



Home Office

EU Settlement Scheme

Public Beta Testing Phase Report

2 May 2019



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Contents

Executive summary	2
Public beta performance data	3
Customer satisfaction and feedback	4
Process overview	4
EU Exit: ID Document Check app	6
Identity document scanner locations	6
Automated residence checks	7
Converting documented PR status into settled status	7
Administrative review	8
Settlement Resolution Centre	9
Assisted Digital service	9
Vulnerable cohorts	10
Refunds	10
Communications and engagement	11
Update on the private beta testing phases	12
Launch of the EU Settlement Scheme on 30 March 2019	13
Future data	15
Annex 1: Number of applications received from 28 August 2018 to 29 March 2019, by EU nationality	16

Executive summary

The public beta testing phase of the EU Settlement Scheme was launched on 21 January 2019 and closed on 29 March 2019. It followed two successful private beta testing phases – Private Beta 1 (PB1) from 28 August to 17 October 2018¹ and Private Beta 2 (PB2) from 1 November 2018 to 21 December 2018.²

The purpose of the public beta testing phase was to test the scheme at scale and to prepare for the public launch on 30 March 2019. Over 200,000 applications were received during the public beta testing phase, including 8,152 on the first day. During the three testing phases, over 230,000 applications were received from citizens of all EU27 countries (see [Annex 1](#)) and from family members who are nationals of over 120 non-EEA countries. By 16 April 2019, 95% of those cases had been concluded.

Applicants were required to complete three key steps: prove their identity, confirm their UK residence and declare any criminal convictions. Feedback from applicants during the public beta testing phase on the speed and ease of the application process was positive. The technology performed well and the caseworking experience was also positive.

The public beta testing phase was deliberately limited to applications using either an EU passport or a biometric residence card (containing a biometric chip) as proof of identity and nationality. This was to allow us to continue to test the EU Exit: ID Document Check app as an integrated part of the online application process.

We have been clear that use of the EU Exit: ID Document Check app will be only one of the ways for applicants to prove their identity: since the full launch of the scheme on 30 March 2019 they can also post their passport, national identity card or biometric residence card to us to be checked and returned to them or use one of the many local authority sites to have their passport or biometric residence card checked in person.

As such, although the findings of this public beta testing phase can be very largely extrapolated to predict the likely experience of the 3.5 million resident EU citizens, those who use one of the other options to prove their identity will have a different experience for that section of the application. Their experience of the residence and criminality sections of the application will be the same.

We are grateful to all those who participated in the public beta testing phase, which enabled us successfully to test the online application process at scale and therefore go ahead with the full opening of the EU Settlement Scheme, as planned, on 30 March 2019.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-private-beta-1>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-private-beta-2>

Public beta performance data

The key performance data for the public beta testing phase was as follows:

- 200,420 applications were received over 68 days:
 - we received applications from citizens of all EU27 countries
 - we received applications from family members who are nationals of over 120 non-EEA countries
- 187,959 of these applications had been decided by 16 April 2019:
 - 69% were granted settled status, with over 13% granted settled status on the basis of holding a valid permanent residence document or existing indefinite leave to remain
 - 31% were granted pre-settled status
 - 0 applications were refused status under the scheme
 - applicants usually received a decision within 1-4 days. Where extra evidence was required from the applicant or the applicant was required to send in their identity document, this took longer
- 161 applications did not result in a grant of leave or a refusal, because they were withdrawn by the applicant; rejected as invalid because they did not submit their passport for verification where they had been unable to use the app; or could not be processed because, for example, they were a derivative rights case not eligible to apply before 30 March 2019 or were void because for example the applicant was a British citizen
- Of the remaining applications awaiting a decision as of 16 April 2019, almost 6,000 were cases where the applicant had mistakenly claimed to hold a valid permanent residence document or existing indefinite leave to remain and so had not paid a fee or provided evidence of residence. Rather than reject the case and ask the applicant to reapply and pay a fee, these cases were put on hold until 30 March 2019, when the 'no fee' policy for all cases was implemented. Other outstanding cases include those where applicants had not supplied sufficient evidence of residence or where the applicant had to send in their identity document but had not yet done so. We continue to work through these cases with applicants, requesting additional evidence where required

Customer satisfaction and feedback

As part of our commitment to improving the application process for applicants, feedback was sought via an online survey. The survey was undertaken voluntarily by applicants after they had submitted their application form. In total, 2,221 applicants completed the survey during the public beta testing phase and the results presented below are from that group.

