authorising Officer or Key Contact) who is a UK resident and settled.



# The Self-Sponsorship Journey: A Clear Path to Success

Embarking on the journey of establishing a business in the UK through the Self-Sponsorship Route is a significant step toward achieving your entrepreneurial dreams. This section will walk you through each critical phase, from setting up your UK company to securing the necessary visas, ensuring a smooth and successful transition into the UK market.

## Step 1 Establish Your UK Company

The first step in your journey is to establish your UK company. Here's how you can achieve this:

### 01 Choosing a Company Name:

- Your company name must be unique, non-offensive, and free from trademark infringements. This name will be your brand's identity in the UK, so select one that resonates with your business vision.

### 02 Understanding Limited Company Basics:

- A limited company by shares is recommended as it limits your liability. This structure ensures that your assets remain protected, separating your finances from your business's.

### 03 Appointing Directors and Shareholders:

- Directors run the company, while shareholders own it. These roles can be filled by the same individuals, making the management and ownership of your business more streamlined.

### 04 Registered Office Address:

- You need a legal address in the UK, such as a registered office. This address will be publicly visible on Companies House and will serve as your business's official correspondence address.

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## 05 Shares and Shareholdings:

- Decide on the number of shares your company will issue and their value. This decision is crucial as it defines your company's ownership structure and provides financial flexibility.

## 06 Persons with Significant Control (PSC):

- Identify individuals who hold more than 25% of the shares or significantly influence the company. This is a legal requirement and must be submitted to Companies House.

## 07 Drafting Articles of Association:

- The Articles of Association govern the internal workings of your company. You may use model articles or customise them to suit your business needs better.

## 08 Final Steps:

- After your company is formed, opening a business bank account and preparing for annual filings is essential. External advice from an accountant or lawyer is highly recommended to ensure compliance with all UK regulations.

## Timeline for Company Registration:

**Company Registration:** 1-2 weeks (with the help of a registered UK accountant).

**How A Y & J Solicitors Can Help:** We provide comprehensive support throughout the company registration process, ensuring all legal requirements are met efficiently. Our team can also connect you with trusted accountants to facilitate a seamless setup.

## Step 2 Build a Strong Human Resources Foundation

Your company's HR framework is the backbone of your business operations. Building a strong HR system is essential to complying with UK employment laws and creating a thriving workplace culture. This involves crafting comprehensive HR policies and procedures that align with UK regulations and foster a positive work environment.

### Timeline for HR Compliance Setup:

**Development of HR Policies:** 2 days (ensuring full compliance with UK laws).

**How A Y & J Solicitors Can Help:** As part of our comprehensive Self-Sponsorship package, we provide a free HRMS (Human Resource Management System) to ensure seamless and ongoing compliance with all HR requirements.

## Step 3 Secure Your Certificate of Sponsorship and Skilled Worker Visa

With your Sponsor Licence in hand, the next crucial step is to obtain a Defined Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS). This document is key to your Skilled Worker Visa application, which allows you to work and lead your UK business legally.

### Key Points about the Certificate of Sponsorship:

- 01 Defined Certificate of Sponsorship:** Required for workers applying from overseas. The process involves submitting a specific application to the Home Office, and it typically gets approved within one working day, though delays can occur if further information is needed.
- 02 Undefined Certificate of Sponsorship:** Used for workers already in the UK or those applying under other routes. It's crucial to manage the allocation and renewal of CoS carefully, as unused certificates expire annually.
- 03 Usage and Validity:** A Certificate of Sponsorship must be used within three months of issuance, and the sponsored worker can apply for their visa up to three months before their intended start date.

## Estimated Financial Preparedness:

- **Initial Investment:** £25,000
- **First-Year Operational Costs:** £150,000

Financial Aspect	Estimated Cost
Visa Fees (5 years)	£8,500 for the main applicant
Operational Costs (1 year)	£150,000

**How A Y & J Solicitors Can Help:** We guide you through every step of the CoS process, from application to allocation, ensuring that all documentation is correctly prepared and submitted on time. Our expertise minimises delays and ensures your Skilled Worker Visa application proceeds smoothly.





# The Benefits of Self-Sponsorship: Why This Route is Right for You

Choosing the Self-Sponsorship route offers a range of benefits tailored to meet your entrepreneurial goals and ensure long-term stability:

## 01 Path to Settlement and Citizenship:

- Potential for permanent residency in 5 years and subsequent British citizenship.

## 02 Family First:

- Spouses, partners, and children under 18 can accompany you, offering them the same rights to live, work, and study in the UK.

## 03 Entrepreneurial Freedom:

- Applicable to any business type, allowing you significant flexibility without the constraints of specific sector requirements.

