



UK NATIONALS
SUPPORT FUND

ANNUAL
REVIEW
2020-21



**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development
Office**

August 2021

SUMMARY

Background

Securing the rights of UK Nationals (UKN) under the Withdrawal Agreement (WA) and Separation Agreements (SA) is a key priority for HMG. These agreements provide UKNs living in EU Member States, EEA/EFTA countries or Switzerland, with certainty on their rights.

In most cases, UKNs will need to take some administrative action to obtain their new WA residency permits. The Government launched the UK Nationals Support Fund (UKNSF) in March 2020 to provide practical support to UKNs who needed additional support when applying for residency in EU Member States (EUMS) and EEA/EFTA countries. These UKNs may include the elderly, the disabled, or those who live in remote areas with limited access to online services.

The Government allocated £3m to the UKNSF up to 31 March 2021, which has allowed the Fund to operate in 13 countries: Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, and Spain. Support has been delivered through eight implementing partners (IPs).

Purpose of the UKNSF

The IPs were tasked with providing assistance to UKNs to help them '**complete the process of registering/applying for a new residence status**' – in order for UKNs to secure their rights under the WA and EEA EFTA Separation Agreement. The support was targeted at certain groups that might have additional needs when applying. These groups might include, but were not limited to:

- Some elderly people, disabled people and people with serious health conditions (e.g. physical or mental impairment, are socially excluded as a result of their circumstances)
- Those who have experienced modern slavery and/or trafficking
- Those who have experienced domestic abuse (to include non-violent forms of abuse, emotional, psychological etc.)
- Those with no fixed abode (e.g. Traveller communities, rough sleepers)
- Those living in hard-to-reach or remote areas
- Children
- Those requiring digital assistance

IPs were also tasked with **providing feedback** from the UKNs they had supported, in order to assess the quality of the advice provided and whether it had enabled the UKN to make an application for residency.

What has been achieved so far?

The objective of the Fund is to help any UKNs that needs additional support with their residency application. There were no numerical targets set at the beginning of the project for how many UKNs should be supported. This is because there was no reliable data available on how many UKNs might need additional support.

The Grant Agreements and MOUs signed with IPs, set out what IPs are expected to deliver and how outcomes will be measured. The key measure of success is how many UKNs have been provided with sufficient assistance to enable them to make an application. The IPs provide monthly statistics on how they are meeting this outcome.

The key achievements for the UKNSF up to 31 March 2021 are:

- **11,925** UK nationals have received direct support from a caseworker and this support has enabled the UKN to submit a residency application.
- Additionally, **2,184** UK nationals have had their residency application submitted by an IP on their behalf.
- Information provided by IPs via their websites, social media activity and other outreach¹ has reached **309,929** individuals
- **229** outreach events (both physical and online) have been delivered, reaching over **6,000** UKNs.
- The UKNSF has delivered support to UKNs in 13 different EU MS and EEA EFTA countries.
- The UKNSF has expanded its coverage to include all the regions of France and Spain – where demand for support is the highest.

UKNs were asked four questions after they had used the IPs' services (provided they agreed to take the survey). The responses have been overwhelmingly positive.

Q1 How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the service you received from [the IP]?

88% satisfied

Q2 Thinking of [the IP's] services you have used, do you now better understand the residency requirements and process for UK nationals living in your country of residence, and what it means for you?

85% replied yes

Q3 As a result of [the IP's] information and advice, do you better understand the wider support available to you, such as access to healthcare and other local support?

87% replied yes

Q4 Do you feel more confident that your residency has been secured in [your country of residence]?

83% replied yes

More detailed statistics are in **Annex C**.

¹ This figure measures how many 'new users' have visited IP's webpages, social media engagement statistics and direct email and telephone contact with UKNs. With the online measures it is not possible to determine if the individual is a UKN. However, we would expect any UKNs using these services in order to access residency information, to interact with other UKNs such as spouses and friends. Therefore, although the data is not exact, it should provide a guide to the number of UKNs that have been reached.

