



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

Monday 3rd August 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:

- There are changes at the border because of coronavirus. [Check what individuals need to do before they travel](#).
- Most UK Visa Application Centres (VACs) have resumed services where local restrictions allow.
- Priority and Super Priority services are only available in some locations. If available, you'll be able to purchase these services when booking your appointment.
- Ongoing restrictions mean a small number of UKVI services remain closed.
- The operation of VACs in all locations is subject to local conditions. Regional restrictions may lead to the temporary reclosure of application locations. For more information, and for updates to the status of VACs, including opening times in your country, check with:
 - [TLS contact](#) if you're in Europe, Africa and parts of the Middle East
 - [VFS global](#) for all other countries
- Many English Testing Centres are also resuming services. Visit the [International English Language Testing System \(IELTS\)'s website](#), the [Pearson Test of English website](#) or the [LanguageCert website](#) or contact your test centre for more information on where we are reopening and how you can book your Secure English Language Test.

Getting documents

- As VACs have reopened their services, we have prioritised returning customer passports.
- If the VAC where an individual has applied is still closed, we will not be able to return their passport.



Home Office

- If an individual's passport is in a VAC, and a decision on their application has been made, the VAC will contact them to arrange collection.
- If an individual's application has not been decided, we will not contact them to return their passport until a decision has been made. However, if they would like their passport returned, even if their application has not been decided, they should contact their VAC to arrange collection.
- We are continuing to reopen more VACs where local restrictions allow, and social distancing can be maintained.

British nationals abroad who need to apply for a passport

- Her Majesty's Passport Office is accepting [online passport applications](#).
- If an individual is advised that they must book an appointment at their nearest VAC to submit their passport application, they should [check if it's open](#).
- If an individual's country's VAC is still closed, they won't be able to apply for a British passport until it re-opens.
- If an individual urgently needs to travel to the UK, they should contact the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office \(FCO\)](#) to discuss their options. Individuals can also check the latest [travel advice from the FCO](#)

Compelling and compassionate circumstances

- Where there are compelling or compassionate circumstances it may be appropriate to issue a visa waiver. 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

- Some English Testing Centres are also resuming services. [Visit the International English Language Testing System \(IELTS\)'s website](#), [the Pearson Test of English website](#) or the [LanguageCert website](#) or contact the customers test centre for more information on where we are reopening and how they can book their Secure English Language Test.

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.

If an individual's 30-day visa to work, study or join family has expired

- If an individual's 30 day visa to travel to the UK for work, study or to join family has expired, or is about to expire, they can request a replacement visa with revised validity dates free of charge until the end of this year. This does



not apply to other types of visas.

- This process will be in place until the end of 2020.
- To request a replacement visa, an individual can either:
 - contact the Coronavirus Immigration Help Centre
 - arrange to return their passport to their VAC if it has re-opened

Contacting the Coronavirus Immigration Help Centre:

- The individual will need to include their name, nationality, date of birth and GWF reference number with 'REPLACEMENT 30 DAY VISA' in the subject line. If the individual already contacted us about this, please let us know in the email.
- We are dealing with a high number of requests and will reply as soon as we can. Please do not contact us again unless to tell us about a change in circumstances.
- [Contact the Coronavirus Immigration Help Centre.](#)
- Individuals will be contacted when their VACs re-open to arrange for a replacement visa to be endorsed in their passport. Their replacement visa will be valid for 90 days.
- Alternatively, individuals can arrange to return their passport to their VAC if it has re-opened.
- Individuals should not travel to the VAC with their passport until they have checked our commercial partner websites for the process in place for re-submitting a passport for a replacement visa as this may vary depending on their geographical location:
 - [TLS contact](#) if located in Europe, Africa and parts of the Middle East
 - [VFS global](#) for all other countries
- The guidance is different [if an individual applied through an enrolment location operated by Immigration New Zealand.](#)
- Individuals arriving in the UK will not be penalised for being unable to collect their biometric residence permit (BRP) while coronavirus measures are in place.

Additional Information

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



Home Office

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. There are changes at the border because of coronavirus (COVID-19). Individual's must [check what they need to do before they travel](#).

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

As VACs reopen, we will prioritise returning customer passports. If the VAC where an individual applied is still closed, we will not be able to return their passport. We will reopen more VACs where local restrictions allow, and social distancing can be maintained.

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.

Any customer who is overseas and has already enrolled their biometrics but no longer wishes to travel to the UK should visit [Cancel your visa, immigration or citizenship application](#)