Global Talent route or Skilled Worker route for London professionals

If you are looking for work visa advice London professionals often need, two of the most common options are the Global Talent route and the Skilled Worker route. Both lead to a UK visa, but they serve very different kinds of applicants. Choosing between them depends on your career stage, your field of work, and whether you have a job offer or can rely on your own achievements.

What the Global Talent route offers

The Global Talent route is designed for individuals who are recognised as leaders or potential leaders in specific fields. These fields include science, engineering, humanities, medicine, digital technology, and arts and culture. Unlike many work visas, this route does not require a job offer. Instead, you apply for endorsement from a designated competent body, such as the Royal Society or Tech Nation, which assesses your expertise and track record.

Once endorsed, you can work for any employer, be self-employed, or switch roles without needing to update your visa. This flexibility makes it attractive for researchers, academics, and senior tech professionals who want to move between projects or start their own ventures. There is also no salary threshold, and you can include dependants on your application.

The main challenge is the endorsement stage. You need to provide evidence of your achievements, such as awards, publications, or significant contributions to your field. The criteria are strict, and not everyone who applies will qualify. If you are early in your career or work in a field not covered by the route, you will need to look elsewhere.

View the location on Google Maps

How the Skilled Worker route works

The Skilled Worker route replaced the old Tier 2 (General) visa. It is the most common work visa for people who have a job offer from a UK employer that holds a valid sponsor licence. The job must be in an eligible occupation, and you must meet a minimum salary threshold, which varies depending on the role and whether it is on the shortage occupation list.

Before you can apply, your employer must assign you a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS). This is not a physical certificate but an electronic record that confirms your job details and that you meet the skill and salary requirements. The employer also pays an immigration skills charge, which is lower for small charities and sponsors.



Once you have the visa, you can work only for the sponsor in the job specified. If you want to change employer or role, you need to apply for a new visa. After five years, you may qualify for indefinite leave to remain, provided you continue to meet the requirements.

This route is more straightforward for people who have a concrete job offer and whose occupation fits the list. It is also open to a wider range of industries than the Global Talent route. However, it ties you to your employer, which can be a drawback if your circumstances change.

Key differences at a glance

- **Job offer:** Global Talent does not require one; Skilled Worker does.
- **Flexibility:** Global Talent allows you to change jobs or be self-employed; Skilled Worker ties you to your sponsor.
- **Eligibility:** Global Talent is for recognised leaders in specific fields; Skilled Worker is for anyone in an eligible occupation meeting the salary threshold.
- **Endorsement:** Global Talent requires endorsement from a competent body; Skilled Worker requires a Certificate of Sponsorship from your employer.
- **Settlement:** Both routes can lead to indefinite leave to remain, usually after five years.

When the Global Talent route suits you best

The Global Talent route is ideal if you have a strong track record in your field and want the freedom to work across different roles or start your own business. It suits researchers who have published in respected journals, tech entrepreneurs who have built significant products, or artists who have exhibited internationally. The lack of a salary cap and the ability to switch roles without reapplying are major advantages.

