

ETHNIC DIVERSITY AND THE EU SETTLEMENT SCHEME

2024

The population of EU citizens in the UK is diverse, with 20% of people shared through the 2021 England and Wales census that their ethnicity is not white. Despite individual reports of systemic racial discrimination with the Home Office, there has been limited research into the problems experienced by specifically by people from ethnic minority backgrounds in securing and proving their immigration status through the EU Settlement Scheme.

This report analyses hundreds of reports received directly from EU citizens from ethnic minorities who have shared their problems securing and proving their rights.

We are grateful to everyone who reported. This vital information gives us the tools to understand and advocate for the rights of EU citizens and family members.

If you experience any problems with your immigration status in relation to the EU Settlement Scheme, don't forget, [report it](#).

Acknowledgements: Our gratitude goes towards Lucas Orchard-Clark who has compiled this report.



Method

We analysed ethnicity information provided by **hundreds** of individuals who self-reported issues with their immigration status over several years at: the3million.org.uk/report-it.

We wanted to understand the extent to which individuals from different ethnic backgrounds faced particular issues with the EU Settlement Scheme.

While the self-reported ethnicity data collected by **the3million** is more detailed, in order to benchmark our data against official data we have set out only the five “ethnic groups” recorded by the **2021 England and Wales Census** from EU 27 Member States: “Asian”, “Black”, “Mixed or Multiple”, “White” and “Other”.

- “Asian” – Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, other written-in.
- “Black” – African, Caribbean, other written-in.
- “Mixed or Multiple” – White and Asian, White and Black African, White and Black Caribbean, other written-in.
- “White” – British, Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Roma, other written-in.
- “Other” – Arab, Latinx or other written-in.

We understand that the concept of “ethnic group” does not fully capture the nuance of individual identities.

