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Guidance

Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice for UK visa applicants and temporary UK residents

This is advice for visa customers and applicants in the UK, visa customers outside of the UK and British nationals overseas who need to apply for a passport affected by travel restrictions associated with coronavirus.

Published 24 March 2020

Last updated 25 March 2020 — see all updates

From:

Home Office (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office>) and UK Visas and Immigration (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>)

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If you're in the UK and your leave expires between 24 January 2020 and 31 May 2020

Your visa will be extended to 31 May 2020 if you cannot leave the UK because of travel restrictions or self-isolation related to coronavirus (COVID-19).

You must contact the Coronavirus Immigration Team (CIT) to update your records if your visa is expiring.

You should provide:

- your full name (include any middle names)
- date of birth (dd/mm/yyyy)
- nationality
- your previous visa reference number
- why you can't go back to your home country, for example if the border has closed

We'll let you know when your request is received and when your visa has been extended.

If you're applying to stay in the UK long-term

During these unique circumstances you'll be able to apply from the UK to switch to a long-term UK visa until 31 May. This includes applications where you would usually need to apply for a visa from your home country.

You'll need to meet the same visa requirements and pay the UK application fee.

This includes those whose leave has already been automatically extended to 31 March 2020.

You can apply online. The terms of your leave will remain the same until your application is decided.

If you're outside the UK

Many UK Visa Application Centres (VACs) are closed or offering limited services. For advice on visa services in your country, contact:

- TLS contact (<https://uk.tlscontact.com>) if you're in Europe, Africa and parts of the Middle East
- VFS global (<https://www.vfsglobal.co.uk>) for all other countries

In some areas the UK cannot send visa vignettes across some borders and routes due to border restrictions.

If you have an appointment and the VAC is now closed, you'll be contacted and told your appointment will not take place.

English Testing Centres are also affected. Visit the International English Language Testing System (IELTS)'s website (<https://www.ielts.org/news/2020/covid19-information-for-our-global-test-taker-community>) or contact your test centre for more information.

Getting your documents

If you've paid for courier return, your passport will be returned if courier routes remain open.

If your passport is currently held in a VAC and you would like it to be returned by courier, please contact either TLS contact or VFS global directly if you haven't already paid for courier return.

Contact the Coronavirus Immigration Helpline if you are concerned about your passport.

We will prioritise the return of all documents once VACs are open.

British nationals abroad who need to apply for a passport

If your country's VAC is closed, you won't be able to apply for a British passport. If you urgently need to travel to the UK, you can apply for an emergency travel document (<https://www.gov.uk/emergency-travel-document>).

Coronavirus Immigration Help Centre

If you have immigration queries related to coronavirus, please email the Coronavirus Immigration Help Centre.

Email: CIH@homeoffice.gov.uk. Your email must be in English.

We'll reply to your email within 5 working days.

You can also call the Coronavirus Immigration Help Centre. If you've emailed the help centre already, please do not contact them by phone.

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

Calls are free of charge.

If your query doesn't relate to immigration provisions associated with coronavirus (COVID-19) please contact the general immigration helpline (<https://www.gov.uk/contact-ukvi-inside-outside-uk>).

Published 24 March 2020

Last updated 25 March 2020 + show all updates

1. 25 March 2020

Updated to add information on the 5 working day response time for helpline emails.

2. 24 March 2020

First published.

Explore the topic

- [Visas and entry clearance \(https://www.gov.uk/entering-staying-uk/visas-entry-clearance\)](https://www.gov.uk/entering-staying-uk/visas-entry-clearance)