**Methods description**

The project involved two main tranches of data collection: (i) setting up a specialist advice clinic to undertake advice-led ethnography and (ii) conducting semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in the delivery of the EU Settlement Scheme.

1. Advice led ethnography

This is the giving of advice, and the documenting of legal and administrative issues encountered in a parallel ethnography. By using academic expertise in the course of giving advice we learn the distance between theory and practice and discover obstacles that would otherwise remain hidden (O’Brien, 2017). It is a particularly important methodology when dealing with new legal changes, where there are no clear legal precedents to follow.

We set up a dedicated advice service – the EU Rights & Brexit Hub – under the auspices of the Baroness Hale Legal Clinic at the University of York. It had a specific email address. We spread news about the service and the research objectives to advice organisations around the UK through membership of the EUSS Alliance, the EU Delegation to the UK’s Monitoring Network on Citizens’ Rights, and through Rightsnet.

Advisers were invited to email us and to complete a consultation form – but they could provide the necessary information just in text in an email if they preferred. We received queries from all around the UK – England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We provided advice and support remotely.

Advisers identified possible cases and sent enquiries and case summaries to our email address. If the summary provided was sufficient for us to make a decision as to whether we could help, (asking: did the case meet the main criteria for the project? Was there likely useful input to be made for the client? Did the summary indicate a contribution to the research questions? Did we have capacity?) we provided advisers with a description of the project and the nature of cases on which we could advise, and an information sheet for them to provide to their clients. They were asked to complete a consent form, in which they were asked to confirm that they had secured their clients’ consent to consult us.

All data sent to us was anonymised with regard to original client data before being recorded. The main constraint on sample size was capacity. The studied population was EU nationals based in the UK, or who had been recently based in the UK, and UK nationals returning from the EU, and who had sought help from an advice organisation (or in some cases, a local authority). This was a limiting factor, since it meant we only saw clients who had themselves already recognised a problem with accessing public services, for which they had sought support.

We compiled case notes including all communications between organisations and the project as redacted field notes, and analysed documents submitted to us, summarising them for the purpose of the field notes. We not only gave advice but prepared advice letters and draft submissions in some cases; these have also been redacted and included in our data.

Some of the most significant obstacles to justice are only visible when analysing decisions in practice (CPAG, 2011). Unofficial barriers to justice are frequently unnoticed, and concerns subdued (Lens et al 2013), while the quality of decision-making with regard to EEA+ nationals’ rights is often questionable (Shaw, 2015). In legal research, some studies are based on case observation (e.g. McDermott & Kirk, 2017), while use of evidence from practice is frequently ad hoc and covert (Miller, 2000); advice-led ethnography instead makes the research objectives clear from the start, and adopts the rigorous approach to practitioner research used in other disciplines (Davies, 2002; Farrer, 2007; Barton, 2008; Fox, Martin & Green, 2007; Harvey & Myers, 1995). We identified key problems, e.g.: decision maker error; technological problems; communication failures; or inaccurate guidance. In the process we gave advice and drafting support that helped organisations and their clients secure access to benefits, housing, shelter accommodation, healthcare and secure immigration rights. Advisers have noted that the work has ‘helped people at the same time as studying them; that’s what’s really unique about it’ (REF 2021).

1. Semi-structured interviews

There were two sets of stakeholder interviews:

1. Parliamentary Study

2. Voluntary Organisation Study

The following provides a short summary of the selection criteria for each study.

It is worth noting that as the interviews carried the risk of identification, even from redacted transcripts, all participants were required to provide additional consent in order for their transcripts to be included in the UKDS. Not all gave this consent so the following also includes a ratio of interviews included in the submission.

**Parliamentary Study.**

Interviews Conducted: 35

Transcripts included: 20

MPs and Lords were selected according to two criteria.

1. Estimated EU nationals as constituents. Using experimental data from the Annual Population Survey provided to us by the Migration Observatory we selected MPs offices where we estimated that their constituency in the top two deciles of constituencies by resident EEA nationals.

2. Membership of relevant parliamentary policy networks. MPs and lords were also invited to interview if they were considered to be active members of relevant parliamentary policy networks on EEA+ nationals rights after Brexit. These were identified as follows

• Membership of All Party Parliamentary Groups on Immigration Policy, EU citizens rights or an affected country.

• Membership of Commons or Lords Select Committees on EU relations or which had conducted an inquiry covering EU citizens rights.

• Contributors to parliamentary debates or bill committees on the post Brexit rights of EEA+ nations

Participants were contacted by email inviting them to interview in three waves. Shortly before the formal exit from the European union (December 31st 2020), between the formal exit and the end of the grace period for EEA/EU nationals (January 20221-June 2021) and the introductory period of the new immigration regime (June 2021-October 2021). MPs interviews in one wave were invited to take part in subsequent waves to develop narratives spanning multiple phases. However most participating MPs declined being interviewed more than once on the topic.

**NGO Study**

Interviews Conducted: 12

Interviews Included: 9

We also conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 of the 72 third sector organisations funded by the Home Office to support applications to the EUSS. They were contacted by email between February and April 2021 and interviews were conducted between February and August 2021.

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