



Home Office

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Dear Zoe,

Thank you for your letter dated 19 March 2024, received via email on 20 March 2024 about the '*Important information about your BRP and changes to the UK immigration system*' mailers sent from 19 March 2024. Further to your letter, concerns were raised at the FBIS Advisory Group on 22 March 2024.

Advisory Groups were established to bring together a broader range of users of the UK immigration system, and those supporting customers through the immigration system, to provide constructive advice, challenge, and perspectives on key issues to support the Home Office in implementing the FBIS Programme. We have previously discussed eVisas with this group. We are currently in a 'test and learn' phase and therefore feedback is essential to help us make improvements before we extend to a wider cohort of customers. I have addressed your specific questions below:

- 1. Are these emails being sent to legal representatives and directly to clients or only to a contact email? How has UKVI determined the correct email address for receipt of these emails? What database is being used?** Direct messages are being sent to customers using the email addresses we hold on record. If the email address provided during their application is that of their legal representative rather than their personal address, the message will go to the representative. These are stored across various databases dependent on the time of application and whether they applied in or out of country. We set out how we will use people's personal information, including to keep in contact with them, in the [Borders, immigration and citizenship: privacy information notice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).
- 2. Who made the decision to send out generic emails? What are the reasons for not sending out personalised emails?** The decision was made via the eVisa Programme Board, based on experience from previous mailing exercises. Input was also sought from advisory groups to inform the decision. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) was conducted on this basis. We do not usually personalise generic emails because of the security risks in sharing personal data. We are reviewing our approach based on the feedback received and the DPIA is currently also undergoing a review with respect to the suggestion to personalise the emails;

therefore, we are unable to confirm at this stage whether future emails will be personalised, pending the outcome of the DPIA review alongside the assessment of the viability of extracting the data in a suitable format to be used for this purpose.

- 3. Would there be any consequences if an individual set up an account using a link that was not intended for them, and if so, what would those consequences be?** The rollout of eVisas is being phased across 2024 to cover different routes, both for in country as well as out of country applications. As this change affects millions of customers, this phased approach will allow a smoother transition across the early rollout period, followed by a call to action in the summer to enable all customers with extant permission to make the switch to eVisas. In mid-March we began inviting groups of in country BRP customers to sign up and create their UKVI account and get access to their eVisa. Should a customer create an account before they are invited to, they may not be able to view their immigration status through their account. All customers will have a status recorded within our databases, viewable through their UKVI account, by summer 2024.

The service will be rolled-out to all BRP holders from summer 2024 at which point we would welcome the support of legal representatives and groups like ILPA to help us reach people, particularly where we may not have up to date contact details. The latest information is available on www.gov.uk/evisa. Holders of other physical immigration documents, including (for those who hold indefinite leave to enter or indefinite leave to remain) passports containing vignette stickers or ink stamps, and BRCs, can also find information here on what they need to do to create a UKVI account to access their eVisa.

- 4. What will be the consequences if someone fails to act upon this email? Is UKVI keeping a record of individuals who have not signed up to an account? What plans are there to contact people who have not signed up for a UKVI account in advance of 31 December 2024?** We are carefully monitoring the take up of accounts and are keen to ensure that everyone who is eligible creates an account so that they can access their eVisa and can easily prove their rights once their BRP or other physical document expires. Extant leave holders with a BRP short-dated to the end of 2024 should register for a UKVI account to enable them to easily prove their immigration status from 2025 onwards. If they don't register by the end of 2024 they will be able to register for a UKVI account in 2025 when they encounter a life-event which requires proof of their immigration status. The experience for a customer would be more user-friendly however should the account creation be done in advance of the life event. Where a customer has not registered for an account, we will be sending a series of nudge notifications as well as using an expansive, broader suite of communication and engagement techniques to ensure we reach everyone, particularly where we may not have up to date contact details.
- 5. Are there any other planned communication methods, such as by post or telephone?** No direct messaging is planned via phone or post, but the broader suite of channels includes a paid advertising campaign, regular updates on gov.uk, other government department (OGD) and partner organisation dissemination of information, Border Force dissemination of information, and media events. We are looking into further communication methods which may be required for more niche cohorts of customers.
- 6. The government webpage currently states, 'If you have not yet been contacted about creating an account, you'll be able to create your account**

and access your eVisa later in 2024.’ Does this mean the website will eventually allow individuals to sign up for an account without a prior invitation to do so? Yes – this will be enabled in the summer.

7. Is there a specific cohort to whom these invites are being sent? Assuming there is a staged approach to the invites, can you please share the timeline for who will be sent these emails and at which time in the coming months?

A small, ring-fenced group of customers have been selected for this initial test phase. We will gradually increase the volume of customers until we enter Public Beta in Summer 2024. At this point, all BRP holding customers will be able to register for a UKVI account.

To continue to test our systems and processes, we will be issuing another round of direct messages tomorrow (03 April 2024). As mentioned above, we are continuing to investigate the possibility of personalising the messages, therefore this round will not be personalised to the customer. Based on feedback received to date however, the content of the messages has been altered to advise legal representatives to disregard these messages. From the start of June, when we enter Public Beta, we would encourage legal representatives to contact their BRP holding clients to advise them they can now create an account. It is essential we press ahead with the Private Beta testing to ensure we have sufficient sample data to test our systems and make any necessary adjustments, in advance of the Public Beta.

I would also like to take this opportunity to reassure you that we are actively working towards reestablishing the Digital Status working group. We are aware the team has reached out to members to check their availability for week commencing 24/04/2024 and many responses have been received. We will reach out to you once we have confirmed a date and will keep you informed of any updates, as we value this opportunity to discuss important matters and listen to your specific concerns.

Thank you for your continued support and collaboration.

Kind Regards,

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Strategic Engagement and Delivery Improvement Unit
Future Borders & Immigration System (FBIS) Programme
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