

Submission for the ICIBI call for evidence on refusals and cancellations

Introduction:

This is a submission by the3million in response to the Independent Chief Inspector's call for evidence on refusal and cancellations of permission to enter the UK.¹ the3million is the largest grassroots organisation for EU citizens in the UK, formed after the 2016 referendum to protect the rights of people who have made the UK their home.² At the3million we are advocating for better rights and protection for those who have status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) and everyone who has been impacted by the new digital status, or eVisa. A large part of our advocacy work is operating and maintaining a reporting tool that is open for people experiencing issues accessing and proving their immigration status through an eVisa. We created an online tool for people to self-report to collect the experiences of EU citizens³ and other immigration status⁴ holders who had difficulties accessing their eVisa. In the second quarter of 2025, for people of all immigration statuses reporting on issues with eVisas, the biggest challenges people faced were related to travel.⁵ We are concerned that the two different digital projects, eVisas and Electronic Travel Authorisation(ETA), are impacting people's ability to travel in and out of the UK. This submission will touch on the aspect of the call on the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of current practices. Before detailing the issues of refusals and travel issues we will first outline how the eVisa scheme has been set up and how it relates to the difficulties of proving immigration status.

Overview of eVisa:

The eVisa is an electronic record of immigration status accessed through Home Office websites using a UKVI (United Kingdom Visa and Immigration) account. An eVisa is required for the majority of immigrants to prove their right to travel, work, study, rent and access public services. As of November 2024 all successful visa applications that would have received a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), now are given an eVisa. At the start of January 2025, the eVisa was due to become the primary proof of immigration status for travel; as most physical visa documents (BRPs and BRCs) expired on 31 December 2024. The Home Office created a grace period for travel purposes that allowed passengers with expired physical visa documents to present these as proof of status. The 'grace period' for travellers was until 31 March 2025, and it was extended once until 1 June 2025. The need for a grace period evidences the accessibility and implementation issues that have plagued

¹ UK Home Office. "Call for Evidence: An Inspection of Refusals and Cancellations of Permission to Enter the UK." GOV.UK, July 24, 2025. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/call-for-evidence-an-inspection-of-refusals-and-cancellations-of-permission-to-enter-the-uk>.

² We use EU citizens as a shorthand for citizens of the EU, EEA and Switzerland and their non-EU family members.

³the3million. December 2020. Report It! | Giving a Voice to EU Citizens in the UK. <https://the3million.org.uk/report-it>

⁴ The3million and ILPA. June 2024. Report problems with your eVisa. <https://www.evisa-problems.org.uk/>

⁵ the3million, *eVisa Problems: Interim snapshot as per 30 June 2025 of reports submitted via* <https://evisa-problems.org.uk/>, 1 August 2025, <https://the3million.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/t3m-report-evisa-problems-2025-Q2-01Aug2025.pdf>

the eVisa scheme. The Home Office estimates that as of April 2025, 300,000 people still need to register for a UKVI account in order to receive their eVisa⁶.

During the transition from physical forms of proof to digital-only immigration status, people have reported problems accessing their UKVI accounts, updating their account details and incorrect data being displayed on their eVisas. the3million has been closely monitoring the move to digital-only status since the initial rollout to the EUSS cohort. While the Withdrawal Agreement allowed the **document** evidencing this cohort's new residence status "to be in a digital form", the current design on the eVisa scheme, we argue, resembles more of an online-only **process**⁷. To prove their right to travel into the UK, rent, study, work and access public services, eVisa users must have internet access to produce a share code. Afterwards, the third-party checker verifies the share code via the UKVI website. Access to proof of immigration status that relies on a series of **technical online** steps has created issues when people have been asked to produce evidence on the spot. The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) conducted in 2018, on the proposal to digital-only right to work and rent checks, states that the scheme could have indirect discriminatory impacts on digitally excluded people, elderly populations and Roma communities.⁸ The Home Office argues that immigration status must be maintained in a 'live' format, meaning that the service must be generated through the share code design, to ensure the most up-to-date immigration records. A core issue with the live design of the eVisa is the quality of data held and maintained by the Home Office.

