

2025

A YEAR IN REVIEW



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Providing accessible advice on the EU Settlement Scheme

2025

Total number of **people engaged with information** and support on the EU Settlement Scheme

1,451

56

Total number of **EUSS advice, info sessions, capacity building and outreach events** delivered

Total number of **people engaged with essential information** on the EU Settlement Scheme via our Resource Hub

5,080*

1,700

*of which engaged via our residency rules article

717

Total number of vulnerable individuals directly supported with **complex EU Settlement Scheme cases** through legal advice, casework support, legal representation, and appeal proceedings

76

Total number of **new complex applications submitted**

Influencing thinking and making the case for vulnerable EU citizens

2025

Our team attended a range of meetings with government departments and other agencies, using each one to make the case for vulnerable EU citizens and raise issues of concern with various entities.

Home Office

We maintain our engagement with the Home Office Safeguarding User Group (SUG) meetings, despite no longer being a Grant Funded Organisation (GFO). This ongoing participation provides direct access to Home Office staff and first-hand insight into upcoming policy changes, as well as the ability to relay complex legal updates to community partners who are unable to attend. This commitment is crucial for ensuring our communities consistently receive clear, up-to-date, and practical guidance regarding the EU Settlement Scheme and policy changes.

All-Party Parliamentary Group

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Citizens' Rights held two meetings in 2025, focused on the EU Settlement Scheme. The first meeting, held in March and chaired by Manuela Perteghella MP, addressed persistent challenges with the EUSS, including the difficulties vulnerable citizens face in providing evidence for their claims. The discussion also considered the implications of the automatic conversion to settled status system for those not included in shared government data and who struggle to prove their presence in the UK, such as, to name a few, people experiencing unemployment, children or older people, stay-at-home parents, people with disabilities, those experiencing ill health, or people experiencing homeless or destitution.

A second meeting in November, chaired by Baroness Goudie, focused on holding the Home Office accountable for system failures, delays, and untested policy changes. The meeting convened experts and individuals personally impacted by EUSS decisions and highlighted significant gaps in the Home Office's transparency and accountability, particularly concerning the process for making policy and operational decisions, followed by a briefing report documenting these gaps and proposing improvements.

Scrutiny Bodies

We continue to provide evidence to monitoring bodies, including the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, and various House of Lords Committees. Our most recent input, for example, focused on the Home Office's management of administrative reviews. This systematic provision of evidence is crucial, as it establishes a long-term record of systemic issues. This ensures that public bodies are held accountable for these concerns, even if immediate resolution is not achieved.

EUSS Alliance and voluntary sector work

Our engagement continues as active members of the Civil Society EUSS Alliance, initially established by New Europeans UK in 2022 and now operating under the aegis of Seraphus, the EU Delegations' Legal advice partner.

Through our outreach projects, we offer more than just EUSS legal advice, extending support to communities, particularly voluntary sector organisations, struggling with complex immigration issues, even if immigration is not their primary focus. Our assistance includes providing best practice guidance, preparing them for the increasing volume of enquiries about digital status, and helping them understand the transition to a fully digital immigration system.

To facilitate this, we created the "Digital Immigration: Highlighting Good Practice from the Voluntary and Community Sector" toolkit. This resource was shared with partners in London and Leicester and adapted for practical, everyday use. We also broadened our reach by supporting third-sector organisations across Scotland, moving beyond our immediate geographical remit.

European Union Delegation in the UK

Our participation in the quarterly meetings of the EEAS EU Citizens Monitoring Network facilitates direct engagement with key institutional actors, including the EU Commission, the EU Delegation to the UK, UK-based Embassies, Consulates, UK Government departments, and civil society organisations.

These engagements are crucial, as they provide us with immediate insight into proposed policy shifts, persistent challenges facing EU citizens, and the institutional strategies for upholding the rights of EU citizens in the UK. We contribute effectively to strategic discussions concerning vulnerable EU nationals, and ensure this accurate and timely information is disseminated to our wider community, informing both partners and the general public.

