



# EXCLUSION BY DESIGN

Digital Identification and the  
Hostile Environment for Migrants

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In collaboration with Nazek Ramadan  
and Anne Stoltenberg (Migrant Voice)  
and Sara Alsherif (Open Rights Group)

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## ◦ Executive Summary

The debate over digital ID systems has recently intensified in the UK, with Prime Minister Keir Starmer framing digital IDs as a mechanism to curb ‘illegal working’. What these debates often overlook is that the UK has already introduced a ‘digital immigration status’ – first via the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) and then the eVisa – which requires migrants to prove their legal status through digital means only. From 1 June 2025, nearly all migrants entering or legally residing in the UK must obtain an eVisa to prove their rights. This makes migrants the first group to experience a mandatory digital-only identification system, effectively positioning them as a testing ground for broader national digital ID ambitions.

The UK’s transition to a digital immigration status began with the EUSS in 2018. The rollout of digital-only status faced criticism due to issues such as digital exclusion, accessibility barriers, and frequent technical failures that hindered migrants’ ability to work, rent, travel, and access public services. Despite these concerns, the Home Office continued with the full digitalisation of its system. The eVisa rollout for non-EUSS migrants started in late 2023. However, due to inadequate preparation, the transition deadline was postponed twice. Initially set for December 31, 2024, it was first extended to April 1, 2025, and later moved to June 1, 2025, with physical documents, such as Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs), no longer valid for travel.

As digital status has become mandatory for most migrants, it is important to understand its implications for their lives. It’s equally important to examine how this digital system influences the broader population, especially those tasked with verifying migrants’ statuses through right to work, rent, travel checks, as well as access to public services and educational institutions. This report addresses this gap by examining the experiences of migrants of diverse nationalities, legal statuses, family situations, and migration trajectories across the UK. It investigates digital immigration status as a wider ‘digital identity platform’ that reshapes the UK’s border regime and produces new forms of ‘everyday bordering’. The analysis explores how migrants understand, access, and navigate their digital status; how reliably they can generate proof of their rights; and how the transition to a digital immigration status impacts their everyday lives, their socio-economic conditions and well-being. The central research question in this report is the following:

**How has the digitalisation of immigration status, particularly the implementation of the eVisa system, affected migrants in the UK?**

This report is the result of more than a year-long collaborative effort between academic researchers, Migrant Voice and the Open Rights Group, employing various methods (FOI requests, roundtables and semi-structured interviews) to explore migrants’ experiences with digital immigration status. Drawing on in-depth interviews with 40 migrants in the UK, this report examines digital immigration status from the perspective of those directly affected. It explores how migrants, third-party actors, and the technical design of the system, conceptualised as a ‘digital identity platform’, interact to shape migrants’ experiences and shifting positionalities. Our findings show that the digitalisation of immigration status has had predominantly negative impacts on participants, though the nature and consequences of these effects vary across individuals and contexts.

A systematic and inductive analysis of interviews revealed a set of recurring themes. These insights were organised into three overarching categories:

- **Emotional and affective experiences;**
- **Practical experiences, including both positive and negative elements, as well as key obstacles and challenges encountered; and**
- **Coping strategies employed by migrants to navigate and mitigate these difficulties.**

## Emotional and affective experiences

Many participants reported experiencing **high levels of stress, fear, and exhaustion** while attempting to digitalise their immigration status within short and shifting deadlines. Changes to timelines and limited guidance intensified uncertainty, contributing to widespread anxiety. In contrast, migrants who had more positive practical experiences of digitalising and using their status reported lower stress levels and greater confidence. This report demonstrates that system design and access to resources, as well as an element of ‘luck’ in not encountering technical glitches, play a crucial role in shaping overall perceptions.

**A general sense of confusion** was evident among many migrants who were unaware that they would need to navigate this process on their own and lacked a clear understanding of how the system operates. These emotional responses were closely tied to practical barriers, including unclear instructions, system errors, difficulty accessing accounts, and the complexity of managing the digital platform across multiple family members.

**Worries of being unable to prove legal status** – within a hostile environment that emphasises enforcement, detention, and deportation – were pervasive. As a result, the inability to quickly and easily prove legal status causes significant harm.

**A deep fear of losing their rights** if they made mistakes within the digital portal was shared among our participants. Because the system requires migrants to regularly update their information, even minor or inadvertent errors were perceived as potentially jeopardising their status. This created a persistent sense of vulnerability. Moreover, the burden of managing these risks and the anxiety associated with them falls entirely on migrants.

**A profound sense of exhaustion** with the Home Office and its immigration policies was shared. Migrants were required to navigate multiple components of the immigration system, digitalise their status, and use it in various aspects of daily life, while some also faced the challenge of resolving technical issues – all of which contributed to this pervasive sense of fatigue.

**A deep sense of mistrust** toward the Home Office shaped migrants’ experiences, especially those with negative encounters, who therefore often avoided engaging with official updates in order to protect their well-being. At the same time, many felt that the shift to digital status served primarily to increase control rather than improve fairness and efficiency. The absence of meaningful consultation or accessible information sessions reinforced the perception that migrants’ needs and perspectives were overlooked.

## Practical experiences

A closer look at participants' accounts about their use of the system reveals that problems can be clustered around three primary sources: (1) flaws in the design of the system itself, (2) difficulties rooted in individual circumstances and resources, and (3) the lack of knowledge by third-party actors who need to comply with the new system. Importantly, these categories often intersected, meaning that migrants with fewer resources were hit hardest when design flaws occurred.

### Flaws in the design of the system itself

A key finding of our study is that many of the challenges faced by migrants were directly linked to flaws in the design of the digital immigration system. Participants reported difficulties arising from overly complex processes, technical glitches, incorrect or entangled data, and challenges related to generating share codes. Additional barriers included device-specific limitations, unclear or inconsistent communication from the Home Office, reliance on specific documents, and problems associated with legacy documents. These design-related issues significantly impacted migrants' ability to navigate the system, contributing to stress, confusion, and delays.

### Difficulties rooted in individual circumstances and resources

The data shows that the system was particularly difficult to use for migrants with limited access to resources and challenging individual circumstances. Key factors included varying levels of digital and English literacy, limited access to devices and reliable internet, caring responsibilities and associated time pressures, disabilities or age-related limitations, and complex legal trajectories in the UK. These personal and contextual conditions significantly affected participants' experiences and their ability to navigate the system.

### The role of third party actors

A further set of challenges emerged from migrants' interactions with third-party actors who play a critical role in implementing and enforcing the digital immigration system. Participants reported numerous difficulties when digitalising their status and generating share codes, which had direct consequences for their right-to-work checks, right-to-rent checks, and travel to the UK. Those who relied on the system most frequently, such as individuals applying for multiple short-term jobs or seeking housing due to frequent relocations, were disproportionately affected.

Third-party actors, including employers, landlords, airline carriers, and border officers, displayed varying levels of awareness and understanding of the system, creating uncertainty and additional burdens for migrants.

- **Right-to-work checks:** Participants encountered outdated or incorrect share code information, lacked clear guidance for themselves and employers, faced requests for share codes early in the hiring process, and experienced having to repeatedly explain the system to employers. Technical issues and concerns about triggering immigration enforcement added further anxiety, sometimes leading migrants to avoid salary increases or contract changes.



- **Right-to-rent checks:** Landlords' limited awareness of share codes and inconsistent government communication, coupled with system failures during code verification, created stress and delays for migrants seeking housing.
- **Travel to the UK:** Many participants reported difficulties and fears when using share codes for travel. Challenges included some airline and border staff's unfamiliarity with eVisas, repeated requests for new share codes, poor internet connectivity, and system errors. Additional issues included linking digital status to passports and the fear of being denied re-entry, both of which discouraged travel altogether.

Our study shows that many third-party actors lack a sufficient understanding of the share code system, leading, in some cases, to outright refusal to engage and to the effective exclusion of migrants. Migrants frequently relied on the goodwill of third-party actors to resolve technical problems. When third-party actors lacked adequate knowledge about the digital immigration status, migrants had to explain the process, creating an additional and often uncertain burden.

We also identified instances of unlawful or unintended uses of the system, which can be seen as emerging forms of 'casual surveillance.' For example, supermarket staff requested share codes as proof of identity – assumedly, well beyond the Home Office's intended purposes. Such practices expose migrants to more everyday racism and social exclusion, limiting access to everyday goods and services, and demonstrating that the risks of digital status extend far beyond official enforcement contexts.

## Coping strategies

Migrants employ a variety of strategies to mitigate the challenges and potential harms caused by the new digital immigration system. These strategies operate across multiple levels – individual, social, and institutional – and reflect both practical and creative responses to a system that many experience as complex, stressful, and exclusionary. At the individual level, migrants develop contingency measures, such as maintaining a portfolio of digital and physical proofs of legal status, to avoid errors that could jeopardise their rights. These practices demonstrate resourcefulness and a proactive approach to navigating systemic risks.

At the community level, migrants rely heavily on informal networks, including friends, family, and community WhatsApp groups, to share guidance, clarify complex rules, and collectively try to resolve problems. Social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Reddit – often run by migrants themselves – have become critical resources for support, and peer-to-peer information sharing. At the institutional level, strategies range from attempting to use official Home Office channels, sometimes with limited success, to reaching out to migrants' rights networks, legal aid organisations, and other migrant support groups to address the shortcomings of official guidance.

Despite these adaptive strategies, the system continues to generate stress, uncertainty, and mistrust. Migrants' reliance on personal and community resources highlights both the resilience of migrant networks and the systemic shortcomings of the digital immigration status system. Overall, these strategies reveal how migrants actively navigate the digitalisation of immigration status, often shouldering a disproportionate burden in managing their own legal security.

Last but not least, it is important to highlight that this research was conducted during the transition phase when the Home Office had announced grace periods, with migrants still being able to use their physical documents until 1 June 2025. The full consequences of digitalisation and its impact

on migrants' lives are only beginning to emerge. Based on the problems reported, the implications are likely to get worse. This misuse of the 'share code' system by individuals who are not entitled to access it, including, for example, shop workers, is hugely worrying, particularly in an environment already marked by hostility toward migrants. When such practices occur in a politically divisive context where migrants are routinely scapegoated for broader social and economic issues, the consequences can be severe, with migrants at even greater risk of racism, criminalisation and discrimination.

## ◦ Policy Recommendations for the Home Office

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The transition to a fully digital immigration status system marks a significant shift in how migrants interact with the UK's immigration infrastructure. While digitalisation is being presented as a modernisation effort aimed at improving efficiency and security, our research demonstrates that its current implementation has created substantial barriers for many migrants. These include individuals with limited digital literacy, language proficiency, or access to technology, those navigating complex legal trajectories, as well as many others who faced various types of technical glitches and errors. These challenges have resulted in legal uncertainty, emotional distress, and social exclusion from essential aspects of daily life, including employment, housing, access to public services and travel.

The following recommendations aim to address these systemic shortcomings and ensure that the digital immigration status system operates fairly and in a manner that safeguards the rights and dignity of all migrants. The recommendations are organised into three categories: Immediate Actions, Short-Term System Changes, and Long-Term Reforms, reflecting both urgent priorities and structural changes required for sustainable improvement.

### Immediate Actions to Improve the Digital Immigration Status System

- **Provide accessible support services**  
Establish support services for migrants experiencing difficulties with digital immigration status, including freely available interpretation. These services should be accessible through direct Home Office channels, such as a 24/7 helpline staffed by fully trained officers, and through non-governmental organisations, supported by a clear and sustainable funding model beyond current short-term arrangements.
- **Provide multilingual guidance**  
Ensure all guidance materials, including UKVI account instructions and website content, are available at least in the most spoken languages among migrant communities in the UK.
- **Inform those responsible for status checks**  
Employers, landlords, educational and banking institutions, government agencies, airline carriers, and UK and overseas border authorities must be fully informed about the digital immigration status system and provided with appropriate support. This should include a 24/7 helpline to resolve system errors in real time.
- **Provide rapid remedies for technical glitches and errors**  
Implement fast and effective procedures to correct inaccurate data, ensuring individuals do not lose access to employment, education, housing, services or travel due to system failures.

## Short-Term System Changes

- **Standardise share code**  
Eliminate the use of multiple share codes for different purposes, as this creates confusion and complicates practical application.
- **Ensure inclusivity in system design**  
Redesign the digital immigration system to remove practical and structural barriers, enabling migrants to view, verify, and update their status without needing advanced digital skills. The system must be accessible to individuals with disabilities, including those who are visually impaired.
- **Provide non-digital alternatives**  
Recognise that digital systems cannot be fully inclusive due to factors such as digital literacy, lack of connectivity, or technical failures. The Home Office should provide robust non-digital alternatives for registration, application, and status verification through freely available in-person appointments. Physical proof of immigration status should be available alongside digital options, ensuring individuals can demonstrate their rights even when offline. Maintaining non-digital alternatives is crucial to safeguarding access to rights and essential services. A hybrid system that combines digital and physical proof should be available to all.
- **Protect privacy through data minimisation**  
Restrict the sharing of personal information with third parties to what is strictly necessary (e.g., confirmation of right to work, rent, or travel). Sensitive details, such as visa category or refugee status, should not be disclosed to prevent discrimination. The right to privacy is a fundamental human right and must be upheld.
- **Ensure transparency**  
Publish clear and accessible information for migrants on what data is stored, how it is managed, and which government agencies and external parties have access to it. The Home Office should also publish unredacted, regularly updated Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) and Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) for the digital immigration system (including both eVisa and the EUSS). Additionally, statistics on reported technical issues and remedial actions should be made public.
- **Create appeal and redress mechanisms**  
Establish accessible and robust procedures for migrants to challenge harms caused by technical error or system inaccessibility. The Home Office should take full responsibility for losses arising from system failures and amend the 'UKVI Account Terms and Conditions' to remove the current exclusion of liability clause.

## Long-Term Reforms

- **Transform the transactional nature of status generation**  
Currently, migrants must generate temporary share codes to verify their legal status requiring repeated actions throughout their residency. The system should be reformed so that status remains fixed and stable for the duration of granted rights, eliminating the need for continuous code generation and providing security and certainty for migrants.
- **Establish meaningful two-way communication with civil society organisations**  
Ensure that engagement with civil society organisations is not limited to one-way information sharing but fosters genuine dialogue. The Home Office should actively listen and respond to concerns raised by these organisations, including calls for formal investigations into GDPR compliance and the equality implications of the digital immigration status system.

- **End the digital hostile environment**

Terminate policies that outsource immigration checks to third parties such as employers, landlords, local authorities and educational institutions.

- **Prevent unlawful status checks and casual surveillance**

Introduce clear legal safeguards to prevent individuals or organisations, such as shop staff or political activists, from demanding proof of digital immigration status without lawful authority. Those engaging in such practices should face appropriate penalties. The Home Office should provide clear guidance on unlawful checks.

- **Stop experimental technology use on migrants**

Migrants have a particularly vulnerable position, often without clear appeal mechanisms. Immigration systems should not serve as testing grounds for unproven technologies.

- **Reframe the narrative and practice of technology use**

Shift the narrative and use of technology in immigration from enforcement and surveillance toward enabling efficient access to essential services. Digital tools should be designed to facilitate inclusion and service delivery, not to monitor or penalise individuals.

Implementing these recommendations would significantly reduce the risks and inequities created by the current digital immigration system. By prioritising accessibility, transparency, and accountability, the Home Office can ensure that the digitalisation of public services does not compromise migrants' rights. Failure to act will perpetuate systemic exclusion, deepen inequalities, and erode trust in public authorities.

## ○ List of Acronyms

**BAME** Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic

**BNO** British National Overseas

**BRP** Biometric Residence Permit

**BRC** Biometric Residence Card

**DPIA** Data Protection Impact Assessment

**DWP** Department for Work and Pensions

**EEA** European Economic Area

**EU** European Union

**EUSS** European Union Settlement Scheme

**FOI** Freedom of Information

**FWP** Frontier Worker Permits

**HMRC** HM Revenue and Customs

**ILR** Indefinite Leave to Remain

**SOCOPA** Somali Community Parents Association

**UKVI** UK Visas and Immigration

**WAG** We Are Group

## ◦ Introduction

Identification by state authorities has historically served specific purposes, often enabling those authorities to exert control over their populations (Lyon 2009, Warren & Mavroudi 2011). Most recently, in the UK context, Prime Minister Keir Starmer linked the introduction of a digital ID system to efforts to ‘combat illegal working’ (GOV.UK 2025). This shows that the debate on digital ID systems is gaining prominence. Proponents argue that digital IDs can enhance citizens’ interactions with government services by saving time, simplifying access, and creating a more personalised experience (Barasa et al. 2024). The current Labour government also suggests that digital IDs could make the UK less attractive to migrants without a legal right to remain (see Seddon 2025). However, critics warn that digital IDs risk expanding surveillance and raise significant concerns regarding privacy and data protection (see, for example, Big Brother Watch 2025).