The office of the ICIBI previously critiqued the data practices of the Home Office and urged the department to standardise and prioritise data quality.⁹ the3million shares the ICIBI's previous critique of data quality and stability and the run-on effect these issues have on the eVisa system. In March 2024 the *Guardian* reported that a core Home Office data platform, Person Centric Data Platform (PCDP), had 76,000 errors, resulting in eVisas displaying incorrect photographs, names, immigration status types or visa expiration dates.¹⁰ After the incident of eVisa data quality being corrupted the Home Office stated that they were "aware of issues around 'merged identity' - where a single 'identity island' has been formed with data belonging to two or more individuals within the PCDP".¹¹ Despite the Department's awareness of the issues with merged identity, there have been further reports of people logging into their eVisa only to see incorrect identity data being displayed. Notably, on 6 March 2025 the3million sent a letter asking the Home Office to confirm another large-scale incident of incorrect information on UKVI accounts. The Home Office confirmed this was as a

⁶ Home Office, Estimated number of people who still need to create a UKVI account: methodology note <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/online-immigration-status-evisa-ukvi-account-creation-data/estimated-number-of-people-who-still-need-to-create-a-ukvi-account-methodology-note>

⁷ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/eut/withdrawal-agreement/contents?view=plainz>

⁸ Home Office, *Equality Impact Assessment: Biometric Residence Cards (BRC) and Biometric Residence Permits (BRP)*, September 17, 2021, accessed August 4, 2025, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62b2ff358fa8f5357a677f31/20210917_BRC_BRP_EIA_word.pdf.

⁹ Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI). *Annual Report for the Period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/641ac5a5e90e0769eead1457/ICIBI_Annual_Report_for_the_period_1_April_2021_to_31_March_2022_Web_Accessible.pdf.

¹⁰ Walker, Peter. "Home Office Immigration Database Errors Hit More Than 76,000 People." *The Guardian*, March 14 2024. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/mar/14/home-office-immigration-database-errors-hit-more-than-76000-people>.

¹¹ The Lord Bishop of Southwark. *Written Question HL3542: Immigration: Databases*. UK Parliament. Tabled March 21, 2024. <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-03-21/HL3542/>.

result of a flawed software release in their reply of April 2nd, 2025.¹² On 6 August 2025 the3million wrote to the Home Office about another eVisa bug which appeared to downgrade the settled status to pre-settled status for many EUSS status holders.¹³ In the Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for the View and Prove system the Home Office recognises that a possible risk could be "inadvertent sharing" or "presenting inaccurate identity details" of visa holders.¹⁴ Data quality issues that result in incorrect information on an eVisa then renders someone's proof of immigration void. In relation to the rejections and refusal of boarding that is the focus of the call to evidence, there needs to be an understanding that the design and rollout of digital status has exacerbated issues for people's ability to travel in and out of the UK.

The efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of current practice

For eVisa holders the current practice for proving their right to travel in and out of the UK relies on their UKVI account being up-to-date with their correct information. The Home Office advises eVisa holders, before they travel, to ensure their UKVI details are correct and linked with their identity documents and to save a 'something else' share code in case they are asked to produce one on the spot at the airport.¹⁵

There are two core issues with the effectiveness of the current design of the eVisa system in relation to travel. First, people have experienced technical issues when attempting to update their UKVI accounts and, second, in some cases people have been asked to go online and show live access to their eVisa when travelling (rather than simply handing over a share code that they may have obtained in advance of travel) which is ineffective if people do not have access to the internet. The concern with the effectiveness of the current practice are the errors and lack of access people have experienced to their UKVI accounts. **Annex A** demonstrates the personal stories of people who cannot travel due to misrecorded data on their accounts. Incorrect data recorded on someone's UKVI, or eVisa, renders their proof of immigration status useless. **Annex A** demonstrates the breadth of the inefficiency of the eVisa scheme and the impact on travellers. There are examples of a person's type of immigration status being incorrect making their eVisa unusable while another person reported the UKVI website returned the error 'We cannot show proof of your status'. Currently, the eVisa system has been designed in a manner that means people do not have agency over resolving issues with their status, and are entirely dependent on the efficiency of the Home Office resolution team to fix errors. In the latest 2025 quarterly report we found that over 70 per cent of respondents had attempted to reach the Home Office without being able to resolve their

¹² Seema Malhotra MP, *Home Office Response to the 3million Regarding Incorrect Identity Document Details on UKVI Accounts*, 2 April 2025, <https://the3million.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/HO-reply-t3m-UKVIAccountsIncorrectLinkedIdentityDocuments-02Apr2025.pdf>.

¹³ The3million, *Joint letter from the3million and ILPA setting out our concerns about an eVisa bug downgrading settled status to pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme*, 6 August 2025, <https://the3million.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/t3m-ILPA-letter-HO-EUSSSettledStatusRevertingToPresettled-06Aug2025.pdf>

¹⁴ Home Office. August 2025. Digital Status "View and Prove" Data Protection Impact Assessment. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-status-view-and-prove-data-protection-impact-assessment>.