Most found the EU Settlement Scheme application form easy to complete. In total, 81% of respondents, when asked how easy or not it was to complete their application form, reported that it was very easy or fairly easy; a further 8% found it neither difficult nor easy.

Most also found each component part of the application form easy to complete:

- 79% of respondents found using the EU Exit: ID Document Check app to prove their identity very easy or fairly easy (a further 7% found it neither difficult nor easy)
- 75% of respondents found proving their residence in the UK very easy or fairly easy (a further 8% found it neither difficult nor easy)
- 77% of respondents agreed that the application form was quicker than expected to complete (a further 10% neither agreed nor disagreed)

The information and support services available to applicants were considered helpful:

- of those who used GOV.UK when filling in their application form (1,100 respondents), 92% found the guidance on GOV.UK very helpful or fairly helpful
- of those who used the Settlement Resolution Centre when completing their application form (138 respondents), 94% found it very useful or fairly useful
- of those who attended an identity document scanning location (155 respondents), 90% found the staff helpful

Applicants are more likely to be positive about the application process than critical. In total, 72% would speak highly of the application process, 15% would give a neutral response, 11% would be critical of the application process and 2% didn't know.

Process overview

Applications to the EU Settlement Scheme are made online via gov.uk, with Assisted Digital support available for those who are unable to use or access online services and with, from 30 March 2019, a paper application form for use in particular circumstances,

such as where the applicant is unable to complete the online form even with Assisted Digital support.

Under the full scheme launched on 30 March 2019, there are three key stages to the application process:

1. Identity

The applicant must prove that they are an EEA or Swiss citizen or their identity as the family member of such a person. To do this they must present a valid passport, EEA or Swiss national identity card or biometric residence card or permit that confirms their identity and nationality.³ This can be done in one of three ways:

- Self-verification (of an EEA or Swiss passport or national identity card, or of a biometric residence card) by using the EU Exit: ID Document Check app
- Post – by sending their identity document to the Home Office where it will be checked and returned as soon as the relevant checks have been made
- Face-to-face – for EEA or Swiss passports and for biometric residence cards, at one of more than 50 identity document scanning locations across the UK

2. Criminality

The applicant must declare any criminal convictions in the UK and overseas. The Home Office will also conduct checks.

3. UK residence

Where the applicant does not have a valid permanent residence document or existing indefinite leave to enter or remain, they must demonstrate that they have been continuously resident in the UK. This can be done in one of three ways:

- Providing their National Insurance number in the application so that we can carry out automated checks of UK tax and some benefits records held by HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to establish their qualifying residence
- Providing their National Insurance number in the application and supplying additional evidence to add to the residence footprint identified by the automated checks
- Supplying documentary evidence of residence alone, without using the automated checks

³ Non-EEA and non-Swiss applicants who do not already hold a biometric residence card must also provide fingerprints, which they are invited to enrol at a designated location.

EU Exit: ID Document Check app

The EU Exit: ID Document Check app can be used by applicants to quickly and securely confirm their identity without needing to submit their identity document to the Home Office. In the public beta testing phase, the app allowed applicants with an EU passport, or a biometric residence card, which contains a biometric chip, to confirm their identity and the validity of their identity document remotely.

The EU Exit: ID Document Check app will be only one of the ways for applicants to prove their identity: since the full launch of the scheme on 30 March 2019 they can also post their passport, national identity card or biometric residence card to us to be checked and returned to them or use one of the many local authority sites to have their identity document checked in person.

Information on the EU Exit: ID Document Check app, including a video on how to use the app, is published on gov.uk here: www.gov.uk/guidance/using-the-eu-exit-id-document-check-app.

The app was only available in this phase on Android devices with NFC (Near-Field Communication). The Home Secretary has confirmed that Apple will make the EU Exit: ID Document Check app available on its devices by the end of the year.