Delivery Difficulties

The Covid pandemic and subsequent social distancing and travel restrictions have meant that IPs have needed to change the way they deliver support. This has required them to move to a mainly online method of support rather than more traditional face-to-face outreach. This has allowed IPs to reach more people, although UKNs who do not have access to the internet have been difficult to reach. To mitigate this, IPs have delivered a range of additional support such as through posters and leaflets. They have also found that radio is an effective means to reach those not online.

Covid restrictions have also caused delays within EU Member State (EUMS) residency systems and delayed the handling of applications by host governments. Some EUMS have been slow to clarify their processes, and this has meant that UKNs and IPs were unable to prepare sufficiently. The resulting lack of clarity and information has contributed to uncertainty and anxiety amongst UKNs. However, this situation has improved in recent months.

In some EUMS there is only limited access to services that assist individuals with mobility issues. This can particularly affect the disabled and elderly who may not be able to travel to make an application or provide biometric data.

From the outset, it was envisaged that the majority of UKNSF support would need to be targeted at elderly or disabled UKNs and although this has been a significant proportion of those helped, language barriers have been the main reason that UKNs have needed help. This has meant that IPs have had to re-think how they can best help UKNs.

It has also become apparent that a large minority of UKNs have found it difficult to access and collate the appropriate documentation that can support their application. IPs can spend 3-6 months helping a UKN obtain sufficient evidence. This is something that administrators of the UKNSF will need to manage and consider when activity is phased down in some regions.

Benefits of Working with Implementing Partners

The IPs have worked well with our diplomatic posts. Their efforts on communicating with the UK expatriate community have complemented that of the FCDO and Posts, and has increased general awareness amongst the UKN community of the actions that they need to take to apply for residency. IP's websites have been a good source of additional information, often explaining step-by-step how to make a residency application. This resource is accessible to all.

It is reasonable to assume that some of those accessing the websites of IPs will have recommended these sites to others and therefore helped disseminate information about what UKNs need to do in their respective countries of residence.

IPs have also played a key role in reporting misapplication of the WA to HMG. This has enabled UK nationals' first-hand experiences to be used as evidence in our wider engagement with EUMS and the European Commission.

The IPs have also helped our Posts to gain a better understanding of the challenges facing the UKN community in their host countries, and to expand the reach of HMG.

