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Settled?

Avoiding pitfalls and maximising potential for those seeking post-Brexit settled status

Contents

Executive summary

About the research

This research was commissioned by the Transition Advice Fund in March 2018 to provide insight on the proposed process for securing 'settled status'. With the UK planning to leave the EU in March 2019, this study engaged EU migrants across the UK to uncover attitudes towards Brexit and the capability of different people to navigate the application process.

The research included a range of migrant communities in Thetford (Norfolk), Wirral (Liverpool), Govanhill (Glasgow), Burnt Oak and Ealing (London). Migrants in these areas included Polish, Romanian, Roma, Portuguese and those of dual nationality.

Summary of key points

The research found that most people should be able to navigate the practical application process for settled status without major problems. However, some people were likely to face challenges due to gaps in their employment or residence record, or difficulty using the online application and payment system. The research also found significant emotional barriers which could affect people's ability to successfully navigate the process.

Most participants should be able to demonstrate their identity and residency in the UK:

- All participants had some form of identity document (either passport or ID card)
- Most people had National Insurance numbers or would be listed on Job Centre or benefits records.
- The few who didn't included Romani women who had never worked in the UK and whose benefits were registered under their partners' names.
- A few had gaps in their employment history or were not registered with Job Centres.

Most would be able to provide additional proof of residency if required:

- Most would be able to produce proof or work, proof of address or annual bank statements.
- Lower category documents, such as GP records and passport stamps, were not held by everyone.
- Some specific challenges might be faced by Romanian participants who were often employed in the informal economy and therefore did not have bank accounts or proof of address.

Some participants could face challenges with online payments;

- All participants owned mobile phones, but most only had access to the internet through wi-fi in public places.
- Some had low literacy, lacked confidence in English or had poor access to computers.
- Although the cost did not represent a huge barrier for most, some were on low incomes or had insecure employment, meaning they were often unsure how much money they would have from month to month.

Many migrants distrusted the UK government

- This affected their likelihood to apply for settled status or pay attention to communications relating to this
- Some were very anxious about making mistakes in their applications
- There was some distrust of other supportive organisations such as job centres, community centres or charities

Many had become desensitised to news about Brexit:

- Some felt that Brexit might never happen
- Some felt that there was 'no point' engaging with information about Brexit

Recommendations

This report highlights the following recommendations to encourage people to overcome these emotional barriers; and process information about Brexit:

- Content of communications: There was a need for Home Office sources to actively clarify and contradict inaccurate information or myths circulating via informal sources
- Language: Some migrants had concerns over their level of English and needed reassurance or help to navigate technical language
- Channels and sources: Participants were using a range of sources including informal networks to get advice, which in some cases meant they were accessing inaccurate information. There was a need for them to be able to recognise the legitimacy of information coming from the Home Office or other official sources.
- Tone: There was a need for communications to inspire trust and generate a desire to work with the government to make the process as smooth as possible.

Opportunities

Overall, the research found that such recommendations present wider opportunities to reset the relationship between EU migrants and the UK government - and its institutions - to inspire a greater level of trust and sense of belonging. It is also likely that many of the barriers that the research found for EU migrants applying for settled status are replicated in other official processes. The findings of this research could therefore be applicable to others providing services for or engaging with EU migrants in the UK.

Introduction

This section outlines the context for the research and provides some details on the methodology used.

Background & context

As the UK prepares to leave the EU, the government has committed to making the process of applying for 'settled status' as streamlined as possible for EU migrants. Although there have been high level assurances that the process will be easy and that EU migrants living in the UK for over five years need not worry, the challenges of designing a 'simple' system and communicating it in an efficient way should not be underestimated.

It is in the interests of most EU migrants to pay attention to the new legislation. Whilst most should be able to navigate the application process with no major problems, concerns have been raised that some are likely to face barriers to engagement with - and understanding of - official information. This is due to a range of factors, including: emotional barriers, lack of awareness and attitudes towards the government and other difficulties like language barriers and financial inclusion.

The Transition Advice Fund aims to ensure that everyone who is eligible can secure their right to settled status, by making sure that the application process is accessible for everyone and that information, advice and support is available for those who need it. This research explores the issues affecting people's ability to secure settled status, looking particularly at their awareness of the scheme and the information and support they might need to complete an application. It is intended as a resource for anyone involved in supporting people to secure their right to settled status.

We selected some key locations to include in the research in order to explore the attitudes and behaviours of a range of EU migrants. We drew on findings from the Migration Observatory report [1] to ensure our research included EU migrants living in a range of circumstances, including those populations who may struggle in the application process [2].

Specific objectives

Research objectives were to:

- Understand the barriers people will face in negotiating their application for settled status
- Identify communication channels they use to get information, what kind of support needs they have and who they trust to provide them with information, advice and support
- Identify any policy implications - for example about the kind of documentary evidence that people will be able to obtain and hence what evidentiary requirements should be policy
- Develop recommendations that can be used to inform the planning of awareness raising activity, advice and support services

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[1]   The Migration Observatory 2018, *Unsettled Status? Which EU Citizens are at Risk of Failing to Secure their Rights after Brexit?* Available from:

< http://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/reports/unsettled-status-which-eu-citizens-are-at-risk-of-failing-to-secure-their-rights-after-brexit/> [12 April 2018].

[2] We describe more on these populations in the following chapters.

Methodology

In order to understand what issues those going through the process would face, we wanted to talk to EU migrants living in the UK who were not highly engaged with UK government institutions and were somewhat 'hard to reach'. In order to do this, we decided to use a 'place-based', ethnographic method to explore lived experiences in context. This approach allowed us to recruit people not generally consulted in formal research; and get to the heart of the challenges they could face when undergoing the application process.

We conducted research in five locations. In practice, the place-based method involved spending several days in each location, meeting local gatekeepers (such as community organisations, shopkeepers, local influencers) and getting to know how the networks operated and how information flowed. In this phase, we conducted short 10-15 minute 'intercept' interviews with EU migrants, during which we simulated the application process using the diagram below as stimulus. We also tested a list of official documentation with migrants, to identify where they would struggle to produce supporting evidence if needed.

