

FREE GUIDE · UPDATED 2026

Cash Savings for the UK Spouse Visa, *Explained.*

A plain English guide to using cash savings to meet the financial requirement under Appendix FM, the six month rule, source of funds evidence, and the mistakes that cause most refusals.

BY

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READING TIME

12 minutes

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PLEASE READ FIRST

This is an overview, not legal advice. The cash savings rule under Appendix FM-SE is technical, and small differences in fact pattern produce different answers. Reading this guide is a useful starting point, but it cannot replace tailored advice from a solicitor on your specific case.

If you would like an opinion on your situation before you apply, I offer a fixed fee consultation from £275 that includes a 45 minute call and a written summary of your options.

IN 30 SECONDS

The four things you need to *get right*.

Cash savings can fully satisfy the requirement on their own, or in some cases supplement other eligible income sources. Every successful application clears these four steps.

01

CALCULATE

Work out exactly how much you need using the Appendix FM-SE formula.

02

HOLD

Keep the funds at or above the level for a full six months, no dipping.

03

PROVE

Document where the money came from, with the right evidence.

04

APPLY

Submit with full bank statements and a clear cover letter.

STEP 1

How much do you *actually need*?

The Home Office uses a formula set out in Appendix FM-SE of the Immigration Rules. It looks complicated. Once you understand the three pieces, it is not.

$$\text{£16,000} + (2.5 \times \text{shortfall})$$

REQUIRED CASH SAVINGS, IN YOUR ELIGIBLE ACCOUNT

Breaking the formula down

The £16,000 disregard. The first £16,000 of savings is disregarded under Appendix FM-SE and cannot be counted towards meeting the financial requirement. You need to hold at least this amount in addition to anything being used to cover the shortfall.

The 2.5 multiplier. This reflects the 2.5 years (30 months) of leave that initial spouse visas grant. The savings must therefore cover the full period.

The shortfall. The income requirement (currently £29,000 since April 2024) minus your annual income from other eligible sources under Appendix FM. If you have no other eligible income, the shortfall equals the full income requirement.

Worked example, the simple version

Sponsor not working, full savings route

Income requirement	£29,000
Sponsor's income	£0
Shortfall	£29,000
2.5 × shortfall	£72,500
+ £16,000 disregard	£16,000
Required cash savings	£88,500

WORTH CHECKING

Immigration financial thresholds are subject to change by amendment to the Immigration Rules, and transitional arrangements may apply to existing applicants. Always confirm the current figure on gov.uk before you do your calculations.

If your situation involves combined income and savings, the calculation gets technical fast.

BOOK A CONSULTATION

STEP 2

What actually *counts as cash*?

This is where most applicants get tripped up. "Cash savings" under Appendix FM-SE has a specific definition, and several common forms of wealth do not count while held in their current form.

YES, THESE QUALIFY	DO NOT QUALIFY IN THIS FORM
✓ Current account, in cash	✗ Stocks and Shares ISA, while still invested
✓ Easy access savings account	✗ Investment or share portfolio, while still invested
✓ Cash ISA (the cash version, not stocks and shares)	✗ Pension pot (any kind), unless drawn down into cash savings
✓ Joint account in name of applicant and sponsor	✗ Property equity (your house's value), unless realised through sale
✓ Overseas account in eligible name, converted to GBP	✗ Money held by a third party (parent, sibling, friend)

IF THE ASSET IS LIQUIDATED

Stocks, shares, investment portfolios, and Stocks and Shares ISAs do not count **while still invested**. Once liquidated into cash and transferred into an eligible account, the proceeds may potentially be relied upon, subject to the evidential and ownership requirements of Appendix FM-SE. See the paragraph 11A discussion in the next section for the holding period rule.

THE CORE RULE

Funds must be in **cash**, held in an account in the name of the **applicant, the sponsor, or both jointly**, and under the control of the applicant and/or sponsor and capable of being accessed within a reasonable period.

A note on account types

The Rules expect accounts where the funds are accessible within a reasonable period. Current accounts, easy access savings accounts, and notice accounts (with short notice periods) are typically straightforward. **Fixed-term bonds and fixed-rate savings products can be problematic** where they impose meaningful withdrawal restrictions or penalties. If the funds cannot in practice be accessed within a reasonable period, they may not satisfy the access requirement.

A note on overseas savings and currency conversion

Where savings are held in a non-GBP currency, the Home Office converts the balance into GBP using the OANDA rate specified in their published guidance, applied on the date of application.

Exchange rate fluctuations create real refusal risk. A balance that comfortably meets the threshold one week may fall below it the next if the GBP rate strengthens against your savings currency. Maintain a meaningful buffer above the minimum.