What is less frequently acknowledged in these debates is that elements of a digital ID system have already been implemented for most migrants. The UK government has recently introduced a ‘digital immigration status’ for migrants arriving and residing in the country. This status, also referred to as eVisas, is a digital-only status, meaning that migrants can prove their immigration status only through digital means. From 1 June 2025, except for those holding ‘legacy documents’ (such as permanent residence endorsed in an expired passport), all migrants must obtain a digital immigration status, also referred to as an eVisa, to prove their legal status in the UK (McKinney 2025). In other words, the eVisa has become a requirement for most migrants, representing the first step towards creating a more comprehensive digital ID system. It is therefore evident that the UK’s digital immigration system has been tested on migrants before being considered for extension to the broader population.

But how did we arrive at the current discussion on digital identification? The following section provides a brief timeline of key events in the shift towards digitalising immigration status, a central element of this process.

### Brief Timeline of Events

Digital immigration status was initially introduced as part of the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) in 2018 (GOV.UK 2020). The EUSS was established to enable European Union (EU), European Economic Area (EEA), and Swiss nationals, as well as their close family members, to apply for residency in the UK following the UK’s departure from the EU, commonly referred to as Brexit. The scheme was rolled out in phases starting from August 2018, with various testing stages and pilot programmes involving different applicant groups (Home Office 2018). Under the scheme, applicants could be granted either settled or pre-settled status. EU citizens with five or more years of continuous residence in the UK could be eligible for settled status, granting them permanent residency, i.e., Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR). Those with less than five years of residence in the country could be granted pre-settled status. After they reached five years of residence, they could then apply for settled status (see The3million 2025a).

Most people with either settled or pre-settled status have automatically received a digital immigration status to confirm their right to remain in the UK. This has also been the case for Hong Kongers who have been able to come to the UK under the British National Overseas (BNO) visa since 2021. However, many migrants in the UK have continued to rely on physical documents as proof of their immigration status. These documents include: (1) Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs), which were issued to non-EU citizens with a range of immigration statuses, including for example, those with leave to remain as skilled workers, students, graduates, or Global Talent visa holders, as well as those



with refugee status, those with independent leave to remain; and their dependents; (2) Biometric Residence Cards (BRCs), which were issued to non-EU citizens who had (pre-)settled status under the EUSS; (3) Documents issued under the Windrush Scheme; (4) Wet ink stamps or vignettes (stickers) in passports; (5) 1951 Convention Refugee Travel Documents.

While these documents continued being used, the EUSS marked the first instance of implementing a fully digital form of immigration status as the sole proof of migrants' legal status. The digital immigration status received criticism from civil society organisations working for migrants' rights. From the very beginning of its implementation up to now, many people struggled with the EUSS digital status, which excluded, for example, individuals with limited digital or English literacy and those with certain disabilities. Moreover, frequent technical errors in Home Office databases, often referred to as 'glitches', have had a significant impact on the daily lives of migrants. As written in one of the 3million reports, 'Fixing digital status': 'A successful immigration status check has many cogs that work together. If one of them fails – the whole check fails' (See The 3million 2024, p. 4).

Despite a range of solutions proposed by various organisations, all of them were disregarded, and the Home Office proceeded with the full digitalisation of the immigration system for all migrants in the UK. The process began in October 2023, when the Home Office issued its first guidance about eVisas, indicating that the rollout would begin on 31 December 2023. However, throughout 2024, it became apparent that a gap existed between official timelines and practical readiness. In April 2024, invitations to create UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) accounts were restricted to only a small group of BRP holders, alongside the release of a media factsheet. Access to register for a UKVI account was only made available to all migrants from 15 August 2024. For many migrants, this left just a few months to familiarise themselves with the new system, create a digital account, and resolve any issues, despite the fact that physical proof of status was to be withdrawn by 31 December 2024.

Several significant problems persisted well into the transition. In response to emerging difficulties associated with compulsory digitalisation, the Home Office announced a limited grant scheme of up to £4 million to support voluntary and community sector organisations assisting vulnerable groups (GOV.UK 2024a). It is also worth mentioning that the delays in choosing the funded organisations and notifying them led to further delays.

By December 2024, the timetable had become unsustainable. The Home Office postponed full implementation and introduced a grace period allowing expired BRPs to be used for travel until 31 March 2025. In February 2025, this was extended again to 1 June 2025, along with exemptions for those holding legacy paper documents, who no longer needed to link these to an eVisa to travel or claim benefits. The transition officially concluded on 1 June 2025, when the Home Office announced that expired BRPs and BRCs would no longer be valid for travel.



The following table presents the number of UKVI accounts created between March 2024 and July 2025 (see Table 1). A clear peak occurred in December 2024, coinciding with the first deadline set by the Home Office (UKVI 2025a). Although the number of new accounts subsequently declined, it remained consistently high, averaging over 60,000 new applications per month. According to projections by UKVI (2025a), by the end of July 2025, approximately 200,000 individuals who held an immigration status at the end of 2024 had yet to create a UKVI account.

Table 1. The number of UKVI accounts created to access an eVisa

Year	Month	Total Account Registration
2024	March	5,821
2024	April	46,755
2024	May	129,257
2024	June	171,894
2024	July	267,658
2024	August	596,582
2024	September	601,456
2024	October	624,921
2024	November	665,793
2024	December	721,021
2025	January	216,352
2025	February	112,293
2025	March	83,932
2025	April	60,709
2025	May	71,846
2025	June	61,561
2025	July	63,384
Total		4,501,235

UKVI (2025a)

## Note on Terminology

In this report, we use the term ‘migrant’ to refer to anyone who lives in the UK or has the right to live in the UK, either temporarily or permanently, but who is not a British citizen. Where relevant to our analysis, we use the term ‘refugee’ specifically to refer to individuals with refugee status. In cases where this distinction is not significant, refugees are included under the broader term ‘migrants’. By using ‘migrants’ as an inclusive term, we aim to avoid reproducing narratives of deservingness that create hierarchies between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ migrants. We also recognise and critically reflect on the political implications of categorising members of a specific population as citizens versus migrants and the preference of defining migrants as ‘people on the move’. However, for this report, we adopt the term ‘migrant’ to examine how the digitalisation of legal status has been implemented in practice and the experiences of those affected by this change.

## What is a Digital Immigration Status (eVisa)?

According to the Home Office, an eVisa is ‘a digital record of [one’s] identity and immigration status’ and ‘the conditions of [one’s] status’ (GOV.UK 2025a). In this report, we use the term ‘digital immigration status’ to refer to the (pre-)settled digital status that EUSS applicants have received, eVisas that non-EUSS migrants needed to obtain, and eVisas that newly arriving migrants who arrived in the UK through legal routes since the introduction of eVisas.

When EUSS applicants were granted (pre-)settled status, their status was only a digital record. Other migrants legally residing in the UK, however, had to digitalise their existing immigration status by creating a UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) account. Currently, migrants arriving in the UK through legal routes since the extension of digital immigration status to all migrants receive a digital status. Because there are no physical documents accompanying this digital status, it is also called a ‘digital-only immigration status’.

Creating a UKVI account involves several steps for migrants, including uploading and confirming their identity through the ‘UK Immigration: ID Check’ app. For this, they need to scan their documents that have biometric chips and take their own pictures. Once completed, they receive a UKVI account confirmation email that confirms their status has been digitalised. For this, migrants need a phone number, an email address that they can use for future logins, and either a valid passport, their visa application number, or BRP number, including an expired BRP card (within 18 months of expiry). They also need access to specific smartphones (advanced models) to install the app and take their picture in a particular manner for identity verification (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Using the ‘UK Immigration: ID Check’ app



GOV.UK (2025d)

When they are required to prove their status, migrants need to generate ‘share codes’ through their UKVI account. These are temporary codes (valid up to 90 days) made up of letters and numbers, which allow them to verify their immigration status with third parties, such as employers, landlords, local authorities, educational institutions, or other service providers. For example, codes such as ‘W’ indicate the right to work, and ‘R’ the right to rent. The verification process involves two-factor authentication. The migrant generates a share code, which they pass to the checking entity (i.e. the third party). The third party then enters the code and the migrant’s date of birth into a separate website to verify their status through the ‘View and Prove’ service. If the details match and there are no glitches or errors, the agent can see the person’s picture and their permitted rights in the UK (see Figure 2). If there is a mismatch or error, the employer or other checkers receive a message saying the details do not match (see Figure 3). Any glitches or errors in this process can prevent migrants from accessing their rights, as we will explain further in the following pages.

Figure 2. Right-to-work checks from employers’ perspective

### What is the share code?

Share code  
For example, A12 345 67G

Continue

The share code is created when the person gives you permission to view their status.

Ask them to share the code with you.

If you need help using this service, contact [UK Visas and Immigration](#).

UKVI (2025b) and Home Office (2025a)

Figure 3. Details do not match our records

### Details do not match our records

Share code

A12 345 67G

Date of birth

31/03/1980

Check you have the correct share code and date of birth.

Make sure you enter these details exactly.

If it's more than 90 days since they shared the code with you, ask them for a new share code.

Start again

UKVI (2025b)

## Digital Identification and Immigration Status

The academic research on digital identification and the datafication of migration and mobility is extensive (see Godin et al. 2025 for a recent overview). Within the scholarship on identification, Scott's (1998) classic work on the concept of 'legibility' in his book 'Seeing Like a State' demonstrates how states seek to make populations administratively knowable through various processes, such as naming systems. The scholarship inspired by Lyon's (2009) research elaborates on how ID cards have long been central to this project, enabling classification, 'social sorting', and surveillance. Furthermore, the

literature shows that these identification practices have often been a subject of contention, particularly in relation to mobile populations, who are perceived as potentially threatening or ungovernable. This perception tends to intensify during periods of increased perceived security concerns. For example, in the post-9/11 period, biometric passports and ID cards proliferated globally (Lyon 2007), enabling states to integrate biometric data into their surveillance infrastructures (Warren & Mavroudi 2011). Such developments are viewed as both a continuation and an intensification of longstanding projects of control (Amoore 2006, Narita 2023), as well as mechanisms for sorting between ‘desired’ and ‘undesired’ migrants (Seuferling 2024).

Masiero (2023) moves beyond the datafied view, ‘the dark side’ of digital identity (which casts digital identity as a means of making people machine-readable), and introduces the lens of platform-mediated surveillance to examine what she terms the ‘dark matter’ of digital identity. The platform perspective emphasises the technical and architectural dimensions of digital identity systems. These architectures enable coordination, scalability, and orchestration of ‘service delivery’, yet often obscure the socio-political consequences of these technical arrangements. By structuring identification, authentication, and authorisation processes (see Nyst et al. 2016), ‘digital identity platforms’ facilitate the deployment of logics of control and surveillance over specific populations (Masiero 2023, p. 1). In our research, the concept of ‘digital identity platforms’ is suitable for capturing the multiplicity of relationships between ‘users’ (‘migrants’), the platform itself (‘UKVI account platform’), which cross-references databases within and beyond the Home Office, and other social actors (‘third-parties’), such as employers and landlords, who verify migrants’ legal status at different times and in various contexts.

## The Digital Hostile Environment

While reading the analysis in this report, it is important to consider the digitalisation of immigration status within the broader context of the Home Office’s immigration policies towards migrants in the UK. Prior to the planned digitalisation of the immigration system, migrants already experienced an atmosphere of suspicion, fear, and insecurity in their everyday lives. As we will show in the following pages of this report, the shift towards digitalisation has only intensified these dynamics within everyday spaces, compelling migrants to remain constantly alert.

As part of the hostile environment policy introduced in 2012 by Theresa May during her time as Home Secretary, various individuals and institutions, such as landlords, employers, local authorities, doctors, educational institutions, and airline companies, have been responsible for acting as de facto immigration enforcement. Yuval-Davis et al. (2018) refer to this extension of immigration controls into daily life within the UK as ‘everyday bordering practices’. Cassidy and Davidson (2024) further describe the institutionalisation of bordering as the dispersion of ‘the burden of “borderwork”’ (Reeves 2014) from state institutions that are typically associated with securitisation toward organisations historically tasked with supporting public wellbeing and development.

These terms capture the growing incorporation of racialised border practices into the fabric of daily life, extending far beyond conventional physical sites such as airports or checkpoints. Consequently, traditional understandings of borders have been reconfigured by extending physical borders to additional border checks inside the country (see Yuval-Davis et al. 2018). While this policy initially targeted individuals without regular immigration status, it soon came to affect other migrants, members of racialised minority groups, and, ultimately, society as a whole (Yuval-Davis et al. 2018, p. 234). Although the Home Office has since rebranded the policy as a ‘compliant environment’, in this report we continue to use the term ‘hostile environment’ to underscore ‘the UK’s punitive approach to ‘migration



management’ and the processes through which mobility has been delegitimised, criminalised, and securitised, fundamentally altering the UK’s border practices’ (Griffiths and Yeo 2021, p. 523).

More recently, with the growing use of digital technologies and the introduction of digital immigration status, scholars have introduced the concept of ‘digital hostile environment’ to draw attention to the growing influence of data sharing and the precarious nature of digital systems in managing and evidencing immigration status (see Narita 2024). In this environment, migrants are cross-checked across multiple databases, allowing state authorities and other agencies responsible for border enforcement to exert control over them through various data points (Narita 2023, Humphris et al. 2025).

Regarding the digital immigration status, much of the current research mainly centres on the EUSS. For example, Jablonowski (2025) notes that digital status represents a fundamental change in identification, moving from a physical, fixed document to a system where migrants must regularly interact with and seek verification from government authorities. The latter requires ongoing engagement from migrants with state authorities. Focusing on EUSS applicants, again, Burrell et al. (2025) argue that the shift to a digital status influences who can access and navigate the system (literacies), who is recognised as legally compliant within it (legibilities), and ultimately challenges trust in ‘settled status’ as a secure, long-term immigration status (legacies). Additionally, other studies have explored the effects of specific aspects of digital immigration status. For instance, Godin and Călin Bica (2023)’s study with Roma communities demonstrates that limited digital literacy within the community, combined with inadequate institutional support for navigating the digital status system, has generated additional barriers not only to securing and managing immigration status but also to accessing essential public services.

More broadly, the ongoing digitisation of everyday bordering practices has heightened the risks of both digital and social exclusion. Meers et al. (2025) found that digital immigration status has led to discrimination in the private rental sector, with migrants being penalised due to their digital identification. Furthermore, Parker et al. (2025) highlight that the historical marginalisation of Roma EU citizens has prevented some from obtaining digital status, risking the loss of their rights following Brexit. Looking at how the digital immigration system functions, Jablonowski and Hawkins’s (2024) research focuses on the glitches, illustrating that these errors are not incidental but rather systemic features of the Home Office’s online design. The shift from documentation (where individuals are issued a tangible proof of their status) to computation (where identity and status are verified in real time through multiple, loosely linked databases) has transformed the nature of status recognition. The authors compellingly argue that this computed, transactional system is inherently unstable, generating recurrent glitches that undermine users’ ability to obtain reliable proof of status to which they are legally entitled.

## Understanding the System from Migrants’ Perspectives

As briefly outlined above, this body of scholarship in the UK context is rapidly expanding; however, in most cases, the data collected focuses almost exclusively on migrants under the EUSS. Currently, there is a limited understanding of how the requirement for obtaining the eVisa has affected migrants’ lives. Specifically, the impact of having to digitalise their status on their own and the impact on their daily life, including the requirement to verify their right to work and rent, accessing education, and travelling, has not yet been explored. This report aims to address this gap by examining the experiences of migrants from diverse nationalities, legal statuses, and migration trajectories, living in various locations across the UK and within diverse family configurations.

## Research Questions and Structure of the Report

This report examines digital immigration status as a digital identity platform that reconfigures the UK's digital border infrastructures, governing the mobility of migrants across and within its borders through everyday bordering practices as experienced by migrants. To do so, we explore how the digitalisation of immigration status shapes migrants' ability to obtain a reliable proof of their status, their understanding of how the system operates, and their capacity to navigate the transition process, as well as the broader implications for their everyday lives. From this perspective, the report is guided by the overarching research question:

**How has the digitalisation of immigration status, particularly through the implementation of the eVisa system, affected migrants in the UK?**

Within this broader inquiry, we address several subsidiary questions:

- How have migrants compelled to transition to digital immigration status navigated this process?
- In instances where migrants encountered difficulties, what forms of support did they seek, and through which channels?
- What forms of emotional impact has this transition led to?
- In what ways has digital status affected migrants' everyday lives, including their rights to work, access housing, education, and travel?
- From migrants' perspectives, what suggestions and recommendations could improve the design and implementation of the digital immigration status system?

