

Good Afternoon,

External Relations Team Update – 13 January 2021

This update includes information on:

- UKVCAS retains designation as an essential service under the National Lockdown
- Mandatory COVID-19 testing introduced to bolster border measures
- Extension of Southern Africa travel ban and amendments to the Travel Corridors list
- Covid-19 Visa Concession Scheme (CVCS)

UKVCAS retains designation as an essential service under the National Lockdown

UKVCAS and immigration services continue to be designated as an essential service, with staff considered key workers, and continue to operate under the latest Coronavirus national restrictions.

Robust and secure COVID -19 measures are in place at all UKVCAS service points, and services will continue to be available to customers, subject to any localised temporary closures. Travel to a service point is legal, even if it is in a different geographical area.

Customers who have an upcoming appointment are advised to check [here](#) before travelling to their UKVCAS appointment, to ensure that their Service Point remains open. UKVCAS will email customers if any appointment changes are necessary. Customers are reminded to check their registered email address regularly for any further correspondence.

If you have been asked to enrol your biometrics at a [participating Post Office branch](#) you can travel to your nearest branch. Further details can be found in your biometric enrolment letter.

Mandatory COVID-19 testing introduced to bolster border measures

Following the Department for Transport [announcement](#), mandatory Covid-19 testing will be introduced to bolster border measures in England from 4am on Friday 15 January. This means that **all** international arrivals, including UK nationals, are required to present a negative COVID-19 test taken up to 72 hours prior to departure for entry into the UK. Passengers will still be required to fill in a Passenger Locator Form and be subject to national lockdown restrictions.

Further information on test requirements will be made available to passengers and transport operators through guidance on GOV.UK. Customers may also wish to consult current information on [self-isolation periods](#) and [the Test to Release scheme](#)

Extension of Southern Africa travel ban and amendments to the Travel Corridors list

Travel restrictions have now been extended to southern African countries from 9 January to protect against the spread of a new COVID-19 variant initially detected in South Africa.

The move, in addition to the [travel ban imposed on South Africa on 23 December 2020](#) means entry into England will be banned to those who in the last 10 days have travelled from or through any southern African country, including Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Eswatini, Zambia, Malawi, Lesotho, Mozambique and Angola – as well as Seychelles and Mauritius.

This ban does not include British and Irish Nationals, longer-term visa holders and permanent residents, who will be able to enter but are required to self-isolate for 10 days on arrival along with their household. Details are available [here](#).

A number of countries have also been removed from the Travel Corridor list since our last update. Conditions in exempt countries, territories and regions on the Travel Corridor list are kept under review and full details are available [here](#)

Covid-19 Visa Concession Scheme (CVCS)

The Covid-19 Visa Concession Scheme (CVCS) was launched on 12 January 2020. This scheme is for individuals who left the UK with valid leave before 17 March 2020 and intended to return to the UK and make an application for Indefinite or Further Permission to Stay, but who were unable to do so before their leave expired because of travel restrictions related to COVID-19.

Individuals meeting this criteria and who wish to apply under CVCS should complete and submit the online form available [here](#)

Individuals will receive a confirmation email soon after submitting the form, so will need to provide a valid email address.

This concession will be available until 31 March 2021 and further details can be found [here](#)

If you have any questions on this update, please contact the Visas & Citizenship External Relations Team at:

VCStakeholderEngagement@homeoffice.gov.uk

Kind regards,
V & C External Relations Team

