

SMP VISA APPLICATION INFORMATION

This information sheet has been put together based on experiences of SMP members and their partners, please treat as general information not specific guidance. For the specifics of the application process please visit:

www.gov.uk/apply-uk-visa

1. INFORMATION FROM UK VISAS AND IMMIGRATION

For information on the process and to begin the visa application process visit: www.gov.uk/apply-uk-visa

There is no special dispensation applicants visiting Scotland despite our special link, and in fact it seems to be becoming more difficult for our friends from Malawi to get visas from the UK, so our advice is to start the process as soon as you can.

For information on the processing time performance against their customer service standards visit: <https://visa-processingtimes.homeoffice.gov.uk/>.

The visa should be processed within 15 working days and cannot be applied for more than 3 months in advance.

UK Visas and Immigration does not prescribe what supporting documents should be provided in support of a visa application but they do provide some guidance. For visitors we suggest the following as a guide only, though ultimately the onus is on the applicant to decide what evidence to supply:
www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/343241/2014_08_Visitor_Documents.pdf

Advice on the application process is also available on the UK Visa and Immigration Teleperformance (TP) website: www.ge2ru.tpcontact.co.uk/sites/all/themes/TLSConnect/documents/SHORT-HOW%20TO%20APPLY%20FOR%20A%20UK%20VISA%20updated%20June%202014-generic.pdf

2. MAKING THE APPLICATION:

You/your Malawian partner will need to:

- **Decide what type of visa you are applying for:** The Immigration rules for visitors are available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-rules-part-2
- **Register for an account on the UK4Visa website:** www.gov.uk/apply-uk-visa
- **Fill in the application form in English** *Please be warned the application form for UK visas (even for short, fully funded, visits at the specific invitation of credible UK agencies) runs to 15 pages; it is incredibly detailed and requires an extra-ordinary level of supporting evidence, including, inter alia: marriage and birth certificates and passport details of applicant, spouse and children, letters from the employer, bank statements for the past 3-6 months, net monthly income from all sources, monthly living costs and how much of monthly income is given to family members and other dependents, vehicle ownership documents, letters of invitation from the UK, financial status of the UK sponsor, full details of everywhere that will be visited in the UK. We'd advise you/your partner access the online form from somewhere where internet is as reliable as possible as we have heard the site can be quite slow. The application form can be saved and returned to at a later date, you can only submit the form once all the required boxes have been completed)*

- **Pay for the visa fee online:** There is one payment, comprising 2 parts, a user fee (stated as £59) and one for the visa itself (£83). This has to be paid for in South African Rand (not Sterling), on the visa4uk site using a credit card. *This is where you might be able to help your partner as most Malawian do not have access to a credit card (NB there may also be additional bank charges for using the credit card).* There is no provision for a receipt, so we would recommend printing out a copy of the web page for your records.
- **If you want to fast track the application;** *According to the office in Pretoria, who process the applications, “applicants in Malawi should not be paying any money on the TP website (unless they wish to pay for the Priority Visa service)” Payments do not need to be made on the TP website unless you want to fast track the application. Fast tracking the application costs £100. First you must book a priority Visa Service appointment through Visa4UK website, and then you [pay for it on the TP website](#) once you’ve applied for the visa. Priority Visa Service applications will be processed within 5 working days.*
- **Print out the form**
- **Book and print out confirmation of appointment** at a visa application centre. The visa application centre is at:TelePerformance Lilongwe Visa Application Centre Fedex, Unit 2 TEVETA House, Ground Floor, Lilongwe.
- **Register on the TP website:** www.tpcontact.co.uk before attending the appointment in Lilongwe. If you do not do this, you risk delays. Registering on this site enables you to track your application and also pay for the fast track service if you wish (in you have booked a Priority Visa Service on the Visa4UK site)
- **Attend the Visa Application Centre Appointment:** The appointment is for taking biometrics information and handing in documents. If the Pretoria office has any further questions, the applicant may need to attend for a 2nd appointment in Lilongwe. There is an option to have passport and support document returned for collection from the Fedex office in Blantyre, for an extra fee. You also need to have all the supporting documents you need for your visa (see below) and translate any supporting documents and include them with the originals if they aren’t in English. Application submission can be made Monday to Friday, 08:00-15:00, passports can be collected (hopefully once the visa has been granted) Monday to Friday, 13:30-15:00

3. GENERAL ADVICE FROM THE SMP FOR THE VISA APPLICANT

As far as we are aware you will need to take the completed visa form to Lilongwe visa application centre along with your passport (which must have **at least six months validity before expiry** and probably need to be one of the new style Malawi passports), one passport photograph and -if appropriate- a letter of support from the Scottish organisation. It is a good idea to take a photocopy of each of these documents with you as well.

Visas can take a while to process so we would really encourage your partner to arrange their appointment at their earliest convenience.

So when you go to the visa office in Lilongwe we advise your partner will need to take:

- a copy of a letter of support from the Scottish partner, including charity registration number
- Applicant’s passport
- Applicant’s passport photograph
- copy of appointment confirmation
- Applicant’s birth certificate
- Applicant’s Bank statement
- Completed visa form
- A photocopy of all these documents as well.

4. SUPPORT FROM THE SMP IN THE VISA PROCESS:

Once the application has been completed please email info@scotland-malawipartnership.org to let us know:

- the visa application reference number of your partner (will begin “GWF” followed by 9 digit number)
- the date the application was submitted
- the date of the biometrics appointment

We can then contact the visa processing office in Pretoria, South Africa to ask them to look out for the visa application. This should help the visa process in a timely manner.

Best advice is probably to start the process as soon as is possible. It can take up to 15 working days, but you can only start the process 3 months in advance.

5. VISA APPLICATION DECISION

The Malawian partner will receive a text/email to say their application had been “resolved”. The TP website shows progress of the application, although it’s not updated immediately, and it does not always give the outcome of the decision. The outcome of the application is most often only know when the passport is delivered back to Malawi.

If you have any questions on any of the above please don’t hesitate to contact the SMP Office by emailing info@scotland-malawipartnership.org.