

**UK Visa Guideline for Individuals affected by travel restrictions
associated with coronavirus (COVID-19)**
(for use of High Commissions/Embassies based in London)

This is an update on provisions made by the Home Office for individuals affected by travel restrictions associated with coronavirus (COVID-19).

The impact of COVID-19 is now widespread and the implementation of strict measures worldwide to control the spread of the disease is a stark reality. This situation has placed foreign nationals in the United Kingdom at risk of overstaying beyond the end date of their visa, due to circumstances outside of their control.

The Home Office has now published updated guidance on GOV.UK ([gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents)), for visa customers and applicants and those travelling to and from the UK, and the Home Office strongly recommends **all concerned to check this regularly**. Along with that it is referred to follow, [NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/) and [PHE](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england) guidance.

Summary:

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the UKVI (United Kingdom Visa & Immigration) are providing visa extensions for those affected by coronavirus. Nobody will be penalised for circumstances outside of their control. The Home Office aims to ensure that individuals stays legally and who are unable to leave because of COVID-19 related travel restrictions, will not be regarded as an overstayer; will not suffer any immigration detriment in the future; and will not be pursued during the crisis. **This temporary extension applies to all foreign nationals in the UK whose permission to be here has expired since 24 January 2020 and are unable to leave the UK due to COVID-19**

Detail:

Visa Customers in the UK

Individuals who cannot leave the UK before the expiry of their leave due to travel restrictions or self-isolation, and who do not wish to stay in the UK in the long-term, **must contact the Coronavirus Immigration Team (CIT) by email** to advise of their situation. This requirement to contact CIT applies to individuals of

any nationality whose leave has expired since or after 24 January 2020 to 31 May 2020.

The CIT email is: CIT@homeoffice.gov.uk

Individuals should include the following in their email:

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

The CIT will update details on Home Office databases. Individuals will be advised that the Home Office has noted their details; they will **not** be subject to enforcement action; and this period will **not** be held against them in future applications.

If circumstances require, the Home Office will **update this position further ahead of 31 May 2020.**

For individuals who cannot leave the UK due to travel restrictions or self-isolation and wish to stay in the UK in the long-term, who would ordinarily need to apply for a visa from their home country, for a limited period the Home Office will allow in-country switching between routes to allow them to apply from the UK.

In the first instance, the Home Office will allow this for people whose leave has expired between 24 January 2020 to 31 May 2020 inclusive. This includes the cohort of individuals who have already had their leave auto-extended to 31 March.

Those affected would still need to **meet all of the requirements** of the route they are applying for before being granted a visa and will be required to pay the requisite fee (as they would if they had applied from abroad).

Making a valid, in time application, and paying the required fee, will mean individuals **will automatically be in the country lawfully**, until their application is determined.

There is no fee for individuals whose permission to stay in the UK short-term is extended until 31 May. For those applying for long-term visas, the usual fee will apply.

Visa customers outside of the UK

At this moment many of the UKs Visa Application Centres (VACs) are closed and more closing may take place. Many that are open are offering a limited service.

For up to date advice on services 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

Next Steps

High Commissions/Embassies may wish to share this information, and the contact email, on the website and consular pages to reassure country specific nationals who are currently in the UK.

Please note that the quickest route to individuals feeling confident in their immigration position is to follow the steps set out above.

1. Contacting the CIT team for short term or
2. making an in country application for longer term.

Please ensure applicants are following the correct advice and up to date contact and application details.

All concerned should continue to regularly monitor **the gov.uk webpage**(gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents), where all updates will be posted. A factsheet is also attached.