**UK Visas and Citizenship Service and Support Centres - Domestic Violence (DV) Customers**

**Factsheet:** **May 2021**

• In November 2018, UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) introduced new, front end services, allowing customers in the UK to submit all necessary evidence and personal information to support their application quickly and securely through a simpler journey.

• From March 2019, these new services also included enhanced support for vulnerable customers, with access to 7 dedicated UKVI Service and Support Centres (SSCs).

• The SSCs are in Belfast, Cardiff, Croydon, Glasgow, Liverpool, Sheffield and Solihull.

• The SSCs provide a service for those customers who may be in positions of vulnerability or whose circumstances may be complex. All SSC appointments are free of charge.

• From 26 May 2021, customers applying for indefinite leave to remain on the grounds that they are the victim of domestic violence or abuse (DV) will be required to attend a SSC in order to enrol their biometrics.

• Customers will be automatically guided to the booking system to book an appointment at a SSC to complete their application. At the end of their online application they will get confirmation of their appointment details, including the location of the SSC, and the date and time of their appointment.

• During appointments at SSCs, a trained UKVI staff member will enrol the customer’s biometric information. All SSCs have implemented COVID-secure measures and are complying with the government’s guidance on managing the risk of COVID-19. At present, and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, DV customers will continue to submit their supporting documents separately, either by email or post. Once social distancing measures are eased, there will be the facility for UKVI staff to additionally validate and scan a customer’s supporting evidence at their SSC appointment. UKVI will seek to understand the customer’s specific circumstances and assist with any safeguarding needs the customer may have.

• Those customers who need it can access support to complete the online application through the Home Office Assisted Digital support service. Customers can visit GOV.UK, using the link below, for more information and to access this service. Please note this service does not provide immigration advice.

[Get help with your online Home Office application - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/assisted-digital-help-online-applications)

• DV customers will be entitled to travel assistance, in order to attend a SSC appointment, where they are applying to be exempt from paying the application fee on the grounds that they are destitute, and, they live more than three miles from their nearest SSC. Where DV customers are eligible and require travel assistance, they will be directed to contact the Service and Support Appointment line (SSAL) as part of the online application process. SSAL staff will process the request for travel assistance.

• Until DV customers transition to SSCs, customers will continue to submit their biometric information via the Post Office and will post or email their supporting documents as they do now.

**If the SSCs are designed to help customers who need additional support, why have DV customers not been able to access this service sooner?**

SSCs have undergone a phased roll out. There has also been an additional delay because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**How have the 7 UKVI SSC locations been selected?**

UKVI repurposed the previous Premium Service Centre network to become the new SSC locations. These are located in major cities in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

**Will interpreters be available on site?**

As a result of COVID-19 and social distancing measures DV customers will only be required to enrol biometrics at their SSC appointment at present. In future, when social distancing measures are eased, and SSC staff can provide additional services, an interpreter service will be available to those that need it. There will be no charge to use this service.

**Are fee waivers available?**

Yes. DV customers will still be able to apply for a fee waiver, and to be exempt from paying the application fee on the grounds that they are destitute, using the online form. Guidance is available on GOV.UK.

**What if DV customers don’t have digital access or lack confidence applying online?**

The Assisted Digital Service aims to ensure that nobody is excluded from making an immigration application due to lack of digital skills or access to a computer. Customers can visit GOV.UK, using the link below, for more information and to access this service. Please note this service does not provide immigration advice.

[Get help with your online Home Office application - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/assisted-digital-help-online-applications)

**How do DV customers access the Assisted Digital Service?**

‘We Are Digital’ provide the support for this service. Customers can either email or call using the following contact details:

Email: visa@we-are-digital.co.uk

Telephone: 03333 445 675
Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm

(Customers should include a telephone number they can be contacted on if possible).

**What if DV customers are unable to attend an SSC location? (For example, due to safeguarding or medical issues?)**

If a DV customer is unable to travel to attend an SSC location, for example due to a specific safeguarding or medical issue, UKVI staff will explore whether mobile enrolment can be offered as an appropriate alternative. Customers in this position should contact the SSAL in the first instance.

**Will customers who apply under the Destitution Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC) need to attend an SSC to enrol their biometrics?**

For the vast majority of DDVC customers, UKVI are currently re-using biometrics submitted with their previous entry clearance or leave to remain application to process their application under the DDVC. This process is expected to continue. There may be exceptional instances where it is not possible to re-use biometrics and where customers will need to attend an SSC. UKVI will notify DDVC customers on an individual basis should the need to attend an SSC to enrol biometrics arise. DDVC customers will be eligible for travel assistance where they are required to attend an SSC and they live more than 3 miles from their nearest SSC.