The report is organised as follows. We begin by outlining our methodology. We then present findings drawn from Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and focus on the findings from our in-depth interviews with migrants. The report concludes with a synthesis of key findings, followed by a set of policy recommendations for the Home Office. Here, we differentiate between immediate and short-term targeted measures that the Home Office should adopt to address pressing shortcomings in the system, and longer-term recommendations that call for a fundamental rethinking of the compulsory imposition of digital immigration status, especially in light of their dangers, limitations, and disproportionate impacts on migrants.

## Methodology

Our research project, titled 'Digitising Identity: navigating the digital immigration system and migrant experiences', is based on a collaborative approach involving multiple methods to understand the experiences of migrants with the digital immigration status. We brought together a diverse team comprising social scientists (Dr Derya Ozkul, PI and Dr Marie Godin, Co-PI), computer scientists (Dr Gabriele Pergola and Prof Arshad Jhumka), and representatives from two pro-migrant rights organisations: the Open Rights Group (Sara Alsherif), which has been actively campaigning on this issue, and Migrant Voice (Nazek Ramadan and Anne Stoltenberg), a migrant-led organisation dedicated to empowering migrants to influence public debate and policy. Together, we co-designed the research questions, methodology and the subsequent processes. These processes included:

- Conducting a stakeholder workshop led by Anne Stoltenberg and Nazek Ramadan from Migrant Voice, with contributions from Sara Alsherif from Open Rights Group,

- Drafting questions for Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to the Home Office, managed by Sara Alsherif from Open Rights Group and researchers Derya Ozkul and Marie Godin,
- Analysing online discussions among migrants subjected to digital immigration status led by Gabriele Pergola and Arshad Jhumka (which is not included in this report)
- Conducting and analysing in-depth interviews with migrants affected by digital immigration status (led and conducted by Marie Godin, Derya Ozkul and Lidya Tewelde Habtay)

We started our project by finalising our methodology, listing our thematic guiding questions, and seeking ethical approval from the University of Warwick's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) (Approval Reference Number: HSSREC 20/24-25).

Migrant Voice then organised our first stakeholder workshop on Friday, 15 November 2024, at their office in London. Invitations were sent to organisations based in London that support migrants transitioning to digital immigration status or that conduct campaigns for their rights related to digital immigration status. The workshop comprised two hands-on sessions on: 1) Understanding the changes and implications of the new eVisa scheme for migrants, and 2) How can organisations best support migrants? Based on insights from participating organisations, we finalised our FOI questions and our interview guide.

We then submitted the chosen FOI questions to the Home Office to understand how the digital system operates, explore possible reasons for technical glitches, examine the Home Office's considerations regarding rights impact assessments, and gather statistics on individuals adversely affected by the system.

For in-depth interviews, we recruited participants primarily through Migrant Voice, which circulated our call for participation within their membership network. Additionally, we approached and recruited participants from specific nationalities and affected groups, with the support of the Somali Community Parents Association (SOCOPA) and the Afro-Innovation Group (a BAME-led registered charity) in Leicester, and Asylum Welcome in Oxford. Some participants also shared our call within their own networks, leading to further participation in our study.

When selecting our interview participants, we deliberately aimed to include migrants with a range of legal statuses in the UK, such as those on temporary and permanent visas (i.e. Indefinite Leave to Remain, ILR) and refugee statuses. We also ensured diversity in characteristics such as gender, age, and nationality to be able to make an intersectional analysis. A full list of the demographic characteristics of our participants can be found in Appendix I.

Social scientists in our team, Dr Marie Godin and Dr Derya Ozkul, conducted 35 interviews in English, French, and Turkish, with the help of a bilingual researcher, Lidya Tewelde Habtay, who conducted an additional five interviews. In total, 40 interviews were carried out. Each participant received a £30 gift voucher, with an extra £10 for those who travelled to meet us in person. When participants preferred online interviews, meetings were arranged via Microsoft Teams and recorded (where consent was given). Dr Godin and Dr Ozkul also conducted the coding and analysis of the interviews. All data were anonymised before analysis.



Findings

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

As part of this research, we submitted FOI requests to investigate the inner workings of the Home Office and better understand the UK’s transition from physical documents to digital immigration status (see Table 2). Specifically, we aimed to understand whether and how the Home Office considered the potential impact of this transition on migrants’ rights, and to establish the extent to which individuals had faced difficulties and been adversely affected.

FOI requests have become a critical methodological tool for researchers seeking transparency and challenging state secrecy (see, for example, Campbell 2020, Luscombe and Walby 2017). However, the effectiveness of this method depends heavily on the willingness of state institutions to disclose information, as well as the resources available to those contesting refusals (Palmiotto and Ozkul 2025). In our research, all FOI requests were submitted via the platform *WhatDoTheyKnow.com*. This decision was intentional to enable both researchers working on this topic and members of the public to monitor the process and access the responses. By using this platform, we aimed to reduce barriers to scrutiny and challenge the opacity surrounding the design and implementation of the digital immigration status system.

Table 2. FOI requests submitted and the Home Office’s responses

	Topic of request	Result	Website
1	Statistics on technical issues in the digital immigration status (eVisa)	Delayed, amalgamated, and rejected based on required costs	<a href="https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/request_for_statistics_on_techni">https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/request_for_statistics_on_techni</a>
2	Staff training materials related to digital immigration status (eVisa)	Delayed, amalgamated, and rejected based on required costs	<a href="https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/request_for_staff_training_mater">https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/request_for_staff_training_mater</a>
3	Statistics on complaints received regarding digital immigration status (eVisa)	Delayed, amalgamated, and rejected based on required costs	<a href="https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/request_for_complaint_statistics">https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/request_for_complaint_statistics</a>
4	Request for internal communications on transition to digital immigration status (eVisa)	Delayed, amalgamated, and rejected based on required costs	<a href="https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/request_for_internal_communicati_4">https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/request_for_internal_communicati_4</a>
5	Request for statistics on complaints related to online immigration status (Submitted by another team member to avoid amalgamation)	Rejected based on required costs	<a href="https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/request_for_statistics_on_compla#incoming-2930500">https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/request_for_statistics_on_compla#incoming-2930500</a>

Topic of request	Result	Website
6 Consideration of making digital immigration status as an option only	Responded, but the question was not answered. The information provided was already available online.	<a href="https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/consideration_of_physical_docume#outgoing-1798096">https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/consideration_of_physical_docume#outgoing-1798096</a>
7 Number of migrants relying on legacy documents to prove their immigration status	Rejected based on the fact that the HO does not hold this information. We were directed to the Office for National Statistics (ONS)	<a href="https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/migrants_with_residency_status_h#outgoing-1891452">https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/migrants_with_residency_status_h#outgoing-1891452</a>
8 Data Protection Impact Assessments for Digital Immigration Status System	Rejected based on public interest	<a href="https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/data_protection_impact_assessmen_118#outgoing-1800819">https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/data_protection_impact_assessmen_118#outgoing-1800819</a>

The Home Office responded to only one of our requests (see Question 6), but even in that case, they did not answer the questions we asked; instead, they provided information that was already available online. In another case, they decided to amalgamate several of the questions (see Questions 1 to 4) submitted by Open Rights Group and rejected them on the basis of costs. Our attempts were unsuccessful, even when we submitted already narrowed down requests and indicated that they could advise us how we could narrow them down further if they needed to.

The high rate of rejection we faced in this project highlights the Home Office's reluctance to share information with researchers and the public, at least in relation to the implementation of eVisas. This is perhaps not surprising and reflects a broader pattern of opacity in immigration governance, where state authorities, and particularly immigration authorities, restrict access to information concerning the technologies they deploy (see Ozkul 2023 for various other examples of this opacity across Europe). Similarly, existing research shows that civil society organisations attempting to obtain such information frequently face resistance, as details of technological infrastructures are rarely made public (Palmiotto and Ozkul 2025).

One striking example was the rejection of our request to access the Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) on the grounds that disclosure was not deemed in the 'public interest'. This refusal is concerning, as it prevents researchers from scrutinising core aspects of the system, including data storage and sharing practices, the list of institutions and organisations with access to migrants' data, and the potential for this information to be used as part of broader surveillance mechanisms. At present, there is no transparency regarding how such data is accessed by a possibly widening range of public and private actors. These include Border Force, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), law enforcement agencies, local authorities, social housing providers, and private third parties such as airlines and landlords.



Overall, our FOI requests revealed a reluctance by the Home Office to share information. The initial refusal to release the DPIA on the grounds of ‘public interest’ also raises questions about who the term ‘public’ refers to and whose interests are prioritised in designing and implementing such systems. Ultimately, this lack of transparency risks undermining public trust in the digital system and may worsen the vulnerabilities faced by migrants who are compelled to use it. In the following sections, we present our analysis through the first-hand experiences of migrants.

Months after we requested access to the DPIA, the Home Office publicly released it (see GOV.UK 2025b) on 13 August 2025. However, it left out many essential responses, with vague answers about protecting the rights of vulnerable individuals and children under 13. Most importantly, the DPIA focused solely on the View and Prove functionality and did not consider the potential impacts of errors when data is shared between different government agencies for immigration enforcement purposes. Finally, in the published DPIA, the Home Office stated that they routinely consult with user groups ‘to obtain feedback on the customer experience’:

“ The Home Office has been issuing digital immigration status since 2018 (EU Settlement Scheme) and consultation with user groups (employers, banking, etc.) has taken place regularly since inception. In addition to user group consultation, user research with customers (holders of digital status who use View and Prove) has been conducted at regular intervals to obtain feedback on the customer experience, to guide improvement of the services. Feedback is also collected directly on the View and Prove service itself which includes links to feedback forms by which users can share their experience of the service, again, this feedback is used to drive continuous improvement of the Services.

(GOV.UK 2025b, p. 21).

It is essential to note that, in its publications, such as this DPIA, the Home Office adopts a market-oriented discourse, framing its functions as if it were providing products and services to consumers. Terms like ‘user experience’ and ‘service improvement’ are used to describe processes that concern fundamental human rights, including the rights to work, housing, access to public healthcare, benefits, education, and banking. Despite the Home Office’s existing consultation mechanisms, as we will show in the following pages of this report, our research found that many migrants felt their views were not taken into account in the design and operation of the system.



## ◦ In-depth Interviews with Migrants

This section presents our interview data on the experiences of migrants legally residing in the UK who have been at the forefront of engaging with the digital immigration status as the new digital identity platform.

### Presentation of the sample

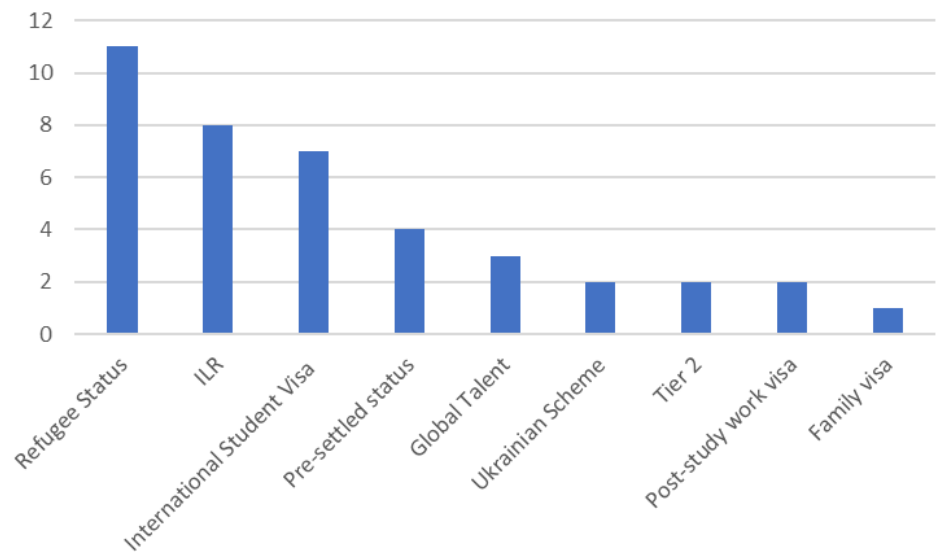
In total, we conducted 40 semi-structured interviews. Most participants were reached through Migrant Voice (22), which served as the main point of contact for recruitment. Additional participants were connected via Asylum Welcome, based in Oxford (6), while smaller numbers came through the Somali Community Parents Association, based in Leicester (SOCOPA) (4), snowballing and personal connections (8). This combination of channels reflects both institutional and personal networks that facilitated access to diverse migrant experiences and perspectives. Most interviews were conducted online (32), while a smaller number took place face-to-face (8). This mix allowed for flexibility in participation, accommodating both geographical distance and participants' availability.

The sample is predominantly composed of female, (n=26), male (n=13), and non-binary (n=1) participants. Given this gender imbalance, the findings reflect more women's experiences, highlighting the distinct challenges they face in accessing and managing this new platform. The marital status of respondents shows that 20 individuals are married, including 2 who are separated but still married, while 18 individuals are single. Most respondents are in the 40–49 age group (n=13), followed by the 30–39 age group (n=11) and the 20–29 age group (n=10). Smaller numbers are observed in the 50–59 (n=4), 35–44 (n=1), and 55–65 (n=1) age groups. Overall, the sample is concentrated in the mid-career age range (30–49).

A diverse range of national backgrounds is represented. The largest group is from Nigeria (n=10), followed by Turkey (n=4) and Eritrea (n=3). Smaller numbers come from Cameroon, Ethiopia, India, Somalia, Ukraine, Zambia (n=2 each), while individual participants originate from Bangladesh, Brazil/Italy, Chile, Djibouti, Guinea-Conakry, Kurdistan (Iraq), Malawi, Pakistan, Sudan, the United States, Zimbabwe (n=1 each). This distribution illustrates both the global reach of the UK's migration regime and the varied contexts in which migrants encounter the eVisa system – ranging from African and Middle Eastern countries to South Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Therefore, participants spoke a wide range of languages. English (17) was the most used primary language, followed by Turkish (4) and Somali and Tigrigna (3 each). Other languages represented included Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Chitumbuka/Chichewa, Fula, Hindi, Kurdish, Oromo, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian, and Urdu (1 participant each). This diversity highlights the broad geographical backgrounds represented in the study.

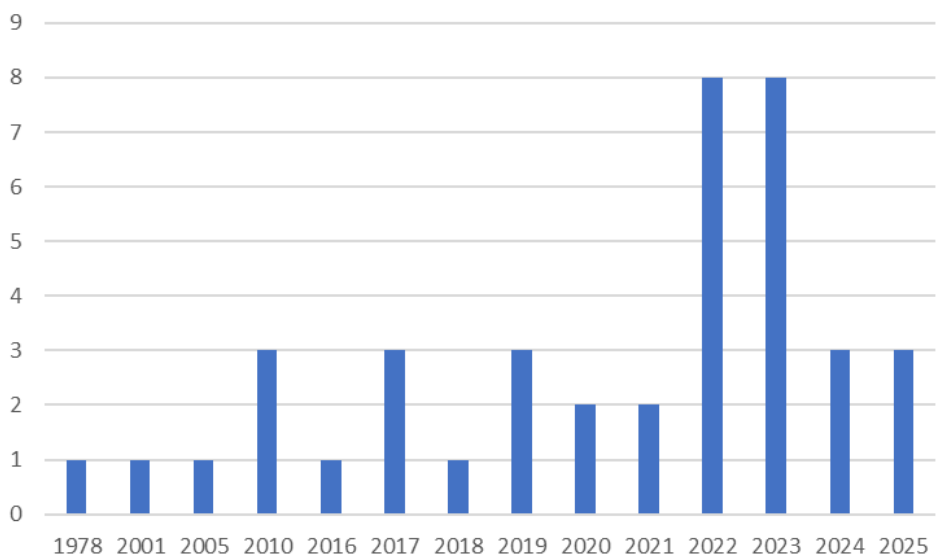
The participants held a wide range of immigration statuses (see Figure 4). The largest group consisted of individuals with refugee status (n=11), followed by those with ILR (n=8), International Student Visas (n=7), and pre-settled status (n=4). Several participants were part of the Global Talent or Global Talent Dependent routes (n=3). Smaller numbers were represented under the Ukrainian Scheme (n=2), Tier 2 and Tier 2 Dependent visas (n=2), Post-Study Work visas (n=2), and Family visas (n=1). This distribution illustrates the diverse range of legal pathways through which migrants engage with the UK's immigration system. It also highlights how individuals with different visa categories, ranging from refugee status to skilled work and study routes, are all impacted in the transition toward a fully digital status system, though, as we will show in the following pages of this report, often with unequal access and experiences.