Documentation must support the conversion. You will need translated bank statements (certified translations where required) and the original-currency balance figures, alongside your own calculation of the GBP equivalent on the application date.

STEP 3

The six month rule, in *plain English*.

The funds must be held in an eligible account at or above the required level for at least **six full months immediately before** the date of your application. Not for six months at some point in the past. Six months right before you apply.

DAY 0	DAYS 1 TO 180	DAY 181+
Funds reach the required level	Hold continuously, do not dip below	Earliest you can apply

The paragraph 11A exception, important for sellers

Paragraph 11A of Appendix FM-SE provides for circumstances where the cash savings derive from the sale of property, investments, or other assets owned by the applicant, the sponsor, or both jointly. Where it applies, the Home Office may treat the prior ownership period of the asset as satisfying the six month holding requirement, **provided the proceeds have been converted into cash savings held by the applicant and/or sponsor at the date of application.**

In practice this means that if you sold a Stocks and Shares ISA, an investment portfolio, or a property that had been owned for more than six months, the cash proceeds may in principle be relied upon without a fresh six month cash holding period, provided the requirements of paragraph 11A are met. The relief turns on five things: lawful ownership of the asset for at least six months before sale, evidence of that ownership, evidence of the sale, transfer of the proceeds into cash savings, and the cash being held at the date of application.

You will need the underlying ownership history (statements showing the asset was held by you for the required period), the sale documentation, and the bank statements showing the cash arrived in the eligible account. The proceeds need to remain in cash savings at the application date, so plan timing around any spending or transfers.

IMPORTANT ON JOINT AND THIRD PARTY OWNERSHIP

Paragraph 11A is stricter than many realise. The underlying asset must have been owned by the applicant, the sponsor, or the two jointly. Where the property or investment was owned by a third party (for example a parent), the sale proceeds cannot simply be transferred to the applicant and treated as exempt from the six month rule. In those cases, the funds are usually treated as a gift and the six month cash holding period applies from when the gift arrives in the eligible account.

Paragraph 11A cases are evidence-heavy and fact-sensitive. If you're relying on it, getting the evidence right matters.

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STEP 4

Where did the money *come from*?

Applicants should be prepared to explain the origin of the savings being relied upon, particularly where there are substantial recent deposits, transfers, gifts, or asset liquidations. The Home Office's focus is on lawful ownership and control of the funds, on the provenance of significant movements, and on the credibility of the evidence supplied. The rule is not a forensic obligation to account for every pound historically, but readers should plan their documentation around the principle that the savings should have a clear and credible story.

<p>Salary EMPLOYMENT INCOME</p>	<p>Bank statements showing the wages arriving from your employer. Where employment income is also being relied upon under Appendix FM (rather than only as a source of savings), the specified evidence requirements for payslips and employer documentation must still be met.</p>
<p>Property sale HOUSE, FLAT, OR LAND</p>	<p>Completion statement from the conveyancing solicitor, plus a covering note explaining the dates. If sold abroad, full translated documentation.</p>
<p>Investment sale ISAS, SHARES, FUNDS</p>	<p>Ownership history of the underlying investment, account statements showing the sale and proceeds, and the bank statement showing the transfer to your eligible cash account. Where the investment was lawfully owned for at least six months before sale, paragraph 11A may permit the proceeds to be relied on without a fresh six month cash hold, provided the proceeds remain in cash savings at the date of application.</p>
<p>Inheritance WILL OR INTESTACY</p>	<p>Grant of probate, executor's letter confirming the distribution, copy of the relevant clause from the will if available.</p>
<p>Gift from family OFTEN PARENTS</p>	<p>A signed gift letter from the donor confirming the funds are a gift, and the donor's bank statements showing the funds leaving their account. The gift should be unconditional, non-repayable, and genuinely under the control of the applicant and/or sponsor. The donor may also need to evidence the lawful source of the gifted funds in some cases.</p>
<p>Redundancy EMPLOYER PAYMENT</p>	<p>Letter from the employer confirming the payment and its date. Bank statement showing the deposit.</p>

Loan

PERSONAL OR BANK

Borrowed funds can raise significant issues under Appendix FM-SE and may not be suitable for reliance as cash savings depending on the nature of the arrangement. The questions that arise are whether the funds are genuinely under the applicant's control, whether they are repayable, whether they are secured against the savings themselves, and whether the structure amounts to disguised debt. Specialist advice should be obtained before relying on any loaned or borrowed funds.

If you're considering using borrowed funds, get advice before you apply.

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IN THEIR WORDS

The questions I get *most often*.

