

News story: EU Settlement Scheme rolled out to public test phase

EU citizens living in the UK who have a valid passport will be able to take part in a public test phase of the EU Settlement Scheme.

From 21 January 2019, EU citizens, as well as their non-EU citizen family members who hold a valid biometric residence card, will be able to apply for the immigration status they will need once the UK has left the EU. By applying during this test phase, they will also provide valuable insight into how the system is performing so that further improvements can be made before the scheme is fully rolled out from March 2019.

The public testing follows a successful private beta phase with employees in the higher education, health and social care sectors.

Immigration Minister Caroline Nokes said:

Securing the rights of EU citizens living in the UK has always been our priority.

We are well on track to deliver a system that will make it easy and straightforward for them to obtain status once we have left the EU and continue to live their lives much as they do now.

This is a completely voluntary test phase, which will give us valuable insight into how the system works and if any changes need to be made before the full launch.

The EU Settlement Scheme will be fully open by 30 March 2019, and EU citizens will have until 30 June 2021 to apply, in line with the draft Withdrawal Agreement.

The expansion has been announced through changes to the Immigration Rules. The Rules are accompanied by some initial findings of how the scheme performed during the second private beta test phase. Feedback during that phase, which ends on 21 December 2018, has so far been positive.

By 13 December 2018, more than 15,500 applications had been made and more than 12,400 of these had been concluded. 71% of the concluded applications were granted settled status and the rest were granted pre-settled status. Many of the applicants received their decision within 24 hours. We will publish a full report in January 2019.

The new, wider test phase will again require applicants to prove their identity by using the EU Exit: Identity Document Check app which is part of the integrated online application process. There will also be support for EU citizens who might need additional help in making their application.

Read [further information on the EU Settlement Scheme](#).