



Home Office

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Dear Ms Hawkins,

Thank you for your letter dated 13 December 2021 regarding the EU Settlement Scheme telephone helpline.

Your comments around the performance of the Settlement Resolution Centre (SRC) are noted. However, I would reiterate the point made in my letter to you of 9th August 2021 which highlighted how, since going live, the SRC has handled over 2 million calls and emails. Overall, the SRC has been integral in the successful delivery of the EU Settled Status Scheme.

Regarding the specific questions you ask:

Q1. Do these data cover just the public facing telephone number of the EU Settlement Resolution Centre (0300 123 7379 and +44 (0)203 080 0010), or do they also cover:

- a. Calls routed from the UKVI Resolution Centre (0300 790 6268 and +44 (0)203 875 4669)?
- b. Calls to the EU Settlement Resolution Centre via Grant-Funded Organisations and other organisations who have alternative or priority telephone numbers?

All calls routed into SRC, by which ever dialed number, are captured by these figures.

Q2. Does the "calls attempted" figure include the following groups:

- a. People whose call is answered, and who get into the queue for an agent, but then hang up voluntarily before their call is answered?

Yes.

- b. People whose call is answered, but are then automatically disconnected by the EUSRC?

Yes, it includes those who receive an automated answer to their query.

- c. People who get a busy tone, so their call is not answered at all?

The SRC telephony system does not give a busy tone. Instead, callers will hear a message when there is no space in the queue.

Q3. Does the "average wait time" apply only to calls which have successfully connected, or does it also apply to calls where the caller was placed in a queue for connection and then abandoned the call?

Average wait time is for those calls which are successfully connected to an agent.

Q4. In nine of the twelve months of the data provided, less than 50% of attempted calls were handled. In the crucial months leading up to the 30 June 2021 deadline, on average only 40% of attempted calls were handled.

- a. What processes were in place to monitor and review the number of unhandled calls?

This is reviewed daily.

- b. Were there any targets of % of handled calls and if so, what were these targets?

The aim is to answer as many calls as possible each day, while also ensuring individual queries are resolved.

- c. Why was capacity not increased leading up to the 30 June 2021 EUSS deadline?

We have continually recruited and trained more agents to handle calls before and after the end of the grace period to handle the unprecedented demand. This included diverting resources into the SRC to respond to increased demand.

- d. Was capacity increased in August 2021, and if so - why?

As above. We continually review resource levels.

- e. Was capacity reduced after August 2021, and if so - why?

Additional support was returned to their home unit to meet demands across other areas.

- f. What lessons have been learned from this period and what strategies have been implemented?

The SRC continually reviews performance and makes operational decisions to maximise our service to customers.

Q5. These data also show high average wait times in certain months - for example December 2020 (46 minutes), January 2021 (43 minutes) and May 2021 (40 minutes).

- a. What processes were in place to monitor and review the average wait time?

Call queues are continuously monitored during SRC opening hours.

- b. Were there any targets of average wait time and if so, what were these targets?

There is no fixed target. Our aim is to answer each call as quickly as possible.

- c. Given the above times, what lessons have been learned and what strategies have been implemented to address the call length times?

We continue to review resource and processes to provide the best service possible.

- d. Is the number of agents dealing with calls kept consistent from month to month and at various times of day?

No. Our agent flow will vary based on historical demand levels. Unprecedented demand will, of course, impact waiting times.

- e. Do agents work in teams on shifts and if so, what are the shift times?

Each agent is part of a team and teams work various shifts between the hours of 7:45 and 21:00.

- f. Is there an overflow system where calls which are unanswered by the core team can be diverted to another team?

No.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Foster', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kevin Foster MP
Minister for Safe and Legal Migration.