My savings are with my parents. Can they hold the money for me?

No. The Home Office requires the funds to be held in an account in your name, your sponsor's name, or both names jointly. Money held by a third party (including parents) does not count, even if they consider it yours. The cleanest fix is for them to gift it to you (with a signed gift letter), at which point the six month clock starts from the date the money arrives in your account.

I have £100,000 in a Stocks and Shares ISA. Will it count?

Not while still invested. Once liquidated into cash and transferred into an eligible account, the proceeds may potentially be relied upon, subject to Appendix FM-SE requirements. Where paragraph 11A applies, the prior ownership period of the ISA may be treated as satisfying the six month holding requirement, provided the proceeds have been converted into cash savings held by the applicant and/or sponsor at the date of application. Evidence required: ISA ownership history, closure or sale statements, and bank statements showing the cash arrival.

My savings are in another country. Will they count?

Yes. Overseas savings can be used. They will be converted to GBP using the exchange rate applicable at the date of application (the Home Office typically uses OANDA). You will need translated bank statements (certified translations where required) and the same source of funds evidence as for UK savings. Where savings are held overseas, exchange rate fluctuations can create real risk, applicants should maintain a buffer above the minimum threshold so that a movement in the rate does not push the converted balance below the level needed.

Can my partner and I combine our personal savings?

Yes, if you are applying as a couple. Savings held by you, by your sponsor, or jointly all count toward the threshold. You can also combine savings held in separate eligible accounts, as long as each account meets the holding period and source of funds rules. Savings held by anyone else (parents, siblings, friends, employers) do not.

IN PRACTICE

Three real *scenarios*.

The same formula, three different shapes of application. Each one shows how the maths plays out.

Scenario 1, Full savings route, no income

Income requirement	£29,000
Sponsor's income	£0
Shortfall	£29,000
2.5 × shortfall + £16,000 disregard	£72,500 + £16,000
Required cash savings	£88,500

Scenario 2, Salary plus savings

Income requirement	£29,000
Sponsor's income	£20,000
Shortfall	£9,000
2.5 × shortfall + £16,000 disregard	£22,500 + £16,000
Required cash savings	£38,500

Scenario 3, Just liquidated an ISA, owned for years

ISA ownership period	Over five years
Cash in eligible account from	3 January
Applicable rule	Appendix FM-SE 11A
Potential earliest application date	3 January, subject to 11A

Because the underlying ISA was owned for far longer than six months, paragraph 11A may apply, treating the prior ownership period as satisfying the holding requirement, provided the proceeds remain in cash savings held by the applicant and/or sponsor at the date of application.

BEFORE YOU APPLY

Your documentation *checklist.*

Gather these before you submit. Missing documentation can create refusal risk.

- Bank statements covering the full six month qualifying period, in your name, sponsor's name, or jointly
- Statements showing the account holder, account number, bank name, and a continuous transaction record
- Statements stamped by the bank, or in PDF form from the bank's official portal (not screenshots)
- Evidence of the source of all the funds being relied on, not just deposits that brought the balance above the threshold
- If a third party gifted funds, a signed gift letter from the donor plus their bank statements (and, where required, evidence of the donor's own source of funds)
- Translated and certified versions of any non-English documents
- A clear written summary of the source of funds and the holding history, often in a cover letter
- Currency conversion calculations if any savings are held overseas (using the OANDA rate on application date)

WHEN IN DOUBT

Times to get *specialist advice*.

Many spouse visa cash savings applications can be prepared without legal help. Some cannot. These are the patterns where solicitor input prevents an avoidable refusal.

Savings spread across multiple countries.

Combining UK savings with overseas savings introduces currency, translation, and timing complications that are easier to get wrong than right.

An unclear source of funds picture.

If any part of the savings does not have a clean documentary trail (an inheritance handled informally, funds that moved through several accounts, gifts from multiple family members), the application needs careful preparation.

A previous refusal.

If you have been refused before on the financial requirement, the next application needs to address the previous reasons explicitly. A solicitor can help frame this.

Time pressure.

If your current visa is running out and you cannot wait a full six months for new savings to qualify, you may need to plan a different route. Get advice before you submit a doomed application.

READY TO DISCUSS

Book a *fixed-fee consultation*.

45 minute call plus a written summary of your options. Designed for the moment when you have read the guidance, run your numbers, and want a solicitor to pressure test it before you commit to a six month plan.

From £275, fixed fee.
www.jasmineashley.co.uk

BOOK A CONSULTATION

This guide is general information only and does not constitute legal advice. The financial requirement under Appendix FM is technical, and small differences in fact pattern produce different answers. For advice on your specific situation, please book a consultation.

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