During the public beta testing phase:

- 95% of applicants successfully used the app to prove their identity remotely
- 987 devices from 92 manufacturers successfully used the app
- 75% of applicants were able to use the app to prove their identity remotely in under 10 minutes

Identity document scanner locations

A network of 13 identity document scanner locations was available throughout the public beta testing phase. These locations provide access to an Android device loaded with the EU Exit: ID Document Check app, which applicants to the EU Settlement Scheme can be assisted to use to scan and verify their identity document.

The locations are provided by local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland, with a service in Northern Ireland being operated by the UKVI Shared Service Centre in Belfast. The identity document scanning locations are provided at the discretion of each local authority and participating local authorities may put in place charges for using the service. Such charges are payable directly to the local authority and can be set to cover the costs of providing the service.

EU Settlement Scheme Public Beta Testing Phase Report

Throughout the public beta testing phase, the Home Office continued to work with local government bodies across the UK to increase the provision of this service by local authorities across the country, building on the pilot locations.

Learning from the early stages of the public beta testing phase was added to understanding gained from private beta phase 2 to inform and support further locations to launch services over the course of the public beta testing phase. By 30 March 2019, 50 identity document scanner locations had been opened nationwide.

During the public beta testing phase, around 1% of applicants chose to use this service.

Automated residence checks

An applicant can provide their National Insurance number when they apply to the EU Settlement Scheme, to help us confirm their UK residence. If a National Insurance number is provided, we carry out automated checks of UK tax and some benefits records to help confirm the applicant's UK residence. This check is against certain records held by HMRC and DWP.

Information on the automated checks is published on gov.uk here:

www.gov.uk/guidance/eu-settlement-scheme-uk-tax-and-benefits-records-automated-check.

During the public beta testing phase:

- 88% of applicants chose to provide their National Insurance number as part of their application, enabling automated checks to be made of HMRC and DWP data for evidence of their UK residence
- 73% of decided adult cases did not need to provide any further evidence of UK residence following the automated checks or because they held a valid permanent residence document or existing indefinite leave to remain

Converting documented PR status into settled status

EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members who have [documented permanent residence \(PR\) status](#) under EU law will need to make an application under the EU Settlement Scheme to convert this to settled status (indefinite leave to remain, ILR) under UK immigration law. This is because, in future, the Free Movement Directive will no longer apply, and EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members will need a UK immigration status in order to remain here. Those with existing ILR do not need to apply to the scheme but can do so if they wish, as ILR (settled status) granted under the scheme will, in line with the draft Withdrawal Agreement, have some additional benefits, such as in respect of rights to family reunion.

EU Settlement Scheme Public Beta Testing Phase Report

There is no requirement for an applicant with documented PR status or existing ILR to re-evidence their UK residence. During the public beta testing phase, over 24,000 applicants with documented PR status or existing ILR were granted settled status on that basis.

Some applicants believed that they had documented PR status when they actually held a different type of document, usually a registration certificate or residence card issued under the EEA Regulations which looks very similar to a PR document. Around 12,750 applicants in the public beta testing phase mistakenly believed that they had documented PR status or existing ILR. By 16 April 2019, over 50% of these cases had been resolved. We are continuing to work with the remaining applicants to request additional information and conclude their application. A new screen has been built within the application process to more clearly demonstrate what a PR document looks like.

Administrative review

The public beta testing phase included scope for applicants to apply for an administrative review by the Home Office of certain decisions under the EU Settlement Scheme: of a decision to grant them pre-settled status rather than settled status; or to refuse their application on eligibility grounds (though, as of 16 April 2019, there had been no refusals).

Information on applying for an administrative review is published on gov.uk here: www.gov.uk/guidance/eu-settlement-scheme-apply-for-an-administrative-review.

Since scope for such administrative review was provided under the scheme in November 2018, 128 administrative review applications had been received and processed by 16 April 2019, with a further 46 pending.

Of those 128 which had been processed:

- 17 administrative review applications were rejected, for example because no EU Settlement Scheme application had been received
- In all the remaining 111 cases, the applicant was challenging a grant of pre-settled status rather than settled status, of which:
 - 12 of these grants of pre-settled status were upheld following the administrative review
 - 99 were instead granted settled status following administrative review. The vast majority of these had originally accepted a grant of pre-settled status when making their application and then provided additional evidence of their eligibility for settled status with their application for administrative review. We have made improvements to the application process (as set out below) to make clear to applicants the scope for them to provide additional evidence of their eligibility for settled status before they accept a grant of pre-settled status

EU Settlement Scheme Public Beta Testing Phase Report

The page in the application process which provides the applicant with the option to accept or not to accept (and to upload documentary evidence of their eligibility for settled status) a grant of pre-settled status where the automated checks indicate that they have been continuously resident in the UK for less than five years has been reformatted and simplified to help prevent similar applicant errors from being made in the future.