This diagram allowed us to see where in the process people were likely to face limitations. It also allowed us to structure questions around specific tools. For example, it was important to understand if people had access to an android phone, or the internet, because the process required these things.
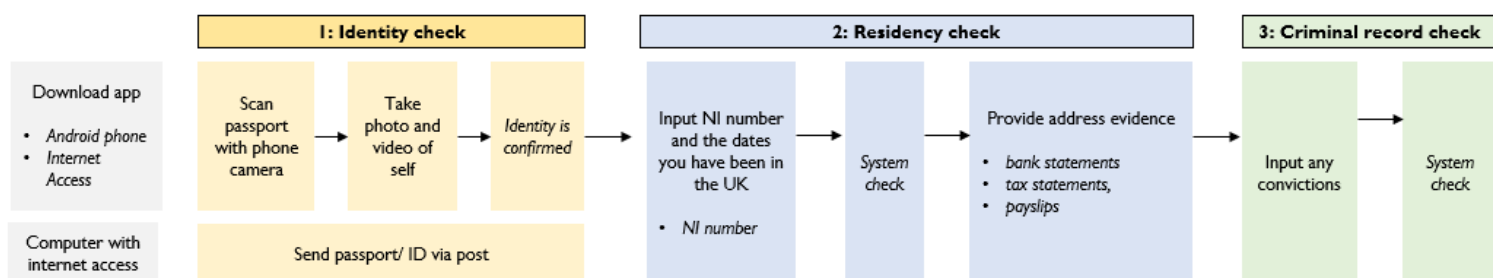
Following on from this we conducted in-home depth interviews, of approximately two hours with ten EU migrants who were likely to face difficulties in their application. During the interviews, researchers mapped out their journeys to the UK; their routines and networks; and their understanding of Brexit and settled status. We also explored what information sources they engaged with.

Overall, the research collected data from over 80 migrants and 20 community/charity stakeholders and advisers. Fieldwork took place between May and July 2018, both before and after the release of the Statement of Intent from the Home Office in June[3].

Researchers considered a range of locations, and the different types of migrant networks in each. Whilst it was important to include several nationalities in the research, it was also important to capture a range of experiences within nationality groups. We therefore recruited EU migrants living in a range of situations.

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[3] Home Office 2018, *EU Settlement Scheme: Statement of Intent*. Available from :

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/718237/EU_Settlement_Scheme_SOI_June_2018.pdf> [21 June 2018]

The research took place in the following locations:

- Thetford – large settled Portuguese population, small Polish population and some dual-nationality migrants
- Wirral – large Polish population, and smaller Romanian population
- Govanhill, Glasgow – large Roma population, and smaller population of dual-nationality migrants
- Ealing, West London – large Polish and Romanian population
- Burnt Oak, North London – Romanian population.

Romanian food shop in Govanhill, Glasgow

Who will be affected?

This section outlines the different groups of people spoken to for the research. It provides some detail into the daily lives and emotional experiences of the EU migrants who will be applying for settled status. Understanding the context around people's lives, habits and networks provides an understanding of the barriers they are likely to face in practice, as well as indicating how these may be successfully overcome. This information provides grounding for the recommendations offered in the following chapters.

Key characteristics

Nationality/location	Touchpoints & information channels
Portuguese community in Thetford	- Coffee shop culture - Locally known 'fixers' - Local charities - Portuguese Embassy - Brazilian & Portuguese TV - Local Portuguese newspaper - Other Portuguese news sources
Polish community in Thetford	- Relatively isolated - Polish news sources - Local shopkeepers
Polish community in Wirral	- Community organisations - Polish shops - Facebook - YouTube
Polish & Romanian community in Ealing (settled)	- POSK (Polish cultural institution) - English news sources - Facebook
Polish & Romanian community in Ealing, London (rough sleepers)	- Local homeless charity - Free newspapers - Facebook - Google
Roma Community in Govanhill, Glasgow	- Community organisations - Local charities - Housing associations - Schools - Facebook
Romanian Community in Burnt Oak, London	- Romanian accountancy offices - Local shops and cafes - British TV

Communities included in the research

Portuguese community in Thetford

Thetford was selected for this project as it is home to an established Portuguese community, with around 6-1000[4] Portuguese citizens in an overall population of roughly 35,000. Those included in this research migrated to the UK for work between 14-18 years ago. Many were joined by their families or had children in the UK and worked in factory jobs.

Networks

Coffee shops were important hubs for the Portuguese community in Thetford, and gossip often spread through these channels– including information about Brexit and the Settlement Scheme. The Embassy and the Portuguese government were also important touchpoints for this community, as these were perceived as formal information channels. Some relied on semi-formal channels, such as charities or local 'fixers' (Portuguese people who were well integrated with British society and helped to solve problems in exchange for small sums of money).

Portuguese people meet daily in coffee shops run by their compatriots in Thetford

Understanding and trust

Children educated at English schools generally spoke the language fluently. However, for older family members language could be a challenge, and most were surrounded by Portuguese speakers in their jobs. Some may struggle to go through the application process due to their limited language skills.

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[4] Jack, I. 2007. *How many migrants does it take to change a Norfork town ?* Available from :
    <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2007/sep/29/immigrationandasylum.britishidentityandsociety> [1 May 2018]

Most did trust the UK government, but were limited by their language ability. Many didn't feel confident to go through the process on their own and imagined they would be deported if they made mistakes.

All participants were unsure about how Brexit would impact their lives. Only a minority of participants were using English sources to access the news. Most watched Portuguese or Brazilian TV channels (which had limited information on Brexit); or relied on their Facebook feeds for news. Some were confused by information publicised by Portuguese officials[5] which appeared to promote alternative advice to Home Office sources. This led to some Portuguese people taking unnecessary action – for example rushing to apply for residency, and in some cases, spending hundreds of pounds in legal fees.

The vast majority of the Portuguese community in Thetford watched Portuguese or Brazilian TV, instead of British.

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[5] Agencia Lusa 2017. *Brexit : Governo aconselha portugueses a pedir residencia permanente para acautelar direitos*. Available from :
<https://observador.pt/2016/06/22/brexit-governo-aconselha-portugueses-a-pedir-residencia-permanente-para-acautelar-direitos/ >
[1 May 2018]

Anselmo (Portuguese)

Age 58, Thetford, moved to the UK in 2004

Anselmo recently lost part of his leg in an accident and so is temporarily living on benefits. Previously he was registered as self-employed, paying taxes. Currently he spends most of his time at home with his wife and son, who has disabilities and receives government assistance.

Every evening he goes to his local coffee shop to meet with Portuguese friends and colleagues. He is engaged in different forms of Portuguese media, such as TV channels and newspapers and has an Android phone and tablet which he uses mostly for Facebook, reading news and socialising.

He is very content with his life in the UK and is grateful to the government for the assistance he and his son receive. In Portugal he feels he would be much worse off and is therefore reluctant to go back. He is unsure whether Brexit will affect him but hopes he can stay in the UK. Although he has all the documents needed to gain settled status and a good understanding of the process in English, he doesn't trust himself to navigate the process alone as he is worried that making even a small mistake could result in deportation. For this reason, he is planning to hire a lawyer to help him with the application.

"If you make one mistake, you are deported! I'm going to hire a lawyer

to help me fill in the application form, this is too serious not to."

Polish community in Thetford

Some participants had been working in agriculture and factories since moving to the UK 13 years ago but were now retired and receiving pensions. Others had followed their children to the UK six to ten years ago, worked as plumbers or painters and were registered as self-employed.

Networks

Most participants did little outside going to work and were therefore quite socially isolated - even from other Polish people. Some knew local Polish shopkeepers or café staff.

Understanding and trust

Most spoke very little English, despite having attempted to learn. Most watched the news on Polish TV. In spite of their limited English skills, they were more informed about Brexit than others in the sample.

