

Partnership Visas

“What relationship evidence do I need in order to prove that I am ‘living together in a genuine and stable relationship’ with my partner?”

The partnership visa is a great way to bring your loved one to your side. It can enable your partner to obtain either residency or an open work visa. To do so, you need to prove to Immigration New Zealand that you are ‘living together in a genuine and stable relationship’.

Eligibility of Sponsoring Partner

Before you consider applying for the partnership visa you need to ensure that the sponsoring partner is eligible and the relationship is exclusive. The sponsoring partner needs to either be a New Zealand citizen, resident, a holder of a certain type of work visa or be studying a high-level qualification on a student visa. The sponsoring partner must not have any domestic violence related offences within the past 7 years and must not have previously sponsored more than one partner for residence.

Proof of Living Together

If you are applying for residency through the partnership category then you need to prove that you have lived with your partner for at least 12 months. There is no set time to be living together if you are applying for a temporary visa (such as a work visa) through the partnership category as long as you can explain how your relationship is genuine and stable. Recommended types of evidence include:

- Joint ownership of the property that you currently reside at or have been residing at;
- Joint mortgage of the property that you currently reside at or have been residing at;
- Joint tenancy agreement(s), rent book(s) or rental receipt(s);
- Correspondence (such as utility bills) addressed to both you and your partner; or
- Letters of support from your neighbour(s) and/or landlord(s).

Do not stress if you have been living separately for a period of time during your relationship. You will need to explain why and provide evidence of how the relationship was maintained during this time. Types of proof include:

- Letters during the period of separation;
- Emails during the period of separation;
- SMS or text message logs during the period of separation;
- Other chat logs (such as WeChat, Viber, KakaoTalk, Skype or Viber) during the period of separation; or
- Itemised telephone logs showing call durations and call frequency.

Proof of a Genuine and Stable Relationship

Proving that your relationship is genuine and stable can be frustrating. Clients who have been married for a number of years and who have children from their relationship often ask why a marriage certificate is not enough to show that their relationship is genuine and stable. The reason is simply that a marriage certificate does not allow Immigration New Zealand to see the way you look at each other, nor how you supported each other through difficult periods of your lives. Providing evidence allows Immigration New Zealand to 'get to know' your relationship. Suggested evidence includes:

- Marriage/Civil Union certificate or old wedding invitations;
- Birth Certificates of any children of the relationship;
- Your relationship chronology/timeline;
- Photos of significant events in your relationship;
- Letters of support from your friends and family;
- Joint social or sporting club memberships;
- Joint bank account (used frequently for a decent amount of time) or proof of financial interdependence;
- Joint life insurance or medical insurance;
- Joint ownership of any major assets;
- Joint liabilities (such as loans or hire purchase agreements of cars and big home appliances);
- Joint utility accounts (such as internet, electricity, gas, water, telephone); or
- Mutually agreed financial arrangements with corresponding receipts or statements (such as if you pay for food and your partner pays for power).

It is important to be aware that if Immigration New Zealand has any concerns or doubts, they may choose to phone interview both you and your partner separately or conduct a house visit.

If your relationship has not always been smooth sailing, then contact the immigration team at Queen City Law.

Disclaimer: This publication is necessarily brief and general in nature. You should seek professional advice before taking any further action in relation to matters dealt with in this publication.

About the author

- Lauren Qiu is fluent in both Mandarin and English
- Lauren is also a restorative Justice Facilitator and is on the management committee for Auckland Restorative Justice Trust
- Email: lauren@queencitylaw.co.nz / Ph: 09 970 8810