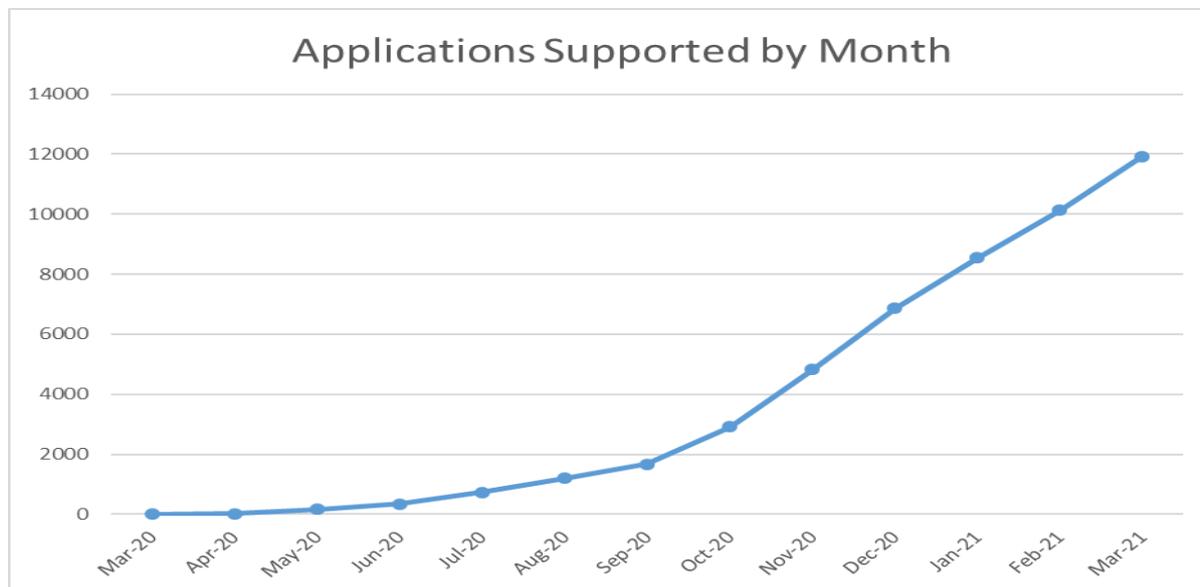
Risks

The UKNSF risk register has been maintained and updated throughout the lifetime of the Fund. The top four risks currently identified are:

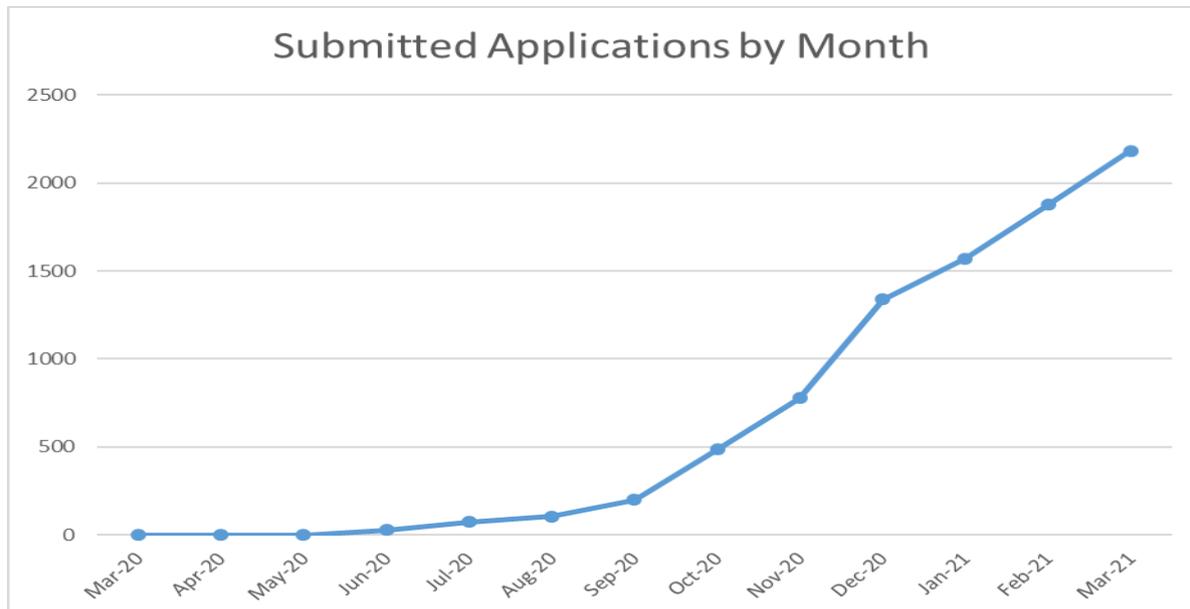
RISK	MITIGATION
<p>Covid-19 restrictions further hindering the delivery of support, especially for those who do not have access to the internet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor effectiveness of IP services, especially online. • Work with IPs to develop strategies to reach UKNs that lack access to online services • Review C-19 restrictions throughout EUMS. • Seek extensions to residency application deadlines to allow more UKNs to apply • Work with IPs to prepare for bottlenecks that develop once C19 restrictions are lifted
<p>Misapplication of the WA resulting in UKNs being incorrectly refused residency permits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with IPs to resolve the issue with the local residency authority • If misapplication continues, IPs to report cases to Embassy to be raised with MS • Report cases to the European Commission and the Specialised Committee
<p>Residency application systems becoming overwhelmed by applications and unable to cope, leading to long processing delays and preventing UKNs accessing wider services such as health care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report delays to EUMS • Seek extensions to residency application deadlines to allow UKNs sufficient time to apply • Work with IPs to prepare for bottlenecks that develop once C19 restrictions are lifted • Report delays to the European Commission and the Specialised Committee
<p>Complex casework increases as UKNs with more difficult issues come to light. It may take much longer to complete residency applications for these cases and this may result in permits not being issued before administrative deadlines expire</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage UKNs to make a residency application ASAP via multi-faceted communications campaign • Seek reassurance from EUMS that late applications will be dealt with correctly under WA provisions