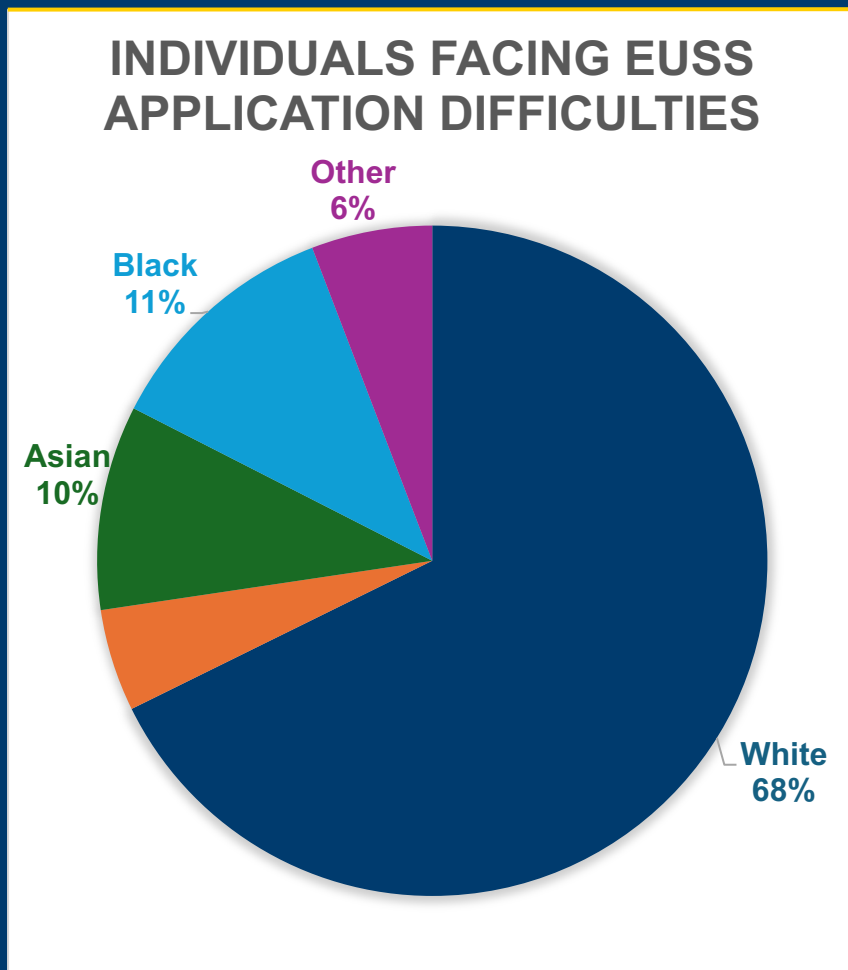
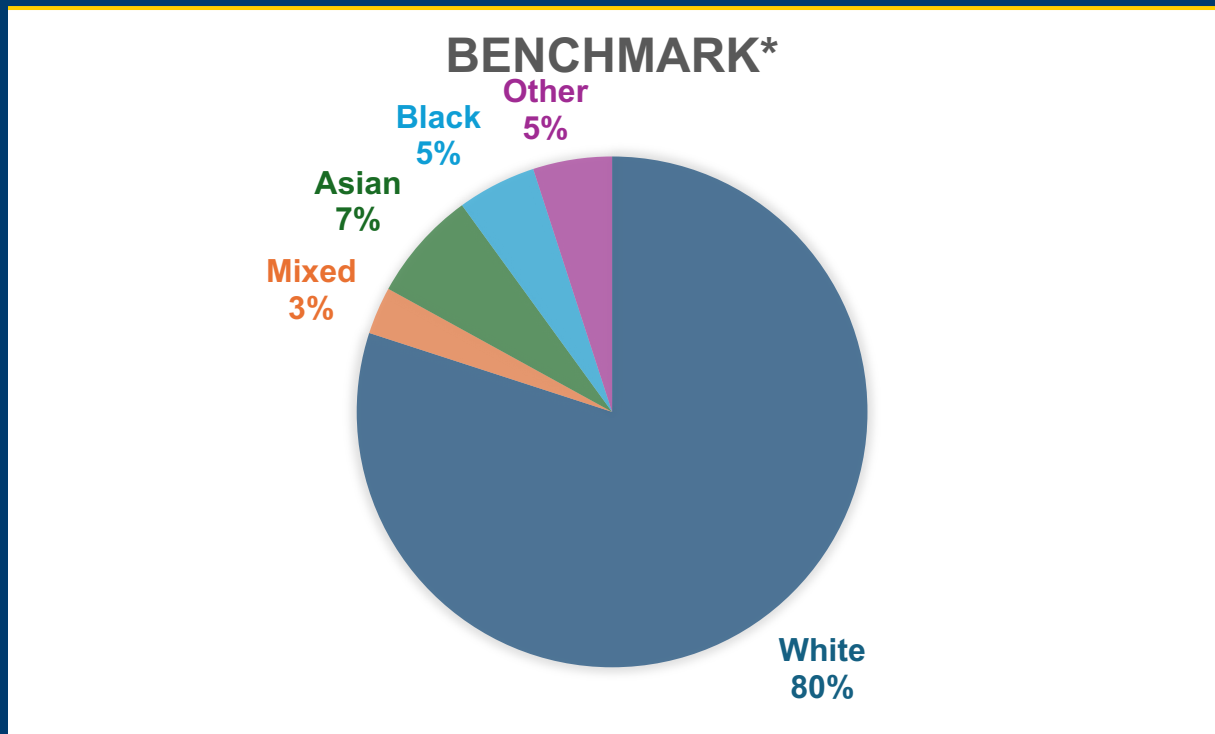
What we hope to achieve by doing this analysis:

- To identify whether particular ethnic groups are disproportionately impacted by problems with their immigration status;
- To identify what problems particular ethnic groups are particularly impacted by;
- To understand whether the EU Settlement Scheme and related policies perpetuate structural inequality, are discriminatory or racist;
- To provide evidence to stakeholders about the issues different ethnic groups face and advocate for change.

AT A GLANCE

EU Application Difficulties

*Benchmark data corresponds with the 5 main categories given in the 2021 England & Wales Census and reflects the proportion of EU 27 passport holders who identified with each of these categories.



