



House of Commons
Houses of Parliament
London
SW1A 0AA

12th February 2019

Dear Colleague,

EU Settlement Scheme: update

As you will be aware, it has always been a priority for the UK Government to protect the rights of EU citizens living in the UK, and the reciprocal rights of UK nationals living in the EU. Fundamental to that is a registration scheme. This will mean we can avert a situation in future years where people with every right to be here find they have difficulty evidencing their status.

Throughout establishing this scheme we have always been clear that we highly value the contributions EU citizens make to the social, economic and cultural fabric of the UK and that we want them to stay in the UK. We have strived to remove any doubt for EU citizens resident in the UK. Their rights are protected by the Withdrawal Agreement and we have made it as simple and straightforward as possible for them to obtain a UK immigration status: they will just need to prove their identity, confirm their UK residence and declare any criminal convictions. Under the draft Withdrawal Agreement, the deadline for applications to the scheme for those resident here by the end of 2020 will be 30 June 2021.

In any scenario, deal or no deal, the EU Settlement Scheme will enable EU citizens living in the UK before exit to be able to stay and continue their lives here much as before, with the same access to work, study, benefits and public services that they enjoy now.

EU citizens living in the UK will be able to obtain their status under UK law online when applying to the EU Settlement Scheme. A postal route for submitting evidence will also be available. Furthermore, we are committed to supporting vulnerable groups of EU citizens and their family members, in protecting their status in the UK, by providing them with the help and support they need to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

Applications made

I am pleased with the progress we have made in getting the EU Settlement Scheme ready. We are currently in a voluntary test phase but over 100,000 individuals have successfully applied in the test phases and we received over 8,000 on the first day of public testing

alone. So far there have been no refusals. Automatic checks against Government data are also working well. In 79 per cent of concluded cases, applicants successfully completed their application without the need to provide any further evidence of residence themselves.

I also want to correct some of the misconceptions about the scheme.

Individuals will be able to use any laptop or mobile device to make an application. It is only during this current phase of testing that people need to use the Identity Document Check app to verify their identity, which is currently only available on Android devices. Those with Apple iPhones will for the time being not be able to use their device to self-verify their identity because it is the present policy of Apple not to allow any third party access to the iPhone "ID chip".

We are, however, working constructively with Apple and hope to come to a fix for this issue in the coming months.

When the scheme is fully live at the end of March, use of the app will be entirely optional – it is just one of several ways people will be able to verify their identity, including by post as we know that this is a traditionally used route for many citizens. Therefore, we have streamlined our ID checks so that documents are returned to applicants once checks have been made and independent of the decision on their application (usually within a week). People can also get their passport chip checked in person at over 50 locations.

For those without access to an Android device who wish to apply during this test phase, help is available during the current pilot at [ID checking locations](#) nationwide, which will rapidly increase in number ahead of the full opening of the scheme in March.

Under the draft Withdrawal Agreement everyone has until 30 June 2021 to apply.

Assisting the most vulnerable

The Home Office is making sure that the scheme is accessible and capable of handling vulnerable applicants with flexibility and sensitivity. Protecting the rights of vulnerable citizens is a core element influencing the design and application process of the EU Settlement Scheme, and our communications and engagement plans. We are enlisting the help of a wide variety of organisations that have expertise and strong local links with vulnerable EU citizens in communities throughout the UK.

To help vulnerable applicants who may struggle to apply online we offer a dedicated telephone advice service on the number **0300 123 7379**. In addition, we offer an [assisted digital service](#) for EU citizens in the UK who do not have the appropriate access, skills or confidence to complete the online form. We are also translating communications materials into all 23 EU languages and Welsh. Alternative formats can also be requested.

On 25 October 2018, we made up to £9 million of funding available to voluntary and community sector organisations to help us reach more vulnerable or at-risk EU citizens and their family members directly.

The grant funding will provide those voluntary and community sector organisations wishing to help EU citizens with the opportunity to do so. There will be two levels of funding awards:

- Level one – to grant fund projects from £5,000 to £39,999; and
- Level two – to grant fund projects from £40,000 up to £750,000.