As the completion of the application process online could only be done using an Android phone, we asked participants about this. Most of these participants owned an Android phone, but only used it to make and receive calls, and didn't know how to use the other features of the phone. Older participants were not computer-literate and said they would rely on their children or friends (both living either in Thetford or in nearby towns) for help with the application *process.*

Jacek (Polish)

Age 63, Thetford, moved to the UK in 2008

Jacek moved to England after his daughter living in the UK told him that there were better jobs there and a chance for a better life, and that she would help him settle.

He worked for years in a meat processing factory, but three years ago he was involved in a custody battle for his younger son which cost him all his money, time, and eventually his job. He spent about a year unemployed and only registered with the Job Centre several months after being fired: he is a very proud man and was ashamed of being unemployed. This means he has a gap on his proof of work records. He received benefits for a while, but these have been reduced over time.

One year ago, he registered as self-employed and has since been working as an electrician. He is still building clientele, but due to his limited English, it is taking him some time to get customers.

Currently, he is not earning a lot: he can't afford the room he has been subletting for over a year and he can't always afford food. His landlord wanted to help him and allowed him to stay there for free. He has no proof of address in his name.

He speaks very little English and can't use his mobile very well. To go through the application process, he would have to ask a friend for help. His daughter is now struggling with a drug addiction and only visits him occasionally.

Older Polish people in Thetford rely on the Polish restaurant owner for help with English.

Polish community in Wirral

Polish migrants included in this research had generally lived in Wirral for up to seven years. Most came to the UK for work, and a high number were working in positions for which they were overqualified: as cleaners, care assistants or in hospitality.

Networks

Renting accommodation was difficult initially, as people lacked references from landlords and struggled to set up a UK bank account. As a result, many started lives in the UK staying with friends and family who had already migrated. Those who had been living in the UK for a while were generally renting houses from their local council.

Most were registered with a GP in the UK, although many preferred the healthcare in Poland and returned there for checks and treatment.

Social media was heavily used. Facebook was a go-to source of informal information, especially when people first moved to the UK. Many people relied on the data shared there to help them find jobs and places to live. YouTube was also used for entertainment.

Understanding and trust

English proficiency was mixed. Many had taken up English lessons when they arrived in the UK, but some struggled to pick it up or lacked confidence. Participants reported some experiences of racism in the UK and most were reluctant to report this for fear of repercussions from the perpetrator, or fear that it would count against them in some way. However, some considered the police to be more approachable in the UK than in Poland.

Most were happy to live and work in the UK but were not considering British citizenship. Reasons for this included identifying strongly with being Polish, feeling like Poland was their home and wishing to return there in the future; or because they believed it would be impossible to obtain the knowledge of history, culture and language necessary to gain citizenship.

Romanian passport

Aneta (Polish)

Age 56, Wirral, moved to the UK in 2013

Aneta moved to Wirral to join her children and her grandchildren born in the UK. When she first arrived, she found life difficult as she didn't have a job and had to rely on her children for translation.

"When I first came you could compare me to like a little child, I couldn't even buy a bus ticket"

Her family introduced her to the Polish group at the community organisation Wirral Change, so she could socialise with other Polish members of the community. After a year she found her first job as a cleaner through talking to others in the Wirral Change group.

Her language ability is her main problem, and she is often reliant on others to help her. She also relies heavily on a mobile phone app to help with translation of important looking letters or texts from her energy supplier.

"Sometimes the shop is the information centre."

Although she does not go many places outside of work, she knows people in two local Polish shops, and often finds out information through informal gossip, such as jobs or local news. Aneta trusts formal institutions, such as the GP and Wirral Change. However, outside these she had little awareness of other sources of advice and formal institutions. She had not heard of the Home Office or Citizens Advice Bureau and only associated the council with paying bills. Although she saw the gov.uk website as a trusted source, she felt she could not use it due to her limited English.

When it came to Brexit, Aneta was accessing a lot of information and news on Facebook, leaving her feeling confused by multiple rumours and sources of information. She had heard of settled status but was unsure about whether she needed to do anything about it.

"If I knew what to do, I could prepare. I know language will be important, but maybe I would try harder to learn if I knew it would help."

Polish and Romanian community in Ealing, London

Two different groups of Polish and Romanian migrants in Ealing were included in the research – those who relied on a homeless charity and those who had more secure housing and were more self-reliant.

Rough sleepers

Most respondents without homes were single men, aged between 18 and 60, who had arrived in the UK one to six years ago. They were sleeping on the street or staying with friends, and in contact with a local homeless charity. English proficiency was low, and some struggled with alcohol addiction. A large number were employed casually in

construction, some by companies who hired them without the right health and safety qualifications. They were often not provided with a payslip and struggled to access welfare benefits.

This group was likely to face difficulties gathering proof of residency as they would not show up on HMRC/DWP record checks and would struggle to provide an annual bank statement or account summary. Only some had managed to open a bank account, and many were not motivated to do so as they only had 'pocket money.'

Most relied heavily on community organisations for access to food, the internet, and help with official forms. The local homeless charity was the main hub where people went for information and help with translation. The charity workers were happy to help but were not well informed about issues related to Brexit and the application process. Free newspapers were a source of information used often by this group. They also used Google searches and Google translate to gain new information, and many used Facebook as a way to stay in touch with people in their home countries.

Constantin (Romanian)

Age 33, Ealing, moved to the UK in 2017

Constantin is currently homeless and works in construction. The nature of this work is informal: he is not guaranteed work on a regular basis and is paid in cash - meaning he has no proof of hours worked or an official employer. Because he has no proof of work he is unable to claim benefits.

As he does not have an address it is very difficult for him to get a full-time job. A charity based out of a church in Ealing allows him to use their address, however often employers notice this, realise he is homeless and therefore will not consider him for the job. Therefore, he continues to depend on work in construction which is unreliable. A text shown to a researcher from his employer read: *"the material didn't arrive today, so we will not have work for you tomorrow, I'll let you know when we do."*

> *"No work, no money today, no food today. That's how we live."*

With the little money he has, Constantin doesn't see the point in having a bank account.

> *"It's only small money, that can fit in your pocket. The money you use to buy food, cigarettes. There is no reason to have a bank account."*

Those with housing

Those who were more self-reliant arrived in the UK 4-14 years ago. The older generation had an established life in the UK, with children and grandchildren recognised as UK citizens; whereas more recent arrivals were either living alone or just starting a family.

Many had stable jobs (full-time, and receiving payslips), and the elderly were generally retired and receiving pensions. English skills ranged from advanced to lower intermediate. However, some younger participants were subletting a room, and consequently had no proof of address.

The local Polish social and cultural association (POSK) was a major touchpoint. People went there for information about Brexit, but the institution had strict rules about providing this (to guarantee no misleading information was given), and instead referred them to a charity that specialised in migration issues.