¹⁵ Home Office. *Travel with Your eVisa*. GOV.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/evisa/travel-with-evisa>.

issue.¹⁶ From our reports we are concerned by the amount of time and effort people need to exert to have their technical issues resolved by the Home Office. We have tried to understand the scale of the errors being reported to the Home Office, however this information is being withheld. FOIA requests have been refused on the basis that the information was exempt via Section 22, allowing information to be withheld if it is intended for future publication.¹⁷ A Parliamentary Question asking for the same information received the reply that this is not currently available from published data and could only be collated and verified at disproportionate cost.¹⁸ Reports from people experiencing problems with accessing or proving their information in their UKVI accounts repeatedly show that while people hold valid immigration status, they have had their rights removed due to technical faults in the eVisa system.

A video produced by the Home Office on how to travel with an eVisa emphasises that people who have two or more passports should use the 'Update Details' UKVI website to ensure all travel documents are linked.¹⁹ In practice people have reported systemic issues of the Home Office systems not recognising or accepting their passports. the3million has engaged with the Home Office that there is a fundamental issue with identity verification apps treating a person's name as recorded in the Machine Readable Zone (MRZ) of their passport as their full and correct name. Whereas in reality the MRZ is often a simplification (through transliteration of characters with diacritic marks) or truncation (where given names or surnames exceed the MRZ character limit) of their name, in accordance with international standards set down by the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO).²⁰ Furthermore, the name recorded in the MRZ can be subject to national legislation, for example in regards to name changes like that from maiden to married. People's inability to link their travel documents to their UKVI account creates inefficiency when travelling.

Even for people who have managed to update their UKVI accounts, correctly link their travel documents, and produce a share code in advance, the design of the eVisa system relies on internet access when carriers demand that passengers log in to their eVisa on-the-spot.

Annex B details the personal stories of people who have experienced issues travelling due to connectivity issues. An ineffective design feature of the eVisa being the main way people can prove their right to travel is that it is dependent on reliable access to the internet. Even passengers who did generate a share code before arriving at the airport found that these codes were not accepted as valid proof, and in some cases were asked to show their UKVI account. Reliance on internet access puts eVisa holders' status in a vulnerable position and has increased the anxiety of passengers. Contributing to further difficulties for people proving their status travelling is the inconsistency of airlines having different requirements at pre-boarding. After people have passed the initial check-in process, they are experiencing different requests for proof of immigration status. Inconsistent among airlines is the ability for passengers to use a share code to prove their status, Finnair stated

¹⁶ the3million, *eVisa Problems: Interim snapshot as per 30 June 2025 of reports submitted via* <https://evisa-problems.org.uk/>, 1 August 2025, <https://the3million.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/t3m-report-evisa-problems-2025-Q2-01Aug2025.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://www.politico.eu/article/home-office-questions-uk-evisa-system-malfunctions-glitch-immigration/>.

¹⁸ Lord Oates. July 22, 2025. *Written Question HL9775: Visas – Digital Technology*. <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-07-22/HL9775/>.

¹⁹ Home Office. 2024. *How to Travel With Your eVisa* [video]. <https://youtu.be/xdZLXvfau2A>.

²⁰ the3million. February 2025. *Note on UK Digital Immigration Status and ICAO Standards*. <https://the3million.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/t3m-note-UKDigitalImmigrationStatusICAOStandards-19Feb2025.pdf>.

that a passenger's UKVI account must be “in order”, for them to be allowed to travel.²¹ Finnair’s policy of not accepting share codes as proof of immigration status is not consistent with official Home Office policy. Throughout the first-hand reports that are presented in this evidence there are calls from the respondents for a simpler system that does not rely on share codes or access to the internet, and a system that can be simplified for passengers and airline providers.

The impact of carrier checks for organisations and passengers

The rollout of eVisas and the ‘non-enforcement’ launch of the ETA for certain nationalities has affected both carrier checks and passengers. The Home Office introduced two ‘grace periods’ allowing people with expired BRPs or BRCs to travel using these documents as proof of immigration status. The Home Office also states that the ETA rollout is subject to a ‘grace period’, not to be fully enforced until an as yet unannounced date in 2026: “We are aiming to begin enforcement of ETA in 2026. We will release more information in due course, as we have committed to giving the travel industry and key stakeholders sufficient notice before we begin the enforcement of ETA.”²² Reports suggest there has been a lack of continuity in how these rules are applied by airline personnel.