ANNEX A

Month by Month Cumulative Profile

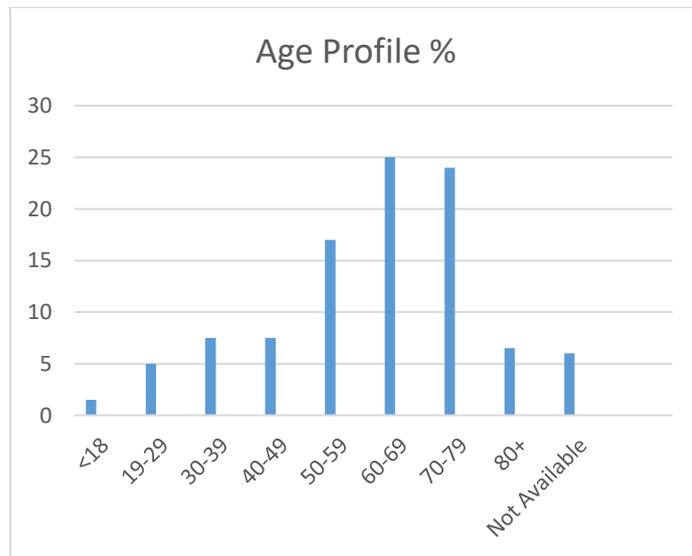
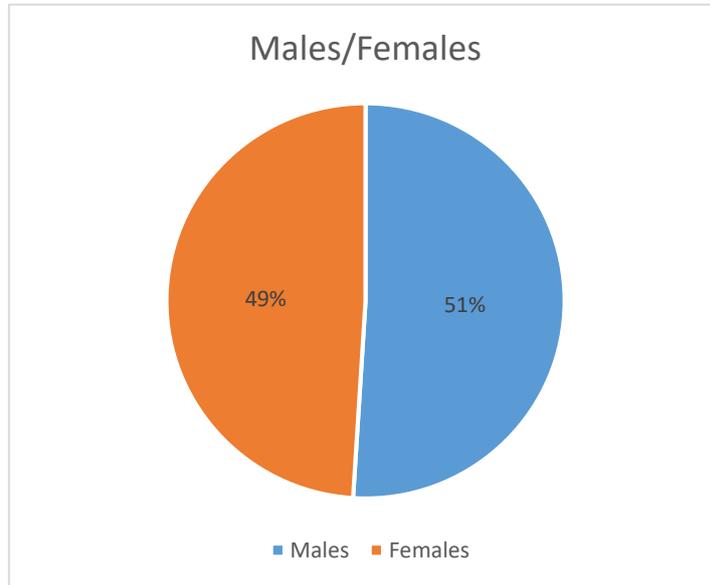


This figure measures how many UKNs have been personally supported by a caseworker and that have indicated they have sufficient information to make an application themselves



This figure measures how many residency applications have been submitted by IPs on behalf of the UKN because they were not able to do so themselves