Settlement Resolution Centre

The Settlement Resolution Centre (SRC) has been set up to receive calls and emails to support applicants through the EU Settlement Scheme application process. The team of over 250 staff work across shift patterns of 8am – 8pm on Monday to Friday and 9:30am – 4:30pm at weekends.

Information on the SRC is published on gov.uk here: www.gov.uk/contact-ukvi-inside-outside-uk/y/inside-the-uk/eu-settlement-scheme-settled-and-pre-settled-status.

In the public beta testing phase, from 21 January 2019 to 29 March 2019, the SRC handled 62,261 calls and 14,596 emails from applicants. In terms of the calls handled, around:

- 25% of calls related to pre-application, with applicants for example asking whether they were eligible to apply to the scheme
- 27% of calls related to making an application, with applicants for example asking about using the app or what documents they would need to send in
- 36% of calls were from applicants with questions whilst in the process of making their application
- 2% of calls were from support organisations
- 10% of calls related to applicants with questions post decision

Applicants were able to contact the SRC to enquire about specific elements of the scheme and were able to highlight specific challenges they were facing with the application process, which were directly fed back into the programme team daily and allowed us to identify and make improvements to our technology and processes.

Assisted Digital service

Ensuring that applicants are supported to obtain their status is a core element in the design and delivery of the EU Settlement Scheme. A range of direct support has been put in place by the Home Office, including an Assisted Digital service for those who do not have the access, skills or confidence to complete the online form.

EU Settlement Scheme Public Beta Testing Phase Report

Information on the Assisted Digital service is published on gov.uk here:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-assisted-digital-service.

During the public beta testing phase:

- we established over 200 centres across the UK providing Assisted Digital support, supplemented by a network of over 50 tutors
- over 150 appointments for Assisted Digital support were booked, with a high proportion of these being face to face

We continue to work alongside our Assisted Digital supplier to consider where there is a need to expand this coverage further.

Vulnerable cohorts

The Home Office also continued during the public beta testing phase to engage with organisations which support vulnerable citizens, in readiness for full launch of the scheme. In February 2019, we commenced evaluation of 85 bids from a range of voluntary and community sector organisations across the UK for up to £9m of grant funding to reach and give practical support to vulnerable citizens and their families. We have now awarded funding to 57 organisations throughout the UK. These organisations have the best outreach capability and expertise to communicate the scheme to hard-to-reach audiences and to offer them practical support, individualised to their needs, to make an application. They have bid to support an estimated 200,000 vulnerable individuals to make their application to the scheme over the next 12 months. We are pleased that so many good organisations across the UK will work at grassroots level to reach and support vulnerable EU citizens and their families.

In parallel, the Home Office provided guidance and support to local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales, and Health & Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland, on their responsibilities for making and supporting applications for looked after children and care leavers. We have also been working with a range of expert stakeholders on how to produce child-friendly materials that will support younger applicants to understand and engage with the scheme. These will become available in due course.

Refunds

On 21 January 2019, the Prime Minister announced that, having listened to concerns from parliamentarians, campaign groups and the public, the Government would not charge an application fee when the EU Settlement Scheme was launched fully on 30 March 2019, so that there would be no financial barrier for any EU citizens wishing to stay.

On 30 March 2019, the legislative changes giving effect to the Prime Minister's announcement took effect, so that all applications to the EU Settlement Scheme from that

EU Settlement Scheme Public Beta Testing Phase Report

date have been free of charge, and anyone who had applied during the test phases and paid a fee would have that fee refunded.

Information on the refund process is published on gov.uk: www.gov.uk/guidance/eu-settlement-scheme-application-fee-refunds.

Refunds are being managed through an automated process, so applicants do not need to take any action to request their refund. During the test phases, from 28 August 2018 to 29 March 2019, 202,514 applicants paid the application fee. We have now processed refunds in all these cases through our system and they will continue to reach customer accounts in the coming days. Some will take longer than others depending on the card issuer/bank account.