From our reports there seems to be a pattern that passengers, including eVisa holders and UK dual nationals, are able to check-in for a flight, produce a boarding pass, but encounter difficulties during the final check in the departure lobby. The eVisa and ETA scheme were envisaged by the Home Office to be accessed through automated systems (interactive Advanced Passenger Information, or iAPI) to handle the checks of passengers for airlines. The Home Office states that “all aviation carriers into the UK are integrated into, and able to use, the iAPI service from locations from which they fly directly”.²³ In practice, we have had reports that certain airlines in international airports either **do not** have iAPI integration, or do not rely solely on iAPI integration, because they appear to demand proof of UK immigration status in an ad hoc manner from passengers (sometimes through requesting a share code but more commonly by insisting passengers access their online eVisa in real time in front of airline or ground operations staff members).

Annex C evidences the personal stories of people who have been denied, or nearly denied, boarding due to airline personnel being ill informed of the travel regulations. People have reported that they were denied boarding when presenting a valid EU national ID card, permitted under the Withdrawal Agreement, or after following the Home Office’s guidance of generating a share code prior to arriving at the airport. These reports are concerning as even individuals who are well informed and able to advocate for their travel rights are refused or mistreated by staff. Reports of poor rule implementation create openings for protected characteristics to become the basis for further immigration checks. The impacts of both technical failures and flawed implementation of the eVisa systems are further compounded by the ETA’s “soft launch”.

the3million has expressed our concerns about the ETA scheme’s unclear communication on enforcement and the impact the scheme would have on visa holders and UK dual nationals. The burden of proof is heavier on the passenger than before, for eVisa holders and UK dual nationals

²¹ Finnair, *Travel Documents to the USA, UK, Canada and Australia*, <https://www.finnair.com/gb-en/travel-documents/travel-documents-to-the-usa-uk--canada-and-australia>.

²² Home Office, Reply to the3million and ILPA on EUSS, CoA, and ETA, 4 July 2025, <https://the3million.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/HO-reply-t3m-ILPA-EUSSCoA-ETA-04Jul2025.pdf>.

²³ Home Office, Reply to the3million and ILPA on EUSS, CoA, and ETA, 4 July 2025, <https://the3million.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/HO-reply-t3m-ILPA-EUSSCoA-ETA-04Jul2025.pdf>

who must navigate the inconsistent checks and protocols from being incorrectly asked for an ETA to travel. **Annex D** details how eVisa holders and UK dual nationals are particularly affected under the proposed ETA scheme. the3million and ILPA have previously written to the Home Office expressing our concern for these issues²⁴. We have noted that the UK's Carriers' Liability Scheme intensifies the risk that certain airline personnel will conduct further checks even if they have received 'valid permission to travel' from the iAPI. The Home Office confirmed that airlines may conduct these further checks and noted that it is the passenger's responsibility to keep their UKVI accounts up to date and be ready to present their share codes. **Annex A and B** illustrate that this advice in practice is limited in efficiency and consistency due to connectivity issues or people unable to link their identity documents to their accounts. The Home Office's insistence that UKVI accounts must be in order is made harder when eVisa holders are unable to reach the department for support. Throughout the examples presented in this submission people have been denied boarding, nearly denied boarding, or have cancelled trips due to issues with the eVisa system. People have reported both the emotional and financial impact of being denied boarding. Experiences of nearly being denied have been described as making people feel like a criminal or singled out. Without the support of the 24/7 helpline that was promised to accompany the rollout of digital status people are left to navigate and advocate for their rights alone.

As a contingency measure during the digital status rollout the Home Office offered to operate a 24/7 passenger support helpline that would assist eVisa holders who were travelling and experiencing difficulties proving their immigration status. On 18 December 2024 the3million were told that the passenger helpline would be published on the Home Office website, and become operational, on 31 December 2024.²⁵ In early March 2024, the Home Office informed the3million that due to 'low levels of contact' the line would be slowly phased, first by reducing the hours during which the helpline would be open from 10 March²⁶, and then completely removing the helpline from by 31 March 2024.²⁷ We argue that the low levels of contact to this helpline is most likely due to the lack of public awareness on the existence of the support, rather than a lack of need for assistance by passengers. the3million made the Home Office aware that the number for the helpline was not easy to find through internet searches, i.e. Google, and was not located on [Gov.UK](https://www.gov.uk) webpages, such as Report an Error with Evisa or Contact UKVI Inside and Outside of UK, that people experiencing an issue would most likely look for information. People have continued to report to the3million that due to the lack of a helpline they are experiencing issues proving their immigration status to travel in and out of the UK. In correspondence with the Home Office the 3million emphasised that the rollout of the ETA was likely going to cause problems for EU or Dual Citizens. As **Annex D** has detailed, the concerns about the programme have begun to emerge before the enforcement period. the3million has suggested to the Home Office that maintaining the number through an invisible redirection to other Departmental support contact lines would not require an additional cost. The withdrawal of

