

Magdalena Zielinska

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www.gov.uk/ukvi

FOI Reference: 64001

29 June 2021

Dear Ms Zielinska,

Thank you for your enquiry of 4 May in which you requested information on the EU Settlement Scheme. Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. We apologise for our delay in responding.

Information Requested

1) How long were EUSS applicants not able to send identity documents or other kinds of paper evidence by post?

2) How long were the the UKVCAS service where non-EEA family members provide their biometrics not available due to COVID-19?

3) How long were the ID scanning services closed? Do you mean the service detailed here [Where to scan your ID document for the EU Settlement Scheme](#) -

GOV.UK

(<https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2F&data=04%7C01%7CCCTFOI%40homeoffice.gov.uk%7Cdedb0f23f16240b9>)

86a508d90f995939%7Cf24d93ecb2914192a08af182245945c2%7C0%7C0%7C637557973554563491%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQljojV2luMzliLCJBTil6lk1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&data=rBcJG2SieRRQ7bcr9yVOXPnFGj6U6W20kX%2FWERTzJ3k%3D&reserved=0) - YES.

Response

- 1) Applicants are informed of the address to which to send any physical documents as part of the application process should they be unable to provide these using the EU Exit: ID Document Check app. The department that deals with the receipt of these has remained open, in compliance with any relevant Public Health England restrictions, and has continued to accept such documents since the inception of the scheme.
- 2) On 27 March 2020, Sopra Steria Ltd (SSL) closed all UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services (UKVACS) service points to protect the health and safety of both their staff and our customers. This decision was taken in line with Government and PHE advice. On 1 June 2020 SSL began a phased reopening of the UKVCAS service in twelve service points across England. I believe this was 66 days – although the invites were phased at this point, with the first invites going to those who had booked in March but had their appointment cancelled. This was due to opening with limited capacity due to COVID. However, we did have a process to allow compassionate / compelling cases to book before an invite if approved by an operational area.
- 3) Local Authorities provide a Chip Checker service where they can assist customers to apply for EUSS digitally. Availability of those services during the pandemic was a decision for each authority rather than one governed by the Home Office and therefore I can confirm that we wouldn't have the details as to when each location was open or closed. These external stakeholders will have reduced / stopped their services in line with advice from Public Health England.

If you are dissatisfied with this response you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request by submitting a complaint within two months to foirequests@homeoffice.gov.uk, quoting reference 64001. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

As part of any internal review the Department's handling of your information request will be reassessed by staff not involved in providing you with this response. If you remain dissatisfied after this internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Yours sincerely

C Heap
Central Operations

We value your feedback, please use the link below to access a brief anonymous survey to help us improve our service to you:
<http://www.homeofficesurveys.homeoffice.gov.uk/s/108105TAZNG>