



Introduction and welcome: Roma & Brexit

Welcome to the latest Roma Support Group e-bulletin. We make no apologies – everyone might be sick of Brexit but for many of our friends, supporters, clients and users, this is a constant source of worry. This month, we are solely reporting matters to do with Brexit, the impact that this might or will have on Roma communities in the UK, and how Roma people and families might be best supported to claim their rights to stay in the UK after Brexit.

Roma communities have survived for generations by being careful and keeping their distance from authorities who have rarely shown any favouritism and even-handedness to Roma people. The Home Office – fresh from endless scandals mainly about migrants and immigrants – is the government department responsible for ensuring that EU nationals have the right to live and work and study in the UK after Brexit. This is not going to be easy.

Pick and choose links that you might want to read.

News from Roma Support Group

Roma & Brexit campaign and publicity worker

We have worked hard to get money to recruit a Roma & Brexit campaign and publicity worker. The application details are available here. The closing date is 4 March 2019. We will interview on 21 & 22 March.

<http://rsg2016.weebly.com/jobs.html>

What's the purpose of the job? To support Roma communities and individuals in achieving their rights to residence in the UK following Brexit; and so to increase the likelihood of Roma women, men and children engaging with the requirements of the EU Settled Status process.

This is the sort of work that a dynamic (particularly Roma) woman or man with loads of imagination and knowledge about 'spreading the word' would enjoy.

RSG statements and etc re EUSS and Brexit

EU families and Euro-children in Brexiting Britain

This is an article staff at RSG have co-written about the trial phase at the end of last year for applying for settled status.

<https://eurochildren.info/2019/01/21/it-took-2-hours-and-one-third-didnt-get-through-piloting-the-settled-status-application-with-roma-migrants/>

Bristol Cable

And here's an news article about how staff at RSG see the dangers of Brexit for Roma in the UK.

<https://thebristolcable.org/2019/01/brexit-could-bring-a-new-windrush-for-roma/>

Sky News

Here's a short TV news item filmed in the RSG offices (just over two minutes long):

<https://news.sky.com/video/eu-settled-status-launch-sparks-fears-of-a-new-windrush-11613410>

And here's the accompanying article with staff at RSG quoted: *"Millions of EU citizens can now apply for settled status in UK. EU citizens need to apply to stay in the UK, but community organisations warn vulnerable groups may be at risk."*

<https://news.sky.com/story/eu-settled-status-launch-sparks-fears-of-a-new-windrush-11613355>

Settled Status – staying in the UK after Brexit

Every EU national – children, older people, students, people who have never worked, people who have been permanently employed since arrival in the UK and people who have worked ‘cash in hand’ – everyone will have to apply to stay. It is called settled status.

Take a look at this short video about applying to stay in the UK (in English, just under 3 minutes long). It’s called “*Are you an EU citizen living in the UK? Did you know that you have to apply for settled status?*” Watch it here.

<https://vimeo.com/315417610>

What does the Home Office say?

Here is the link to the app that everyone will have to use to start the process of applying for Settled Status:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.gov.HomeOffice.ho1>

And here is the section of the government website that contains all their information about making an application for Settled Status:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/eu-settlement-scheme-applicant-information>

What does the process of making an application look like? A video ‘walk through’ and a written explanation

Our friends at Free Movement have made this short film. It’s a proper step by step film and commentary (in English) about the application. It’s just over 22 minutes long – and ideal for someone who will be ‘supporting’ people making an application but probably not good for applicants whose English might not be strong.... Click here to watch it.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=537&v=5KxquWDt6yA

And here is Free Movement’s narrative explanation of the application process. Click here to read it.

https://www.freemovement.org.uk/how-to-apply-for-settled-status-temporary-status-brexit/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=how-to-apply-for-

[settled-status-temporary-status-brexit&utm_source=Free+Movement&utm_campaign=d91a3c3be8-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_WEEKLY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_792133aa40-d91a3c3be8-116231393&mc_cid=d91a3c3be8&mc_eid=1ce38ae791](https://www.settled-status-temporary-status-brexit&utm_source=Free+Movement&utm_campaign=d91a3c3be8-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_WEEKLY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_792133aa40-d91a3c3be8-116231393&mc_cid=d91a3c3be8&mc_eid=1ce38ae791)

RSG thoughts: why are Roma more likely to be struggling to apply for and achieve Settled Status?

Roma Support Group participated in the trial phase of the Home Office scheme for EU nationals to secure settled status in the UK. These notes and tips are based on this involvement with over 60 actual applications for settled status.