This graph shows the percentage of those who reported issues with their applications for pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme to **the 3 million** who reported as belonging to one of the 5 “ethnic groups” set out under “Method”, above.

The issues reported included:

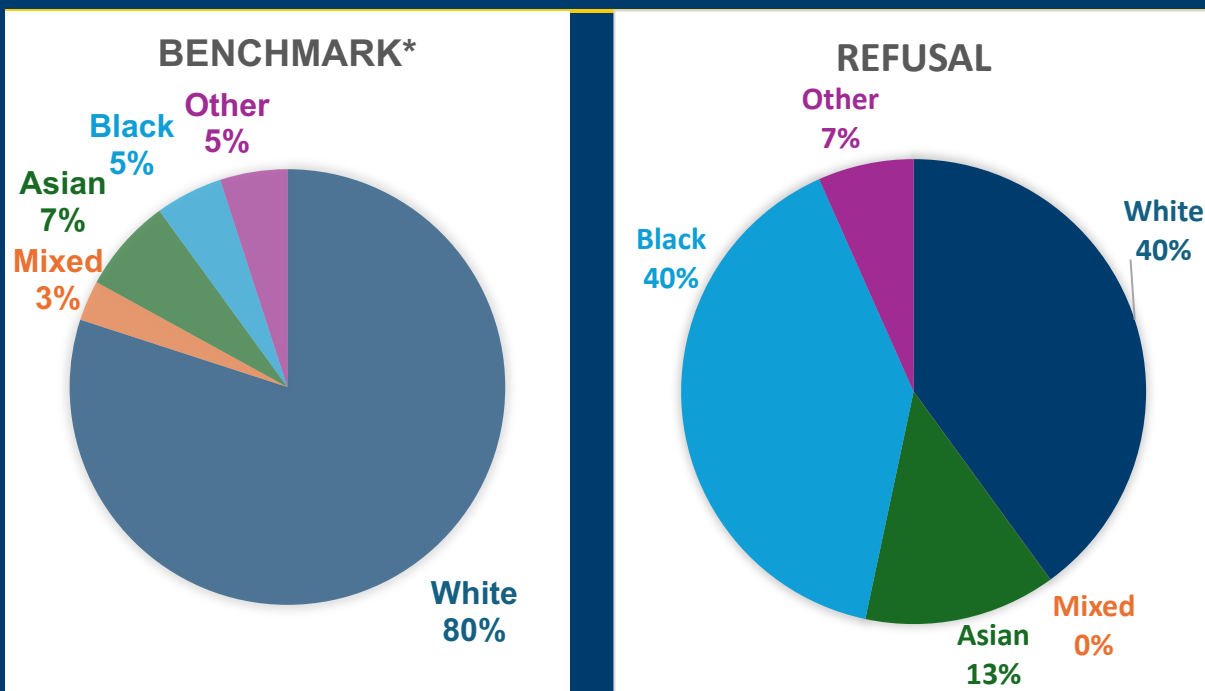
1. difficulties collecting evidence of residence,
2. (2) technical issues with the application, (3) refusal of applications,
3. (4) delayed applications,
4. (5) difficulties understanding the application and
5. (6) Home Office mistakes, among other problems.

