



CORONAVIRUS RESOURCES

UKVI: Coronavirus: immigration guidance if you're unable to return to China from the UK (17 February 2020)

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Coronavirus: immigration guidance if you're unable to return to China from the UK

Guidance on immigration provisions made by the Home Office for individuals in the UK who are unable to return to China. Published 17 February 2020 From: **Home Office** and **UK Visas and Immigration**

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Due to travel restrictions because of coronavirus some individuals may be facing uncertainty in relation to the expiry date of their current visa or leave to remain in the United Kingdom. The Home Office understands that in many cases this is because of circumstances outside of your control.

Subject to the below guidance, most people in the UK whose immigration status is affected by the coronavirus outbreak will get an automatic extension of their visa until 31 March 2020.

Read the guidance below to find out if your visa will be automatically extended or if you need to contact the Home Office's [dedicated coronavirus immigration helpline](#) to discuss your circumstances and arrange an extension.

Chinese nationals in the UK whose visa has recently expired or is about to expire

If you are a Chinese national in the UK and have been compliant with the conditions of your visa prior to the coronavirus outbreak, your leave will be automatically extended to 31 March 2020 if your visa has an expiry date between 24 January 2020 and 30 March 2020.

You don't need to do anything to get this extension.

You will be subject to the same immigration conditions as your last visa during the extension period.

You will not automatically receive a new visa or Biometric Residence Permit card.

Your new expiry date (31 March 2020) will be added to UK Visa Immigration's systems.

If you need a status letter confirming this extension, or a new Biometric Residence Permit with a revised expiry date, you should [contact the coronavirus immigration helpline](#).

If you have already applied to extend your visa you don't need to do anything.

If you are intending to apply to extend your stay in the UK before 31 March 2020 you should continue to do so.

Non-Chinese, non-EEA nationals in the UK normally resident in China

If you are a non-Chinese or non-EEA national in the UK but are normally resident in China and your visa in the UK has an expiry date between 24 January 2020 and 30 March 2020 you should **[contact the coronavirus immigration helpline](#)**.

The team will be able to extend your visa to 31 March 2020 if you can demonstrate you are normally resident in China.

You will be subject to the same immigration conditions as your last visa during the extension period.

Chinese nationals in the UK whose leave was granted by Irish authorities (British Irish Visa Scheme (BIVS))

If you are a Chinese national in the UK with a visa that was granted by the Irish authorities and has an expiry date between 24 January 2020 and 30 March 2020 you should **[contact the coronavirus immigration helpline](#)** to discuss your circumstances.

Chinese nationals in the UK whose leave was granted by the Crown Dependencies

If you are a Chinese national in the UK with a visa that was granted by a Crown Dependency and has an expiry date between 24 January 2020 and 30 March 2020 you should **[contact the coronavirus immigration helpline](#)** to discuss your circumstances.

Switching to a Tier 2 category in the UK

If you are a Chinese national in the UK on a Tier 2 Intra-Company Transfer visa and want to switch to a Tier 2 General visa you normally need to return to China to make your application.

You can exceptionally apply to switch from a Tier 2 Intra-Company Transfer to a Tier 2 General visa from within the UK if your visa has an expiry date between 24 January 2020 and 30 March 2020.

You will still need to pay the relevant fee and meet all the requirements of a Tier 2 General visa, other than the requirement that you usually have to apply in China.

British nationals whose passport is at a Visa Application Centre (VAC) in China

UK Visa Application Centres in China are currently closed.

It is not possible to remove any documents, arrange further delivery or collection of new/replacement passports from Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou Visa Application Centres.

You can **apply for an emergency travel document** if you need to travel urgently.

The Home Office is monitoring the situation and as soon as we are able to re-open the VACs we will prioritise the return of all documents to our customers.

Chinese or third country nationals whose passport is at a Visa Application Centre (VAC)

UK Visa Application Centres in China are currently closed.

It is not possible to return any documents to customers until the VACs re-open.

You should contact the Chinese authorities or your consular representative in China to get an alternative travel document if you need to travel urgently. An urgent visa request can only be considered if you have a valid travel document.

The Home Office is monitoring the situation and as soon as we are able to re-open the VACs we will prioritise the return of all documents to our customers.

Licensed Tier 2, Tier 4 or Tier 5 sponsors: absences due to coronavirus

Some Tier 4 students or Tier 2/5 employees may be prevented from attending their studies or employment due to illness, the need to serve a period of quarantine or the inability to travel due to travel restrictions caused by coronavirus.

Sponsors do not need to report student or employee absences related to coronavirus which they have authorised.

Sponsors do not need to withdraw sponsorship if they consider there are exceptional circumstances when:

- a student will be unable to attend for more than 60 days
- an employee is absent from work without pay for four weeks or more

Decisions on whether to withdraw a student from their studies or terminate an employment are for sponsors to make. The Home Office recognises the current situation is exceptional and will not take any compliance action against students or employees who are unable to attend their studies/work due to the coronavirus outbreak, or against sponsors which authorise absences and continue to sponsor students or employees despite absences for this reason.

The Home Office will keep this under review, especially if the length of absences mean a potential repeat of period of studies become necessary.

Other immigration queries

For any other immigration queries related to coronavirus, you can [**contact the coronavirus immigration helpline.**](#)

Coronavirus Immigration Helpline

The helpline will be open from 9am on 18 February 2020

Telephone: 0800 678 1767 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

Calls are free of charge.

Email: [**CIH@homeoffice.gov.uk**](mailto:CIH@homeoffice.gov.uk)

Further updates

We will keep our guidance under regular review. You can keep up to date by reading [the latest Public Health England advice](#) which includes the latest advice for travellers. Published 17 February 2020

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Attachments:

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