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Dear Monique Hawkins,

Thank you for your letter of 12 May 2022 to Kevin Foster MP, former Minister for Safe and Legal Migration, regarding the process for changing or adding names to a person's digital status documentation, to match the person's name in the visual inspection zone (VIZ) of their passport rather than the name recorded in the machine readable zone (MRZ). Your letter has been passed to me to reply. I apologise for the delay in responding.

We appreciate your interest in this matter. We have shared your queries with the appropriate technical team. Please find below our responses:

Q1. People have reported to us that they cannot find an option on the 'Update your immigration status' process to make this change [to match the person's name in the VIZ]. They only see the option to update their account if their name has changed, which it has not for these people. In what way has the digital process been adapted to allow people make this change?

Customers who use the Chip Checker app to apply for status will automatically have their status issued under the MRZ name that is extracted from the chip contained within their document. However, customers can make and request changes online using the Update My Details service (UMD). UMD is a digital service customers can use to update their personal details. However, the current version of the system does not differentiate between changes to primary names and those that would like to add their additional name (e.g., married name) to their digital status. We are currently in the process of improving the customer experience by building a specific process for customers who would like to display their married names recorded in the VIZ of their passport on their digital status, in addition to the name recorded in the MRZ.

Q2. We have had a report of someone who was able to achieve this change. They did so by choosing the (not necessarily appropriate) option to reflect a name

change, having to physically send their passport to the Home Office, and by (voluntarily, unprompted) including a covering note to explain that their name had not changed, but they wanted their married name to be included on their EUSS status. Is this the intended process as referenced in the October 2021 letter?

At present, the EUSS status is automatically issued in line with the MRZ name. Customers who then wish to make a request to include their married name on their status can do so by posting their original passport and providing a covering letter requesting this change. Any names that customers want to add to their digital status will need to be shown in the VIZ of their travel document. Status name will then be updated and will display the customer's name as it exactly appears on the VIZ. For many French and Dutch married nationals, this will take the form of "Birth Name Wife of Married Name", including the prefix "wife of". We are currently working to improve the way in which we present additional names on digital status in a way that is more in line with customers' needs and expectations.

Q3. Would you consider introducing a dedicated process advertised for this type of change on the Update your immigration website?

As referenced in response to question 1, the process outlined in question 2 is an interim way of reflecting married name on the user's digital status, and we recognise that this is an imperfect solution which will not scale. We are currently in the process of improving the customer experience by building a specific process for customers who would like to display their married name in addition to the MRZ name on their digital status. This new process will include specific changes to the way data is stored and displayed, tailored to this scenario.

Q4. Would you consider introducing a dedicated choice for this type of change in the "Personal details" of the maintenance screen?

We are currently in the process of improving the customer experience by building a specific process for customers who would like to display their married name recorded in the VIZ in addition to the MRZ name on their digital status. Once this process is available, we will offer this as a dedicated choice within the maintenance pages of the user's account.

Q5. Why is it necessary for someone to send their identity document to the Home Office, when their name has not changed, and the Home Office has already accepted the very same identity document at the time of applying for status under the EU Settlement Scheme, either via the 'EU Exit: ID Document Check' app, or via posting in their identity document at the time of applying?

There is currently a system in place which allows customers to automatically update their passport where their biographic details have not changed, for example when a person has been issued with a new passport to replace an expired one. However, for any other changes, such as requesting an alternative name to be used on a digital status, we require the customer to post their passport to us. The passport will then be checked by the caseworking team and compared against existing records. This is to maintain the security of the person's identity and ensure it cannot be taken over by a third party.

We are currently looking into ways of building additional functionality into Update My Details (UMD), to make the process of updating customer details even more user-friendly. We would look to inform customers of any additional options once this functionality becomes available.

Q6. Why is it necessary for someone to send their identity document to the Home Office, when their name has not changed but their identity document has been renewed, given that it is possible to update status with a renewed document (no name change) by simply uploading a photograph of the identity document?

We are only able to make these changes with the physical document because we need to ensure that the biographics in the passport match fully with the proposed alterations.

Q7. In the case of the person who was able to achieve the change, the resulting status now shows the name as “FIRSTNAME MIDDLENAME BIRTHNAME EP MARRIEDNAME”, all capital letters. Can the display be updated so that it is made clear (as it is in the VIZ of the identity document) which of these names are given names, which are surnames, and an explanation of the word “EP” or similar?

We recognise that the process outlined in question 2 for reflecting married name on the user’s digital status requires improvement. We are currently in the process of improving the customer experience by building a specific process for customers who would like to display their married name in their VIZ in addition to the MRZ name on their digital status. This new process will include specific changes to the way data is stored and displayed, tailored to this scenario.

Q8. For at least one nationality, namely Italian, it is the case that married names can be added to passports, however the married name is then noted on a separate page within the document. This is explained on the Italian Consulate website. Can you confirm that you will also allow Italian women (and any other nationalities who allow recording of married or other names elsewhere on the identity document outside of the main VIZ area) to update their EUSS status to include their married name?

When a customer applies for status, all names shown on the evidence presented at the time of application will be recorded onto the relevant case management system. However, the name we extract from the chip will be the primary name under which status will be issued. All other names appearing on the ID evidence presented, including the observation page, will be captured and recorded in our systems. Customers will then be able to add to their status any additional name that is shown on the VIZ of their passport.

However, we are unable to add names other than those recorded on the MRZ or VIZ. This is because we operate under the principle of “one name for all official purposes”. Our policy is set out in the “Use and Change of Name” guidance, which is available on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/change-of-name-guidance/use-and-change-of-names>

We only issue status in the name that the passport issuing authority elected to use as primary at the passport issuance stage, which is the name recorded in the MRZ and VIZ.

I hope the above responses answer your questions satisfactorily. Please let me know if you have any other feedback or questions about this topic.

Yours sincerely

Simon Tomlinson

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