

## ***Procedure for Visa Applications for Overseas Link Visitors visiting the UK.***

### **Introduction**

The current procedures in visa offices are designed to manage the high volume of applications received, whilst at the same time facilitating travel to the UK through processes, which prevent immigration abuse.

### **Additional Interim Procedures**

The following are the interim procedures to ensure visa applications by Health Link visitors to the UK run smoothly, especially visitors from Ethiopia. They will be subject to review when new visa rules and procedures are fully in place in 2008.

Biometric visas are now being issued in over 70 overseas countries and are being rolled out gradually to all British missions. They may not be in place in all countries when visas are applied for, however they are in place in Ethiopia for instance. The UK visas website [www.ukvisas.gov.uk](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk) contains information on the roll out of biometric profiling.

In order that overseas Link visitors visas are issued efficiently, **for the time being, please copy (do not send original documentation) all UK supporting documents and information to the UKvisas Stakeholder Engagement Office London SW1A 2AH, Tel +44 (0)20 7008 8369, Fax +44 (0) 20 7008 8362; Manager - Mark Walmsley email [Mark.Walmsley@fco.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.Walmsley@fco.gov.uk) (copied to [Hazel.Duddy@fco.gov.uk](mailto:Hazel.Duddy@fco.gov.uk)).**

This office will then inform the appropriate Entry Clearance Manager in the overseas office that they will shortly receive a visa application from an individual under the THET programme.

### **Normal Procedures**

Your overseas Link partner's visa application will need to be lodged at their local visa office providing original documentation to support their application. As the method of submitting visa applications may vary from country to country, applicants should first consult their Embassy/High Commission website for the current information on this.

Once the system is running well then applications will be made directly to the relevant overseas visa office without the need to involve the UKvisas London Stakeholder team.

In the near future UK or overseas visa officers will use the THET website [www.thet.org, see Links Search] to check the legitimacy of a Link and may phone the Link Coordinator if they wish to make more detailed inquiries. **This will require all THET supported NHS Health Links to be on the THET website as soon as possible.**

All letters must be on headed note paper.

### **Additional Procedures**

1. If possible, preferably at least three months before the time of travel, UKvisas (as an interim Stakeholder Engagement Office as above and overseas visa office) should be informed by the UK Health Link partner the names and dates of travel of the overseas visitors.
2. When the visa is applied for the following information must be supplied by the UK Health Link partner and THET:
  - A letter from THET endorsing the Health Link and the visitors (contact aisha@thet.org).
  - A letter from the UK Health Link partner confirming the names and dates of travel of the visitors, the purpose of the visit, and stating that the full costs of the visit will be covered by the UK Health Link partner/s.
3. When the overseas visitors send or attend their overseas visa office they will need to provide the following information:
  - A letter of invitation from the UK Health Link partner/s (as above) confirming the date and purpose of the visit and again that the costs of the visit will be fully covered by the UK partner/s.
  - A support letter from the overseas Links visitors health institution, [senior manager/CEO/Dean], stating length of service and permission to undertake the visit.
  - A current medical/professional certificate of registration, if applicable.

4. In some circumstances, when all the above documentation is correct, and the visa office has been informed of the visit and the names of the visitors, the visitor may be issued with a visa without having to attend the visa office. However, where biometric profiling is operational the visitor will have to attend once for finger printing and a digital photograph.