Figure 4. Participants’ immigration statuses



Participants arrived in the UK over a broad time span, reflecting varied and often complex legal trajectories (see Figure 5). The majority were recent arrivals, with 8 coming in 2022, 8 in 2023, 3 in 2024, 2 each in 2020 and 2021, and 3 in 2025, indicating a strong representation of newcomers (n=26). Smaller numbers had settled earlier, including arrivals in 2010 (n=3), 2017 (n=3), and 2019 (n=3). A few participants had been in the UK for an extended period, dating back to 1978, 2001, 2005, 2016, and 2018 (one participant each) (n=14). Overall, the demographic data suggest a predominance of recent arrivals alongside a smaller group with long-term settlement histories.

Figure 5. Participants’ year of arrival in the UK



The dataset shows a high level of educational attainment among respondents. Master’s and bachelor’s degrees are the most common (n=16) for each, indicating a strong representation of advanced qualifications. Overall, 3 individuals hold PhD degrees, while 2 individuals hold college-level degrees, 2 hold secondary school degrees, and finally, 1 participant holds a junior school degree. Overall, in

line with UK immigration requirements, the sample is predominantly well-educated, with the majority holding bachelor's or master's degrees. Lower-level qualifications (secondary and junior school) are rare, suggesting that most respondents have attained higher education.

The respondents are spread across a range of locations in the UK. Overall, the data indicate a concentration in major cities, such as Birmingham and London, as well as cities of Leicester and Oxford, but respondents are relatively dispersed across the UK (see Appendix I).

These interviews were analysed inductively through a systematic review of anonymised transcripts. From this process, we identified recurring and emerging themes, which we organised into three main categories: (1) Emotional and affective experiences; (2) Practical experiences, including positive and negative aspects, as well as obstacles, and challenges; (3) Coping strategies used by migrants to navigate and overcome these difficulties.

## Emotions and affective experiences

Many migrants who took part in our study and recently engaged with the digital immigration system via the eVisa reported experiencing stress, fear, exhaustion, and a lack of trust towards the Home Office.

The process was **highly stressful at various stages**, particularly because most migrants had to digitalise their status within a very short amount of time. Even though the deadline for creating a UKVI account and applying for digital immigration status was extended (first from 31 December 2024 to 31 March 2025 and subsequently to 1 June 2025), these shifting timelines contributed to a pervasive sense of uncertainty and heightened anxiety among those required to comply with the new system within a very short timeframe.

**A general sense of confusion** was also evident among many migrants who were unaware that they would need to navigate this process on their own and lacked a clear understanding of how the system operates. The inadequate communication from the Home Office significantly contributed to increased anxiety, but also to misunderstandings about the steps required. In addition, not all migrants were able to understand English to the level needed to access the eVisa registration, and the methods of communication used by the Home Office, whether through e-mail, their website, or helplines, left many migrants feeling excluded. Consequently, they found themselves relying on translations and second-hand information, which added another layer of complexity to an already challenging situation. One of our participants, for instance, shared:

“ I was asking friends because we were shocked. What is this share code? What are they asking? And some people were saying “oh it's only for certain people, it's only for this type of people”. So we were like, “oh, so how are you going to get this, you know, information?” And then [...] by the end of last year, that's when we... I think it was November; I think we received an e-mail from the Home Office saying [...] All of us have to, you know, have this share code. You have to do this and that and that we didn't know all along, but meanwhile other people knew way before we did.

(INT17)

”

Many migrants shared **a fear of not being able to prove their legal status**. The UK government's focus on immigration enforcement creates an environment where proving legal status is crucial to avoid the risk of both detention and deportation. As a result, the inability to quickly and easily prove legal status causes significant harm. Because of such fears, many of our participants expressed a desire to have a paper document and were concerned about having their status only in a digital format. For example, the following participant explained that in her country of origin, individuals demonstrated their identification through paper-based documents. Because of these past experiences, she described the fear of not being able to prove her legal status and identity in the UK, if she did not have a physical document. She shared:

“

For me applying for something and not get any paper and anything like that was very stressful. It was in the middle of the pandemic, so there was no place you could just go and ask people to help you [...] And then I started Googling and I saw this horror stories of people who applied in the UK and had just lost their legal status [...] I got everything saved. All the prints of all the process and things like that. And I still have all the documents, but for me the idea of not having a physical thing to prove my status or to prove even my identity is scary. [...] I'm constantly thinking, "oh my God, how am I going to prove that I have status that I have the right to be here that I applied". So, I just save and print everything every time I travel, I print the QR code [...] I always have my Italian ID with me because that's my way of proving who I am and then I started taking my driver's licence, my British driver's licence. So, I would have a British paper always with me [...] I have an ID document that is physical so I can prove my status.

(INT16)

”

Relatedly, many participants also described **the fear of losing their rights** if they did something wrong in the digital portal. The current system requires migrants to update their details online in order to maintain their rights, including their right to work, rent, and travel. Because of this requirement, some migrants expressed having significant fear of making mistakes. Even inadvertent errors could have implications for their legal status, generating a persistent fear that the Home Office might construe any mistake to the detriment of migrants. The fear of making or facing an error and the related responsibility of regularising one's status are also clearly unevenly distributed across migrant groups. For instance, one of our participants shared:

“

There was a lot of anxiety in the air because what would that be? What would that do? And personally, I usually have a kind of threat as a form of feeling, because at the back of your mind, you know that if you make one mistake, everything can crash from there and trying to correct such mistakes in such a big enterprise like the Home Office.

(INT02)

”



A refugee participant expressed particular concern because her old BRP listed her status as ‘refugee’, but after digitalising her status, her eVisa showed that she now had ‘humanitarian protection’. She explained:

“

When I saw my status on the eVisa, I am a refugee, but it says, “humanitarian protection”. I was really concerned, so I went to Citizen Advice and Asylum Welcome to ask about that. And I’ve seen people as well calling me asking why it is saying humanitarian because we are not, we are refugees, it’s not humanitarian. Everyone was sending e-mails to the Home Office. [They said] it doesn’t make a change. But I was really concerned about this. I thought it was a mistake because humanitarian protection and refugee, I think they are different [...] So, it caused me stress, and yeah, everyone was concerned with it.

(INT26)

”

This change in terminology, and potentially an error in the digital system, introduced without adequate notification or explanation, exemplifies how much harm the transition caused for people.

The sense of exhaustion generated by the Home Office and its immigration policies was palpable. For many, this latest development was unsurprising, yet it nonetheless reinforced a growing perception that migrants’ hope to settle in the UK might remain perpetually out of reach.

“

The point is that I’ve been so traumatised with Home Office procedures that anything that comes from the Home Office, I’m like...I went through a lot during the asylum procedure, and that has remained at the back of my mind [...] Yes, I wish I had no ‘paperwork’ to do anymore because I’ve done a lot of it. I’m like full, you know [...] I wish I can be in a place where I don’t need to justify myself. I don’t need to prove who I am all the time [...] that is why I miss home: at home, it’s just me. Nobody knows me by anything other than me, neither by the colour of my skin nor by my immigration status. It’s just me. Just me.

(INT05)

”

Difficulties were greater for migrant families with several family members as they had to meet strict deadlines and often had limited help. For many, accessing the UKVI account after its creation was a further source of frustration, as few understood the logic behind generating different types of share codes to exercise their rights, such as renting, working, or travelling. Moreover, the fact that these codes were valid only for limited periods meant that migrants often found themselves caught in a repetitive cycle of generating codes for various purposes, both for themselves and for family members, losing track of when and for what purposes they had generated them.

Refugees in particular stressed the legacy of negative encounters with the Home Office. In some cases, this led some to refuse to engage and check the Home Office's website for updates on the digital status in order to reduce the stress it could cause, especially if they had past negative experiences with the institution. For example, one of our participants, who held refugee status, felt extremely anxious about any interaction with the Home Office. As a result, he did not check their website to find out if he needed to take any action regarding his digital status.

“

Everybody is scared to talk to them or to see them because we have, I don't know, but that's our mentality. You are just going to open the website, but maybe we'll find some information like somebody has a cancer and I don't want to know that they have cancer and feel scared. That's the way we are feeling. But definitely like we try to. [...] That's the mental health; the mental health bill will get from there [...] So we try to avoid it. Even sometimes this kind of avoidance may create some problems for you because you may miss [that] that time [you] need to do something.

(INT32)

”

For many of these participants, the digital immigration status did not appear to aim at making immigration procedures more efficient, secure, or manageable. The absence of meaningful consultation, accessible information sessions, and broader public engagement initiatives reinforced this perception. Many of these participants emphasised that the lack of genuine consultation and inclusion signalled that the new system was designed to control migrants and increase the pressure on them by adding further burdens rather than creating fairness for all.

Moreover, we found that there is **a considerable amount of mistrust between migrants and the Home Office**. In this context, for example, one participant mentioned that she used the system because she had to, but she did not trust the online platform. She felt exposed by having to providing all her detailed information when applying for a visa and checking her digital status. This feeling of being forced to comply was widespread among many of our participants. As one put it:

“

Actually, I'm scared, but I have to go through these steps. I try not to question why they want this information from me, but I'm worried about everything. Even when I'm just searching for something on Google, I feel this anxiety. I'm doing it because I have to, not because I trust them.

(INT36)

”

This lack of trust goes beyond concerns about the eVisa system. Recent changes to immigration and citizenship rules, such as higher fees, longer residency requirements, and stricter naturalisation rules, have increased distress for many migrants living in the UK. In the digital hostile environment, the online process of sharing personal information through the Home Office's digital identity platform has raised additional worries. Migrants were often uncertain about where their data is stored, who can access it, and how it is protected. While some participants trusted data protection standards in the UK, others, especially those aware of surveillance technologies or those with knowledge about the Windrush scandal, expressed fears about hacking, identity theft, or government misuse of their data.

“

I don't trust the system, especially because of what Windrush showed us that trusting the government for migration archives is not very trustful. Let's say it. There were already situations of Europeans applying that were completely vanished from the system for any reason that we don't know if this happens to one, why them, not me. What is preventing the system of doing that again? It's a system, so it's flawed. The data can be leaked. So I don't really trust the system. I think it has put migrants in a more vulnerable situation.

(INT16)

”

As one participant explained, *'when you put all your details there [in the system], you are feeling like you're exposing everything out.'* (INT17) Another participant shared similar concerns, and added that, as a migrant, they had little power to resist even though they felt this system was not 'right':

“

I've got concern about it because I'm telling you with the [way] technology's going on in this generation, all your details, everything about you is out. There, with all my face.... I think this is too much, but who are we to question? I can't question them because I'm still a migrant. That's why maybe when I'm a British citizen, I cannot stand it and I'm like some things are not right. You're giving out all my details.

(INT31)

”

The emotional aspects discussed in this section are closely linked to migrants' practical experiences with the digital immigration system (both the EUSS digital status and the eVisa). Many participants reported feeling stressed, confused, scared, exhausted and mistrustful towards the Home Office, because of their general perception of the latter, as well as practical problems such as unclear instructions, managing multiple accounts, or dealing with system errors. On the other hand, those with better practical experience with the system tended to feel fewer negative emotions and more confidence about using the eVisa system. This connection between feelings and practical experiences shows how system design, communication, and administrative processes can influence migrants' experiences and perceptions. The next section will look at these practical experiences in more detail, highlighting both the difficulties and the benefits migrants experienced when transitioning to digital immigration status.



Home Office

**Question 6 of 7**

**How could we improve this service?**

Do not disclose any information that may identify you such as names, email addresses or reference numbers.

Just make it work as it's supposed to please. It's already stressful and time consuming to make the application and then wait months on end. Then finally you get the letter fro the Home Office and you think everything is all right and log in only to find out you are back to square one!

Back Continue

One of our participants sharing frustration with the system through the Home Office feedback form.

## Practical experiences

In our interviews, we asked participants about their experiences of digitalising their immigration status, both positive and negative. We also asked about proving their status when required through a 'share code' that they needed to generate and share with third parties. Some participants, especially those with higher levels of education and digital literacy and those who did not encounter any technical glitches, reported that the process was easy and straightforward. One participant reflected: *'It's easy for me to access it. If it's for myself, I can just go and check my eVisa or view every status that I have. The application itself is very straightforward'* (INT26). Others echoed this, saying they could navigate the system independently without difficulty. One explained: *'No, I never had an issue. I'm well educated, and I know how to navigate a few systems. Registering and navigating this was something I could do myself'* (INT27). The ability to complete the process from home was particularly valued. Avoiding travel, saving money, and not having to bring children to appointments were all seen as significant advantages. Several interviewees also said the 'share code' system worked smoothly for them, especially when employers or universities provided clear instructions, and they did not face any technical glitches.

Tech-savvy participants were particularly enthusiastic about the digital status and saw digitalisation as a positive development. One explained: *'I love technology and innovation. When I heard about the eVisa, I was excited. It saves the hassle of carrying a BRP, and I can easily access my information online'* (INT18). Some even saw the system as a necessary adaptation to the digital age, acknowledging that technological changes are inevitable and essential for efficiency and security:



The world is moving fast technologically. AI and digitalisation are here to stay. These systems improve efficiency, security, and access. I trust this system will work well.

(INT36)



Even when there were hurdles (for example, when taking multiple photos before the system accepted them, or having to restart after errors), some treated these as minor annoyances rather than barriers. As one participant put it: *‘Capturing the picture took me about four tries, but once it went through, I loved it’* (INT18). Others appreciated that digitalisation reduced the risk of losing BRPs and even felt reassured by data protections in the UK compared to their home countries. A few participants said they simply trusted the system, either because they had ‘nothing to hide’ or because they believed it was a necessary adaptation to the digital age.

However, alongside these positive views, many participants raised significant concerns and described obstacles that made the process stressful, confusing, or in some cases unworkable. A closer look at participants’ accounts reveals that problems clustered around three main sources: (1) flaws in the design of the system itself, (2) difficulties rooted in individual circumstances and resources, and (3) the lack of knowledge by third parties who need to comply with the new system. Importantly, these categories often intersected, meaning that migrants with fewer resources were hit hardest when design flaws occurred.

## Flaws in the design system

Several challenges were directly related to the design of the system. These included:

1. Overly complex processes
2. Technical glitches
3. Incorrect and entangled data
4. Difficulties generating a ‘share code’
5. Device-specific limitations
6. Unclear and/or inconsistent communication with the Home Office
7. Reliance on specific documents
8. Problem related to ‘legacy documents’

Each of these issues is explored in detail in the following sub-sections.



## Overly complex processes

Participants described the multiple steps required for login and two-step verification as confusing and repetitive. Many reported having to switch back and forth between their smartphone, email, and the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app, which caused frustration. If any step failed, the system often forced them to restart the entire process, which left them disoriented as to what they needed to do next. For example, one refugee participant explained that although he personally did not face difficulties digitalising his status, he observed that many other migrants struggled with the system's complex design:

“

So for me again, it was easy to create my account and navigate. But for the vast majority, it is still very confusing to use it even after creating the account. People generally don't know what to do with it or how to log in with a share code that's generated from the Home Office, especially at the beginning. So they have to seek help from outside [...]. And then even after that, a lot of people are struggling navigating the system which has, 2 step verifications that you have to put your e-mail address and then your phone number. Then you have to receive codes, after which you have to go back to. It can be complicated for many people.

(INT27)

”

## Technical glitches

Website crashes, login failures, and share code errors disrupted even the most digitally confident users. Some participants reported being locked out after repeated errors, while others were able to log in but found incorrect information listed on their profile. Problems with the website were particularly common. Participants shared that the UKRI's site would freeze or become temporarily unavailable. Some kept trying and eventually managed to digitalise their status, others sought help from organisations, and some ultimately gave up, unable to complete the process due to persistent technical issues.

“

The first time I tried it, it didn't work. When I tried, I clicked on it, but it was frozen. I clicked on it again. It will just be there. It will be showing you, but you cannot do anything, it's like frozen, it is not moving.

(INT22)

”



“

It was not easy in the sense that for example, you would put in your BRP number, you keep on putting it on and then they keep on sending you the PIN code number for you to access the same website you're trying to access, and sometimes it could freeze and it [would] tell you [that] you cannot access anymore. Your time is up, or we have put you in a queue and then I was attempting time after time again, and it would not go through.

