**Coronavirus – ILPA Members Feedback part 6 – 12/3/20**

1. 6 March 2020

 I’ll summarise this client’s scenario and please feel free to share these details with the UKVI if you think this would help:

- Client and wife are both Iranian

- In the UK currently with Tier 5 leave expiring on 13 March 2020.

- Has an offer of a job with a Tier 2 (General) sponsor and we have a restricted CoS in place for the role.

- Were planning to leave the UK on 10 March 2020 to submit an entry clearance application from abroad, but fearful about travelling to Iran or elsewhere in the region due to the virus. They would be travelling for the sole purpose of applying for the Tier 2 (General) entry clearance.

1. 6 March 2020

Our experience of the telephone helpline has been very poor - despite our questions being very specifically Covid19 related, they directed us to the general enquiry line - who in turn of course directed us back to the CIG helpline.

So whilst it’s good to hear that everyone’s feedback is being collated by HO, some actual answers for clients in desperate and distressing circumstances are urgently needed.

The published policy fell way short of expectations following the encouraging discussions prior to its publication. Given that the general direction of travel for policy post 2020 is to allow most switching (other than for visitors) there is clearly no longer an ideological objection to switching by government - may we really press HO now to allow switching for people affected by Covid19 due to travel restrictions etc.

1. 9 March 2020

I wonder if there is any guidance or you know about the following scenario please.

We are aware that the Home Office has confirmed that if a sponsored worker is unable to come into work because of coronavirus-related travel restrictions or quarantine/self-isolation (either in the UK or abroad), sponsors can continue to sponsor them and don’t need to report this as an unauthorised absence (if they have agreed to it).

Normally if a 30 day visa holder is not able to enter the UK during the validity of their 30 day entry visa, they can apply for another replacement one. Against this, however, is the requirement that it is not possible to delay the UK work start date of a Tier 2 General visa holder beyond 28 days once the visa has been issued. Our client is trying to plan for one of its sponsored migrants currently applying out of Japan. If a complete travel ban out of Japan is imposed, do we know if the requirement not to delay the start date for Tier 2 General once the visa has been issued by more than 28 days will be relaxed and that they will be able to apply for replacement 30 day visas?

1. 9 March 2020

We are currently working on an Entry Clearance application for a Chinese national who has been issued with a CoS under the Tier 5 – Temporary worker (Government Authorised Exchange). As you are aware the visa centres in China are currently closed due to the issues related to COVID-19. We wish to find out whether you are aware of the anticipated issues which have arisen at the appointment booking stage in respect of the visa centres in China. We would also like to find out if the applicant can book an appointment at a location outside of China, once the Entry Clearance application has been submitted.

Any support or guidance would be much appreciated, we have contacted UKVI and they have provided very little information in respect of the query above.

1. 10 March 2020

We contacted the Home Office today in regards to individuals who have been issued with Visa Vignettes to enter the UK within a 30 day period, however due to the Corona virus outbreak, there is a concern that flights to the UK from certain countries may be cancelled.

The Home office caseworker stated that where a flight is cancelled and an Individuals Entry Clearance Vignette is expired a new application must be made.

There is no guidance on the Home Office website in relation to this matter.

We wanted to query whether this was in fact the case or whether policies have been put in place in relation to non-Chinese nationals whose travel plans may be affected due to the Corona virus outbreak, especially where they have been issued with a 30-day visa vignette.