²⁴ <https://the3million.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/t3m-ILPA-letter-HO-FollowUpETA-11Jun2025.pdf>

²⁵ 31 December 2024: 24/7 helpline added to user-facing website:
<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20241231162748/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ma king-sure-your-evisa-is-correct-before-you-travel>

²⁶ 10 March 2025: Helpline hours reduced:
<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20250310162321/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ma king-sure-your-evisa-is-correct-before-you-travel>

²⁷ 31 March 2025: Helpline removed:
<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20250331172258/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ma king-sure-your-evisa-is-correct-before-you-travel>

the 24/7 passenger helpline before the end of permission to travel on expired documents, BRP and BRCs, and before the full enforcement of the ETA scheme, risks leaving passengers in precarious and stressful situations whilst travelling.

Conclusion:

From the evidence presented in this submission, it is clear that the eVisa scheme's ineffectiveness, inconsistencies and errors are impacting passengers and airlines. The 3million is concerned that the travel difficulties reported so far represent only the tip of the iceberg. Urgent reforms must be made to digital status to address the consistent errors and burden of proof being placed on passengers. The scale and consistency of issues affecting people with various immigration status is troubling. We are seeing echoes of the Windrush Scandal in which people who have rights to live in the UK are unable to prove those rights.

The absence of physical proof or a stable digital token under the passenger's control, and the instability of the Home Office's online-only status has caused travellers unnecessary stress, money and complications. Errors in the UKVI implementation have caused knock-on effects that hinders people's ability to book and travel freely. Even passengers who have been able to correctly maintain their eVisa face problems at the airport, such as the UKVI website not being available or airline staff unfamiliar with digital status. Reports of passengers being denied boarding should be treated as an **early warning sign of wider systemic problems that will increasingly affect eVisa holders**. As the ETA rollout proceeds, urgent attention must be given to ensuring stronger communication and guidance for airline staff and travellers.

Annex A: Testimonials from People Experiencing Issues Boarding Due to Errors on their UKVI Accounts

Case One:

"Despite holding Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) for seven years, my status is incorrectly listed as "Dependent." Under the Type of Permit, it is listed as Settlement, and in the Remarks section, it states "Indefinite Leave to Remain." However, my status remains inaccurately recorded as "Dependent," which does not reflect my actual immigration status. Due to this error, I have suffered significant financial loss, stress, and disruption to my life.due to recent rule changes, following the expiration of BRP cards at the end of 2024, my status had to be verified using the new eVisa system and a share code. When I attempted to travel, I was denied boarding because my eVisa status incorrectly showed "Dependent" instead of ILR. Despite holding ILR for seven years, I was told that I needed to have ILR in order to travel. As a result of this mistake, I was unable to fly, lost all the money I had spent on my holiday, and experienced severe stress, anxiety, and disruption to my plans. This has had a serious impact on my personal and professional life."

Case Two:

"A Border Force officer informed me that my eVisa is linked only to my expired BRP and not to my current passport. He warned that unless this is corrected, I could be denied entry next time. I immediately tried to update my identity document on the portal, but encountered a technical issue that prevented the update. I submitted multiple error reports but received no resolution - my latest reports were ignored entirely. Due to the urgency I sought legal help. My lawyer contacted UKVI, and we were assured the issue had been fixed (special form was submitted, it was a real person communication). However, when I checked, the situation had worsened: the UKVI portal now shows "We cannot show proof of your status" on my eVisa page, and in the update section, the document type is still listed as BRP, but the document number shown is that of my passport - a clear mismatch. My lawyer immediately flagged that the problem had not been resolved - and in fact had become more serious - but his follow-up messages were ignored. We have received no response or support since. As a result, I had to cancel our family trip and lost the cost of non-refundable tickets. I'm also currently unable to generate a share code, meaning I wouldn't be able to return to the UK if I left."

Case Three:

"Once we enter to our UKVI Account, we receive a message telling us that it's not possible to view our status at the moment either because our case is not decided or because is not possible to use the service. Currently, we're unable to view our status, update our address or travel documents, prove our right to work or our right to rent. We're also unable to travel, as we can't prove anything or generate a share code to

prove our status. We were previously able to travel with the BRCs, but not anymore, as already expired."