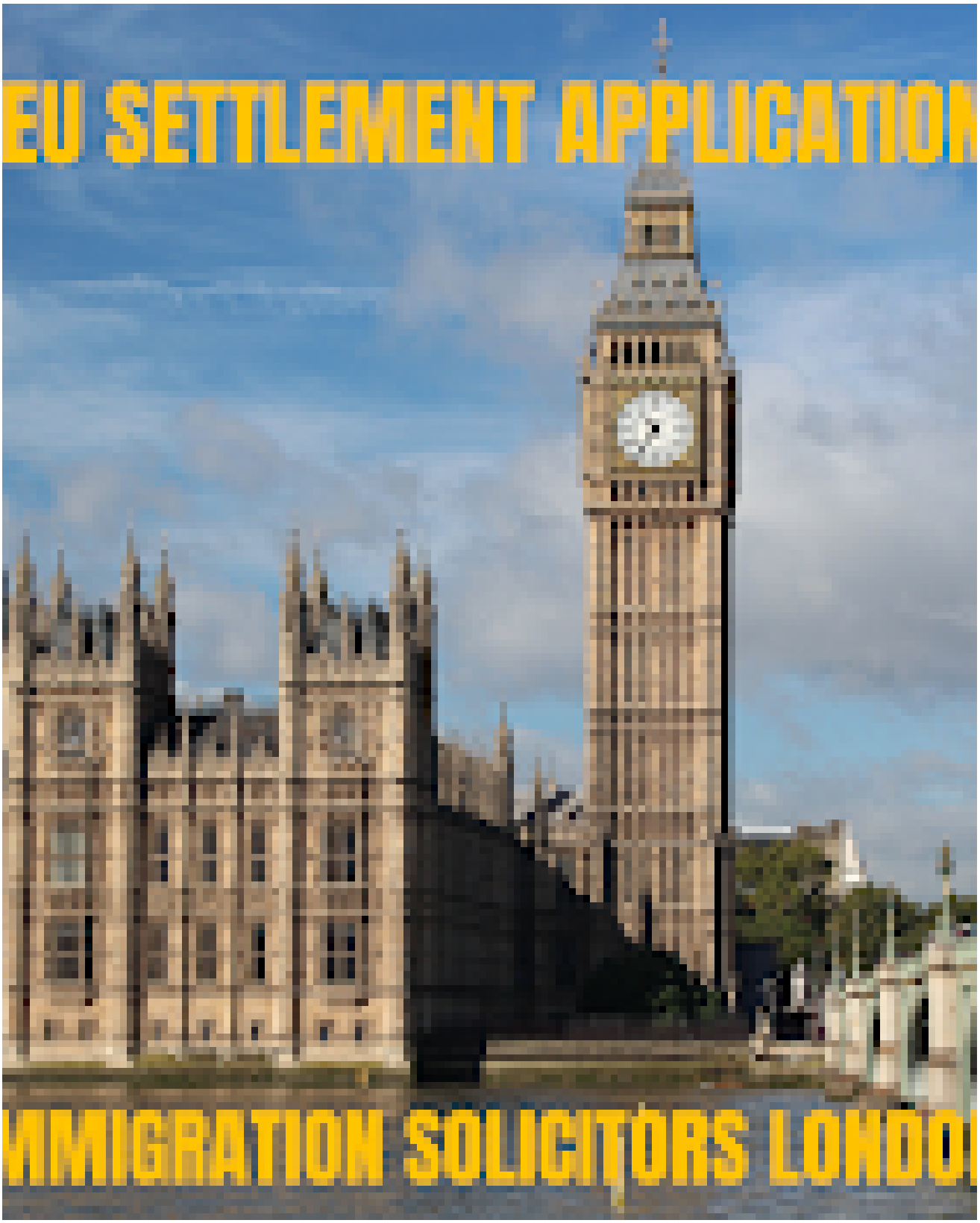
However, the endorsement process can be time-consuming and uncertain. You need to prepare a detailed application with evidence of your achievements. If you are not confident that your profile meets the criteria, it may be worth consulting a legal expert. Many applicants seek work visa advice London firms provide to assess their chances before submitting.

For those who do qualify, the route offers a clear path to settlement and does not depend on a single employer. That independence can be valuable in industries where short-term contracts or freelance work are common.

When the Skilled Worker route is the better choice

The Skilled Worker route is the right option if you have a job offer from a UK employer with a sponsor licence. It covers a broad range of occupations, from healthcare and engineering to IT and finance. If your role is on the shortage occupation list, the salary threshold is lower, and the visa fee may be reduced.

This route is also more predictable. Once you have the CoS and meet the salary and English language requirements, the visa is usually granted. There is no endorsement stage, and the process is familiar to many employers. For people who already have a job lined up, it is often the fastest and most reliable way to move to the UK.



The main downside is the lack of flexibility. If you lose your job or want to change employer, you must find a new sponsor and apply again. That can create stress if your industry is volatile or if you are unsure about staying with the same company long term.

Practical considerations for both routes

Whichever route you choose, you will need to prove your knowledge of English, usually by passing an approved test or holding a degree taught in English. You will also need to pay the immigration health surcharge, which gives you access to the NHS. The cost is higher for the Skilled Worker route if you are applying for a longer period.

Both routes allow you to bring dependants, including a partner and children. Dependants can work in most cases, though there are some restrictions for those on the Global Talent route if they are not the main applicant.

Compliance is another factor. If you are on the Skilled Worker route, your employer must keep records and may face compliance visits from the Home Office. Any failure to maintain sponsor duties can affect your visa. The Global Talent route has fewer ongoing obligations, but you must still notify the Home Office of changes to your personal details.

Making your decision

Start by looking at your current situation. Do you have a job offer from a UK employer? If yes, the Skilled Worker route is likely the simpler path. If not, can you demonstrate significant achievements in a qualifying field? If so, the Global Talent route may open doors that a standard work visa cannot.

Also consider your long-term plans. If you value the ability to switch roles or work independently, the Global Talent route offers more freedom. If you prefer the security of a permanent job and a clear route to settlement, the Skilled Worker route may feel more stable.



Neither route is inherently better; they serve different needs. The key is to match your profile and career goals to the right visa. For personalised guidance, many people turn to a legal practice that understands both options. Adamir Immigration Solicitors London can help clarify which route fits your circumstances, based on the facts of your case.

Where to get reliable work visa advice London

Immigration rules change frequently, and the difference between a successful application and a refusal often comes down to preparation. Whether you are applying for a Global Talent endorsement or a Skilled Worker visa, getting advice early can save time and reduce the risk of errors.

If you are based in or moving to London, you can speak with a solicitor who deals with these routes regularly. Adamir Immigration Solicitors London offers advice on UK immigration matters from their office at Unit-1, 5 Norman Rd, London N15 4ND, UK. You can reach them on +44 20 3302 0074.

Adamir Immigration Solicitors London is also on Discord.