EU Application Difficulties

Issue-by-Issue

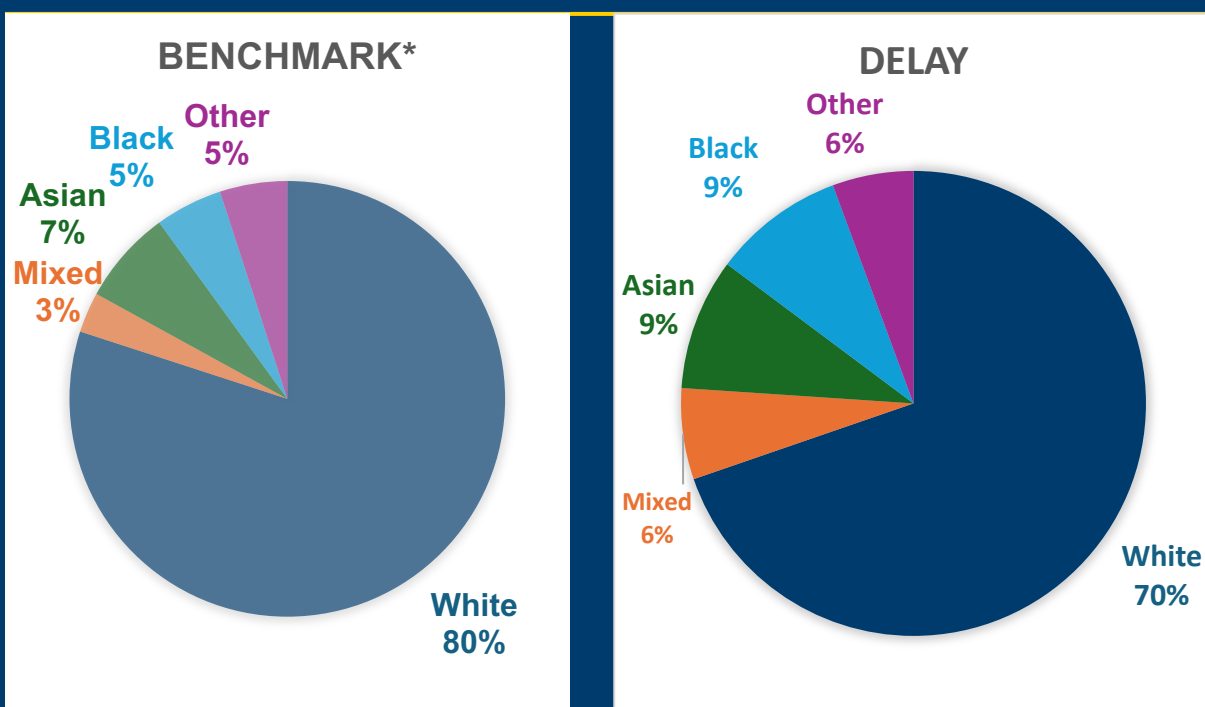
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Refusal of Application for Pre-Settled or Settled Status



This graph shows the percentage of those who, reporting as belonging to one of the 5 “ethnic groups” set out under “Method”, told **the3million** that their applications for pre-settled, settled status (or derived family applications) under the EU Settlement Scheme had been refused. Reasons for refusal given by the Home Office varied.

Excessive Delay in Processing Application under EUSS



This graph shows the percentage of those who, reporting as belonging to one of the 5 “ethnic groups” set out under “Method”, told **the3million** that their applications for pre-settled, settled status (or derived family applications) under the EU Settlement Scheme were delayed. The length of delay varied widely, and delay includes non-acknowledgment.

EU Application Difficulties

“I got stopped at the airport and *they told me I can't exit the UK if I want to come back*. Problem is I work here. But my family lives in Italy and Morocco. I'm stuck here and giving how long they're taking I'll be stuck here for longer. *I feel like my rights are not protected*. And I keep receiving these emails saying that *due to a high demand they are taking a long time.*”