## 04 No Fixed Investment Requirement:

- Unlike other visa routes, Self-Sponsorship does not require a specific investment amount, making it accessible for various business sizes.

## 05 No Job Creation Mandate:

- This increases accessibility as there is no mandatory job creation quota, allowing you to scale your business at your own pace.

## 06 Enhanced Quality of Life:

- Access to free healthcare under the NHS, free education for children, and a safe, well-developed infrastructure.



# Common Pitfalls to Watch Out For Before Applying for the Self-Sponsorship Route

When pursuing the Self-Sponsorship route to establish your business in the UK, you must be aware of potential challenges that could complicate your application. By addressing these key areas upfront, you'll be better positioned for success.



## Ensuring Sponsorship Compliance

The UK Home Office has strict rules for sponsor licence holders and may conduct random audits. To avoid penalties or losing your licence, keep thorough records and stay on top of all reporting obligations. Regularly updating your knowledge of immigration rules and working with legal advisors can help ensure you're always in compliance, especially if you're selected for an inspection.



## Preparing for Compliance Visits

The Home Office may conduct an in-depth visit when you apply for a sponsor licence, closely examining your business operations. To prepare, ensure every aspect of your business is well-organised and meets UK regulations. Professional guidance can be invaluable in helping you meet these standards and reduce the risk of any issues during the visit.



## Navigating the Interview Process

You or your authorising officer may be required to attend an interview as part of the visa application process. This interview tests the seriousness and viability of your business plan. Proper preparation, including mock interviews, can boost your confidence and help you present a convincing case.



## Meeting Sponsorship Requirements

Getting a sponsor licence requires proving that your business is genuine and fully compliant with UK laws. The job role must meet specific skill levels and salary criteria. Collaborate with immigration experts to ensure all requirements are met to avoid delays or rejection.

## **Managing Financial Obligations**

The financial requirements for the Self-Sponsorship route can be substantial, covering visa fees, the Immigration Health Surcharge, and proof of personal savings. It's crucial to have a solid financial plan in place. This ensures that both your business and personal finances meet the necessary thresholds.

## **Handling Operational Challenges**

Managing a UK business from abroad can be tough. Consider setting up strong local management and compliance systems to keep operations running smoothly and in line with UK laws.

## **Keeping Up with Legal and Regulatory Changes**

UK immigration laws can change frequently, affecting your business and visa status. Staying informed and adapting to these changes is critical. Regular consultations with immigration legal experts can help you stay compliant and avoid surprises.

By addressing these challenges head-on, you'll be well-prepared to navigate the Self-Sponsorship process and establish your business in the UK.





# Our Self-Sponsorship Package: What We Offer and How We Compare

When pursuing the Self-Sponsorship route to establish your business in the UK, you must be aware of potential challenges that could complicate your application. By addressing these key areas upfront, you'll be better positioned for success.

## Dedicated Visa Specialist:

You will be assigned a dedicated and experienced Self-Sponsorship Visa Specialist to handle your case, ensuring personalised and expert guidance.

## Company Incorporation:

We will facilitate the incorporation of your UK business, including registering your company with Companies House, VAT registration, and employer liability insurance, ensuring full compliance with UK regulations.

## Representation and HR Compliance:

We will prepare a representation outlining the compliance and legal requirements needed for your Sponsor Licence application and assist in setting up an HR compliance system for your application.

## Purchase of a Sponsorship Management System:

We will support you in purchasing a legally compliant Sponsorship Management System, crucial for managing your sponsorship duties effectively.

## Mock Interview Preparation:

We will provide mock training for a potential Home Office interview or application-related inquiries, ensuring you are well-prepared for any eventuality.



## Written Agreement:

You will receive a written agreement outlining our services, costs, and timelines. This ensures complete transparency and helps you understand what to expect at each stage of your journey.

## Authorising Officer Assistance:

Our team will assist in appointing the Authorising Officer and ensure that the Sponsor Licence application is submitted correctly and on time.

## Sponsor Licence Application:

We will assist in obtaining a Sponsor Licence for your company, providing advice on all mandatory documents to ensure a successful application.

## Certificate of Sponsorship:

We will assist in obtaining a Certificate of Sponsorship for your employees and guide you through the Skilled Worker Visa application process, including any additional requirements.

## Ongoing Legal Advice and Support:

We will provide unlimited legal advice/support for one year, including advice on Sponsor Licence duties, Skilled Worker Visa renewals, and HR compliance matters.

## 3 Guarantees for Exceptional Legal Service:

01

### Fast Response Time:

We guarantee that we will respond to all your messages, emails, and calls within 24 hours.



