



Coronavirus (COVID-19) factsheet: visa customers outside of the UK

Thursday 02 April 2020

Guidance on immigration provisions made by the Home Office for individuals affected by travel restrictions associated with coronavirus (COVID-19).

Key lines

- The Home Office has [published guidance on GOV.UK](#) on immigration provisions for individuals affected by travel restrictions associated with coronavirus (COVID-19).

Visa customers outside of the UK:

- All of the UK's Visa Application Centres (VACs) are currently closed.
- For updates to the status of VACs in each country individuals should access the relevant commercial partner:
 - Europe, Africa and parts of the Middle East visit: uk.tlscontact.com
 - All other countries visit: vfsglobal.co.uk
- Visa customers outside of the UK who are affected by travel restrictions associated with coronavirus should visit the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): advice for UK visa applicants and temporary UK residents](#) GOV.UK page for the latest information and guidance.
- UKVI services are limited and we are unable to meet our usual service standards. Therefore, we are not encouraging applications at this time and cannot say when an application will be decided if an individual does decide to apply. We continue to keep the situation under review and hope to resume normal services when we are able.
- Our commercial partners (TLS and VFS) consignment logistics are also affected. This means we cannot print and send visa vignettes across certain borders and routes.
- Where visa applicants have an appointment and the VAC is now closed, commercial partners are contacting customers to advise them the appointment is not going ahead.
- If customers have paid for courier return, commercial partners are sending passports back (where courier routes remain open to allow them to do so).
- If an individual's passport is currently held in a VAC but they have not previously arranged for it to be returned by courier, please [contact either TLS contact or VFS global directly](#).



Home Office

- Due to the impact of COVID-19 and the worldwide border, travel and public health restrictions it may not be possible to return their passport at this time.
- If an individual have submitted their passport, and would like it returned, they must contact the visa application centre where they logged their application to see if courier return is available in their location.
- Where there are compelling or compassionate circumstances it may be appropriate to issue a visa waiver to those unable to apply for a visa, or authority to carry for those applicants with an issued but uncollected visa due to the disruption. Individuals should [contact the British embassy, high commission or consulate](#) of the country they are in if they think they fall into this category.
- English Testing Centres across the world are currently seeing restrictions by the relevant local and national authorities. For all the latest information, please visit the [International English Language Testing System \(IELTS\)'s website](#), or applicants can contact their test centre directly by email.

Applicants for a Global Talent, Start up or Innovator visa

- If an individual's endorsement from an endorsing body has expired because they have not been able to travel to the UK, they may still be eligible for a visa.
- They should make their application as planned and we will consider all applications on a case by case basis.

Additional Information

What guidance does Home Office have for those who have a valid visa but haven't travelled to the UK yet?

Applicants who hold a valid visa should check initially with their own government websites to ensure that they are up to date on latest travel restrictions from their current locations. In addition, applicants should check the Gov.UK website which is updated regularly.

How does Home Office plan to return passports to applicants in regions where there are VAC closures?

Applicants are advised that they should check the relevant Visa Application Centre (VAC) website relating to the applicant point where they submitted their passport. Where local permissions allow for customers have paid for courier return, Commercial Partners are sending passports back (where courier routes remain open to allow them to do so). If applicants are concerned about their passport, they can contact the Coronavirus Immigration Team at CIH@homeoffice.gov.uk. In countries where significant movement restrictions are in place some of our VACs are closed and our Commercial Partner is required to comply with all local restrictions.



If an individual has applied for a visa from overseas but would now like to withdraw their application, how do they do this?

If the customer wishes to withdraw their application before their biometric appointment and is overseas, they can do this in the same place as their application was made, on Access UK or Visas4UK. Customers in the UK should use the form on [Cancel your visa, immigration or citizenship application](#) GOV.UK page to make the request.

Any customer who is overseas and wishes to withdraw an application after their biometrics have been taken should visit the above link.