(INT20)

”

### Sorry, there is a problem with the service

We have not saved your answers. Try again later.

When the service is available, you will have to start again.

Alternatively, you can [contact us for help](#).

[Back to account details](#)

[Back to applications](#)

Need help? [Contact us](#)

UKVI account is not accessible

One participant, an ILR holder along with all her family members, explained that when they were granted ILR status, the Home Office sent an email instructing them to digitalise their statuses. She completed the process for herself and her husband, but when she tried to do the same for her children, the website repeatedly displayed an error. She reported the issue to the Home Office via the website but received no response. Later, she faced significant challenges when travelling back to the UK in May, which caused tremendous stress. She explained her experience to us as the following:

“

So this year, after making the application for ILR and after the application was approved, they sent us an e-mail saying, "OK, your ILR status has now been approved, you need to link that with your UKVI account" so that wasn't automatically linked so you couldn't log into your account and say "oh, now this is your new status". You had to link it again, it's such a nightmare to do that because there are different accounts and different things happening, so anyway I managed that and my husband managed that. But when I try to do that for the children. Their account said it expired or that their account didn't exist. So, I tried to do it numerous times, and I'd kept getting different error results, and I wasn't able to link in my children's account to their status.

(INT35)

”

## Incorrect and entangled data

As migrants began to digitalise their statuses and access their eVisas, some individuals discovered that their personal data had been amalgamated or, in other words ‘entangled’, resulting in what is referred to as ‘merged identities’. According to a news story published by *The Guardian* in 2024, leaked internal documents revealed that major flaws in the Home Office’s immigration database led to more than 76,000 people being recorded with incorrect names, photographs, or immigration statuses (Dyer et al. 2024). Such errors not only prevent individuals from applying for jobs and housing, accessing services and travel, but also create serious risks when unrelated people gain access to each other’s sensitive personal information.

### Box 1. Merged identities

During our research, we spoke with a solicitor who described a case in which one of her clients was left traumatised by such issues. The solicitor had submitted an ILR application on behalf of her client, who subsequently attended a biometric appointment at TLS (the commercial partner of UKVI that handles the visa application centres in the UK). Unlike her other clients, she did not receive the usual automated confirmation from TLS acknowledging receipt of the documents. Furthermore, the solicitor did not receive the expected acknowledgement from the Home Office confirming receipt of the application, which typically arrives within a few days of the biometric appointment.

Several weeks later, the client was contacted directly by another migrant with a different nationality, living in a different city in the UK. This individual explained that while accessing her own eVisa through her UKVI account, she could view the client’s personal details, including email address, telephone number, nationality, and passport information. It transpired that this other migrant had received an acknowledgement email from the Home Office for the client’s application, even though the only email address associated with the application was the solicitor’s professional address.

The solicitor lodged a complaint with TLS, which advised that the client should re-enrol their biometrics, a step that was duly taken. The solicitor also submitted a complaint to the Home Office and received an automated response stating that she would receive a reply within 20 working days; however, no further communication followed. The situation escalated when the other migrant encountered significant difficulties while travelling to her country of origin for the Christmas holidays and attempting to return to the UK in January 2025. Border officers disclosed the solicitor’s client’s personal details, including their immigration history. Upon reviewing the case, the solicitor confirmed that the two individuals had different nationalities, immigration histories, and physical characteristics, leaving no plausible reason for their data to have been amalgamated.

As her client became increasingly distressed and the ILR application remained unresolved, the solicitor exhausted all official channels without success. Ultimately, she contacted a charity representative with personal connections at the Home Office, who was able to escalate the matter. The issue was resolved the following day, and the client’s ILR application was granted. Nevertheless, the client remained deeply traumatised by the experience and chose to remain anonymous, declining to pursue further complaints (fieldwork notes from a meeting with a solicitor, 4 September 2025).

This case illustrates just one example of such ‘data entanglements’. According to The Guardian, internal Home Office documents describe the problem of merged identities as a ‘longstanding issue’ (Dyer et al., 2024), raising serious concerns about the decision to implement digital status for all migrants while the immigration databases were already flawed. In this instance, two unrelated individuals were able to access highly sensitive personal data, including immigration history, phone numbers, and email addresses. While in this case, the matter was eventually resolved, such situations carry significant risks, including stalking, identity theft, or impersonation. It is also noteworthy that resolution was achieved only through personal contacts rather than official support channels. Finally, it is striking that a process intended to enhance efficiency through digitalisation has, instead, introduced more complexity with potentially dangerous consequences, while also preventing affected individuals from exercising their rights. These findings underscore the urgent need for robust safeguards and accountability mechanisms.

## Problems with generating a ‘share code’

Although most participants were able to generate share codes, some found the process confusing. A common concern was the ability to issue multiple share codes within minutes, which raised questions about how the system worked and why codes could be changed so frequently. One such participant with a computer science degree stated:

“

If you request it again in the next 7 minutes, it’s gonna give you a different share code. But, of course, the first one that it gave you, it told you that it’s gonna be valid for the next 90 days. I don’t understand how that system works when it continues to generate different share codes like that.

(INT19)

”

Participants also questioned why share codes were only valid for a limited period (90 days during the time of our fieldwork) and why they were necessary at all, given that eVisa already displayed the terms of a person’s stay in the UK. These design choices were perceived as unnecessary and poorly explained, leaving migrants uncertain about the logic behind the system:

“

What’s the thinking? What’s the understanding behind? The share code changing every three months if I’m correct [...] Why? What’s the point?

(INT02)

”



## Device-specific limitations

To digitalise their immigration status, migrants were required to create a UKVI account, follow the instructions, and download the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app onto a smartphone to scan a QR code using the camera. Participants reported that not all smartphones were compatible with the app, and based on their experience, the system worked better on iPhones than on certain Android devices, where photo uploads and passport scans repeatedly failed. One participant even questioned whether the system was deliberately designed to favour iPhones (INT23).

In addition, navigating the process comfortably often required both a laptop and a smartphone, resources that were not available to everyone. One refugee participant noted that many refugees lack personal devices and rely on charities for phones or laptops, which may not meet the eVisa requirements (INT27).



An explanatory video from the Home Office showing the use of laptops and smartphones

Others reported problems with taking photos, as images were rejected for reasons such as poor lighting or incorrect background colour. One participant shared that the process turned into 'a *full photo shoot*' with flatmates helping, and that the photos were not 'passport quality styled photos with a nice camera' (INT33). Because migrants had to take their own pictures, these often looked unprofessional compared to standard passport photos. At times, this caused issues when travelling, as border officers in other countries sometimes questioned the authenticity of the digital status:

“ I heard from a friend who was from Africa. Also, she went out of the UK and then the border control of her country. They're like, "you're kidding. What is this? We can't accept." "This is a visa. Yes, it's called an eVisa." "What is this picture? What is this?" They just thought it's fake and it's not professional, so it might be OK in the UK, but not in other countries. They wouldn't believe you. But that's also one of the problems: other countries or other immigration officers of other countries are not taking that seriously.

(INT30)

”

These device limitations made the digitalisation process not only more challenging to navigate but, for those with limited resources, sometimes impossible to complete, and eventually use their digital status.

## Unclear and inconsistent communication

Some participants reported that instructions from the Home Office - whether via email or the Helpline - were vague or contradictory, leaving many unsure which documents to use (for example, BRP or passport) or what steps to take when problems arose. As a result, many people had to rely on their friends and migrant or refugee organisations. Others echoed concerns about insufficient information and time to understand the process:

“

They didn't give... I don't think they gave enough time for people to understand.

(INT31)

”

Other participants shared that they did not understand why their BRPs were expiring, even when the Home Office mentioned it in their emails when they issued their visas. Some were surprised when they received emails instructing them to create a UKVI account, as they believed they had already done so during their visa application:

“

This stuff wasn't very clear. It just said, register for UKVI. It wasn't really clear because I was wondering why I don't have a UKVI account. But how come? So how did I get the first BRP? So, it was confusing. I understood the language literally, but there was no... How do I put it? I could read what was there, but you know, the instructions weren't very clear.

(INT21)

”

In some cases, reportedly, emails never arrived, particularly for children, leaving families in limbo situations. Several participants said the Home Office had never contacted them and therefore did not know they needed to digitalise their status. One participant only found out about this transition during our interview. They shared: *'Before, my understanding was [that] it's just only for the new people. Or maybe the people who don't have the biometric ID, or they don't have the previous paper written by Home Office staff.'* (INT32) This example highlights that some migrants may not have received any communication from the Home Office, or that emails were lost or overlooked.

Others received emails from the Home Office confirming their digital status at different times, which also created confusion. For example, one participant who successfully digitalised her status after months of attempts received a confirmation email in December 2024 for herself and her son, but her daughter did not receive anything for three weeks. The Home Office instructed her to wait, but she did not understand why her daughter's confirmation was delayed (INT21).



Migrants trying to understand the Home Office's communication  
Picture taken by ©Marie Godin, 2025





## Dependency on physical documents

To digitalise their immigration status, migrants were required to use specific documents, such as a BRP or a passport. While some participants appreciated the idea of having a digital status and not relying on physical documents, which could be lost, others highlighted new challenges created by this dependency. If migrants used a BRP to digitalise their status, they needed the details from that BRP to log in to their UKVI account and access their eVisa later. As one participant explained, although physical documents have officially expired, they remain essential for accessing the eVisa system for some people. Therefore, as this participant shared, paradoxically, the BRP cards had thus become the ‘physical key’ to navigating one’s personal digital immigration portal:

“

If your biometric card is missing, you’re finished; you cannot access your eVisa. So, which means now the biometric card is still more important than the eVisa [...] And again, when you are accessing your eVisa, there’s a place [where] they said ‘what identity document did you use when creating your account?’. So, for example, I use my BRP, but you have the option to use a passport and an ID card. So which means if my BRP is missing I cannot have access to my eVisa because I opened [it] with it [...] but the bad thing is, what if you misplace your BRP? They won’t issue a new one. I won’t be able to access the system.

(INT01)

”

Those who lost their BRPs could face unique difficulties, as they were unable to access or update their digital records. One refugee participant also explained that many refugees she worked with had forgotten their BRP details or lost the card entirely, leaving them unable to access the system:

“

As a person who works in Asylum Welcome, I am constantly facing clients coming with eVisa problems or requests. Most of them have trouble accessing, and the first question they ask is what did you use to apply for eVisa, have you used your passport, BRP, national ID and if they have used BRP, they have already forgotten that code on the BRP because there is a code on the top right corner of the BRP, or they have already lost their BRP, what can they do, how can they access the eVisa? Most of them come here with that problem. So, I imagine it would be very difficult for people.

(INT25)

”

This reliance on specific documents undermines the intended convenience of digitalisation, creating new vulnerabilities.

## Legacy documents

The digitalisation of immigration status required individuals to possess BRPs and/or passports. However, the system failed to account for those with 'legacy documents', i.e. older forms of proof of status that were once accepted but no longer recognised in the digital framework. At the time of writing this report in October 2025, the Home Office advises that *'People who have indefinite leave in a legacy document, in a passport that is valid, lost, stolen or expired, or have no proof of their indefinite leave status, can have their indefinite leave transferred to an eVisa by making a no time limit application'* (GOV.UK 2025c); however at the time of our fieldwork this guidance did not exist, and migrants with legacy documents were confused as to how to digitalise their statuses.

### Box 2. Migrants with legacy documents in limbo

One of our participants from a country in South America had lived in the UK since the early 1980s and was granted ILR via a stamp in his passport, accompanied by a formal letter from the Home Office (INT14). For decades, he travelled freely using both his old and current passports, without ever needing a BRP. In 2024, however, his experience underwent a dramatic change. While travelling, he was questioned at the airport about his lack of a BRP. His passport was temporarily taken away, and he was nearly prevented from boarding his flight. This incident marked a turning point, prompting him to apply for a BRP. His decision was further influenced by the so-called summer riots of 2024, during which he told us self-identified 'patriots' set up checkpoints demanding proof of immigration status from non-white individuals. He described this moment as a wake-up call, realising that legal status as it was shown on his old passport alone was no longer sufficient; he needed to be able to prove it instantly.

When he finally decided to apply for a BRP, the Home Office had stopped issuing them, with all existing cards set to expire by December 2024. He was then instructed to create a UKVI account. Lacking the necessary documents and digital guidance, he struggled through the process. After months of waiting, he received a letter confirming his ILR status, but it contained only a printed link to the UKVI portal. Despite following the instructions and uploading a photo, his UKVI account showed no progress. The system displayed contradictory messages, stating that his application had not started and that his status could not be verified. He described the experience as disheartening and stressful, feeling as though he was forced into a process he never chose. He also faced difficulties with local authorities, particularly in accessing Universal Credit. Previously, he had used his 1982 Home Office letter as proof of status, but was now asked to provide a share code, which he could not generate because his application was still unresolved.

Eventually, when, after months of waiting, he received another letter from the Home Office, he felt yet another mistake had been made and considered filing a complaint. The letter he received confirmed his right to remain in the UK under the Windrush policy, even though he was not part of the Windrush generation. He was frustrated with the entire process, particularly because he did not identify with the Windrush generation, which had its own specific historical grievances. He felt that the digital identity assigned to him did not reflect his migration journey and described the experience as wrongly appropriating someone else's identity.

Ironically, the UK government claims that 'eVisas are central to making the UK safer by reducing the risk of fraud, loss and abuse of physical documents, strengthening border security, and providing a more secure way to prove immigration status' (GOV.UK 2024b). Yet, after months of waiting, this participant found himself with a legal status that did not reflect his own journey. The only positive aspect of the situation, in his view, was discovering that he could apply for citizenship 'for free' and ironically through 'a paper application', which he saw as a form of compensation. He was indeed shocked to learn that the application could not be completed online. Instead, he had to download a physical form, fill it in by hand, and send it by post, an outdated method in the context of a supposedly digital system.

This case highlights how the Home Office has employed the Windrush Scheme to address documentation gaps among long-term residents. Although the scheme was initially established to assist Commonwealth citizens who arrived before 1973, its scope appears to have expanded to include others who entered the UK before 1989, including individuals from non-Commonwealth countries. Nevertheless, the absence of a dedicated pathway for those holding ILR but lacking a BRP has left many in a state of uncertainty, navigating a system that fails to acknowledge their legacy documentation or migration histories.

## ◦ Problems related to individual circumstances

A second set of challenges stemmed from participants' circumstances and access to resources, which significantly influenced their ability to navigate the platform. These included:

1. Varying levels of digital literacy
2. Access to necessary devices and reliable internet connectivity
3. Having caring responsibilities and related time pressures
4. Disabilities or age-related physical limitations
5. Complex legal trajectories in the UK

Each of these conditions is explored in detail in the following sub-sections.



## Digital literacy

Participants who were less comfortable with technology found the digitalisation process particularly daunting. Even when instructions were available, unfamiliarity with online systems meant that minor problems could become major obstacles. One participant described experiencing physical symptoms from the stress of using the system, and at the time of the interview, had still not digitalised her own status:

“

To be honest, if I tell you at this moment, I've not done mine yet. I've done my kids ones', but I haven't done mine because I just feel... The time I tried doing my children's when it was very, very, very stressful, because you have to capture, you have to make sure you are putting the picture in the right eye. I couldn't do it. I was having... My head was aching, I had headaches 'cause it was so... it was not so easy for me. You know, I'm not used to. I don't know. You know, the computer, stuff like that, where I'm more like an old school kind of person.

(INT22)

”

Participants who struggled with digital literacy, as well as those who were more confident but who reflected on others who were not, criticised the system for being unfair. They argued that it failed to account for individuals who lacked digital skills. One participant commented: *'It excludes lots of people who are not digitally literate. It's so confusing [...] Not everyone has access to or knowledge of how to use this kind of platform. We must recognise that many people, even among people who are self-educated, see a struggle.'* (INT04)

## Access to devices and connectivity

As mentioned above, completing the process typically requires both a smartphone and a laptop, along with a reliable internet connection. Access to the latest versions of specific smartphones and laptops was closely tied to economic resources, and those lacking such devices experienced the most significant difficulties. Some participants reported relying on public library computers because they did not own a laptop. Others relied on second-hand smartphones, and in particular, refugees depended on devices provided by charities, which often lacked the necessary compatibility with the system. These limitations placed certain groups at a distinct disadvantage, making the process more burdensome and, in some cases, inaccessible. The reliance on up-to-date technology and connectivity thus reinforced existing inequalities, disproportionately affecting those with fewer material resources.