Citizens' Gathering and EmpowerEU Awards

We also attended the Citizens' Gathering, organised by the Citizens, Social, Justice and Home Affairs Department of the European Union Delegation to the United Kingdom, in Manchester in July 2025. We raised issues of funding for the advice sector, where demand remains high, and Home Office funding has declined, with the representatives from the European Parliament and Commission.

We were nominated for the EmpowerEU Awards, organised by the EU Delegation in the UK, and were one of three groups shortlisted in the Community Champions category.

Migration Sector Advisory Panel

Participation in the quarterly Migration Sector Advisory Panel is also a valuable opportunity, allowing us to directly address concerns regarding the effect of migration policy on our beneficiaries, vulnerable EU citizens in London, and gain a broader understanding of the migration support landscape within the GLA. Furthermore, the forum facilitates networking with partners addressing similar issues and provides insight into beneficial initiatives, such as those promoting political literacy.

Our focus on sustained and consistent outreach in London

In 2025, we continued to strengthen our outreach efforts across London boroughs, diversifying engagement methods to reach various communities. Our strategic approach prioritised consistent, accessible engagement with marginalised communities most affected by newfound challenges in the EU Settlement Scheme.

Importantly, our focus this year was to **consistently deliver monthly drop-in sessions** with our two key partnerships: **Latin American House**, based in Camden, and **Edmonton Community Partnership**, based in Edmonton. Together, we have facilitated over 18 drop-in sessions, providing tailored advice on the EU Settlement Scheme to more than 30 people.

The top inquiries included:

- switching from pre-settled to settled status with long absences
- explaining the new residence '30/60' rule
- UKVI account access
- substantially more complex, retained rights to reside and joining family member applications

These sessions have been sustained through 1-2-1 advice, and face-to-face interpretation support, to meet the needs of our most vulnerable service users.

Through these sessions, we have interacted with people from various Latin American countries, as well as other marginalised groups from Eastern Europe, respectively the Roma Bulgarian and Turkish communities in North London.

Beyond our community-level engagement, our broader collaborations with higher institutions and local authorities have allowed us to reach diaspora communities with tailored, translated guidance on the EU Settlement Scheme. Most commonly, we have engaged with the **Romanian Embassy** and the **Romanian Consulate in London**, as well as several **local authorities** in North and East London, in addition to local community groups and stakeholders that have allowed us to maintain strong relationships with racialised communities across London.

Our objective is, and will continue to be, to maintain a network of ecosystems across London, where marginalised vulnerable groups can access free legal support and connect with wider organisations and institutions to advocate for their rights. Our engagement efforts in 2025 have solidified the importance of sustained, localised engagement to reach vulnerable EU citizens, particularly those experiencing multiple barriers, including limited English proficiency, a lack of IT skills, and a lack of a support system, with workshops, information and drop-in sessions, as well as informative resources in community languages.

A Life in Limbo: Santiago's Settlement Struggle

Santiago, a Spanish national, moved to London together with his family in the 1960's, when he was 5 years old. He believed himself to be a British citizen, as some of his older documents confirmed, but never actually naturalised. Therefore, only having access to a Spanish passport, Santiago applied to the EU Settlement Scheme with the help of a friend before the deadline in 2020, but without adequate legal support. With no communication from the Home Office for several years, Santiago remained unaware of any issues with his application.

He kept travelling in and out of the UK without encountering any problems until March 2024. Upon returning to the UK from abroad, the Border Force detained Santiago and informed him that his application had been refused just a month earlier, more than four years after the application submission. Santiago promptly contacted the EU Settlement Resolution Centre, discovering that unbeknown to him, the refusal letter was sent to an incorrect email address.

He then contacted New Europeans UK with the support of one of our partners.

Following a Subject Access Request, we confirmed that the Home Office sent the refusal letter to the wrong address, despite sending previous correspondence to Santiago's correct email address. In addition, the application was refused based on deception, as the Home Office deemed the evidence submitted by the applicant to be fraudulent, despite the evidence being authenticated by his bank.

The unfounded accusation of forgery, which led to the refusal, severely impacted Santiago, causing his physical and mental health to decline exponentially. He underwent several life-saving medical interventions, for which he was charged by the NHS. As a result, he was afraid of proceeding with further required medical interventions, worsening his situation.