02

### Expert Legal Guidance:

You will receive unlimited legal advice during your case to help you navigate the complex immigration system.



03

### Oversight of the Process:

We will monitor your case daily, providing support throughout the legal process to ensure you are informed and involved every step of the way.





# Our Tailored Package Options

At A Y & J Solicitors, we provide a comprehensive service package designed to simplify the Self-Sponsorship process. Our offerings are tailored to meet the needs of business professionals, ensuring every aspect of your application and business setup is handled with expertise.

## Basic

Sponsor Licence and visa application support. It is recommended only if you have a strong business network in the UK.

£20,000 + VAT

## Comprehensive

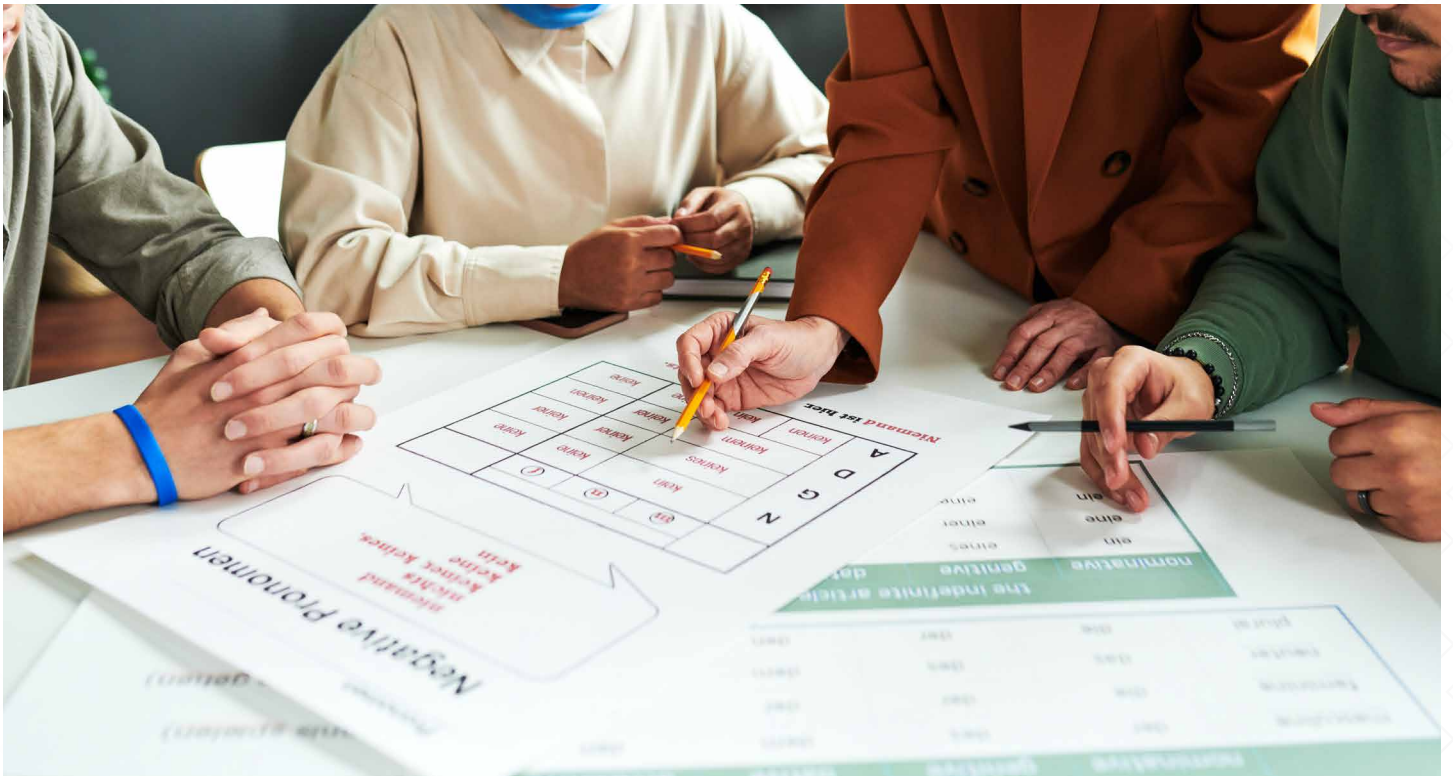
Full support, including company incorporation, business bank account setup, tax registrations, sponsor licence, and visa application.

£30,000 + VAT

## Premium

Comprehensive package plus business plan preparation, website development, HRMS software for compliance, and strategic partner support.