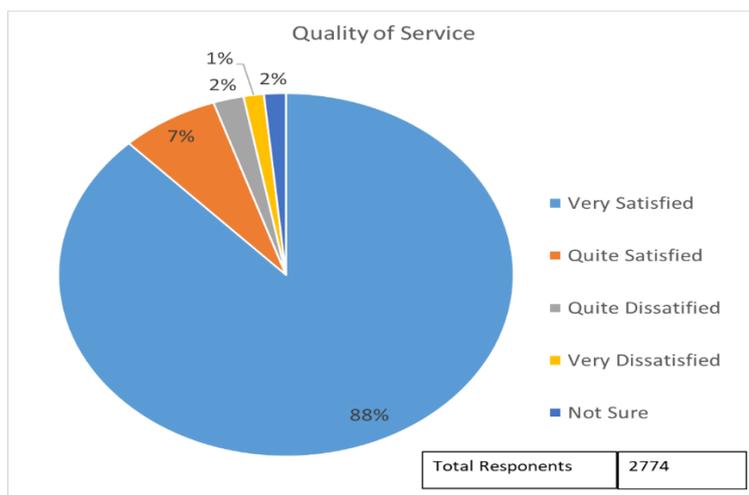
ANNEX B Profiles of UKNs Using IP Services



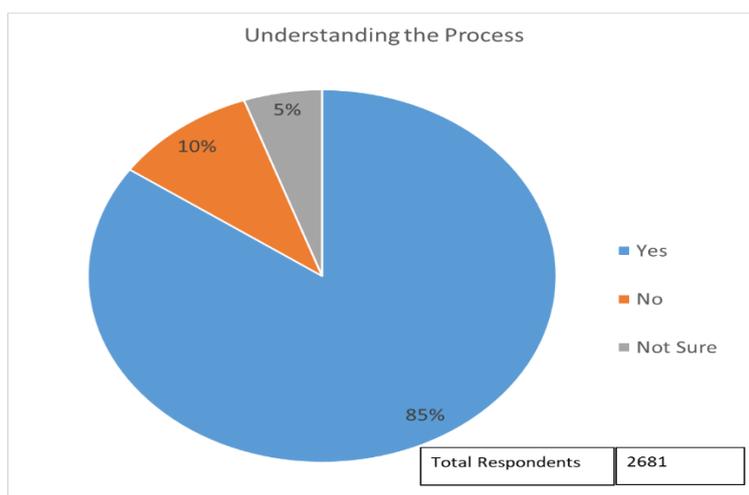
ANNEX C

Customer Satisfaction Survey (Annual Summaries)

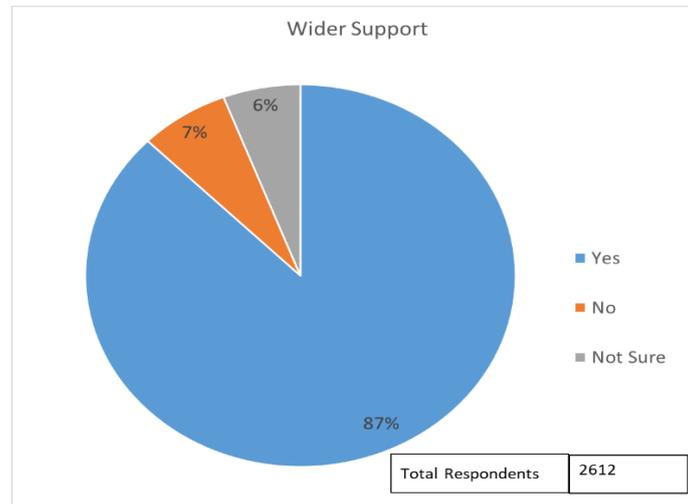
Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the service you received from [the IP]?



Question: Thinking of [the IP's] services you have used, do you now better understand the residency requirements and process for UK nationals living in the EU, and what it means for you?



Question: As a result of [the IP's] information and advice, do you better understand the wider support available to you, such as access to healthcare and other local support?



Question: Do you feel more confident that your residency has been secured in [the country]?