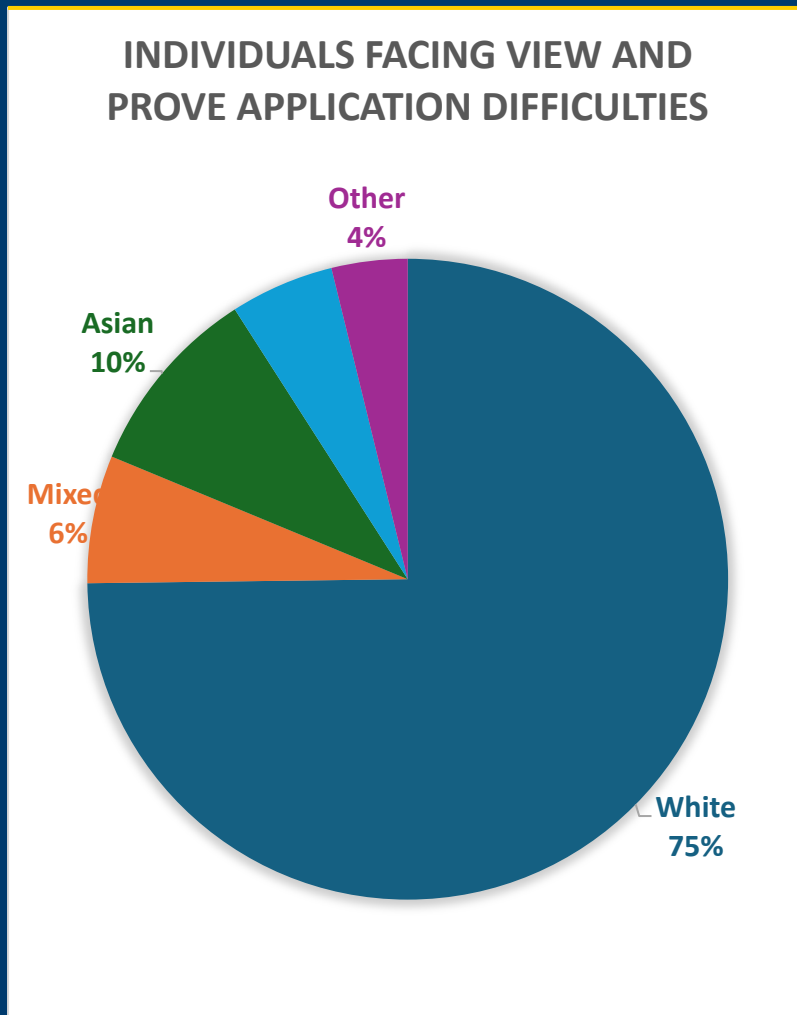
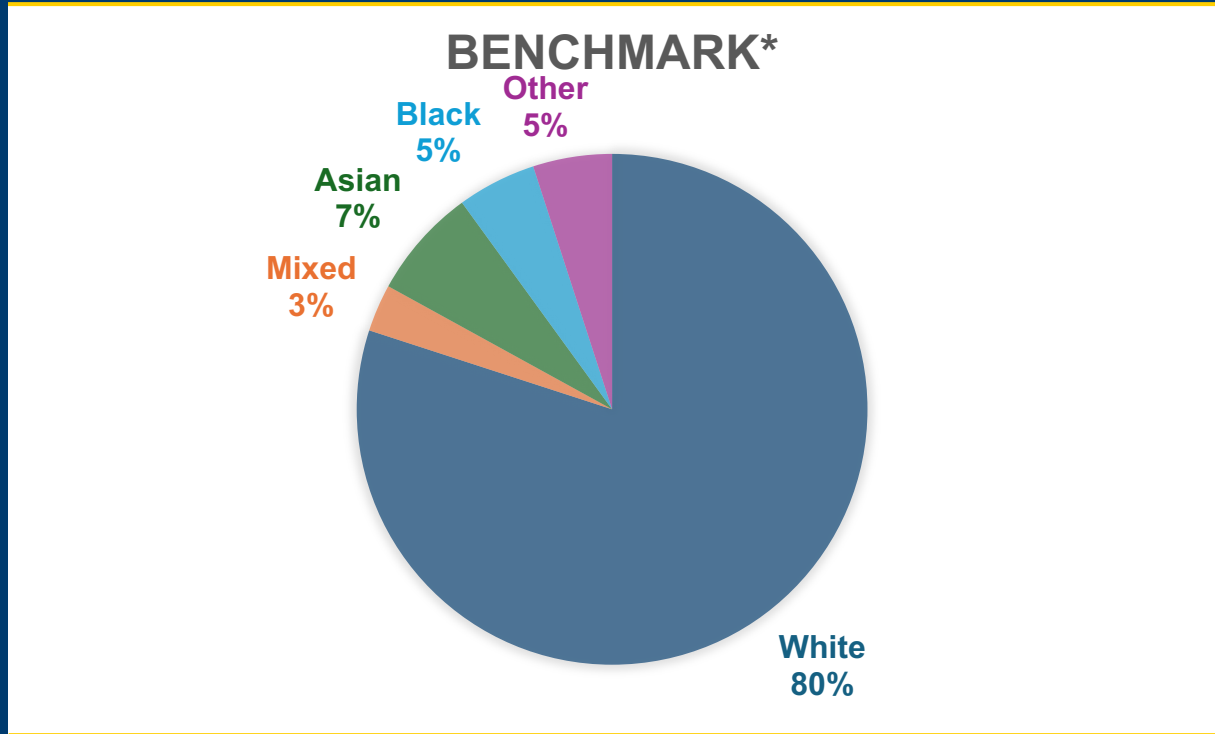
“I am being denied to be with my wife in the UK, my wife gave birth to our son in the UK since September 21st- 2020, *up till now I have never meet with my own child, because of home office decision*, my family is apart... Home office is denied me to meet my son who I never met in life.”

