



the3million
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By email:

Minister Kevin Foster MP
Copied: Home Office SUG team

9 May 2022

Dear Kevin Foster MP,

Corrupted digital immigration status records unable to show photographs or create share codes

Since the launch of the3million reporting tool (<https://www.the3million.org.uk/report-it>) in December 2020, we have received reports from people whose digital status under the EU Settlement Scheme appear to be corrupted, in the sense that two aspects of the status are failing, and these two symptoms appear to be correlated.

1. Firstly, while they can successfully log in to View & Prove and see their status, their photo is not visible. The words “Photo not available” are shown where the photograph would normally appear.
2. Secondly, when they click the ‘Get a share code’ button, they receive an error message. We have seen the following errors in this situation over the time of the reports (January 2021 to April 2022):
 - ‘We cannot show your details’
 - ‘There’s a problem with this service at the moment’ (though someone receiving this message said they tried almost daily for a month and the message was always the same)

Several of the reports confirm that their photograph *was* visible at an earlier date, and that they *had* been able to generate share codes at that earlier date.

What these reports also have in common is that most of them include descriptions that they had contacted the EU Settlement Resolution Centre, or the UKVI Resolution Centre, and that the situation had not been resolved. Some examples:

“I contacted the EU Settlement Resolution by phone and they told me that they will write to me with instructions when they will have sorted the technical issues. I contacted them again in writing in September 2020, they replied but nothing has been solved so far.” - January 2021

“I have phoned the EU Settlement Resolution Centre several times, managed to get through twice, and reported this as a technical issue for which they filled out a form and said they'd get back to me. They have not gotten back to me in almost two weeks now, and the mortgage lender keeps insisting on a Share Code to progress my application.” - April 2021

“The problem is ongoing since July 2021, it has been reported to UKVI but they still can't fix it.” - April 2022



The impact for many of the affected citizens has been severe, ranging from repeated questioning at the border, to being denied a mortgage offer and thereby losing a property purchase, problems proving the right to rent, inability to accept job offers, and terminated employment. For example, one organisation offering EUSS support told us:

“Client was able to log into his digital profile but his photo was unavailable. When we tried to generate a share code for his future employer, just after we chose the reason for the share code and were meant to be taken to the page with the preview of what the employer will see, we got a message that they could not show his details. Client had already had two job offers refused because he wasn't able to generate the share code. He said that it negatively impacted his mental health and he feels that there is nothing he can do and the solution of the problem is out of his possibilities. He desperately needs work and a steady income as his debts are rising.” - May 2022

We have raised this issue in our March 2022 report to the Independent Monitoring Authority, which we also forwarded to the Home Office (see paragraphs 152 - 158 of the report at <https://www.the3million.org.uk/ima-report-mar-22>).

Since the 6 April 2022 changes to Right to Work and Right to Rent, whereby biometric residence cards and permits are no longer acceptable as proof of status, we have adapted our reporting tool to no longer be focused on the EU Settlement Scheme. It now invites reports from anyone with a digital UK immigration status.

As a result, we have been receiving reports from people with Hong Kong BNO Visas.

Recently, we received such a report from someone with a BNO Visa which described the exact same scenario above; namely a missing photograph and the inability to create share codes.

We therefore ask the following questions:

- Q1. Is this a known and recognised problem with the digital status under the EU Settlement Scheme, the British National (Overseas) status, and other UK digital immigration statuses?
- Q2. Is there an understanding of the cause of this problem? If so, what event causes a digital status to change from the state of displaying a photograph and being able to generate share codes, to the state of 'Photo not available' and the inability to generate a share code?
- Q3. Is the Home Office able to run a programmatic audit to identify all affected records and contact the individuals?
 - a. If so, has the Home Office run such an audit, has it contacted individuals, and if so, when?
 - b. If not, why is this not possible?
- Q4. Has a fix been identified to correct the digital status of affected individuals? If so:
 - a. When was this fix identified and when was it implemented?
 - b. Does the fix have to be manually applied for every individual who reports their corrupted status to the Home Office, or is a system-wide fix available which can repair all such affected digital statuses?



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- c. Why are people still reporting that their record has not been repaired? Our most recent report last week said this problem had been ongoing since July 2021, reported to UKVI but still not fixed.

Q5. What is the process for identifying systemic issues amongst individual problems with digital status reported to the Home Office by status holders?

Kind regards,

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