Case Four:

"We cannot access ukvi account. Trying to prove my wife's visa status. Signed in ukvi. All it says is "you are already logged in"and "back to your application." But not showing any visa status there. We are traveling tomorrow. Don't know what to do. May be we can convince the immigration in the UK but in Hyderabad, India. It's impossible. Really in trouble"

Annex B: Testimonials from People Experiencing Issues Boarding from Being Unable to Produce a Share-Code/ Show UKVI Account on the Spot:

Case One

"Travelling from Geneva Switzerland to London Heathrow. At check in my (EU) passport was not enough. I have a printed version of my share code, with steps explaining how to check it. At the check in desk the lady insisted I had to go on that website on my own phone and log in to show her my passport, photo or a code she can scan. It took me some time - did not log in to my account but used the ""check someone's status"" gov.uk website. She did see my photo, and my immigration status. Wasn't happy with it, as it does not show my passport details, only my date of birth, nationality and photo. (Same as on my passport). She let me through. I showed her the instructions, that she should be checking this on her computer. She told me I want to travel, not her, so the burden of proof is on me. "

Case Two:

"I checked in online without any problems. I arrived at the airport armed with a View& Prove share code, a screenshot of my Settled Status and a download of the HO acceptance letter. I had also been assured beforehand on a chat with TUI that they know how the View & prove share code works. I was still worried. And it turned out I had reason to. When the check in person at the bag drop saw my (EU) passport she told me that with this passport I need an ETA. I said I don't as I'm resident in the UK with Settled Status. She then said that she needed to see my visa. I said there's no visa card to show, it's a digital status but I have a share code for their checks. She told me I had to go online and show her my visa. I tried to explain that as per Government guidance the View & Prove share code is for them to use for the check but she point blank refused to accept any of this. ""I don't care about the government, I know how it works, I've got it all here""", she said pointing to a pile of papers on the desk. Her attitude was like ""go on the internet and show me your visa or else you're not getting on the plane."" It became quickly clear that arguing would be a waste of time, and I did not want to risk missing my flight.

At this point I opened the screen shot of my Settled Status on the phone and showed her that. I don't actually know if she realised it wasn't live. She looked at the photo, scrolled down and asked where my UK address appears. I said that's all there is, my name, the photo and then the text detailing my rights. She accepted this in the end. It was clear that she had no idea what she was looking at, she was just wanting to see a photo of me, would have wanted to see an address, but as for the text, she didn't read any of it. If I had kept on arguing that it is the airline who needs to use the View & Prove share code to check my status, I don't know what would have happened. Would they have agreed to it in the end? Judging by her attitude, no. Would I have missed my flight if I had spent more time insisting on the correct procedure - probably, which I could not risk. We would also have missed our onward travel bookings in the UK."

Case Three:

"Went to Egypt last month. The check in counter wanted to see my physical visa documents. I gave her my share code and she asked me to log into the Gov website. I didn't have WiFi or roaming access. She had to use her own mobile WiFi to log into my phone to access the Gov website. It took some time to get the process going. The queue was growing too as there were only 2 counters open. Doesn't make sense to print the visa like we did years ago and travel with this. Thought we were moving towards a paperless society. When I got to immigration he too wanted to see my physical visa and log into my gov account to 'see' my visa. I advised him that I didn't have WiFi and that the lady at the check in counter had logged in for me already to check my status. I'm sure he saw how distressed I was and let me through. They should just bring back the biometric cards or just affix the vignette like before."

Case Four:

"My understanding was that I only need to present a shared code at the passport control at the check in and before boarding. So I had a letter on my email which I thought would be enough. But in Cairo airport they wanted me to access to the website to show them the page with all my data. I had a local SIM card with internet but the connection was intermittent. A few times system would show an error. I was left behind the line while I was trying to sort it out. Being in a foreign country at the boarding with limited time and bad internet can cause significant troubles. I made it. But shouldn't the airports have their own systems to check these codes? I feel that every time I take a plane now I would be stressing about whether they have / don't have internet, whether I receive the access code online etc. Shouldn't you work out something totally offline, pdf sent to my email address with my data, immigration status, my picture etc?"

Case Five:

"My husband was denied boarding on a flight from Krakow to Bournemouth because he had problems with online access to his UKVI account during boarding at the gate. Although earlier, he passed all the checks (including showing the staff a valid UKVI

account) at the check-in desk, received a boarding document and passed passport control. The airline staff demanded that he log into his account when boarding the plane. However, it was at that moment that the login process was constantly interrupted or didn't complete successfully due to some kind of failure. I'm not sure if this was due to internet connection issues or if it was due to technical issues with the website. The airline didn't accept any alternative methods of confirming the validity of the visa, which they had previously checked and seen as valid."

