

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
27 February 2020

Migrant Voice statement in response to report by Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, published 27 February 2020, [An Inspection of the EU Settlement Scheme \(April to August 2019\)](#)

“We’re pleased that this ICIBI report shines a spotlight on some key concerns relating to the EU Settlement Scheme, such as the hidden costs of applying, a lack of transparency and detail in the Home Office data, and the need for consistency in how applications are processed.

“We know that the Home Office has been failing to fully recognise and respond to concerns regarding vulnerable EU nationals and it’s good to see the Chief Inspector advising the department to rectify this (although concerning that such obvious advice is still needed).

“Yet by focusing on the issues that arose in the first inspection – which took place in late 2018 – this report fails to acknowledge some fundamental problems with the scheme, explored in detail in our [November 2019 report](#).

“That report, based on a survey of hundreds of EU nationals and their family members, found that many applicants are being asked to provide additional evidence where this shouldn’t be necessary, wrongly granted temporary pre-settled instead of permanent settled status, or experiencing technical glitches. Some married women and transgender applicants are facing problems proving their identity, while many third country nationals experience long delays in getting a decision, a worrying situation that the Home Office has so far failed to adequately explain.

“The relevancy of today’s report is also called into question by the long delay in its publication. The scheme has seen a big uptick in applications in the six months since the inspection ended and existing problems are likely to have been exacerbated (and new ones generated) in that time.

“The Home Office must urgently provide an explanation for this delay and commit to implementing the recommendations, both from the ICIBI and our November report.

“Most importantly, the message that EU nationals and their families are welcome here must be made a reality by ending this application scheme that will turn unknown numbers of EU nationals into undocumented migrants, and creating a simple registration scheme instead.”

For further information or comment, contact press@migrantvoice.org.