What to Do When Your Work Visa Application Is Delayed in London

Understand why delays happen and what you can do about them

Waiting for a decision on a work visa application can be stressful, especially when the expected timeline passes without any update. Delays are not uncommon, and they often stem from factors that have nothing to do with the quality of your application. Knowing how to respond can make a real difference to your peace of mind and to the outcome.

This article walks through the practical steps you can take when your work visa application is delayed. Each step covers what to do, what to watch out for, and how to keep things moving without making matters worse.

Check the standard processing times first

Before you assume something is wrong, check the current published processing times for the type of work visa you applied for. The Home Office updates these regularly, and they vary by visa category and by whether you used priority or super-priority service. A delay that feels long might still fall inside the normal range for standard applications.

What to watch: processing times are measured in working days, not calendar days. A six-week wait in real time could be only four working weeks. Also note that processing times for applications made inside the UK can differ from those made outside the UK. If your application is still within the published window, there is usually no need to act yet.

View the location on Google Maps

Use the online enquiry service for updates

The Home Office provides a paid enquiry service for applicants who want a status update. You can use this service to ask where your application stands. You will need your application reference number and your passport details. The response is usually by email and arrives within a few working days.

What to watch: the enquiry service cannot force a decision or speed up your case. Its value is in confirming that your application is being processed and that no additional documents are required. If the response says your case is with a caseworker, that is a normal status. Do not interpret a short reply as a sign of trouble.



Check your email and spam folder regularly

During the processing period, the Home Office may contact you by email. They might ask for more information, request an interview, or send a decision. Missing an email can cause further delays or even a refusal by default.

What to watch: the Home Office does not always send a reminder. If they ask for additional documents, they usually give a deadline, often 10 working days. Check your email at least once a day, including the spam or junk folder. If you have changed your email address since submitting the application, update it through the online service as soon as possible.

Respond quickly to any request for documents

If the Home Office asks for more evidence, respond as fast as you can. Common requests include updated bank statements, a new Certificate of Sponsorship, or proof that you meet the salary threshold for your eligible occupation. Send exactly what they ask for, nothing extra.

What to watch: sending documents that were not requested can slow things down. It may also raise questions about your application that were not there before. If you are unsure what a request means, seek advice before replying. A poorly prepared response can lead to a refusal or a longer delay.

Contact your sponsor for support

Your employer or sponsor has a role in the visa process. They issued your Certificate of Sponsorship and they have a sponsor licence that the Home Office monitors. If your application is delayed, your sponsor can sometimes check on its status through their own sponsor management system. They may also be able to provide a letter confirming that your role and salary still meet the requirements, which can help if the Home Office has queries.

What to watch: your sponsor may be hesitant to get involved if the delay is not their concern. Approach them politely and explain that a quick resolution benefits both sides. If the delay is due to a compliance visit or a query about the sponsor licence, your sponsor should already be aware and may be working on it.

Consider whether you need legal advice

Some delays are routine and resolve on their own. Others signal a problem that needs professional input. If your application has been pending for longer than the published processing time plus a reasonable margin, or if you have received a letter saying your case is being considered on complex grounds, it may be wise to get advice.



What to watch: not all legal advisers are equal. Look for a firm that specialises in UK immigration and has experience with work visas. Adamir Immigration Solicitors London is one such firm that provides UK immigration advice and legal services. If you decide to seek help, ask about their experience with delayed applications and what they would recommend for your specific situation.

Do not submit a fresh application unless advised

When a visa is delayed, the temptation is to submit a new application in the hope that it will be processed faster. This is almost always a mistake. A second application does not cancel the first one, and it can confuse the Home Office about which case to process. It also means paying the application fee and the immigration skills charge again, with no guarantee of a quicker outcome.

What to watch: if your circumstances have changed - for example, your sponsor has changed or your job role has shifted - a new application may be appropriate, but only after you have withdrawn the old one. Withdrawing an application is a formal step and should be done carefully. Seek advice before taking this route.

Keep records of all communication

From the day you submit your application, keep a log of every contact you have with the Home Office, your sponsor, and any legal adviser. Save emails, note the dates and times of phone calls, and keep copies of every document you send. This record can be invaluable if you later need to challenge a decision or prove that you responded on time.

What to watch: the Home Office does not always acknowledge receipt of documents you send by post or through the online system. If you send something important, use a tracked method or keep the submission confirmation. If you email documents, keep the sent email in a dedicated folder.

Know when to escalate your case

If your application has been delayed significantly beyond the standard processing time, you may be able to escalate it. The Home Office has a formal complaint process, and in some cases, you can ask your MP to make an enquiry on your behalf. Escalation should be a last resort, not a first step, because it can sometimes slow things down if used too early.

What to watch: before escalating, confirm that the delay is not due to a missing document or an unresolved query. If the Home Office is waiting for something from you, escalating will not help. Also, be aware that the complaint process can take several weeks to produce a response. It is not a quick fix.



Adamir Immigration Solicitors London is also on LinkedIn.

Plan for the worst-case scenario

While most delayed applications are eventually decided, there is a possibility that a delay leads to a refusal. Think about what you would do if that happens. Would you appeal, reapply, or consider a different visa route? Having a plan in place reduces panic and helps you act quickly if the decision is not what you hoped for.

What to watch: a refusal often comes with a right to appeal or to request an administrative review, but the deadlines are short. If you receive a refusal, act immediately. Waiting even a few days can close off your options. **Adamir Immigration Solicitors London** offers services that include immigration appeals and can advise on next steps if you face a refusal.

Delays in work visa applications are frustrating, but they are not always a sign of a problem. By staying organised, responding promptly, and knowing when to seek professional advice, you can manage the situation calmly. If you need tailored guidance, you can contact Adamir

Immigration Solicitors London at Unit-1, 5 Norman Rd, London N15 4ND, UK, or call +44 20 3302 0074 for a consultation about your case.