Most in this group tended to watch and read English news and use Facebook regularly.

Roma community in Govanhill, Glasgow

Background and Housing

There is a large Roma community in Govanhill, reportedly of over 3500 people[6]. Participants came from different migration routes, either from Romania or Slovakia, and spoke different dialects. There was sometimes tension between these populations. The majority of participants migrated to the UK within the last 11 years - many for better education for their children.

"I wanted my kids to have a better childhood than I did" Lavinia, 29yo, Slovak Romani.

"Romani people don't prioritise education because, when you don't have money for food, how can you think about education? And even if you go to school, if you're Romani, you will not get a decent job in Slovakia" Daniela, 18yo, Slovak Romani

Networks

Some participants lived in "closes" in tenement buildings whilst others lived in regular flats, rented from the council, or from private landlords, who sometimes took advantage of them. In most cases, men worked in factories, potato picking or car washing, whilst women stayed at home. This meant that men had more contact with non-Roma and had developed better English skills than the women.

Aside from work, the Roma community was fairly isolated, in part due to fear of prejudice. Low income and limited language skills also contributed to this isolation. Some went to local community centres or charities, schools and GP practices, but relied on interpreters and occasionally took a while to build up trust with these institutions. In more conservative groups, women would avoid going to cafés without their husbands, and meet instead in one another's houses.

Many had mobile phones, although they often changed their numbers and rarely had access to mobile data. They did however tend to have wi-fi in their homes. Many used Facebook, although word of mouth was the most common method for sharing information.

"When I wake up, the moment I open my eyes, I am on Facebook!" Syeira, aged 29, Slovak Romani

Understanding & trust

Women spoke very little English and no participants could read in English. However, English proficiency among the younger generation was higher. Most children were going to school locally (although sometimes attendance was low).

Participants appeared to trust the UK government and in particular tended to speak about the Police in a positive way, stating that the Police tended to understand them better than other local people

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[6] Scottish Government 2013. *Mapping the Roma Community in Scotland*. Available from :
<https://www.gov.scot/resource/0043/00434972.pdf> [1 July 2018]

Community Infosource 2016. *The Roma Community in Scotland 2016*. Available from : https://www.renfrewshire2023.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/The-Roma-Community-in-Scotand-2016.pdf [1 July 2018]

Lamuie (Romanian Roma)

Age 26, Govanhill, moved to the UK in 2013

Lamuie is from the Gabor group, which is one of the most conservative groups of Romani people – she wears long skirts and a scarf over her hair. She was born and raised in a small village in Romania and got married when she was thirteen.

She feels like the UK is her home:

> *"When I came to this country I didn't expect to get any kindness. The day I went to my son's school for the first time, I was scared because I am often looked down on because of the way I dress. But the school's headteacher was so nice to me, she said 'that's a beautiful dress'. I looked around and there were also other people wearing different clothes, like the Muslim ladies with burkas. I felt really good."*

She now has three children. Before she had her third child, she would sometimes work selling magazines or as a cleaner – work organised through an agency. Her husband started off working in construction with a friend but after a year had learnt enough English to get a job in a shop, where he received payslips. She loves that her children are going to school and getting an education.

They live in a rented flat and have tenancy agreements and bills in both their names.

Her and her husband have a joint Facebook account: **"but I don't know how to use it too well, my husband uses it the most."**

They tend to rely on a limited number of English-speaking friends for help: *"This year I couldn't fill in the paper they sent to register to vote, because my friend wasn't here."*

Romanian community in Burnt Oak, London

Burnt Oak, houses a large Romanian community and was known to some locals as 'little Bucharest'. Most participants worked in the informal economy, without any proof of work. Because most spoke very little English, it was harder to get a "better job" and many worked long hours. Many participants were subletting rooms without any sort of receipt, tenancy agreement or bills in their names. Often, several people lived together in flats of poor condition.

Network

Most went to Romanian Accountancy Offices (spread across the area) for help with any official processes. A respondent said: "they can help you with anything." Most respondents couldn't afford to go out too often and tended to have a "work to home" routine.

Some watched British TV, but most said they looked online for information when they need it.

Understanding and trust

Some could speak good English, but most spoke either little or no English at all.

Ana (Romanian)

Age 44, Burnt Oak, moved to the UK in 2015

Ana's husband came to the UK in 2015. A few months after he secured an informal construction job, Ana and their son came to join him.

Ana works in a chicken shop near her home in Burnt Oak. She works around ten hours a day and gets payed £5.00 an hour – she doesn't receive any payslips as her boss refuses to give them. She doesn't like to work there, but she is putting her son through university, so she says she can't give up her job. Her husband also works long hours in construction and doesn't get any proof of work either.

They all live in one room that they sub-let. There are four rooms in the house and nine other people living there, all subletting. Ana will not be able to prove residency through work or address. Both she and husband have bank accounts, but they have only had these in for about a year. It was hard for them to open a bank account without proof of address, but she got help at a Romanian Accountancy Office.

Ana doesn't have a smartphone, and she doesn't know well how to search for information online. But her husband and son do, and she relies on them for that.

Ana wrote down on her notebook her 'work journey' since she arrived in the UK 3 years ago

What are the biggest challenges?

People we spoke to were likely to face a range of barriers in their application process. Overall, the most challenging and wide-reaching barriers were likely to be emotional, rather than practical. This meant that barriers often stemmed from issues such as lack of confidence or trust, rather than lacking paperwork or technology needed to apply successfully.

This chapter describes the challenges faced by people we met.

A lack of trust in the UK government

Many in the sample questioned whether the government had their best interests at heart. They were instead suspicious that the application would be a 'minefield', and that those making mistakes could have their settled status denied. Some harboured a fear that they could be deported for no good reason – often generated from rumours of this happening to others in their circles.

Those with little trust in the government were unlikely to engage with state institutions until pushed. They were more likely to rely on hear-say and rumours from informal social connections, and likely to put off decisions around their application until it became clear that these were necessary.

A lack of confidence in themselves to be able to navigate the process correctly

Many people felt nervous in their grasp of the English language and were afraid that small language errors on forms might have big repercussions, such as deportation. This was augmented by their sense that language used in the application process would be technical and complex. Some felt embarrassment over their limited linguistic ability and therefore were reluctant to seek support with this, despite their lack of confidence.

A lack of trust in others

It often took people new to the country a long time to build relationships and trust with others around them, including community organisations. They often only engaged with organisations when they knew others they trusted used them too. In some cases, this led to people becoming over-reliant on a few specific community organisations. This meant they would go to them for a variety of reasons and would be vulnerable if these relationships were to break down.

Anger at the prospect of going through the application process

Some people felt that the UK didn't value them or the work they had put into building their life in the UK. Some also voiced the opinion that Brexit was a racist decision, made by people who wanted to push them out of the country. This meant that people were reluctant to think too much about Brexit, or the implications it might have for them. These people were less likely to engage with communications about the application process.