## Language barriers

A common problem reported by participants was that all communication from the Home Office, including emails and website information, was available only in English. For individuals with limited English proficiency, this created significant challenges in following detailed instructions. Even participants with strong English skills felt it was unfair that the information was not translated into other languages, as it is done in some other public services. One participant who had successfully digitalised his status thanks to his high level of English and digital literacy, described how others in his community were struggling:

“

There is a language barrier. [...] So for me, the problem starts when you roll out this system without giving anyone the preparation, without having to train people or at least telling people how this is going to happen at this time, but you just bang, “oh, by the way, it’s digital from now on”.

(INT27)

”

He further explained that many people he knew had to turn to charities to seek help, as they simply could not understand the English-only information provided (INT27). Indeed, participants with limited English struggled to understand both the website and email communications. Another participant expressed frustration with the complexity and ambiguity of the guidance.

“

Very hard, very hard. It’s very hard. The guidance to get there, their explanation on how to navigate is not clear. It’s a bit ambiguous and it should be in simple English [...] How many migrants read this thing and understand? The more you read, you get more confused.

(INT01)

”

Without multilingual support, many migrants were left dependent on external help, which reinforced barriers rather than removing them.

## Caring responsibilities and particular problems for children

Some parents and carers faced challenges when digitalising immigration status, particularly in relation to their children. They reported that the process was long and complicated, requiring multiple attempts and frequent restarts. This was especially exhausting when combined with family duties and limited time, making it difficult for those juggling jobs and caring responsibilities to complete the process without interruption.

In some cases, parents could digitalise their own status, but doing so for their children proved more complex. For example, one participant shared that while her own immigration status had been digitalised, her children's statuses could not be due to a technical issue with the system (INT35). She expressed feelings of extreme stress and fear that her family would be stranded and unable to return to the UK. On the day they were set to return from Germany, she realised at the last minute that she might not be able to access her children's accounts, reportedly because they were outside the country. The uncertainty about whether they could board the plane or enter the UK caused her immense stress and anxiety. Beyond that one incident, she highlighted the ongoing mental burden of having to repeatedly explain their situation, contact officials, and invest significant time in resolving issues that were overwhelming for her. The process often involved days of chasing emails, reaching out to various people, and feeling like she was *'running around in circles'*, only to be told to wait (INT35). She characterised this as a massive and unnecessary burden on individuals and families who were already overwhelmed with caring responsibilities.

## We cannot show proof of your status

This might be because:

- your status is not ready to view in this service yet
- your visa or immigration application is not yet decided

The UKVI webpage indicating that digital status cannot be displayed.

Another issue that was raised was uncertainty around account access. Once one parent had digitalised a child's status, it was unclear whether the other parent could also log into the UKVI account and generate share codes independently. This was a particular concern for families where communication between parents was limited or strained. Because share codes are needed repeatedly for various purposes, any breakdown in communication between parents could result in delays or difficulties in verifying a child's immigration status.

Participants also described how stressful it was to manage the process while caring for young children, especially when travelling alone. For instance, generating share codes at check-ins or border crossings was particularly challenging when a parent had to manage multiple young children.

These challenges highlight how the system's design did not adequately account for the realities of family life, placing additional burdens on parents and carers, and creating unnecessary complications in managing children's digital status.



## Disabilities and older age

Participants with disabilities, those caring for dependents with disabilities, and older migrants faced significant accessibility challenges during the digitalisation process. One major issue reported was the difficulty of taking pictures, which was a required step for everyone in digitalising immigration status. For example, a family with an autistic child described their repeated attempts to take a suitable photo, ultimately failing to complete the process:

“

We wanted to do one for my son. He's autistic, so he cannot sit still. So when we wanted to take those pictures, it was a struggle for us. [...] Now we are struggling. We can't take his picture.

(INT17)

”

In this case, the family sought support from organisations but still could not solve their problem. They were instructed to take a passport-sized photo and use it instead. Despite several attempts, the family was unable to resolve the issue, and their child's immigration status was still not digitalised at the time of the interview. Such unresolved statuses are likely to cause further complications in the future, particularly when travelling or accessing essential services.

Older migrants also faced difficulties, both in digitalising their status and in generating share codes independently. These challenges were often linked to low levels of digital literacy and physical limitations such as poor eyesight. One participant described how her mother, aged over 65, depended on her for support throughout the process:

“

It was such a big problem for elderly people because they're not tech savvy enough. For example, for my mom, she's over 65 and she doesn't know how to do it. [...] And also she's got some eye issues. So for sure it's not easy. For example, to open this page. To find the appropriate website, decide to enter this passcode and then to show the share code.

(INT34)

”

These examples illustrate how the digitalisation process failed to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals and older migrants, placing them at a disadvantage and increasing their reliance on others.

## Complex legal trajectories

Some participants have navigated complicated and unstable legal circumstances that frequently generate or exacerbate social inequalities. When challenging personal situations intersect with limited resources (such as social, digital, or economic capital), families can experience complex and precarious legal status trajectories (see Goldring 2022). The digitalisation of immigration status often further complicates these already precarious trajectories, particularly in households where family members hold differing legal statuses.

### Box 3. Complex family circumstances

One of our participants, from an African country, arrived in the UK in 2021 through a family reunification scheme (INT11). She was married to a Norwegian man of Somali origin, who had previously lived in Norway. Both she and her husband held pre-settled status and had four children together. Her husband had moved to the UK in 2020 and submitted applications for their children's immigration status at that time. She joined him a year later with their children. However, by the time of the interview, she had discovered that her children's applications remained unresolved, still marked as 'Under consideration' on the Home Office's website. In addition, as time passed, the children's Norwegian passports had expired. To renew them at the Norwegian embassy in the UK, proof of legal residency was required - something they could not provide without confirmation of their pre-settled status.

Her own passport was also nearing expiration. With no embassy of her country of origin in the UK, she initially considered travelling to Belgium to apply for a new passport via a Schengen visa. However, she soon realised that the visa requirements were too complex and costly, and her passport did not meet the six-month validity rule for entry into the Schengen zone. As a result, she felt her only viable option was to return to her country of origin to renew her passport. Yet she was deeply anxious about this possibility. She feared that the authorities might not recognise her eVisa, that she could be denied boarding in a transit country, or that she might not be allowed to return to the UK, leaving her separated from her children.

Although she believed her children were safe with their father, his absence from the UK (over a year) jeopardised his eligibility for EUSS settled status. She was uncertain about the outcome of his application and worried about the long-term implications for the family. At times, she considered returning to Norway, but she had lost her residency rights there after being away for more than three years. She understood that she might be able to pursue family reunification through her children, once their legal status was confirmed.

This case illustrates how digitalisation, when layered onto already complex legal and familial situations, can create significant uncertainty and distress, particularly for families navigating multiple immigration systems and statuses.

## ◦ The role of third parties in implementing the new digital immigration system

This section examines how migrants interact with third-party actors who have become integral to the implementation and enforcement of the new digital immigration system. As shown in the sections above, participants reported a range of issues when digitalising their immigration status and generating share codes for various purposes. These problems had important implications, particularly in relation to right-to-work checks, right-to-rent checks, and travel to the UK. Those who needed to use the system most frequently, such as individuals applying for multiple short-term jobs or seeking housing due to frequent relocations, were disproportionately affected by the transition to digital immigration status. Additionally, not all authorities require a share code. Some instead continued to ask migrants to provide physical documents as proof of their immigration status. This suggests that different state authorities followed different processes and that, at the time of fieldwork in 2025, not all systems were fully integrated with the share code system. Beyond state authorities, other third parties, such as employers, landlords, airline carriers, and border guards, had varying levels of awareness about the eVisa system and how to handle problems that arose. These inconsistencies created uncertainty and additional burdens for migrants, which are explored in the subsections below.

### Issues related to the right to work checks

Several participants reported experiencing specific problems or being (in)directly affected by the share code they needed to generate for their right-to-work checks. The most reported problems included:

- Incorrect share code information showing outdated visa conditions
- Lack of clear guidance for migrants and employers on how to use share codes or fix errors
- Share codes requested earlier in the job application process, increasing the risk of exclusion
- Uncertainty about whether technical issues or discrimination caused rejection
- Migrants are burdened with explaining the system to employers repeatedly
- Anxiety about triggering immigration enforcement, leading migrants to avoid salary increases or contract changes

Among these, the most prominent issue was the inability to access employment opportunities, which meant they could not be employed due to problems with the share code system. For example, one participant's share code indicated she was only permitted to work 20 hours per week, rather than full-time, despite being entitled to full-time employment. This participant had recently switched from a student visa to a post-study visa, but her share code still reflected her previous student visa requirements. As a result, a potential employer, wanting to hire her, was deterred by the incorrect information and chose not to proceed with the job offer.



The participant explained that she was unsure why incorrect details appeared in the system or what steps she needed to take to correct them, and that there needs to be detailed guidance for herself and employers for situations like this:

“

When I gave them a new share code, they told me that it still said I could just work for only 20 hours a week. So I don't know what exactly was wrong, but it shouldn't have said that because I was eligible to work full-time. So I couldn't get that job.

(INT23)

”

Before the introduction of share codes, migrants were typically asked to provide proof of their right to live and work in the country at the final stage of the job application process. However, many of our participants reported that since the implementation of share codes, they are now asked to provide these during the application process itself. Some participants expressed uncertainty, unsure whether they were not called for interviews because their share codes were incorrect or because they faced discrimination after their codes were checked. One participant shared that this situation creates new forms of vulnerabilities, describing it as almost like having a ‘stroke of luck’:

“

I feel like sharecode is again, I think it has its own issues because you never know if it's going right or if it's going wrong. It's like it's more like I'd say, a stroke of luck. It's like winning the lottery 'cause if it happens, happens. If it doesn't, it doesn't. So, there's no way to check if it's done the right way. I think that's the biggest issue.

(INT23)

”

Those working in the employment sector were not always adequately informed about the process. In several cases, migrants found themselves having to explain the new process to their employers, placing an additional and uncertain burden on them. One participant shared that they could not secure their desired job because employers lacked sufficient knowledge of the share code system. As a result, they not only lost the job opportunity but also the time spent applying and travelling for the interview. Many questioned why they should be responsible for explaining this transition to employers, emphasising that they had to repeat the same information multiple times to different potential employers.

“

That day I was really sad. 'cause I'd spent, I think, more than an hour going there. Then another hour coming back [...] The admin people, many of them don't know anything about this system, so you are here with all your information dealing with an ignorant system and you are it's a burden having to say things, things over and over and over again. I have to say it again today. It is so tiring [...] who should be doing the information sharing? Who should be doing the telling? Who should be doing the sharing?

(INT02)

”

The lack of awareness about the process can even lead migrants to reject positive changes to their work contracts out of fear. In our cohort, migrants who were awaiting the outcome of recent visa applications or extensions reported feeling particularly anxious. One participant, for example, suggested to their employer that their salary remain the same and that they not receive a raise, to avoid triggering immigration enforcement, despite having the right to stay in the country (INT33). These fears were heightened by uncertainty about the share code system and whether it was prompting any further checks that could create problems for them, despite their right to work in the UK. Overall, these fears should be understood as part of the general anxiety experienced by migrants on temporary visas in the UK.

## Issues related to the right to rent checks

Similar concerns applied to the right to rent checks. The most reported problems included:

- Lack of awareness among landlords about the share code system and eVisas
- Inconsistent communication from the government about new procedures
- System failures when landlords attempted to verify share codes
- Dependence on landlords' goodwill to resolve technical issues

Among third-party actors, individual landlords may be the least aware of the digital immigration status. One participant emphasised the need to raise awareness among the general public, especially landlords, to ensure that everyone can access this platform.



For me, I still stand on my word saying it is an innovation quick show. I totally love it. It makes the whole thing easier. So, but the only thing I feel that will be very necessary is making other people aware in all the sectors, including landlords [...] they should make it a kind of a mandate to put it in every zone, you know, awareness about the share code system, about how to do the application, how to help people to go with this [...] The new world. If you don't have it, it's gonna be a big barrier.

(INT03)



One of our participants explained that although he was able to generate a share code for housing purposes, his landlord struggled to use it (INT19). Each time the landlord entered his share code on his side, the system failed to work. In this case, the issue was eventually resolved because the landlord continued to try and because it was the two of them meeting in person. The participant reflected that had they not been in person, the landlord might not have persisted, and he could have lost the opportunity to rent the property. This shows that this system is likely to work through the goodwill and persistence of landlords. If landlords are unwilling or unable to invest the time to use the share code system and sometimes even resolve some issues that may arise from the system, and in fact if they are not able or in the position to engage with this 'bordering' work (Reeves 2014), applicants could be left without housing.

Reflecting on the obstacles migrants will face when asked to provide a share code to exercise their right to rent, this participant explains quite clearly how things will probably unfold:



Imagine you are a landlord. You have like five people willing to rent your house. Three of them have a physical document, which is what British people have, and then these two have these strange numbers. As a landlord, will you take the time to open a computer, navigate to the webpage, enter those strange numbers, view the picture, and see if the first one comes on? The thing is that not the entire British society is based on paperless forms of documentation. The entire society is based on paper, proof of documentation [...] So we are going to mark you visually when you have to prove your status, so people can know that you are not British. We are going to do it in a way that is going to be so hard to prove your status.

(INT16)



## Issues related to travel to the UK

Many participants in our research shared negative experiences of travelling to the UK using a 'share code', as well as fears about travelling or deciding not to travel because of these concerns. The most reported problems included:

- Lack of awareness and understanding of eVisas and share codes among airline and border officers in countries of departure
- Repeated requests to generate new share codes during check-in and boarding
- Concerns around poor internet connectivity or lack of international roaming, making it difficult to generate or verify share codes on the spot
- Inability to digitalise immigration status (or that of dependants) due to system errors, causing stress and delays when travelling
- Not knowing that digital status must be linked to a passport, leading to potential denial of entry
- Refugees being unable to link Refugee Travel Documents to UKVI accounts, leaving them uncertain about their ability to travel
- Fear of being unable to re-enter the UK, discouraging overseas travel altogether





Several participants told us that when they were able to digitalise their status, entering the UK at border points such as airports was relatively straightforward because UK customs officers were familiar with eVisas and expired BRPs. However, the major challenge arose when leaving the country of departure for the UK. The following story illustrates very well how even privileged migrants struggled with the new system when travelling abroad:

“ In Singapore, when I went back to [airline] desk, the person was like: “can you prove that you’re living in the UK?” And I gave the code, you know, but then she was like: “no, we need an ID proving that you’re living in the UK”. And I was like: “that’s what I have that I live in the UK”. [...] the Home Office did not let anybody know from the boarding companies in different parts of the world, different flight companies about the system. So, if the person was very strict, [I] would have [had my] rights denied.

(INT16)

Similarly, one participant from Ukraine, who had the right to live in the UK, described difficulties when travelling from Paris to London. She was asked to present a valid physical document, and the share codes she provided for herself, and her dependents were not accepted. Despite having printed copies of the share codes, she was required to generate each one again in front of the officers – a task made even more difficult as she was managing childcare for multiple children at the border.

“ They didn’t know what to do with the share code, where to put it, how to deal with it. So and for us it was like it was tricky because they couldn’t allow us to leave their country for the UK because they were not sure that the UK is happy to have us, yeah.

(INT34)

Similarly, another participant, who had recently arrived in the UK for the first time as a temporary resident on a Global Talent dependent visa, described the difficulties she faced when travelling. Although she had no issues registering for the system or generating a share code before her journey, the boarding process proved challenging. From check-in through passport control and up to the point of boarding, she was repeatedly asked to generate new share codes for the officers, as none of them seemed to understand what the codes were for. She explained that this was stressful and time-consuming, and she was worried she might miss her connecting flight because of the repeated requests:

“ It’s a waste of time; it’s a waste of time for everyone involved, including us and the officers working there, too.

(INT36)

Like others, she concluded that the main issue was at the point of departure, where border or airline officers lacked knowledge about digital status.

For others, although they were able to digitalise their status and generate share codes, they were unaware that they also needed to link their digital status to their passports. Without this link, border guards could not automatically verify their status when checking passports, which meant they might be denied entry to the UK. Several participants only discovered this requirement through social media channels, such as Instagram and YouTube, where other migrants shared their experiences. Even after learning about it, some struggled to complete the linking process. Some participants shared stories of friends who struggled and lost their tickets while trying to travel to the UK (INT31).