Case Six:

"I am a (UK) dual national. I hold a (EU) passport but had not applied for a British passport...I arrived at Gatwick and asked an immigration officer what I should do once the new ETA comes into force. He recommended to continue flying with my German passport and complete an ETA. Last week I was in Spain and trying to fill in the online form which was not possible. As you will know entering (EU) and British citizenship is not an option. I then phoned the British consulate in Spain and was told that my only option to return to the UK would be to apply for a British passport which could take up to 7 weeks. Since I later found a government blog including information about a grace period for dual citizens I decided to ignore the advice from the consulate and luckily, I had no problems boarding an EasyJet and going through the e gate at Gatwick. So, I was given wrong information twice by two government officials who should know better. I have now applied for a British passport and will use both passports when travelling abroad. However, it looks like this is only possible if the outbound and inbound flights are booked separately. Not an option for long haul flights since booking separately would normally be a lot more expensive. Until this mess is sorted flying abroad is a risk for anybody with dual nationality or settlement status."

Annex C: Testimonials from People Who Experienced Issues Boarding Flights due to Airport Personnel/ Border Staff Not Informed on the eVisa Rules

Case One:

"As the personnel at Gran Canaria airport refused to check my status online and accept my National Identity Card registered with my UKVI account as a valid means for UK-EU flights and vice-versa, I was wrongfully denied boarding flight Gran Canaria to London on... The flight was scheduled and confirmed and I was able to check-in using the BA application and my ID card three hours before the flight. Not only did the personnel breach the EU Settlement Scheme, but they also breached my EU Air Passenger rights. No one from British Airlines or the airport personnel came to me to explain my rights in such a situation. There was no poster either explaining the Air rights of EU citizens. I spent the night in the airport and incurred an unexpected cost of £840 in order to return to London."

Case Two:

"I traveled from Cyprus to the UK and generated a share code before arriving at the airport. At boarding, I presented my passport and showed the share code on my

phone. Initially, the staff asked what the share code was, and then they denied boarding based on the share code I provided. They only allowed me to board after presenting my physical BRP card.

Case Three:

"My elderly parents and I traveled back from Cape Town with Virgin Atlantic. My mother is a dual national British/(EU-Country), my father and myself hold a (EU-Country) passport with Settled Status. I was able to check my mother in online with her British passport but for myself and my father they insisted on a 'return date' which we couldn't give them as we were going home! We went to the airport a day early to see if we could get it sorted.

Whilst trying to check in at one of those self service pillars the message came up "" we can't check you in as we can't guarantee your entry into the UK or that you will be able to stay there"" ! No one was available from Virgin but a lovely airport lady put me through to them on the phone.

I spoke to a Virgin customer service representative who kept saying we had to contact the embassy! A 2 1/2 hour flight away in Pretoria. She knew nothing about Settled Status or share codes, just kept saying go to the embassy. We didn't do this and were advised to arrive at the airport 4 hours before our flight when the Virgin staff would be there at 6 am. I contacted the 24 hour helpline number that we were given by the 3 million for EU citizens in situations like this and although they were reassuring they said as I wasn't physically at the gate being denied boarding they couldn't help at that moment. We turned up the next morning and were the first in the queue to check in and bag drop when the lady said ""you are already checked in"" !!! How I don't know! We were given boarding passes and flew back with no problem...my father and I had all our documents with us like share codes, Home office letter, screen shots, council tax bills etc. Also in subsequent phone calls with Virgin I was astonished that they had never heard of Share codes, let alone know what to do with one when presented with it! Also we had filled in the API several weeks before our departure from the UK which had been verified!"

Case Four:

" I was deboarded from a British Airways flight despite holding a valid UK Graduate eVisa. I had all required documents, including my passport, UKVI share code, and even a visa eligibility letter from the Dominican Republic embassy, New Delhi , India . Yet the airline staff refused to accept my digital immigration status and removed me from the flight. This caused me significant distress, financial loss, and humiliation, and highlights a critical gap in airline understanding of the UK's eVisa transition."

Case Five:

"My girlfriend and I went to Madrid in May 2025. We had been to Madrid for the same weekend for the last two years and experienced no problem. My girlfriend presented her [EU] national identity card and mobile boarding pass for our British

Airways flight to London Heathrow. The Iberia staff member XXX, to whom I shall refer as "M", immediately responded "No, I need your passport". I gave M the attached one-page explanation, which I had written in the knowledge of worsening issues of this nature since 2nd April 2025 when the UK extended ETA to European national...M appeared to relent on requiring a passport by instead insisting "I need the settlement but the settlement printed" and "I need the settlement with your picture". I referred her again to the attached page, which explains that the UK does not issue such a document. M refused to read the page and refused to explain what she meant by "the settlement". M then rejected my girlfriend's preprinted share code and an old printout of the output of a previous share code."