Becoming desensitised to Brexit and the need to apply for settled status

Many people in the research faced overwhelming feelings of uncertainty around what would happen after Britain leaves the EU, which resulted in some becoming desensitised. Myths and conflicting information about Brexit had the potential to further muddy the waters and prevent people from engaging in information.

This desensitisation was exacerbated by the lull period following the initial referendum, during which it was unclear what the repercussions were going to be for EU migrants. Some felt their initial shock fade to indifference during this time and began to voice opinions that Brexit might never happen.

What are the consequences of these emotional barriers?

These emotional barriers could lead to more practical issues if not addressed and dealt with adequately. More specifically, these consequences could include:

People not able to process information from the Home Office and other official sources: those who have low English skills or literacy, or for those who don't feel capable or confident in their own ability.

People not hearing the most up-to-date or correct information: those who feel desensitised and are not actively seeking information; for those who are socially isolated.

People distrusting official information: those who are suspicious of official government institutions; or feel anger towards them.

People believing misleading information from various sources: many people who are accessing information through a range of informal sources, as well as formal ones; those who are more confident in understanding and trusting information from their habitual sources rather than official Home Office information.

What could be done?

This section presents the research findings relating to two areas: understanding and process. It outlines the barriers that EU migrants were currently facing and highlights recommendations to address these barriers.

Overall, the research found that these recommendations presented wider opportunities to reset the relationship between EU migrants and the UK government - and its institutions - to inspire a greater sense of trust. This wider opportunity is discussed in the final chapter.

Understanding

Many of the barriers to gaining settled status were linked to migrants' *understanding* of Brexit and settled status. This section will cover findings related to content, language, channels and tone.

Content

There was significant confusion around Brexit and settled status. Whilst all participants had heard about Brexit and knew of the rough timescales, when asked how Brexit would affect their lives, most answered that they were unsure. Some had a sense that they would have to apply to remain but knew little about the ramifications of this on their daily lives.

People had heard various rumours, including:

- There will be mass deportation, in some cases targeting the unemployed
- No more access to healthcare and benefits for EU migrants
- Families will be split up
- From 1 January 2019, the government will pay people £10K / 250 euros (amounts varied) to go back to their own country

"I read that there will be massive deportation"
Polish, Ealing

"I think we will have to fill in a form, so the government know how many people are here"
Spanish, Ealing

"I've heard that when Brexit happens they will send all migrants away. But maybe we will be able to stay, because my husband's employer need him so maybe he will want to keep him here"
Mirabela, aged 29 Romanian Roma

"I think people will travel less, because what if they are not allowed to come back?"
Daniela, aged 44, Slovak Romani

'Don't get thrown out of Britain!' states a Polish news website.

Most rumours were spread via word-of-mouth, social media, and local newspapers. Some believed the rumours they heard (especially if these spread via their social networks), but in most cases people could identify contradictions in the information they heard– which left them confused. Few knew how to assess the legitimacy of their sources or remembered seeing any 'official' information to dispute the rumours they had heard.

Furthermore, some were 'switching off' from following news and stories about Brexit. After hearing a volume of information, people began to feel somewhat fatigued and desensitized to the subject, meaning they lacked a sense of urgency to find out the latest information.

> *"I can't put family life on hold for something that might not happen'*
>
> *Polish, Wirral*

There was some evidence that a few people were incurring costs due to rumours. There were some examples of people spending time and money applying for residency, believing these to be necessary steps to secure their settled status. Although gaining residency did not harm their cause, the investment of time or money was not always necessary – and could be a big burden for those on low incomes.

People additionally spent money on lawyers or other forms of paid support, especially if they did not feel confident to go through the process themselves. Behaviour trends like these sometimes spread through social networks, as people took the advice of their friends and neighbours.

Notably, few migrants were aware of the term 'settled status.' Most were aware they would have to 'do something' or 'apply for something' following Brexit, but few recognised this to be 'applying for settled status.' Instead, people used varying words to describe what they expected to apply for, such as "residence card", "residence permit", "temporary card", or "visa". This might have an impact on those searching for information about the settlement process, as they may not know what search terms will be most useful.

Specific opportunities

There is an opportunity:

- To launch fresh communications about the process, 'switching' people back on to thinking about Brexit and the specific consequences for them;
- To discredit certain rumours – and credit accurate information (e.g. having a 'seal of approval' for official sources and content);
- To communicate that certain actions aren't necessary (e.g. applying for residence documentation);
- To publicise the term 'settled status' to make it more recognisable and understandable;
- To ensure clarity and consistency of language - making sure all the same phrases/ names are being used for applications and status, and taking note of how meaning might change in translation;
- To use search engine optimisation to ensure people using slightly different terms would be directed towards the right information source.

Free English lessons offered in Glasgow

Language

As previously discussed, many felt embarrassed about their poor English. Many had taken some form of English lessons when they arrived or had tried to teach themselves informally, with some success. However, often commitment to these first efforts faded over time, and some considered themselves "too old" to be able to pick up another language easily.

People with limited English skills often relied on small network groups of their nationality, and so had little contact with other information sources. People often became dependent on these networks and would be vulnerable if they were to break down.

The majority felt anxious that small language errors on official forms might have large repercussions (e.g. being rejected, being deported). This was true even for those with a good level of English. People did not really have concrete examples of this ever happening, but their perception was fuelled by rumours and stories they had read in the media or on social media.

"If you make one mistake, you are deported! I'm going to hire a lawyer to help me fill in the application form, this is too serious not to."

Anselmo, aged 58, Portuguese, Thetford

"I try to do it on my own, but if I don't fully understand and get something wrong, I worry that there will be a consequence"
Aneta, aged 56, Romanian, Wirral

As a result, many people sought reassurance from those with better English than them. This included children who had studied in the UK, friends, translation apps and community organisations. Translation apps were heavily used among research participants, with varying success. Many were able to discern the topic and urgency of certain documents or information; however, translation was often limited in that people could not always determine the *action* that they had to take, and therefore people often used a second source (e.g. friends) to double-check. Friends that people relied on sometimes didn't have a much better standard of English and so there was often a sense of 'muddling through together'.

Some relied heavily on community organisations to help them translate official forms. In some cases, staff at community organisations found forms confusing and reported not knowing which box to tick, as lived situations were more often complex and nuanced than forms allowed for.

There was a risk that some became over-reliant on community organisations and called on them for help with more trivial issues – for example, approaching a charity for help with arranging holiday travel. Once people had got into the habit of using charities or community organisations, they often went here regularly.

> *Example:*
>
> *Aneta (Polish, Wirral) would often call up her children during the day to ask about letters she had received or to ask them to translate between herself and a gas engineer. She would also often use translation apps to take photos of letters to discern how important they were. However, she was unable to formulate replies and often went along to a local charity for support with this.*

> Example:
>
> *When Roma in Govanhill needed help with filling in forms for benefits or registering to vote, they would often turn to connections they had who spoke better English. If these people were unable to help, they would turn to community organisations, but only if they already had trusted relationships there.*

Specific opportunities

There is an opportunity:

- For continued reassurance that applications will be looked at on a case-by-case basis
- For reassurance that reviewers are not looking for people to fail/be rejected
- To allow for explanations and supporting documentation for people to explain more complex and nuanced situations

Channels

We found that people were using a range of sources for their information. We have categorised these into 'formal', 'semi-formal' or 'informal'. We discuss informal and semi-formal in this section.