Refugees who did not hold passports but instead had Refugee Travel Documents faced a specific challenge: it is not possible to link a Refugee Travel Document to a UKVI account. This left many refugees in an uncertain position, as they could not link their digital immigration status to their travel document, and were unsure whether they could travel abroad. One participant with refugee status, who later obtained ILR, expressed frustration with the Home Office for failing to link their document and described feeling humiliated when trying to return to the UK:

“

I'm like Sir, you work for the Home Office. We've got eVisas now. He said, the eVisa is not linked to my travel documents, you understand? So, I'm like, "who has to link it? I think you, the Home Office, you have to link it because you told us that you're gonna do everything. So how is that my business?" You know what he told me? He said, when you go out next time, I'm coming back and we [will] stop you. But how do I link it? [...] I was telling him the truth because it was so annoying. People would think that maybe I'm trying to negotiate my entry, or I don't have papers. It was humiliating.

(INT01)

”

Many also highlighted concerns about internet connectivity when travelling. If problems arose and participants needed to use their mobile phones to verify their digital status, they feared that poor reception or lack of connectivity abroad due to a lack of an international roaming plan, or network incompatibility could prevent them from proving their right to travel to the UK. One shared:

“

What if you are travelling and have no Internet. You will be blocked. And then they would say you're lying, that you don't have it. You know how they are.

(INT01)

”

Finally, for some, the fear of being unable to re-enter the UK was so strong that it prevented them from making any plans for overseas travel for a long time.



## Everyday digital bordering and casual surveillance

The breadth of actors tasked with verifying migrants' legal status is substantial, and these practices are often described as 'everyday digital bordering'. Our study clearly demonstrates that many third-party actors lack an adequate understanding of how the share code system functions. This lack of knowledge can result in outright refusals to engage with the system, effectively excluding migrants by default.

Additionally, we also notice unlawful uses of the system that we refer to as emerging forms of 'casual surveillance'. For example, we documented a case in which supermarket staff requested an eVisa as a form of identity verification – an application assumedly far beyond the purposes envisioned by the Home Office. As one explained:

“

Sometimes people don't know about it, and they would want to check the physical ID, but some know about it. For example, when you get into any service providers like supermarkets, they would ask to verify your age. Some do say to show them your eVisa. It happened to me once. It was at a supermarket while buying drinks. They asked me for an ID, and I showed them the ID I had, but they asked for an eVisa. And I could not show them by logging in to the system, I told them I don't know how to do it. Then they said that if I didn't show them, I couldn't buy it. But others do not know about eVisa and just ask for ID.

(INT28)

”

While some people were unfamiliar with the system and requested physical IDs, others, such as staff at supermarkets, specifically asked for a share code as proof of identity. This indicates that the share code system is being used in everyday situations beyond the third parties which are supposed to be using it. More importantly, this indicates that migrants are even more at risk of being racially profiled and socially excluded from goods and services not envisaged by the Home Office.

In the next section, we examine the various strategies migrants employed to overcome and cope with the difficulties they encountered.



## ◦ Migrant-led strategies of navigating the new digital immigration system

### Home Office support channels

When migrants encounter difficulties in establishing a UKVI account, navigating the verification process, or addressing system-related errors, such as incorrect personal details, they are directed to several formal mechanisms intended to resolve such issues. These include:

- The eVisa webchat service;
- The online ‘Report an error with your eVisa’ form;
- Contacting the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) Resolution Centre by telephone;
- Submitting a formal complaint;
- Requesting that airlines contact the Home Office’s Carrier Support Hub when travellers are wrongly denied boarding for flights to the UK.

However, those who used these official support channels frequently described them as ineffective. For example, when they used the UKVI eVisa webchat, responses were often delayed, and the information provided was incomplete or incorrect. Automated web chats rely on templated responses that often fail to provide accurate or relevant information. Participants also described attempting to resolve issues through the online form or by emailing the Home Office, typically with limited success. Others turned to online guides and FAQs intended to address ‘common problems’, though these materials were often too complicated to decode. The Home Office has also created a YouTube channel offering explanatory videos on the eVisa system; however, some participants still could not resolve the problems they faced, even after following all the steps shown on these videos. Other migrants were not aware of these videos, suggesting that the Home Office’s channel had limited visibility or relevance.

Among the most used formal mechanisms was the UKVI Resolution Centre, referred to by migrants as the ‘helpline’, which serves as the primary channel for addressing concerns related to digital immigration status. For some interviewees, calling the Home Office did not seem to be an issue. For example, one stated: *‘Whenever I have any problem with the Home Office, I call them directly. Yeah, that’s what I do. Or I write to them directly, any problem I have, I pick up my phone and I ring’* (INT05). However, most did not know how to contact the Home Office in times of need. For example, one participant, who struggled to digitalise her children’s statuses, was not aware of any support contact numbers. She noted that while attempting to complete the digitalisation process, she found a link on the Home Office website where users could report problems. She submitted a report through this link but never received a response. She shared:

“

I am not aware of any helpline. I couldn’t see any contactable information on the website.

(INT35)

”

In one case, where a participant was aware that she could contact the Home Office, she did so repeatedly but was unable to obtain a satisfactory response. This participant, a refugee who held a travel document rather than a passport, needed to travel from the UK to Germany after successfully digitalising her status through her BRP. Because her visa was linked to her travel document rather than a passport, she was anxious about whether she would be able to exit and re-enter the UK without difficulty. Prior to travelling, she contacted the Home Office to enquire whether her travel document could be linked to her eVisa. Despite making multiple calls, the staff she spoke to were either unable to provide assistance or lacked the relevant knowledge. She was redirected from one person to another, including a live chat service, and after providing her details several times, was ultimately told that only passports could be linked to an eVisa. At no point was she offered clear guidance. Instead, she was repeatedly informed that the Home Office could not advise her and that travelling would be *‘at her own risk’*. (INT30)

For problems that occurred during travel, the Home Office established a 24/7 travel helpline to support travellers encountering status-related issues. However, this service was reportedly discontinued within months, leaving individuals stranded abroad and denied boarding (see The3Million 2025b, p. 6).

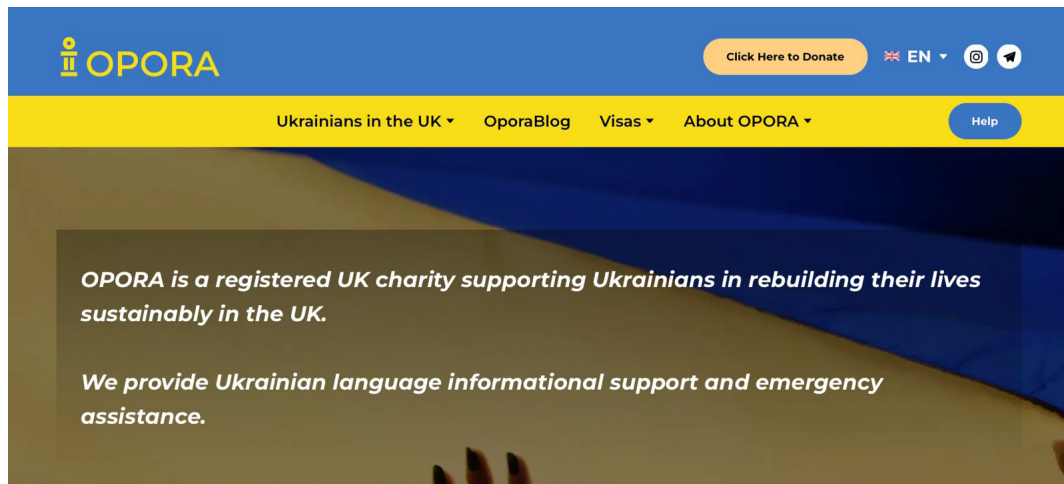
Finally, the Home Office additionally funds Assisted Digital support delivered by the We Are Group (WAG), which has assisted EUSS applicants and those registering with UKVI since 2017. This service is intended for migrants lacking digital confidence, internet access, or appropriate devices, as well as those with complex needs (including children, disabled individuals, survivors of trafficking or domestic violence, older or isolated people, and those experiencing homelessness, etc.). However, the eligibility criteria to access this service remain unclear, particularly for individuals already struggling to navigate the system.

Overall, our data show that migrants often had to rely on alternative channels because the official mechanisms provided by the Home Office were frequently inadequate for resolving urgent or complex difficulties. However, this should not be overgeneralised. Some participants, typically those with higher levels of English proficiency and digital literacy, reported feeling able to contact the Home Office when needed.

## Migrant rights support networks

Many migrants in our sample have reached out to charities that provide various forms of assistance to migrants regarding their legal status. A network of third-sector organisations supported directly by the Home Office – 21 in England, 2 in Scotland, 1 in Wales, and 1 in Northern Ireland (as of September 2025) – also provides support. Yet the establishment of this network was significantly delayed, limiting migrants’ access to timely assistance during the period when they were required to create a UKVI account. These organisations are also constrained by limited funding, which typically only covers one-off assistance with setting up an account rather than ongoing support for proving digital immigration status.





OPORA, UK charity supporting Ukrainians

Apart from these organisations, which received some official funding from the Home Office, a range of grassroots groups across the sector has been providing assistance and support to migrants throughout the UK. Similar to what happened at the time when the EUSS was introduced, these organisations play a central role in securing life-changing outcomes for migrants (Elfving and Marcinkowska 2021, p. 69). For instance, one Ukrainian participant noted that the organisation OPORA, a primary information and support hub for Ukrainians in the UK, has helped many Ukrainians with this new scheme. She also referred to locally based church community initiatives hosting weekly sessions to support migrants. Although she expressed dissatisfaction with the share code system, she nonetheless felt well supported overall due to the availability of these organisations, which offered their services at no cost (INT34).

Among civil society initiatives designed to assist migrants, the work of the3million is particularly notable. The organisation created an online reporting tool, 'Report It!', which allows migrants to document problems with their digital immigration status (see Figure 6). Drawing on these submissions, the3million (2025b) recently published 'The Digital Status Crisis' report, which identifies a systemic failure within the UK's digital immigration infrastructure. The report analyses more than 1,870 user-submitted cases and estimates that nearly 940,000 individuals may have been unable – at some point – to evidence their lawful status due to technical glitches. The report explicitly likens these failings to the Windrush scandal and calls for urgent government action to address structural flaws within the eVisa system.





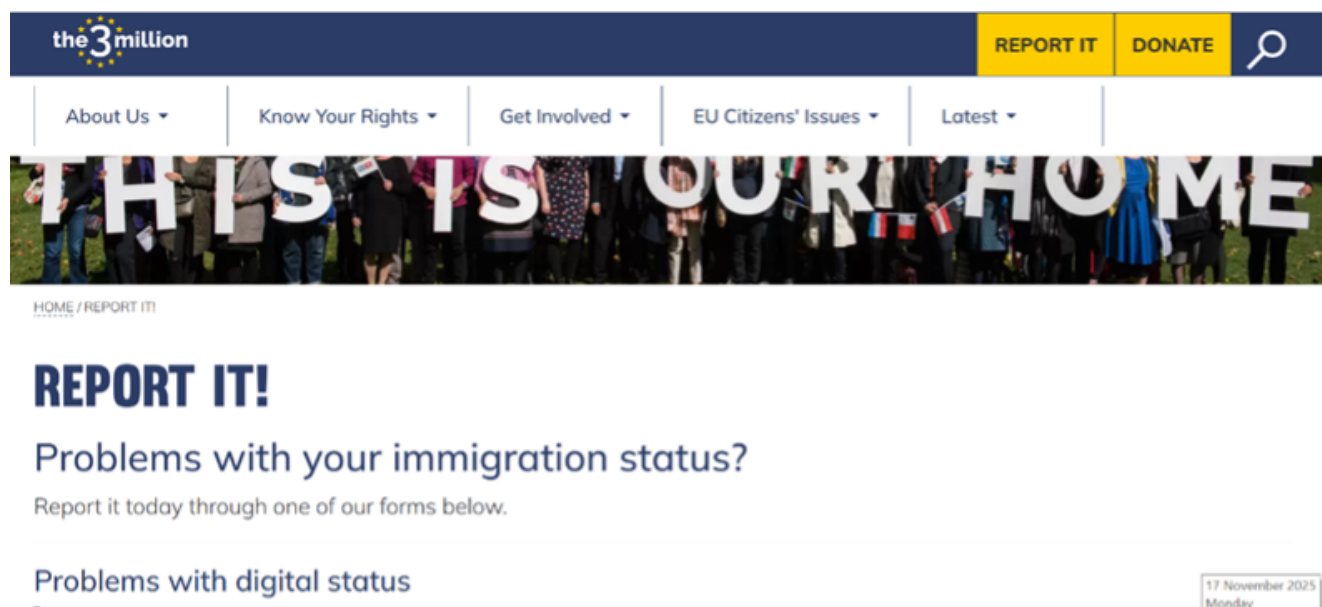


Figure 6. 'Report It!' on the3Million's website

## Informal support networks

Our participants used various strategies to overcome the challenges they faced. In an environment characterised by what is often referred to as 'information precarity' (Wall et al. 2017), migrants usually need to navigate the system on their own. For those whose English is not their first language, they often need to rely on friends and/or community-based support through platforms like WhatsApp groups. Therefore, migrants need to perform 'interpretive labour' (see Ozkul & Jarrous 2021), which refers to the cognitive, intellectual and emotional work people must perform to make sense of bureaucratic systems that are often opaque, fragmented, and linguistically inaccessible. When migrants lack the resources (such as digital literacy, reliable internet access, and/or proficiency in English) to navigate official channels of communication, this 'interpretive labour' becomes even more demanding. Migrants are required to decipher complex procedures, interpret the nuances of administrative documents, and rely on informal networks for guidance. This uneven burden exposes how responsibility for understanding and compliance is shifted onto migrants themselves and their support networks, reinforcing inequalities within the migration regime. For example, the following participant initially attempted it on his own but was unable to proceed, especially when he did not understand what was required of him. In many cases, participants sought help from their own communities and/or friends. Unable to complete the process, these participants sought help from someone more resourceful:

“

I once tried to send an eVisa code through Gmail when asked to do so. I attempted it myself, but I couldn't manage it in the end. Another person helped me with that.

(INT28)

”

The phenomenon of YouTube channels and Instagram ‘immigrant influencers’ (Jaramillo-Dent et al. 2022) is well-established in other contexts where migrants seek information. Therefore, it is not surprising that information about digital immigration status is also shared on these platforms. One notable example mentioned by several interviewees is the channel owned by Nanelle Griselda, a Ghanaian YouTube influencer and registered nurse in the UK. Nanelle Griselda provides practical advice and shares personal experiences related to migration and settlement. In her video titled ‘E-VISA IS HERE!!! AVOID THESE MISTAKES WHEN APPLYING’, which has garnered almost 300,000 views, she offers a detailed 20-minute walkthrough of the eVisa application process (#ukvisa #evisa #brpukvisa) (23 April 2024). Some of our participants sought information from such ‘immigrant influencers’. For example, the following participant relied heavily on YouTube channels dedicated to how to proceed with the E-Visa application online. She described very clearly how she prepared herself to get through the online process:

“

I usually first try to see other people’s experiences before doing things, and there’s a lot of people on YouTube going, oh, this was how I did it, a step-by-step guide. So, it took watching tonnes of YouTube videos. It took asking questions on WhatsApp groups like, or even reading other people’s responds to. Oh, OK. I’m having this challenge. How do I solve it? I’m like I’m mentally preparing if I have this kind of challenge [...] It was on such spaces that I figured out how to do things if you are having struggles, there’s something on your BRP, you have to scan it. Remove the case from your phone and wipe your camera properly. So it was in those spaces that sort of makes you mentally prepared. Like OK, if you encounter this challenge do this. Try this. Try that [...] lots of mental preparation before starting the process [...] those places are usually spaces where you learn more about other experiences.

(INT02)

”



A YouTuber explaining the introduction of eVisa in her channel

Others echoed that such videos created by other migrants were helpful:

““

The majority of those links were created, or those videos were done by our community people, Nigerians. So, they did it to help their fellow Nigerians. Yeah, on videos, on YouTube videos, on Instagram [...] It was helpful.

(INT21)

””

Many YouTube channels where accurate information is being shared among migrant communities are helpful. However, there are also many counterexamples. The lack of clear communication towards migrant communities has contributed to the spread of rumours, particularly on social media platforms, as noted in another research (see Ozkul & Jarrous 2021). Therefore, as mentioned by one of our interviewees:

““

The Home Office must do more. They have to do something about their policy of being faceless. While I understand how it can be for OK people to come out and talk about issues and stuff like that, we've come to an age where you can't just keep mute about certain issues. If there is a void of information, other things will thrive, hence the rumours. Hence the fake news. Hence the information going around [...] They have to do more with reference to sharing the right information and not just with migrants.