Bids for applications closed on 1 February 2019. We will collate and evaluate the applications and announce which organisations have received funding by the end of March, in time for the full launch of the EU Settlement Scheme.

We want to ensure that the local voluntary and community sector is given all the tools and resources it needs to both inform vulnerable individuals about the need to apply; and to assist them to complete their application so that they obtain the UK immigration status they will need in order to remain here permanently.

Tools to help you

The Home Office has recently published a new [community leaders toolkit on GOV.UK](#). The toolkit contains practical and ready-made communications materials aimed at giving voluntary and community sector organisations and local authorities the ability to cascade messages about the EU Settlement Scheme and to encourage applications from those wishing to stay in the UK. The toolkit includes: introductions, briefing packs, factsheets, leaflets and posters. Video content and FAQs will soon be available on GOV.UK. If you would like hard copies of the leaflets from the toolkit to hand out to constituents in your surgeries, please do get in touch by emailing: EUSettlementScheme@homeoffice.gov.uk

When the scheme fully opens on 30 March 2019 it will be supported by a Home Office led multi-media marketing and communications campaign with prominent advertising across video on demand (catch up TV), outdoor posters (billboards), radio, web banners, social media and paid search.

Fees and refunds

The Prime Minister announced on 21 January 2019 there will be no application fee when the scheme fully opens by 30 March 2019. Anyone who has applied already, or who applies and pays a fee during the test phases, will have their fee refunded. Details of the refunds process will be published shortly. Applicants applying during the test phase are advised to use the payment card they wish to be refunded on.

This demonstrates the strength of our commitment to resident EU citizens, particularly vulnerable groups, by removing any financial barrier for any EU citizen or their family member who wishes to remain here.

No Deal planning

EU citizens already living here are very welcome. The Government has been clear that we want them to stay, whether we reach a deal or not.

On 28 January 2019, the Home Secretary [set out provisions](#) for EU citizens and their family members arriving in the UK after we leave the EU in the event the UK leaves without agreeing a deal. In this scenario, the Government will end free movement, and this will happen as soon as practically possible.

We have also been clear that if we leave the EU with no deal, there will be a transitional period where EU citizens will continue to be able to come to the UK.

For those who come for less than three months things will not look any different to now (for an interim period). They will not need to apply for any immigration status if they do not intend to stay for longer than three months. For those who want to stay longer, they will

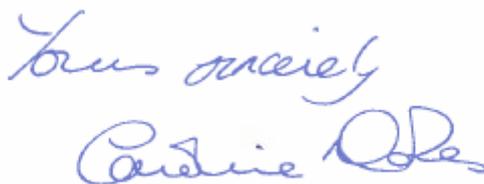
need to make an application for European Temporary Leave to Remain to stay for a further three years.

This will provide a sensible transition period before we move to a new skills-based immigration system by 2021.

[Guidance for EU citizens coming to the UK to visit, study, work or join family if the UK leaves the EU with a no Brexit deal](#) is available on GOV.UK.

We greatly appreciate your continued support in promoting the EU Settlement Scheme and providing reassurance to EU citizens in your constituencies. Please remind EU citizens to sign up to receive [EU Citizen Email Alerts](#) from the Home Office.

We will keep you informed about grant funding applications and you can also encourage voluntary and community sector organisations to stay informed on engagement activity by signing up to the [Home Office Community Bulletin](#) newsletter.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Yours sincerely Caroline Nokes".

Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP
Minister of State for Immigration

Quick Links:

The links below have been provided to assist you in signposting your constituents to helpful information about the EU Settlement Scheme.

- [Access assisted digital support](#)
- [ID checking locations](#)
- [Sign up to receive EU Citizen Email Alerts from the Home Office](#)
- [Sign up to receive the Community Bulletin](#)
- [European Temporary Leave to Remain Guidance](#)

Note: You must download the EU Exit: ID Document Check app from Google Play.