Informal sources

There were a range of methods by which information travelled through informal circles. These included by word-of-mouth and online.

Many relied on gossip through their social networks to get information about jobs, documentation and Brexit. Some within the Portuguese community in Thetford, for example, would gather socially in a coffee shop every day to exchange this kind of information.

In addition, many were accessing news about Brexit via social media, and some recognised that the stories found here were often sensationalised in order to generate views. One online Polish news website displayed a 'Brexit countdown' on the homepage, which conveyed a sense of urgency[7].

"There is lots of scaremongering on Polish websites, because then they can get the most clicks."

(Polish shop worker, Ealing)

"People use social media because they don't see anything else"

(Community worker, Wirral)

People also used social media to get answers to more day-to-day questions, such as finding jobs and accommodation. Some used Facebook to ask questions about documentation in wider online groups, e.g. how to apply for a National

[7] Polish Express 2018. Brexit Alert! Available from: <http://lp.polishexpress.co.uk/brexit-alert/ > [1 June 2018]

Insurance number. Crowd-sourcing information like this could mean that they were accessing inaccurate information or advice from inexperienced people.

Semi-formal touchpoints

Semi-formal sources were those perceived to be relatively authoritative by those using them but were not generally gaining their information from official Home Office sources. Some set up meetings with 'advisers', who ranged in experience and professionalism, and could do both harm and good. Advisers were often well-intentioned and charged small fees to provide people with information from official sources. However, there was some evidence of advisers taking advantage of people, by charging high fees to give advice or fill in application forms. There was also a risk that the advisers themselves may be ill-informed and therefore be contributing to the spread of misinformation.

Romanian accountancy offices were a source of information in Burnt Oak

Many relied on staff in charities or community centres to help them. In some areas, there was a high proliferation of professionalised services offering help with similar things. For example, in Burnt Oak Romanians relied heavily on Romanian accountancy offices. Similarly, in Ealing and Wirral many migrants found that work agencies were their first port of call to find employment. These agencies sometimes offered advice about how to get a National Insurance number or how to claim benefits, which led to some migrants successfully securing documentation. There were also a few examples of HR departments offering advice and support.

> *Example:*
>
> *Within the Portuguese community in Thetford, one man was broadly known as "knowing all the laws" and working in a "favour exchange" basis. He would help people with everything: from coming with them to the doctor to help with translation, to filling in benefits applications. Some reported he could help find loopholes in the law in order to "get more benefits" if that was what they wanted.*

> *Example:*
>
> *In Burnt Oak, there were several accountancy offices communicating entirely in Romanian. A Romanian participant reported that these accountants "can help you with anything", not only issues restricted to accountancy. One participant reported that an accountant had helped her to open a bank account, even though she had no proof of address or work.*

It was difficult for people to know what information sources to trust. Whilst most people said that they would trust information from the UK government, official government information did not stand out as a definitive 'go to' for accurate information amongst the various sources people were using. Few migrants in this research had looked at the UK government website or had signed up for email updates. When asked, some people said that this was because they knew they would not be able to understand it anyway because of their poor English. Instead, they said they would rather rely on second-hand information provided in their own language. A few had looked on the government website in the past but had not returned to look at it regularly. Overall, there was a sense amongst those spoken to that the UK government had kept a low profile and that there was very little in terms of official announcements.

Most supporting charities or community organisations were using the government website as their source of information, although some were not aware that this source existed. However, keeping up-to-date with the latest information was often down to one or two individual members of staff.

Some members of staff were as confused as the people they supported in terms of the settlement process. They too were recipients of rumours and information in the mainstream media, and 'settled status' was not a term many of them had heard of. Some expressed a need to be able to easily identify legitimate information, through Home Office certification (e.g. visual identity, stamps etc).

Few, if any, had seen the Statement of Intent released by the Home Office in June. Almost all were prioritising immediate problems, such as assisting people to find work or claim benefits. They were not generally talking to migrants about settled status unless explicitly asked.

> *Example:*
>
> *Diana, a Romanian living in Wirral, had trained as a nurse in Poland and was employed by the NHS when she moved to the UK. Her HR department was crucial in supporting her to find school places for her children, to apply for National Insurance and even to apply for temporary residence cards for her and her family.*

Specific opportunities

There is an opportunity:

- To create a clear visual identity on communication from the Home Office to signal legitimacy
- To encourage community organisations to use / continue to use UK government sources
- For warnings about unnecessary actions or services (e.g. from those who charge high fees)

Tone

Whilst all community organisations had an interest in supporting their clients, a few organisations had strong opinions against the government's wider immigration policies. Such agendas could feed into communications that came off as alarming, potentially adding to existing anxiety and distrust towards formal institutions and officials. For example, there was evidence that some were displaying posters which outlined immigration officials as aggressive and discriminatory; or conversations between staff and clients about the mistakes of the Home Office in previous scenarios (e.g. Windrush). In addition, some EU migrants did not trust the UK government or government institutions more generally, due to negative past experiences either in the UK or in their home countries.

Specific opportunities

There is an opportunity:

- To implement a new tone in communications, to inspire trust in the state

Poster in Glasgow community centre giving advice for dealing with immigration officials
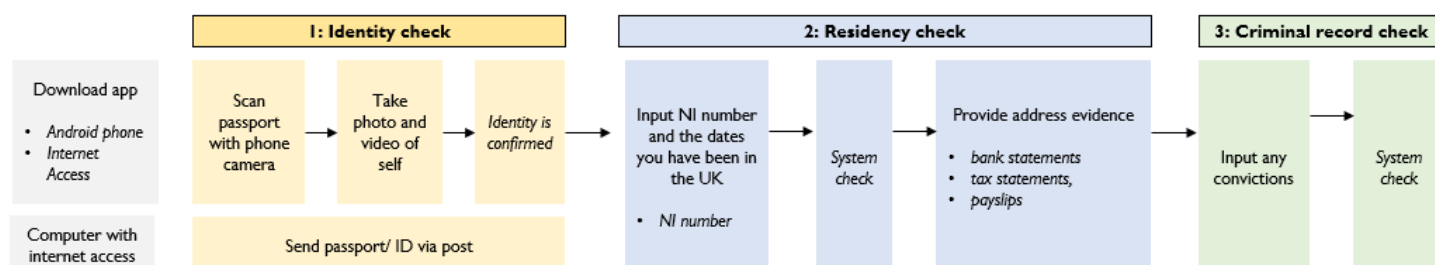
Application Process

This section will outline the proposed application process for Settled Status, discussing our findings against the different sections of the process. We found most participants would be able to complete the process with little difficulty. However, this highlights the key elements of the design where potential risks lie for certain individuals and groups.

