

By email only

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Home Office

cc: Matthew Foster, Head of Central Office, Status and Information Services, Visa, Status and Information Services, Customer Services Group, UK Visas and Immigration

19 March 2024

Dear Lee,

Re: 'Important information about your BRP and changes to the UK immigration system' Email

We are urgently writing regarding emails received by our members inviting the creation of a UKVI account.

The emails are sent from donotreply.evisadirectmail@notifications.service.gov.uk, with the subject line 'Important information about your BRP and changes to the UK immigration system', and begin '*Dear Sir/Madam, We are contacting you because your biometric residence permit (BRP) which can be used to demonstrate your immigration status, will expire on 31 December 2024.*' We have attached an example of the email to this letter, with our member's details redacted.

The emails do not identify who the Home Office is inviting to set up an account. This is problematic for the following reasons:

- For immigration practitioners, who will have huge numbers of current and former clients (some with whom they may have lost contact), it will be impossible to identify which client this notice is intended to reach. They may be flooded with these emails. This is particularly problematic as the email further indicates that the link included is not necessarily a general link for anyone to use: '*You should not share this link with anyone else as it may not work for them. If you have been sent this email by someone other than the Home Office, you should not use the above link. You may not be able to create your account or see your eVisa yet.*' If you follow the link it states '*You can use this service if the Home Office has emailed you about how to get access to your eVisa. If you've not been contacted by the Home Office, you do not need to do anything yet. You'll be able to set up access to your eVisa later in 2024.*'

- If the email is sent directly to an invitee, they may ignore it, as it is not addressed to them personally.
- Security software may deem it spam/phishing, as it is from a generic email address, and titled “Dear Sir/Madam”. We do not understand why the Home Office has not used basic technology to personalise these emails.
- It may lead to a large number of calls to UKVI by individuals and legal representatives, asking whether the email is genuine.

Therefore, it seems likely that the emails may not reach the intended recipient or prompt the engagement it requires. This is concerning, as the email contains important information about the move to eVisas, before BRPs expire on 31 December 2024, including what actions the individual needs to take in order to travel outside of the UK and prove their immigration status in future.

Please may we request urgent clarification of the following:

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?
2. Who made the decision to send out generic emails? What are the reasons for not sending out personalised emails?
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?
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?
5. Are there any other planned communication methods, such as by post or telephone?
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?
7. Is there a specific cohort to whom these invites are being sent?
8. 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?

We would urge you to immediately stop sending invitation emails and pause the emails until they are personalised to indicate who they are intended to reach. Such a step is wholly proportionate and appropriate in these circumstances, to prevent confusion and unnecessary expenditure of time and resources by lay applicants, legal representatives, and the Home Office itself.

In light of the drastic consequences that may occur if an individual does not receive the necessary information about the need to create a UKVI account to access their eVisa before 31 December 2024, including being unable to enforce their rights and re-enter the UK, we urge you to heed our longstanding feedback and warning: you must more effectively communicate with individuals about the roll-out of digital immigration status.

Yours sincerely,

Zoe Bantleman
Legal Director
Immigration Law Practitioners' Association (ILPA)

From: DoNotReply eVisaDirectMail

<donotreply.evisadirectmail@notifications.service.gov.uk>

Sent: Monday, March 18, 2024 2:35 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Important information about your BRP and changes to the UK immigration system

GOV.UK

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are contacting you because your biometric residence permit (BRP) which can be used to demonstrate your immigration status, will expire on 31 December 2024. The expiry of your BRP card does not affect your immigration status. However, how you prove your status will change from 2025.

The UK border and immigration system is becoming digital. This means that physical documents like BRPs and vignette visa stickers are being replaced by eVisas.

If you have become a British citizen since you were last issued with a BRP, you will have the right of abode in the UK. To prove your right to be in the UK, you can use a British citizen passport or a certificate of entitlement of right of abode.

If you have a British passport, you do not need to do anything. If you have a certificate of entitlement you may need to take action in the future and further details will be provided in due course.

If you want to apply for one of these, or if you still have your BRP, you can find more information on what you need to do here: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-citizenship-indefinite-leave-to-remain/after-you-get-your-certificate>.

If you are not a British or Irish citizen, you need to take action now, before your BRP expires on 31 December 2024.

What do I need to do now?

To create a UKVI account and access your eVisa you will need:

- Your date of birth
- Your BRP Number
- Your passport (if you do not have a BRP)
- Access to an email address and phone number
- Access to a smartphone

You can create an account using the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/get-access-evisa>. You should not share this link with anyone else as it may not work for them.

If you have been sent this email by someone other than the Home Office, you should not use the above link. You may not be able to create your account or see your eVisa yet.

If you need help creating your UKVI account, you can get help at: <https://www.gov.uk/assisted-digital-help-online-applications>.

If you already have an eVisa along with your BRP, you do not need to create a new UKVI account. To check if you already have a UKVI account, you can go to <https://www.gov.uk/view-prove-immigration-status>.

If we need any further information from you during this process, we will contact you.

You can also go to <https://www.gov.uk/evisa> and follow the latest guidance.

What is an eVisa?

An eVisa is an electronic record of a person's immigration status. Updating your physical document to an eVisa does not affect your immigration status or the conditions of your permission to

enter or stay in the UK. eVisas remove the need for physical documents, including BRPs.

Since 2018, millions of customers have received an eVisa online, for example through the EU Settlement Scheme. The benefits of eVisas include:

- they are secure and cannot be lost, stolen, or tampered with, unlike a physical document.
- they can be accessed anywhere and in real time, putting you in control of your own data.
- you can easily update your details or documentation and tell us about any changes like a new passport issued by your home country, email, telephone number and postal address.

For more information on how your data is used, please see GOV.UK.

What should I do when travelling overseas during 2024?

During 2024, you should continue to carry your in-date BRP when travelling internationally until it expires.

From Summer 2024 onwards, if the passport or national identity document you are travelling with is linked to your UKVI account, airlines and other carriers will be able to digitally check that you have permission to come to the UK.

You should update your UKVI account with any passport you wish to use for travel, to avoid unnecessary delays when travelling internationally. You can do this at

<https://www.gov.uk/update-uk-visas-immigration-account-details>.

What if I have lost my BRP?

If you have lost your BRP, or it has been stolen or damaged, please follow the latest guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits/lost-stolen-damaged>.

Further information

The latest information on eVisas is available at www.gov.uk/evisa, and you can register to receive updates whenever this page is updated. It will be updated throughout 2024.