£35,000 + VAT





# How We Stack Up Against the Competition

Support you will require	Provided by A Y & J specialist self-sponsorship service?	Typically provided by alternative immigration service providers
Opening a Business Bank Account	✓	
Recruiting Key Personnel for Sponsor Licence	✓	
Setting Up Sponsor Licence Compliance System	✓	
Preparing Sponsor Licence Application	✓	✓
Managing Compliance visit from the Home Office	✓	
Preparing Certificate of Sponsorship Application	✓	✓
Preparing Skilled Worker Visa Application	✓	✓
Preparing for the Home Office Interview	✓	
Unlimited Legal Advice and Services throughout	✓	
Support to challenge potential refusals at no extra cost (wherever possible)	✓	
Website creation (wherever necessary)	✓	
Business Plan (wherever necessary)	✓	
Registration with the HMRC for PAYE and VAT	✓	
Strategic partner support (for office hire etc.)	✓	
HR Management Software System for ongoing compliance	✓	
Sponsor Licence Compliance Training	✓	



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### 01 What business would qualify for Self-Sponsorship?

Any business can qualify for the Self-Sponsorship route, regardless of the sector. The key is ensuring that the business is viable and contributes to the UK economy.

### 02 Can I be a 100% shareholder in the UK business and the Director?

Yes, you can hold 100% of the shares in your UK business and serve as the Director. This allows you full control over your company.

### 03 How much investment do I require for the UK business?

There is no minimum or maximum investment requirement; it can range from £25,000 or more, depending on the needs of your business.

### 04 When do I need to demonstrate the funds?

You will need to demonstrate the necessary funds before submitting the Sponsor Licence application to the Home Office.

### 05 What will be my position in the UK company?

You can be a majority shareholder in the UK business and hold a role such as Managing Director, Director of Operations, or any other relevant position required to run your business.

### 06 Can I bring my partner/spouse and children?

Yes, you can bring your partner/spouse and children under the age of 18 to the UK.

### 07 How much is a Skilled Worker Visa?

The cost of a Skilled Worker Visa ranges between £719 to £1,500. Additional fees apply, including the Immigration Health Surcharge, which is currently £1,035 per year for adults and £776 per year for children.

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## 08 Do I need to receive a salary while on the Self-Sponsorship route?

The cost of a Skilled Worker Visa ranges between £719 to £1,500. Additional fees apply, including the Immigration Health Surcharge, which is currently £1,035 per year for adults and £776 per year for children.

## 09 Can I take on other employment in the UK?

There may be an option to take on supplementary employment, as long as it aligns with your job classification.

## 10 How can A Y & J Solicitors assist in obtaining Self-Sponsorship?

We offer a comprehensive range of services, including:

- Introducing you to strategic partners like accountants, web designers, and sales/marketing consultants.
- Preparing a business plan and guiding you on opening a business bank account.
- Assisting with your Sponsor Licence application and training your Authorising Officer.
- Preparing a business plan and guiding you on opening a business bank account.
- Preparing and submitting your Skilled Worker Visa application.
- Preparing you for your Visa Interview with the Entry Clearance Officer (ECO).

## 11 What if the business does not perform well during the 5-year period? What happens to your visa status/sponsor licence?

The Sponsor Licence is valid for 10 years. If your business remains active/trading, you can retain the Sponsor Licence. If the business ceases trading, you will need to switch to another immigration category.

## 12 What if the Authorising Officer (AO) leaves the company?

If the Authorising Officer leaves the company, you will be required to replace them with another qualified individual to maintain compliance.

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## In Conclusion

After understanding the unique opportunities and practical steps involved in the Self-Sponsorship route, you may realise that this path aligns perfectly with your business ambitions in the UK. If this guide has resonated with your goals, the next immediate step is to take advantage of our free discovery call. This call will help you clarify any remaining questions and see how we can tailor our expertise to your needs.

At A Y & J Solicitors, we pride ourselves on our extensive experience and a proven track record of helping entrepreneurs establish their businesses in the UK. Our clients consistently benefit from the freedom and flexibility that Self-Sponsorship offers, allowing them to focus on what they do best—growing their business—while we handle the intricate administrative and legal processes on their behalf.

We believe in empowering our clients with peace of mind, knowing they have a trusted partner to navigate the complexities of UK immigration law. This allows you to concentrate on expanding your business without the stress of compliance and paperwork.

To start your journey, book a call with us today. Let's discuss how we can help you realise your UK business dreams.

Stay connected for more insights and updates on the Self-Sponsorship route and other immigration matters. **Subscribe to our YouTube channel**, and follow us on **Instagram** and **LinkedIn** for our expert team's latest news and tips.

**CHECK YOUR  
ELIGIBILITY TODAY!**