- 70 out of 100 Roma applicants are not able to provide valid email address
- 85 out 100 Roma applicants are not able to read or write in English sufficiently well
- It is more likely that Polish Roma reside in UK for more than 5 years; many Slovak Roma have lived in the UK for more than 5 years
- It is more likely that Romanian Roma reside in the UK for less than 5 years
- It is more likely that Polish and Slovak Roma hold a Passport
- It is more likely that Romanian Roma hold a National Identity Card
- It is more likely that Roma have an Android phone
- 97 out of 100 Roma applicants do not have enough confidence, language and or IT skills to submit the EU SS application without support

There are three questions that all applicants must confirm, or provide information:

- Identity and nationality
- Length of residence in the UK
- Any criminal convictions

Roma would be less likely to be able to read the instructions in English. Less likely to be able to follow digital process.

85 out of 100 Roma applicants are not able to read or write in English well enough to follow the process.

The EU Settlement Scheme Application consists of two sections: Identity Check and an Online Application Form.

The first section, the Identity Check, can only be done via the [EU Exit: ID Document Check app](#) on an android phone. It consists of 5 steps:

1. Mobile phone number (sends you a PIN number to allow access to the programme)

Roma are more likely to have android phone – rather than iPhone

Email address

70 out of 100 Roma applicants are not able to provide their own, valid email address; you might have to help create one

If the process is not fully completed it is not possible to change contact details in case the applicant has lost access to the phone number or the email address originally provided; or the details entered were not correct. For example, if an applicant has their contact details entered in the app, then he/she uses the app to read the chip in their passports and then decides it will continue the rest of the process later, it cannot do this if it doesn't conform to the contact details initially entered. Once the Identity check is completed it is possible to change contact details when accessing the online application form. [This issue has been reported and the app might be updated to contain this feature]

If they have an email address, before starting the application process, make sure they are logged in on their smartphone or that they know the password so they can log in at any time.

2. Scan your passport on the photo page

Should be ok.

3. Place phone on closed passport to check the chip

Less likely to have a passport (e.g. RO nationals travelling on ID; SK and PL nationals travelling on passports)

It is more likely that Polish and Slovak Roma hold a Passport

It is more likely that Romanian Roma hold a National Identity Card

When trying to read the chip in the passports, if placing the phone on top of the passport doesn't work, applicants should slowly move the smartphone on top of the passport until they hear a beep and then place the device on top of it. Too many wrong attempts will get applicant's account locked for a period.

4. Scan your own face

More problematic when applicants can't open their eyes wide enough

5. Take a selfie

Make sure there is enough light as the lack of it would require another attempt

The second section, online application form, done via a mobile device, smartphone/tablet or a PC using the mobile phone number and email already given:

- Application type
- Residence in UK
- Criminal convictions

Critical sections:

- Enter a national insurance number
- Submit a declaration
- Payment (before 30 March 2019)

It is more likely that Polish Roma reside in UK for more than 5 years

It is more likely that Romanian Roma reside in the UK for less than 5 years

Some Slovak Roma (outside London) have lived in the UK for more than 5 years; some for less than five years

97 out of 100 Roma applicants do not have enough confidence, language and or IT skills to complete and submit the EU SS application without support

When prompted to choose security questions make sure you explain their purpose and write them down as it is quite likely people will forget them.

Outcomes

- You'll be considered for settled status
- You'll be considered for pre-settled status
- We need more evidence of your residence

Is more likely that Polish Roma have enough documents to evidence their residence in the UK

Uploading documents proved to be more difficult when using Internet Explorer

And if you're reading this in Wales

We are very pleased that the Wales government has seen the need to make special provision for Roma people and families in Wales who have to apply for Settled Status. Last year, the Wales government agreed a new strategy for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers; it's available to see here.

<https://gov.wales/docs/dsijg/publications/equality/180625-enabling-gypsies-roma-travellers-plan-en.pdf>

The plan commits the Wales government to 11 actions. The last one reads:

11. Ensure EU Citizens, including Roma and Irish-born Travellers, are supported to understand their rights and obligations in relation to the UK Government's EU Withdrawal arrangements.

Welsh Government will:

» Monitor and seek to influence the UK Government's arrangements for promoting the 'Settled Status' system and supporting more marginalised individuals to apply before and during the Transition period (late 2018 – 2021).

» Explore ways to ensure information about the process can be disseminated to these communities.

We would hope and expect that all of the devolved governments in the UK – Northern Ireland, Scotland and England – will follow the Welsh lead.

...and finally

Roma Support Group will be holding a training event in central London on Thursday 14 March; *“working with Eastern European Roma in the safeguarding context”*.

For more information and to book places, see this link.

<http://rsg2016.weebly.com/news--events/training-on-working-with-east-european-roma-in-safeguarding-context-thursday-march-14th-10-off-early-booking-before-3rd-february>

....and another job

'Roma in the Lead' Co-ordinator. Based in Kent, the Co-ordinator will help and support four Roma Development Officers have been employed to help their communities identify solutions to their problems and consequently to assist in establishing positive activities, increasing access to services and building links with wider communities.

Closing date 22 February 2019.

<https://jobsinkent.com/job/1133734>

Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily suggest that they are in accordance with the trustees of the Roma Support Group.

**We gratefully acknowledge the support provided by the
Barrow Cadbury Trust.**