



**THE MIX**

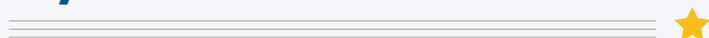
# Mythbusting: the truth about the EU Settlement Scheme

Now that Britain's left the EU, there are a lot of myths about the new immigration rules. We separate fact from fiction.



You might have heard some worrying rumours about applying for the Settlement Scheme, so we've looked into some of the most common misunderstandings for you.

## Myth



I have to pay to apply

## Fact



You don't have to pay. Applying to the EU Settlement Scheme is free. You'll also need to fill in the application yourself and shouldn't pay someone else to do it for you.

The only exception is if you need legal advice, for example if you have a criminal conviction. There are organisations that offer free legal advice, such as Here For Good or Settled, but you may need to pay a lawyer.

## Myth



I can't apply for the scheme because I don't have an Android phone

## Fact

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You'll probably need to use a smart phone for the first part of your application, to scan your documents and take a digital picture of yourself using the EU Exit: ID Document Check app. However, you don't need to have an Android phone, iPhone models from the iPhone 7 onwards will also work. [Here's a more detailed list about what your phone will need.](#)

You can also borrow a phone from someone: the app won't save your scanned documents to the device.

If you can't get hold of the right kind of phone, or if your documents won't scan, you can either post your documents to the Home Office, or visit a document scanning centre. You can see a full list of document scanning centres here, but bear in mind some of them may be closed because of coronavirus restrictions and that you'll have to book an appointment and possibly pay a small amount.

## Myth

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If I send my documents away, I won't get them back

## Fact

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It can feel strange to send your passport or ID document away, but the Home Office will send them back to you. You'll be told what address to send them to as you fill in the online application. Because of coronavirus, it may take a little longer than normal to process everything. If you know you'll need your passport to travel with, it is probably better to send your documents off when you return.

## Myth

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I can't apply as I don't have a National Insurance (NI) Number

## Fact

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You can apply without an NI Number. You'll be asked for it as you fill in the online application, but don't worry. An NI number provides an easy way of

proving you've been living in the UK, but you can submit other documents to show this. [You can find a list of suitable documents here.](#)

## Myth

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My parking tickets could affect my application

## Fact

===== ★

You'll be asked to declare any criminal convictions which are 'unspent.' But parking tickets are not a conviction, nor are speeding fines.

You will not have to declare any 'spent' convictions either. [Here's what the police say about spent and unspent convictions.](#)

[This series of videos from the organisation New Europeans may help.](#) They offer advice on criminal convictions in different languages.

## Myth

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I can't apply to the scheme if I'm claiming benefits or on a low wage

## Fact

===== ★

You can apply if you're claiming benefits. You can also apply no matter how much money you're earning.

The application checks how long you lived in the UK, not what you did while you were in the UK - it doesn't matter if you were claiming benefits, in work, a student or self-sufficient. It is about residence, not economic activity, in the UK.

## Myth

===== ★

I haven't lived in Britain for the whole of 2020, can I still apply?

## Fact

===== ★

You can apply for the EU Settlement Scheme if you're an EU or EEA national

and have lived in Britain at any point before 31st of December 2020.

If you've not been in the UK for long, you'll be granted pre-settled status.

You're eligible for settled status if you've lived in the UK for at least five years, but you don't need to have spent all of that time in the UK. If you've lived here for at least six months of every year in the last five years you should qualify for settled status.

You should also know that those six months don't have to be all together. For example, if, in 2017, you were living outside of the UK between January and March and again between May and July, you'll still have lived in the UK for six months of the year.

## Myth

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I can't challenge a pre-settled status decision

## Fact

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When you're filling in your application for the scheme, you'll reach a point where you'll see a message saying you'll be granted either settled or pre-settled status. This is an automated message and hasn't been checked by a human decision maker. If you think you're eligible for settled status you can select an option to add more documents to your application to prove you've been in the UK for five years or more. It's very much worth doing this; people with settled status will have more rights than people with pre-settled status.

## Myth

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If I'm awarded pre-settled status, I'll automatically get settled status later on.

## Fact

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No, if you are granted pre-settled status you'll need to apply again for settled status once you qualify. You won't be upgraded automatically. Pre-settled status will also expire in five years' time and you'll need to re-apply again to the scheme before it expires in order to continue to living in the UK lawfully.

## Myth

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I won't be able to get back into the UK if I leave at any point.

## Fact

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You can leave and return to the UK for a holiday or a visit at any point. If you apply to the scheme and are granted pre-settled status you can leave the country for up to six months in one year. However, if you want to apply for settled status later on, it's worth bearing in mind you'll need to prove your continued residence in the UK when you apply.

If you're granted settled status you can leave the country for up to five years and return without it affecting your immigration status at all.