



The Home Office set up the EU Settlement Scheme as a result of the UK's decision to leave the EU and as part of the Government's Hostile Environment Policy.

The Scheme is for EU citizens (and their family members of any nationality) to apply in order to receive a new immigration status that protects their rights to continue to live in the UK.

Those who do not apply before the end of June 2021 and receive their status will lose their rights in the UK and become undocumented, they will not be able to work, rent and access essential support.

31 January 2020
The UK leaves the EU

1 January 2021
New Immigration system starts
(EU citizens' immigration status will be checked)

31 December 2020
End of transition period

30 June 2021
EUSS deadline
(for EU citizens living in the UK in December 2020)

The Home Office does not have accurate figures for the number of EU citizens living in the UK

This means there are no figures on how many people still need to apply

Applying to the EU Settlement Scheme: the challenges

- Many EU citizens and their family members are not aware of the Scheme and that they need to apply.
- It is a digital application process that requires a compatible mobile phone, and confidence in reading and writing in English, and using the internet.
- Lack of awareness of free support and advice available. Even if the Home Office (and other funders) have financed organisations to provide help and support, this is not evenly spread across the country.
- The immigration status you receive is fully digital, this means there is no physical proof of this status. Potential employers or landlord / statutory service access the Home Office website to check someone's immigration status. For many this is unsettling, and means they are not fully empowered or in control of their own status.

* COVID-19

EU citizens come from communities disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Lockdown restrictions and concerns about health risks, housing, job and financial insecurity are currently a priority. Alongside this, face to face support and advice on applying to the Scheme has been closed, limited and inevitably there is a backlog of cases at the Home Office, even though the deadline to apply (30 June 2021) has not changed, despite COVID-19.

What is the EU Settlement Scheme?

EU citizens apply via an app and online to the Scheme, proving residency in the UK. The Home Office checks their application and grants them either Pre-Settled Status (for those who have lived in the UK for less than 5 years) or Settled Status (for those who have lived here for more than 5 years). Recent Home Office figures show that 3.6 million people have received their status (figures up to July 2020).

57% of applicants obtained Settled Status (indefinite leave to remain) because they could prove they have lived in the UK for more than 5 years, 41% obtained Pre-Settled Status (limited leave to remain) with proof they have lived here for less than 5 years.

What will it mean for communities?

Those with Pre or Settled Status will be asked to prove their status by employers, landlords, local authorities and service providers, such as banks. This marks a significant change, with the added anxiety for individuals being asked to do so, and the increased likelihood of discrimination and lack of support.

In the run up to the Referendum there was a rise in hate crime towards people from BAME and migrant communities, there is the potential that we will see another increase in the run up to the December 2020 deadline and beyond.



What will this mean for EU citizens day to day?

Once the June 2021 deadline has passed those who have not applied to the Scheme will have No Recourse to Public Funds. This will mean increased hardship and difficulties in accessing support for people who may have been settled in the UK, living, working, and raising families.

In addition, those who have been awarded pre-Settled Status will be required to apply for Settled Status once they have lived here for 5 years, if they do not they will also be living in the UK as undocumented migrants.

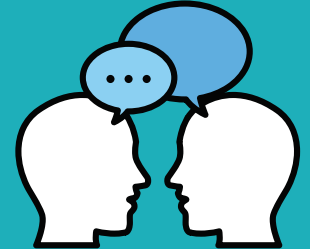
People who have been granted leave under the Scheme will need to start proving their digital status using an online system from January 2021. Recent research by New Europeans shows that 75% of respondents do not know how to access their online status to prove their residence rights.

What will it mean for the voluntary and community sector?

The EU Settlement Scheme sits within the Government's Hostile Environment Immigration Policy. Once the deadline to apply has passed, the effect of the policy will extend to affect millions more people who are EU citizens. This will have an effect on public understanding and discourse around EU citizens and communities, as well as decisions on how funding, resources and support are allocated.

It will fall upon local charities, community groups and organisations to provide support. With this increase in need and demand, this sector will need to be prepared with resources, capacity, funding, and signposting to local immigration advice and existing support.

It is an emerging picture for EU citizens living in the UK, and for the Government, as the EU Settlement Scheme is the first fully digital immigration process and status in the UK.



* How can you and your organisation prepare?

You and your organisation may not be aware of the EU Settlement Scheme and the potential challenges for EU citizens and the communities they live in, once the UK leaves the EU.

If this is the case, you can access New Europeans' support, services and resources.

For more information
enquiries@neweuropeans.net

or visit www.neweuropeans.uk

How can we help you?

We are currently funded by the Home Office to offer free support and advice to people applying to the Scheme, and capacity building on the Scheme for staff and volunteers who work with these communities.

We produce resources on a range of issues for EU citizens such as applying to the Scheme and for those who have successfully applied to manage their immigration status. These are available in different community languages, and are in an easy to read format.

We also organise events and activities to help groups and organisations to start thinking about the issues facing EU citizens and communities in the run up to Brexit and preparing for life once the UK has left the EU.