These testimonials are real, unedited accounts from individuals who reported their immigration difficulties to the3million. All testimonials are from individuals who identified as belonging to an ethnic group that is disproportionately according to the3million's data in comparison with the England & Wales 2021 Census data.

AT A GLANCE

View and Prove Difficulties

*Benchmark data corresponds with the 5 main categories given in the 2021 England & Wales Census and reflects the proportion of EU 27 passport holders who identified with each of these categories.



This graph shows the percentage of those who reported issues with using the “View and Prove” system to **the 3 million** who reported as belonging to one of the 5 “ethnic groups” set out under “Method”, above. The issues included:

- (1) non-acceptance of digital status as adequate proof of status (at UK and non-UK borders),
- (2) technical issues (wrong status, failure to link status with ID, failure of share code, difficulties updating personal details, failure of system at border including detention,
- (3) difficulties applying for benefits.

View and Prove Difficulties

“We were denied boarding, *it made us feel powerless, insignificant and almost illegal*, after spending 6 years in the UK building a home *it made us feel like we were not allowed to be a family.*”

“On April 11th 2024 I was unable to generate a share code to provide my employer proof that I have right to work. I called the customer helpline for EU scheme and I was told it's a technical issue. Although I understand it's a technical issue it is affecting my livelihood I am unable to work. *You can't work without proofing your right to work.* I have been unable to work since April 11th unable to apply for a new job as I won't be able to start either. *I keep being told to just wait but bills don't wait.*”

“We're trying to buy a house currently, and have an offer accepted. *For our mortgage application we need the sharecode in order to prove right to buy a house.* This hasn't been available to us online for several weeks. My wife has called several times to be told "it will be resolved" but that they can't give a timeframe. *It looks increasingly likely that this will cost us our dream house.*”

These testimonials are real, unedited accounts from individuals who reported their immigration difficulties to the3million. All testimonials are from individuals who identified as belonging to an ethnic group that is disproportionately according to the3million's data in comparison with the England & Wales 2021 Census data.

Disclaimer

The Office for National Statistics and the Home Office do not reliably collect data on the ethnic backgrounds of individuals applying under the EUSS Scheme or who face other problems with their immigration status. This makes it difficult to analyse the extent to which these issues are impacted by structural bias, discrimination and racism.

The quantity of data collected by **the3million** is not sufficient to carry out a detailed critique into the issues faced by specific ethnic groups. However, it does show trends when aggregated and we will continue to refine our understanding as more individuals tell their stories.

Individuals who report issues with the EU Settlement Scheme to us do not necessarily attribute their experiences to racism and discrimination. This does not mean it does not exist. Beyond overt racism, it is often hard to point to the subtle and pernicious ways in which systemic discrimination affect individuals' lives.

By telling our stories, we amplify our collective voice.

Don't forget it, Report it.