As mentioned in the introduction, the fieldwork took place between May and July 2018, both before and after the release of the Statement of Intent from the Home Office in June[8].

We tested the process using a diagram to simulate all the necessary steps, and evidence or tools needed at each. We asked EU migrants to comment on which steps of the process they would find difficult and explored in detail the challenges they would face.

Outlining the process

- We developed a process map using information available about the application for settled status, and other government related applications (e.g. benefits)[9].

- We also reviewed the documentation and tools needed at each stage with participants

Overall findings: most people would be able to complete the application process successfully

- Most participants had the means to complete the process successfully and with ease.
- Those that were at risk of not completing the process successfully came across difficulties in the **residency check** section.
- These findings were more significant for Romanian and Roma migrants
- The challenges faced by these groups specifically will be discussed under residency check in this section

We outline findings below in relation to documentation, IT and practical issues, and cost.

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[8] Home Office 2018, *EU Settlement Scheme: Statement of Intent*. Available from :

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/718237/EU_Settlement_Scheme_SOI_June_2018.pdf> [21 June 2018]

[9] After the Home Office released the "EU Settlement Scheme: Statement of Intent" document on the 21st of June 2018, we confirmed that both the process map and the list of documents we had been testing are in agreement with what the Home Office established.

Documentation

1: Identity check

Process:

- People need to submit their passport or ID card to prove their identity
- If applying through the app, this can be done just by taking a picture of the document and uploading a photo/video
- If applying using a computer, the necessary ID documents must be sent in the post

What we found:

- Everyone we spoke to had either a passport or a National ID card
- Some had problems due to lost documents (e.g. homeless), but most had been able to replace these

2: Residency check

NI Number

Process:

- Once an applicant has input their NI number, the application system should automatically retrieve the applicant's records
- This means that evidence does not need to be submitted manually
- If the information retrieved does not cover a full five year[10] period (required for settled status) applicants can then submit other documents manually to fill in the gaps
- Having an NI number doesn't guarantee that there will be records for the full period that migrant has had the NI number – they must have been working or formally registered as unemployed (at the job centre) in order for records to exist

What we found:

- Most of our participants had an NI number
- Even homeless participants or those working in the informal economy had an NI number but were not using it at that moment.
- The exception were some Roma women who had never worked in the UK
- Some didn't work, and were receiving benefits registered in the name of a partner
- Over half of those interviewed worked in the formal economy (paying taxes, receiving payslips and P-60 forms), so should have records in the system
- Only a few with NI number, but unemployed, were registered at the job centre as unemployed
- Those who worked in the informal economy were often not registered at the Job Centre, which created large gaps in their work record

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[10] If the EU Migrant has been here for less than 5 years and therefore is applying for Pre Settled Status, they will need to submit evidence equivalent to the period they have resided in the UK.

Documents proving residency

Process:
- The three preferred[11] forms of evidence to prove residency include[12]:
  - Having proof of work for a 12 months period (at a company or as self-employed)
  - Proof of address
  - An "annual bank statement, or an account summary covering a 12-month period showing payments received or spending in the UK in at least six months of that year"[13]
- Some similar documents are also acceptable to "fill in gaps" or to build proof of a whole period of residency in the UK
- Other documents listed as alternative included:
  - GP letters
  - Passport stamps or travel ticket confirming entry at the UK border, which cover the whole month in which they were issued

What we found:
- Most participants could prove their residency in the UK using at least one of the three main forms of evidence
- Even participants that had gaps due to workplace injuries received benefits from state and were therefore able to provide sufficient evidence[14]
- Some had alternative documentation, such as GP letters. However, these did not cover long periods of time, and therefore were not a sufficient substitute for those lacking the primary documentation required

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Common challenges presented by Romanian participants: [15]

Romanian migrants were particularly likely to face challenges in the residency check section. This was due to the following reasons:

They often worked in the informal economy:

- Within our sample, all worked in the informal economy and therefore did not have access to any proof of work
- The majority stated a desire to work in the formal economy, but said they were unable to get a job due to poor spoken English, lack of skills or literacy

Few had proof of address:

- Most sublet rooms, and landlords had not provided any sort of contract, receipt of rent, or utility bills under their name

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11 As stated in the document released by the Home Office on the 21st of June.

12 This is a summarised overview of the list of documents, which in turn is much more nuanced.

13 Home Office 2018, *EU Settlement Scheme: Statement of Intent*. Available from :

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/718237/EU_Settlement_Scheme_SOI_June_2018.pdf> [21 June 2018]

14 as per stated in the HO Document

15 We spoke to some Romanian people living in Burnt Oak (area with a large Romanian community in Northwest London), others gathered around Ealing (London) – who were homeless therefore not necessarily residents of the area), and some more in Glasgow.

Few had mobile phone account

- Most had 'pay as you go' deals instead of contracts

Few had bank account history that covered an extended period
- Many did not have bank accounts at all, as they did not have much money
- Some had bank accounts, but these rarely covered the entire period of time they had been in the UK.

  "It's too little money, I use it to pay for everyday expenses: food, cigarettes and shelter. There is no reason to have a bank account"

For some, accessing work in the formal economy, having somewhere to live and getting a bank account were effectively linked, resulting in a 'catch 22' situation where one could not be accessed without the other and vice versa:

- To get a bank account you need an address
- To be able to pay rent you need a bank account
- Migrants found it easier to find work in the formal economy when they had proof of address

3: Criminal record check

Process:
- Applicant will be asked to input any convictions in the application, and these will be checked against existing records.

What we found:
- None of our participants claimed to have a Criminal Record.
- Given the sensitive nature of the issue it is unlikely that they would have admitted to having one, and we were not able to verify it in other ways.

IT & practical issues

Process:

- The application process can be done on an Android phone or combining actions in a computer with sending documents by post. Internet access is needed in both cases.

What we found:

- All our participants had mobiles, most of which were Androids.
- Older participants[16], although they owned phones, used technology in very limited way[17] and were not confident about the idea of an app or navigating an online system.
- Some planned to seek help from their children or friends.
- Those that did not have Androids, were apprehensive about sharing technology when personal information was involved. This meant they were reluctant to borrow a friend's phone or use a computer that wasn't theirs in a public place.
- All participants had a means of accessing Wi-Fi, even it wasn't in their home. Public Wi-Fi hotspots, for example McDonalds were mentioned
- Such locations, however, may not be appropriate for residency applications as they are not secure networks.
- In some cases, there was a lack of trust in posting documents. Some had posted original documents in the past and had not received them back – making them wary of posting more

Costs

Process:

- The application will cost £65 and £32.50 for children under the age of 16
- This does not include the cost of sending documents by post
- This payment must be made online

What we found:

- Most applicants indicated that they would be able to pay for the application cost, although some found saving this amount more challenging
- Those working in the informal job market were most likely to face difficulties budgeting, as they often worked without knowing where their next pay check would come from
- Some homeless migrants didn't have bank accounts because they received cash-in-hand payments, which made making online payments impossible
- Some elderly people and many Roma people were unable to use a mobile or a computer, so would face difficulties making online payments. These people would most likely ask their children or husbands for help, before seeking more formal support.

