

Immigration Webinar

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8 April 2020



What we will cover

- Contingency provisions
 - Asylum
 - Asylum support and accommodation
 - Immigration enforcement
 - Hostile environment
 - Visa holders and short-term residents
 - Courts and Tribunals
- Developing issues to be aware of
- Support services available for clients

Contingency provisions: asylum

- Screening interviews are continuing
- Substantive interviews suspended
- Unaccompanied minors- applications considered on receipt of SEF
- Contact to the Asylum Team at Drumkeen House should only be sent via email to belfastasylumdutyofficer@homeoffice.gov.uk or belfastasylumefax@homeoffice.gov.uk.
- Reporting suspended for all foreign non-offenders
- Further submissions in person has been suspended. Instead, email to csuec@homeoffice.gov.uk or post to FSU The Capital Building, Old Hall Street, Liverpool, L3 9PP.

Contingency provisions: asylum accommodation

- For service users with symptoms living on their own the self-isolation period is 7 days. For those living with others, isolation is 14 days for all occupants.
- New service users who present with symptoms are being supported to self isolate.
- One month's electricity and gas is being put on meters in houses
- Service users are not being required to move on from asylum accommodation during 28-day transition period
- Discontinuations- Home Office are advising service users to apply for S4 support.

Contingency provisions: enforcement

- No updated guidance on removals
- Voluntary Returns Service has suspended its service
- No updated guidance on detention
- Bail reporting has been suspended

Contingency provisions: hostile environment

- No recourse to public funds- legal challenge
- NHS Treatment: as of 7 March 2020, new regulations mean that novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) has been added to the list of diseases for which no charge is to be made for NHS treatment in Northern Ireland, regardless of the patient's immigration status.
- Right to work checks- can now be carried out remotely

Contingency provisions: visa holders and short-term residents

- Changing Home Office guidance:
 - For policy guidance, see LCNI updater.
 - For Covid-19 guidance, see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents>
- Coronavirus visa extension scheme:
 - Short term residents who were not planning to extend their stay in the UK and whose leave is due to expire between 28 February 2020 and 31 May 2020
 - Complete online form
 - Leave will be extended to 31 May 2020
- NHS workers and their families visas expiring by 31 October 2020 will get an automatic 1-year extension for free

Contingency provisions: visa holders and short-term residents

- Specific guidance for Tier 2 and Tier 4 migrants and Sponsors:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-tier-2-4-and-5-sponsors>
- Applying for / extending long-term leave in the UK:
 - Home Office advises to apply online as normal
 - Visa application centres are currently closed and processing times are impacted.
- Applying for visas overseas- visa application centres are closed and applications currently being held as pending
- See VFS Global and TSL Contact for information for each country

Courts and Tribunals

- First-tier Tribunal- vacated hearings. Managing cases via CMR and with a version of the Digital Reform pilot. Will consider decision on papers or a remote hearing.
- Upper Tribunal- listed hearings have been postponed. UT contacting Appellants where judge holds the provisional view that it would be appropriate to decided the following questions without a hearing:
 - (a) whether the making of the First-tier Tribunal’s decision involved the making of an error on a point of law; and, if so
 - (b) whether the First-tier Tribunal’s decision should be set aside
- JR- only urgent matters and via remote hearing.

Developing issues

- No recourse to public funds
- EU citizens with pre-settled status
- Biometric enrolment
- Use of digital reform in Covid-19 contingency provisions
- UT 'provisional view' to decide cases on the papers
- EU Settlement scheme
- Inability to meet visa conditions for current leave and extension applications e.g. financial requirement, fiance visa etc.

Support Services

- Housing issues
 - Mears
 - Bryson Intercultural / Migrant Help UK- 028 9031 5744 or 028 9244 8447
 - PPR- 028 9031 3315
 - Home Plus- 028 90 311836
 - Housing Rights- 028 9024 5640
- Asylum support
 - Migrant Help UK- 028 9031 5744 or 028 9244 8447

Support Services

- Foodbanks
 - Covid-19 Response for Refugee & Asylum Community- 078 7852 5870
 - Single point for assistance to access foodbanks / delivery
- Destitution/family reunion
 - Red Cross- 028 9073 5350
- Legal advice (immigration/benefits/employment)
 - Law Centre NI- 028 9024 4401

Questions?





028 9024 4401

Law Centre (NI) advice line available weekdays
(closed 1pm – 2pm for lunch)

