

Survey reveals huge negative impact on people of EU settlement scheme

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Professor Tanja Buelmann announces the results of the Settled Status Survey.

Credit: Northumbria University

The largest survey of the EU Settlement Scheme to date, with over 3,000 respondents, has revealed the serious negative impacts on EU/EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members in the UK.

The data collected identifies key concerns of those having to apply for Settled Status, ranging from discrimination and loss of identity, to concerns over a lack of transparency and visibility and a breakdown of trust in the government's willingness and ability to deliver a secure [status](#) for the future.

The Settled Status Survey was designed by Professor Tanja Buelmann of Northumbria University and the non-governmental organization the3million, which represents the rights of more than 3 million EU citizens at home in the UK.

It was open throughout December and was completed by thousands of EU citizens living in the UK.

The results have now been announced, with 89% of respondents saying they are not happy with their digital status and fear being discriminated against at work, at the border or trying to rent a property. For example, 10.9% of respondents said that they were already being asked about settled status by landlords, banks, and councils even though proof of the new immigration status is not required before 2021.

One person said: "I'm working in the [public sector](#) and somebody from HR said that they are unable to form my permanent contract as my future is uncertain in the UK. They asked me to prove that I have applied for settled status in the UK."

The report finds that the Home Office has failed to properly inform and reassure both those who have applied and those who have not yet done so. Even those who have already been granted Settled Status feel less secure, less integrated in the UK.

A worrying 7% of those respondents who haven't applied to the scheme yet think they do not need to even though they have no pre-existing document or status.

Professor Tanja Bueltmann, Northumbria University, who conducted and analysed the Settled Status Survey, said: "While the Settled Status Survey shows that the application process can be quick and straightforward for many, Settled Status was never going to be about what works for some, but what works for everyone. After all, the promise was an automatic guarantee of rights.

"Instead of that, as the Survey documents without question, we have an 'unsettling status.'" This extends beyond the application process, revealing an erosion of trust; an erosion of well-being; and an erosion of the sense of belonging among Survey respondents.

"The government has a duty to finally give EU/EEA and Swiss citizens certainty. Hollow words are not enough."

Maike Bohn, Co-founder of the3million, said: "This report shows that the UK government has not earned the trust of EU citizens, having spent the last three years gas-lighting our anxieties with mixed messages.

"Are we the much-quoted 'neighbors, colleagues, friends' or are we the 'queue jumpers, benefits scroungers, unwelcome guests, draining the NHS'?"

"The government needs to step up local outreach and support, both to

EU/EEA and Swiss citizens but also to employers, landlords and others who will be forced to check the immigration status of these citizens in order to avoid huge fines.

"We also have a clear message to Prime Minister Johnson: he needs to represent all residents of the UK and start rebuilding trust through actions, not by blowing hot and cold on EU citizens."

More information: The report is available online:
drive.google.com/file/d/1gYRRE...eeS848kHbtPK2ao/view

Provided by Northumbria University

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