Communications and engagement

Full scale publicity began when the EU Settlement Scheme fully opened on 30 March 2019. During the public beta testing phase, communications and engagement activity was focused on preparing EU citizens, employers, local authorities and other partners for the full opening of the scheme and keeping them up to date.

Update on the private beta testing phases

Further to the information given previously on the findings of the private beta testing phases (PB1 and PB2):

- Over 31,000 applications were received during the private beta testing phases
- Of those applications that had been decided by 16 April 2019:
 - 70% were granted settled status
 - 30% were granted pre-settled status
 - 0 applications had been refused status under the scheme
 - 115 applications did not result in a grant of leave or a refusal, because they were withdrawn by the applicant; rejected as invalid because they did not submit their passport for verification where they had been unable to use the app; or could not be processed because for example they were a derivative rights case not eligible to apply before 30 March 2019 or were void because for example the applicant was a British citizen
- 75 cases remain outstanding as of 16 April 2019, and in all of these cases we are working with the applicant to resolve their case. In the majority of these cases we are awaiting further information from the applicant in order to make a decision on the application, and we expect the number of outstanding cases to continue to reduce as further information is received

Launch of the EU Settlement Scheme on 30 March 2019

The EU Settlement Scheme was launched fully on 30 March 2019, following the success of both the private and public beta testing of the application process. The total number of applications received since the testing of the scheme began on 28 August 2018 is now over 600,000, and we received over 50,000 applications in the first weekend the scheme was fully live.

The scheme is now fully open to all resident EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members. The application process contains additional functionality, options for applicants and other enhancements that were not available in the testing phases. In particular, we have now:

- allowed the use of national identity cards as proof of identity for EEA and Swiss citizens
- created a postal route for submitting identity evidence
- opened the scheme to [overseas applications](#) from 9 April 2019
- established over 50 locations (mostly operated by local authorities) offering an [identity document scanning service](#), for a small charge, for applicants without access to an Android device (on which the app can currently be accessed) to complete the identity verification process via the EU Exit: ID Document Check app
- introduced legislative changes, in line with the announcement made by the Prime Minister on 21 January 2019, to remove the application fee for the scheme and allow us to refund those who had paid a fee during the test phases
- gone live with a multi-million pound marketing campaign to encourage applications to the EU Settlement Scheme, including outdoor sites across the UK, as well as on video, radio and online platforms
- updated the online application form so that several of the screens, including those that provide the results of the automated checks, are clearer and help to ensure applicants provide the right information to enable us to grant the status they are entitled to
- made key information clearer in the decision letters that are sent to applicants, to clarify what each status means to the applicant, in terms of access to public funds and services, and what the ongoing residence requirements are for those granted pre-settled status

**EU Settlement Scheme
Public Beta Testing Phase Report**

- announced grant funding of up to £9m in 2019-20 to enable a range of charities and other community groups across the UK to offer practical support to vulnerable EU citizens and their families in applying under the scheme
- launched the community leader toolkit, which is a suite of materials to equip local authorities and community groups with the right tools and information to support EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme
- created a detailed guidance pack for local authorities and health and social care trusts who will be making applications for, or supporting applications by, looked after children and care leavers
- reworked the mainstream guidance for applicants, following user testing and feedback
- translated key material about the scheme into 26 languages

Future data

The Home Office plans to publish high-level progress information on the EU Settlement Scheme through managed statistical updates, and a more detailed quarterly Official Statistics publication from August 2019, alongside the department's quarterly Immigration and Transparency statistics.

Annex 1: Number of applications received from 28 August 2018 to 29 March 2019, by EU nationality

EU nationality	Applications received
Romania	37,742
Italy	28,575
Poland	28,214
Bulgaria	18,132
Portugal	18,020
Spain	16,257
France	11,583
Germany	10,825
Netherlands	8,822
Greece	7,692
Lithuania	7,522
Latvia	6,336
Hungary	6,297
Slovakia	3,357
Sweden	2,895
Czech Republic	2,406
Belgium	2,021
Denmark	1,816
Austria	1,734
Finland	1,336
Cyprus	1,116
Estonia	777
Croatia	641
Malta	496
Ireland	359
Slovenia	318
Luxembourg	76