New Europeans UK challenged the incorrect, procedurally flawed decision. We highlighted the Home Office's failure to account for Santiago's National Insurance contributions, social welfare receipts, as well as authenticated documentation, and provided additional evidence of his lifelong residence in the UK. Finally, Santiago was granted settled status and cleared of the NHS charges.

The inadequate communication, excessive procedural delays and inappropriate use of suitability grounds against Santiago had predisposed him to legal insecurity, medical barriers and immigration detention at the border. Clearly, without expert legal advice, Santiago would have disproportionately been deprived of his rightful status in the UK.



Building on our experience and refining our approach in Leicester

In 2025, we built on our previous work by expanding outreach activities and strengthening collaboration with partners based in Leicester.

These partners include community and advice groups, such as the **Somali Community Parents Association** (SOCOPA), **Social Justice for All**, supporting the Roma community in Leicester, and **General Information in the UK**, a Romanian online community.

This year's focus was on recognising the different needs of the communities we support and responding to them more effectively. To achieve this, we reviewed our communication approach with partner organisations and held ongoing dialogue to better understand their specific challenges.

This process helped clarify both support needs and appropriate ways of responding to them. As a result, we were able to tailor our support more effectively and strengthen the capacity of our partners' staff and volunteers to assist vulnerable EU citizens and their family members. We delivered a range of outreach activities that addressed immediate needs while also increasing awareness of the EU Settlement Scheme, such as information resources, a direct referral system, and informal support networks to help service users access assistance.

Throughout the year, we worked with our partners to support **more than 325 individuals** on EUSS-related matters, through legal representation, one-off advice, follow-up support, and technical assistance. Most individuals supported were from Roma communities originally from Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The second largest group supported were individuals of Somali origin, many of whom held Swedish or Norwegian citizenship.

The most common issues raised concerned:

- access to UKVI accounts
- updates to personal details
- applications to move from pre-settled to settled status
- eVisa-related queries
- general information on rights and entitlements linked to EUSS status.
- British citizenship requirements, particularly in relation to children.

Overall, in 2025, we delivered around 20 in-person and online events across Leicester in partnership with local organisations and through wider outreach activity. These included in-person EUSS information sessions, online training on specific topics, and participation in networking events organised by partners and wider networks, such as Women for Change (a Somali organisation), the Red Cross Leicester, Femina (a Polish organisation supporting women), and the University of Leicester Law Department.

Paperwork vs Parenthood: Digital status errors, prolonged delays, and refusals

Ali, a Norwegian national, and Rahma, a Djibouti national, are married and have four children, all under 18 years old.

Rahma and the children moved to the UK in October 2021 to join Ali, who moved a year earlier and has a pending settled status application. Rahma and the children submitted an EUSS application as joining family members. While Rahma was granted pre-settled status quickly, her children's applications remained unresolved for years, for different reasons.

In early 2022, Rahma received a request for further evidence for her youngest child. She struggled to understand Home Office correspondence, and only uploaded the requested birth certificate after the 14-day deadline imposed by the caseworker had passed. At that point, the application had already been refused, leaving the child without immigration status.

No further updates were received for the other children until November 2024, when Rahma was asked to submit birth certificates. She did so for two children. However, when accessing the application for her 13-year-old child, the digital system showed that the child's status had "expired". She turned to us for support. We called the EU Settlement Resolution Centre, which confirmed this was a technical error and issued a Certificate of Application, confirming the child had a valid pending application.

We also helped her submit a late paper application for her youngest child.

This case shows how failures in the Home Office's handling of children's EUSS applications affect children disproportionately. Short deadlines and digital errors create barriers that many families cannot overcome. Without help from an adviser, children of parents who are digitally excluded or face language barriers risk losing access to their lawful status. The impact is long-term and often only becomes clear later in life, when they try to access education or employment.



Nurturing our online presence and reach in the digital world

2025



23,100

Page views



4,601

Post impressions



Newsletter opens



Website sessions



Newsletter clicks



Website users

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