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[16] The elderly people in our sample were Polish people living in Thetford with very low level of literacy, and who worked in factory's "ground" all their lives.

[17] They only used their smartphones to make and receive calls, take and receive pictures.

Case study

"Of course! I can fix a few fridges and I'll have the money."

Jacek is a 63-year-old Polish migrant who lives in Thetford and has been unemployed for almost a year. He has been registered as unemployed for a while, but his benefits have been reduced over time.

He recently decided to work as an electrician, registering himself as self-employed. It is taking him some time to attract customers due to his limited English. When asked if he could afford the £65, he said "of course! I can fix a few fridges and I'll have the money." However, by the end of the interview he confessed that the last meal he had was two days ago, as he had completely run out of money that week.

What are the opportunities?

The recommendations outlined in the previous section provide a basis through which both emotional and practical barriers can be overcome to improve the process of applying for settled status. Through activating these recommendations, there is a wider opportunity to 'reset' the relationship between EU migrants and the UK government. Doing so could enable a greater sense of trust in the UK government and its institutions and allow a more transparent relationship overall.

'Resetting' the relationship between EU migrants and the UK government

Currently, some of the relationships between EU migrants and the state are characterised by a lack of mutual understanding which, at times, turns to mistrust.

For example, Romanian and Polish communities in Ealing reacted negatively to stories in the media about deportation, which increased their negative perception of the UK government and the Home Office. It also meant that these people were less willing to report crimes to the police, for fear of being removed from the country themselves.

This application process could be used as a unique opportunity for the UK government to re-establish itself in the eyes of migrants as approachable and trustworthy. Furthermore, the government could take the chance to publicise its commitment to supporting EU migrants living in the UK to feel welcome and integrated.

Resetting the relationship in this way may have many advantages for individuals, communities, local organisations and the UK government as a whole.

What could change?	What benefits could this have?
Migrants seeing the state as more approachable	**Individuals would feel** more motivated to communicate, less intimidated and better able to ask questions. People would be more likely to seek help from legitimate sources, rather than relying on informal sources or word-of-mouth. **Communities and Local Organisations** would be better able to collaborate with governmental bodies without fear of alienating their client base. There would likely be reduced reliance on community and local organisations for support provided by state institutions – freeing up time and resources to be better spent elsewhere. **UK governmental institutions would have** more transparency and communication around services such as council tax and benefits
Migrants seeing the state as a trustworthy source of information	**Individuals would be more** receptive to messaging from the community and state campaigns; more likely to trust official sources and follow instructions; and would be more likely to question or fact-check informal sources.

	Communities and Local Organisations would be able to make better use of government issued information, and would have reduced burden for providing this themselves **UK governmental institutions** would be better able to deliver targeted advice and intervention programmes, leading to better health/ financial/ resilience outcomes
Migrants feeling more welcomed and settled in the UK	**Individuals would be more likely to seek** employment in the UK; become more involved in their local community; and less likely to experience social isolation **Communities and Local Organisations would have a reduced burden on services, and likely experience an increase in assets and resources at the local level as** EU migrants contribute to their local communities. Local areas are likely to see higher school attendance rates (leading to better educational outcomes); better integration; engagement with health services **UK governmental institutions would benefit from** migrants bringing skills to the UK; better health/ economic/ educational/ integration outcomes

Conclusion

This research focused on five locations around the UK – Thetford, Wirral, Glasgow, Ealing and Burnt Oak, covering a range of nationalities and experiences.

Barriers and opportunities

This research found that the most challenging barriers were likely to be emotional rather than practical. It was evident that:

- There was a lack of trust in the UK government – many questioned whether the government had their best interests at heart and were more likely to rely on informal social connections, rather than approaching state institutions directly.
- Participants had little confidence in themselves to navigate the process correctly and were fearful of making mistakes and the subsequent repercussions.
- Some participants only received information from small, informal networks, including acquaintances and community organisations. They would be left with little access to information if these were to break down.
- There was anger over having to go through the process – some people felt that the UK government did not seem to value them, and they were being 'pushed out'.

These emotional barriers could lead to more practical issues if not addressed, including not receiving information from official sources, distrusting information form the government and believing misleading information from non-official sources.

Application process

Most participants had identification documents, proof of residency and some form of access to IT. There were some challenges, especially for some Romanian participants, who received cash-in-hand payments, did not have bank accounts or proof of address.

Aside from these challenges, there were some larger barriers linked to people's understanding of Brexit and settled status, which contributed to the emotional barriers described above. The major opportunities centred around content, language and tone.

Content

There is an opportunity to:

- Discredit certain rumours and communicate that certain actions aren't necessary
- Raise the profile of the term 'settled status' to make it more recognisable and understandable
- Launch fresh communications about what will be happening, 'switching' people back on to thinking about settled status

Language

There is an opportunity to:

- Continue reassuring applicants that reviewers are not looking for reasons for applicants to be rejected
- Allow space for explanations of more complex or nuanced circumstances

Channels

There is an opportunity to:

- Create a clear visual identity on Home Office communication to signal legitimacy
- Encourage organisations to use/continue to use Home Office sources of information

Tone

There is an opportunity to:

- Implement a new tone in communications that will inspire trust in the state

'Resetting' relationships between EU migrants and the state

In addressing the above barriers, there is also a wider opportunity to consider how creating an effective process and facilitating greater understanding around Brexit and settled status can be a starting point for improved relationships between the UK government and EU migrants more generally. This application process could be used as a unique opportunity for the UK government to re-establish itself in the eyes of EU migrants as approachable, trustworthy and supportive.

Resetting the relationship in this way could have many advantages for individuals, communities, local organisations and the government.

Appendix

Sampling table

Nationality	Location	Intercepts	Notes	Experts	Depths	Notes
Polish	Ealing	8		1		
	Wirral	14		3	1	
	Thetford	6		1	1	
	TOTAL	28		5	2	
Romanian	Ealing	4		2	1	
	Burnt Oak	9			1	
	Wirral				1	
	TOTAL	13		2	3	
Portuguese	Thetford	9		2	1	
	TOTAL	9		2	1	
Roma	Glasgow	7		3	2	
	TOTAL	7		3	2	
Spanish	Ealing	1				
	TOTAL	1		0	0	
EU Cit. from non-EU country	Glasgow	1	Italian/ Afghan	1	1	Italian/ Afghan
	Thetford	1	Portuguese /Brazilian		1	Portuguese /Brazilian
	TOTAL	2		1	2	
SUBTOTAL		60		13	10	
TOTAL DONE		83			10	
Total Required		50	to 70		10	