(INT02)

””

In some cases, ‘information precarity’ can also lead to exploitation, where individuals may take advantage of migrants by charging them large sums of money for assistance in obtaining their eVisas. For example, one participant had to pay £150 for some ‘migration advice’, only to receive the same information she had already obtained from the Home Office’s resolution centre (INT11). Those who are in a vulnerable position can also be subject to ‘advice sharks’ (see the3Million 2025, p. 15) who capitalise on individuals’ inability to manage their own immigration status. These intermediaries retain all login details for their ‘clients’, who must then pay them to access their own information.



## Individual contingency strategies

Many migrants found their own ways to navigate the system by creating personal workarounds. For instance, it was not rare to hear stories where people take screenshots of each step of the application process on their phones. This method allowed them to follow the steps independently and access their accounts as needed, even if they did not fully understand the process.

“

I think it is a matter of getting used to it. I have to get used to the system. You cannot always depend on people, you have to try to make an effort to learn the system.

(INT28)

”

In many instances, migrants are developing various contingency strategies, including an assemblage of digital and physical proofs of legal status, such as current and expired passports, old and new BRPs, and letters from the Home Office, with printed or digital records confirming their rights. Such records may include copies of multiple share codes verifying the right to work, rent, and travel at different points in time, acceptance letters, and email communications referencing their right to stay in the UK. Continuously generating new share codes is also a strategy, as their validity period is often unclear. Maintaining these documents in multiple formats and locations, both digital and physical, is crucial for many, even when some items, such as BRPs, have expired since December 2024.

Some also reported frequent use of AI-based tools, such as ChatGPT, and noted their ability to formulate effective prompts to better understand the system. One participant indicated that he initially used ChatGPT to navigate the digitalisation process (INT29). To gain a more comprehensive understanding, he supplemented this with additional research using both Google and ChatGPT. Participants often cross-checked information across multiple sources, including official government websites.

“

So, for instance, if I face obstacles with the share code, I'll ask ChatGPT and it will answer how to generate the share code and where to apply for the share code. [...] I also ask about the variance of our future with the type of immigration with a visa, what type of visa we can afford for ourselves, the documents needed, what kind of evidence is necessary for this type of visa or that type of visa. [...] It makes the process of finding information, but also analysing information, easier.

(INT06)

”

One participant explained that they had relied on Reddit – the social news aggregation and forum social media platform – for all their previous visa applications and chose to do the same when transitioning to the eVisa system:

“

I like Reddit for the forums and people are very good at tracking. I don't know. It has very solid information around immigration. Like the reality of it and the processes and people really take the time to write it out so. It's kind of literally my first spot, yeah.

(INT33)

”

Not surprisingly, this new digital system rewards those who have this form of digital literacy. They rely on themselves and demonstrate an entrepreneurial spirit, which allows them to move more smoothly within society than others, facing fewer barriers in accessing work, housing, travel, and other services. Some of them even explicitly stated that they belonged to this new digital society.

“

What I would say is. I actually. I'm somebody who loves technology. I love innovation. I love learning. So I'm always enthusiastic when I hear about a new development in the new process. I love changes. At that moment, I heard about the evisa, when I received it, I was looking forward to it. 'Cause you know? If everything gets to a point where there's change, there's improvement and development. It really helps a lot. So, when I heard about the eVisa, I was looking forward to it because I knew yes, it saves you. The fact of carrying the BRP around, you know, because carrying the BRP around sometimes might... You might miss it and that's another process for you to get it back. Whereas with the eVisa, it's easy for you to go online, put your identity and all that. So, I'm somebody that loves innovation, development. And so, I was really looking forward to it when I heard about it.

(INT18)

”

This section highlights the various strategies that migrants use to navigate the new digital immigration system. These strategies range from using official Home Office channels to seeking assistance from migrant rights support networks. The data shows that many migrants rely on informal networks within their communities and personal connections to address issues of 'information precarity' and to help them interpret the new rules. Social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Reddit, often led by migrants themselves, are becoming valuable resources for those trying to navigate the system. This section also discusses various individual contingency strategies that demonstrate migrants' creativity and resourcefulness in coping with the complexities and exclusionary dynamics of the new digital immigration system.

## ◦ Conclusion



I think with the Home Office it feels like, “oh, the digital is done and our job is done”. No, your job is not done if it is not working properly.

(INT02)



This statement reflects the frustration voiced by many participants. As of October 2025, at the time of writing, the Home Office appeared to consider the digitalisation of immigration status a completed task, despite persistent and unresolved issues that continued to affect migrants' lives. Several participants, or their dependents, had still not been able to digitalise their status. While immediate consequences had not yet materialised, we expect significant problems to emerge over time, particularly when proving their status and rights in the country.

Drawing on qualitative data from in-depth interviews with 40 migrants in the UK, this report examines the digital immigration status from migrants' perspective. We explore how migrants, third parties, and the technical workings of the system, which we conceptualise in this report as a digital identity platform, co-produce migrant experiences and shape their shifting positionalities. Migrants' ability to navigate this platform is mediated by their demographic characteristics, legal trajectories, and the resources afforded by their economic, social, and digital capital (including digital literacy and access to digital infrastructure).

Our findings indicate that most migrants who took part in this research experienced negative impacts from the digitalisation of their immigration status, although in varying ways and with differing consequences for their lives. We argue that the system reinforces a continuum of precariousness, encompassing three overlapping groups:

- Migrants who are already and increasingly excluded and marginalised;
- Migrants who can cope with the system but remain at risk of legal and economic exclusion;
- Migrants who navigate the system more efficiently, experiencing negative impacts but having sufficient resources to recover from these challenges.

The report deliberately highlights the problems experienced by the first group: those already experiencing multiple forms of precarity - legal, socio-economic, or otherwise. These individuals face the most significant challenges in accessing and navigating the system, a burden exacerbated by the platform's requirements. Migrants are not only responsible for registering for and managing their legal status online but must also continuously engage with the system to exercise their rights, including their right to work, rent and access public services and travel. Many struggle not only with the initial account creation but also with the ongoing, day-to-day management of their digital records, placing them at immediate risk of marginalisation and falling through the cracks.

The second group generally has access to the system, but technical and design limitations often impede their ability to accurately reflect their legal trajectories, leaving them vulnerable to legal and economic precarity. Members of this group frequently report feeling 'trapped' in the system, compelled to comply while lacking trust in its functionality. The third group has successfully created accounts and



navigated the system with relative ease. These migrants, who tend to have higher levels of English proficiency, digital literacy, and economic or social capital, experience more linear legal trajectories, with fewer changes in status and lower risks in securing employment and housing. They encounter ‘everyday digital bordering’ less frequently and primarily rely on themselves or close networks with comparable digital skills to navigate the platform effectively.

The system reinforces an already hierarchical regime of belonging in which migrants are kept in a prolonged state of probation and evaluated according to standards never applied to British nationals (Sigona 2025). By not making the digital immigration system accessible to all migrants, it intentionally encourages exclusion and inclusion practices that mirror the rules of a points-based or ‘merit-based’ immigration system. In its current form, the system is exclusionary by design: it privileges certain categories of migrants deemed to possess the requisite ‘skills,’ educational qualifications, age, or English-language proficiency. As a result, hierarchies of deservingness are embedded directly into the platform’s architecture, making them more difficult to contest and limiting the possibility of holding the Home Office accountable for the inequitable delivery of its own services.

Nonetheless, the system remains hostile – albeit to differing extents – to all migrants participating in our research. Across all profiles, several commonalities emerge. Most participants describe the system as unreadable, unreliable, unstable, stressful, and time-consuming. In response, many develop contingency strategies, assembling digital and physical proofs of legal status. Trust in the Home Office is generally very low, prompting migrants to seek alternative pathways to navigate the system, often within their own social networks (friends, community WhatsApp groups, YouTube Channels, etc.), but also by relying on civil society organisations for support. Overall, most participants perceive the system as unfair and inconsistent, highlighting the uneven experiences and outcomes it generates.

Moreover, the lack of clear information from the Home Office not only creates confusion among migrants but also extends to employers, landlords, and others. In such situations, migrants are often forced to act as educators, explaining the share code system and the transition to eVisas: an additional burden that consumes time and energy and sometimes leads to suspicion about their truthfulness. Ultimately, such communication failures and uneven levels of awareness across entities create barriers, increased stress and heightened risk of social and economic exclusion for migrants.

The digital immigration status also introduces new vulnerabilities, dependencies, and risks. Many migrants struggle due to limited digital literacy, a challenge particularly pronounced among people with disabilities and the elderly. Language barriers exacerbate these difficulties, as the platform and supporting information are largely unavailable in languages other than English. In addition, the language employed is often highly technical and inaccessible, disconnected from the realities and the needs of people who have to use this platform in their everyday lives. Technological constraints, including reliance on outdated smartphones or specific Android models and limited internet connectivity, further impede access.

These challenges intersect with precarious legal statuses, while complex gendered dynamics can also shape unequal experiences in navigating the system. Paradoxically, those most constrained by the system are also required to engage with it most frequently, repeatedly proving eligibility for work, housing, and social benefits. This highlights how structural demands of compliance disproportionately burden the most vulnerable.

While previous research has highlighted challenges faced by EUSS migrants, our research emphasises additional challenges faced by non-EUSS migrants who were expected to digitalise their legal status on their own and complete it within only a few months, with fewer resources and less institutional

support. However, for all migrants, including EUSS and non-EUSS migrants, digital immigration status changes the logic of identification. Through the implementation of a shared code system, migrants need to generate share codes for different purposes many times, as the share codes are only temporary; their status is no longer fixed and must now be constantly requested from the Home Office. The term ‘politics of exhaustion’ is often used to describe the external, ‘off-shored’ aspects of UK immigration policy (see Ansems de Vries and Welander 2021). However, our research indicates that migrants within the UK are also being subject to a politics of exhaustion, which has become invisibilised, routinised and legitimised by the new digital immigration platform.

Migrants, both the EUSS and non-EUSS migrants, have effectively been treated as a test population for future digital identity infrastructures, with little regard for their personal circumstances, including disability, digital literacy, or access to technology, as well as their general fear of losing their rights due to being migrants. While migrants have served as ‘technological testing grounds’ in other contexts (Molnar 2020), such experiments have typically focused on managing external borders rather than governing populations within state borders. In this respect, the UK represents a distinctive and troubling case: it has piloted a digital identity system on migrants residing within its territory, effectively normalising experimental forms of digital identification on a specific, already precarious group before considering similar digital infrastructures for the general public.

Our findings come at a time when various charities and human rights organisations, such as Migrant Voice and Open Rights Group, are raising concerns about the various deficiencies in digital immigration governance. Our conclusions align with these broader sector worries and aim to add further empirical evidence to ongoing calls for a comprehensive review of the digital immigration status system in the UK.



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Appendix

Participants' Demographic Details

	Nationality	Status	Single/ Married	Children	Gender	Age	Education	Residence	Number of years in the UK	Primary language	Online/ FtF	Connection
1	Cameroun	ILR	Single	Y	F	40-49	Master's degree	Birmingham	2018	English	online	Migrant Voice
2	Nigeria	Global Talent	Married	Y	F	30-39	Master's degree	Birmingham	2022	English	online	Migrant Voice
3	Nigeria	ILR	Married	Y	F	40-49	Bachelor's degree	Birmingham	2017	English	online	Migrant Voice
4	Nigeria	Refugee Status	Married	Y	M	40-49	Master's degree	West Midlands (Sandwell District)	2019	English	online	Migrant Voice
5	Cameroun	ILR	Single	Y	F	50-59	Master's degree	Middlesbrough	2016	English	online	Migrant Voice
6	Ukraine	Ukrainian Scheme	Married	Y	M	50-59	Master's degree	Birmingham	2022	Russian	online	Migrant Voice
7	Malawi	Refugee status	Single	Y	F	50-59	Master's degree	Coventry	2017	Chitumbuka, Chichewa	online	Migrant Voice
8	Somalia	Pre-settled status	Separated but still married	Y	F	40-49	College degree	Leicester	2023	Somali	FtF	SOCOPA
9	Somalia	Pre-settled status	Separated but still married	Y	F	40-49	Secondary school	Leicester	2022	Somali	FtF	SOCOPA
10	India	International Student Visa	Married	N	F	20-29	Master's degree	Leicester	2023	Indi and Urdu	online	SOCOPA
11	Djibouti	Pre-settled status	Married	Y	F	40-49	Master's degree	Leicester	2021	Somali	online	SOCOPA
12	Nigeria	International Student Visa	Married	Y	F	30-39	Master's degree	St. Helens	2023	English	online	Migrant Voice
13	Guinea- Conakry	ILR	Single	Y	F	40-49	Master's degree	Coventry	2010	Fula	online	Migrant Voice
14	Chile	ILR	Single	N	M	50-59	Bachelor's degree	London	1978	Spanish	online	Migrant Voice
15	Nigeria	Global Talent	Married	Y	F	30-39	Bachelor's degree	Blackburn	2022	English	online	Migrant Voice
16	Brazil/ Italian	Pre-settled status	Single	N	F	30-39	PhD degree	Sheffield	2020	Portugese	online	Migrant Voice
17	Zambia	Refugee status	Married	Y	F	40-49	College degree	Birmingham	2005	English	online	Migrant Voice
18	Nigeria	Tier 2	Married	Y	M	40-49	Bachelor's degree	Birmingham	2022	English	online	Migrant Voice
19	Zimbabwe	Refugee status	Married	Y	M	30-39	Bachelor's degree	Birmingham	2023	English	online	Migrant Voice
20	Zambia	Refugee status	Married	Y	F	40-49	Bachelor's degree	Birmingham	2001	English	online	Migrant Voice
21	Nigeria	Tier 2	Married	Y	F	30-39	Bachelor's degree	Midlands	2022	English	online	Migrant Voice



22	Nigeria	International Student Visa	Married	Y	F	30-39	Bachelor's degree	Wales	2023	English	online	Snow-balling
23	India	Post-study work visa	Single	N	F	30-39	Bachelor's degree	Nottingham	2023	English	online	Migrant Voice
24	Nigeria	International Student Visa	Single	N	F	20-29	Bachelor's degree	Wolverhampton	2024	English	online	Migrant Voice
25	Kurdistan, Iraq	Refugee status	Single	N	F	20-29	Bachelor's degree	Oxfordshire	2019	Kurdish	FtF	Asylum Welcome
26	Eritrea	Refugee status	Married	N/A	F	20-29	Secondary school	Drayton	2021	Tigrigna	FtF	Asylum Welcome
27	Ethiopia	Refugee status	Single	N	M	20-29	Bachelor's degree	Oxfordshire	2023	Oromo	FtF	Asylum Welcome
28	Eritrea	Refugee status	Married	N/A	M	20-29	Junior school	Oxfordshire	2024	Tigrigna	FtF	Asylum Welcome
29	Ethiopia	Refugee status	Single	N/A	M	35-44	PhD degree	Oxfordshire	2024	Amharic	FtF	Asylum Welcome
30	Eritrea	Post-study work visa	Single	N	F	30-39	Master's degree	Oxfordshire	2023	Tigrigna	online	Asylum Welcome
31	Nigeria	ILR	Single	Y	F	40-49	Bachelor's degree	West Midlands	2010	English	online	Migrant Voice
32	Sudan	Refugee status	Married	Y	M	55-65	Bachelor's degree	Birmingham	2010	Arabic	online	Migrant Voice
33	The USA	International Student Visa	Single	N	NB	20-29	Master's degree	London	2022	English	online	Migrant Voice
34	Ukraine	Ukrainian Scheme	Single	Y	F	30-39	Master's degree	Oxfordshire	2022	Ukranian	FtF	Personal connections
35	Turkey	ILR	Married	Y	F	40-49	Master's degree	Oxfordshire	2020	Turkish	online	Personal connections
36	Turkey	Global Talent	Single	N	F	20-29	Master's degree	Liverpool	2025	Turkish	online	Snowballing
37	Turkey	ILR	Married	Y	M	40-49	Master's degree	Oxfordshire	2019	Turkish	online	Personal connections
38	Turkey	Family visa	Married	Y	M	30-39	PhD degree	Sheffield	2017	Turkish	online	Personal connections
39	Bangladesh	International Student Visa	Single	N	M	20-29	Bachelor's degree	London	2025	Bengali	online	Personal connections
40	Pakistan	International Student Visa	Single	N	M	20-29	Bachelor's degree	London	2025	Urdu	online	Personal connections



