

VISA PAK ISSUE 478 — 20 AUGUST 2021

ADVICE ON PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FROM PEOPLE AFFECTED BY RECENT EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN

In light of the recent political developments in Afghanistan, staff are reminded of Visa Pak Issue [248](#), which provides advice for immigration officers who are considering a visa application from any person whose home country is currently experiencing civil disturbances or natural disasters. This advice is focussed on assisting those on temporary visas in New Zealand who may need to stay longer in New Zealand.

The advice does not cover what to do when the situation in a person's country means they are not currently able to obtain documentation we would normally seek in support of an application for a visa. In extreme situations, such as the current situation in Afghanistan, it may not be possible to obtain any new documentation so we can only ask applicants to submit what information they currently have access to and then make a decision based on that information.

In these situations, staff should take the following approach:

- Use common sense and apply an empathetic approach to applications from affected people. If unsure talk to your manager.
- Be pragmatic when thinking about documentation required to support an application. For example, it is currently not practical or helpful to request a new Afghanistan police certificate, or request a passport be sent out of Afghanistan to be scanned.
- Consider the use of discretion in the absence of supporting documents. For example, the provision to waive police clearances is set out in the Operational Manual at A5.10.1
- Consider an office referral if you have a case which should be approved and do not have the delegated authority to exercise discretion.
- If you decide an exception to instructions is not merited nor is an office referral, this must be signalled to the National Office via the No Surprises process. The application should be held until further advice is received.