Case Six:

"This afternoon checking in for flight with SAS from Stavanger, Norway to Aberdeen. They wouldn't accept the evisa as no number on it. They had heard of the share code but could [not] input it in their system. The only way they managed to check me in was using the number on my now expired BRC. They knew that these were still valid until end of March but they said without that they could not have checked me in so worried about next time I travel."

Case Seven:

"I was denied boarding a flight traveling from Saudi to Egypt because Egypt visa on arrival requirements need the traveler to have over 6 months valid residency in the UK or Europe. As the check in attendants saw my brp expiry date say 31/12/2024 they thought I had 4 months left on my residency when in fact I have a residency until 12/2026. (This happened mid August) They refused to recognize the evisa as they said they have no way of verifying this evisa is genuine since it was on a website and had no code and they had not received any directions that the UK is moving away from physical cards to evisas. I offered to show them the gov website but they said it was not their problem and there is no way to verify. They also noted that it seemed suspicious that my evisa ends on 12/2026 and my brp ends on 31/12/2024 but since my BRP is a physical proof they would believe in over my evisa. The UK must notify airports around the world that they are moving away from BRP to evisa because otherwise it could be disastrous. I also didn't have internet to show my evisa at first and the airport internet was not working so I had to ask someone to hotspot me and at one point I accidentally pressed the go back bottom on the web and my evisa crashed because it is WiFi dependent so I had to find someone else to hotspot me. It is just a mess. And the lack of any proper guidance as we are approaching December is making me lose trust in the system. This same issue has happened to my brother as well where he was almost denied boarding and argued for over an hour because they thought his indefinite leave to remain expires on 31/12/2024 even though it quite literally says indefinite leave to remain."

Annex D: Testimonials from People Experiencing Issues from the 'Soft Rollout' of the Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA)

Case One:

"When my family decided to travel to Kenya this July, all my hotel reservations, plane tickets and a tourist visa for Kenya were linked to my [EU] passport... I checked online and I found information that the EU citizens require a travel permission since 2. April 2025 to visit the UK, but as a UK citizen and resident I was not aware of this. My son and I flew from Croatia to London Stansted with Ryanair in April this year and had no problems boarding the flight or entering the UK with our [EU] passports without this travel permission. Also the information on the UK government site explicitly stated that travel permission is needed only for tourist or family visits. I recently applied for a British passport, but because all our travel arrangements were linked to my [EU] passport, and because I was not aware of potential problems with the immigration rules interpretation, I did not carry my British passport. I did have a picture of it on my phone, which I showed to a ground crew member, since he said he needed a proof I was a British citizen. I also informed him that I live in the UK and my UK address is in my [EU] passport, but he ignored that information. This address is the same as provided in my Turkish Airlines flight bookings. When I was waiting for passengers to board, two other ground crew members came to help me. They made some calls, and took photos of my [EU] passport and of my British passport photo on my mobile phone. They told me the photos will be sent to an email address in the UK, so somebody could confirm that I could travel without a visa, but it would take more than 30 min. My son was given a choice to stay with me or fly home since he had his British passport on him, and he decided to fly home. After all passengers boarded the plane I was told to go through immigration/passport control and head to Departures so I could get a new ticket home. I would also shortly receive an email regarding the query that was sent to the UK immigration whether I could travel without a visa.... When a ground crew member booked me on another flight to London, he stressed again I needed a visa and I should be able to get one before flying."

Case Two:

"A client who is a senior associate was stopped yesterday afternoon boarding a flight to the UK from France- she is (Non-EU National) and has Skilled Worker status. She argued that she had an e Visa however they wanted to see an ETA, a physical BRP or visa which had not expired. We sent over to her a copy of her BRP and last approval notice however she was only permitted to board after a strong argument. In essence the airline staff were confused with ETAs and Evisas."

Case Three:

"My share code at Luxembourg airport didn't work. I'd checked into a BA flight 24hrs earlier online but at the bag-drop desk I was asked for my ETA and said I didn't have one I had settled status. When I was asked for proof I explained about the share code and produced it but was told they didn't have internet access at the desks and I

should be the one to prove my status, not them...Because of ETAs - which can be attached to documents when booking flights but UKIVs can't - we're now being asked to prove our status at checkin when before we weren't and the system doesn't work. What system??! No one at the airport had a clue about it (other than the BA staff member in question only because he has a UKIV account himself!) It's a shambles - we need physical proof. Staff at airports abroad are at a loss and put it back on the passengers and as passengers we're not informed that actually you should have, not only your passport and boarding pass at the ready, but also be logged in to the page of your UKIV open so your photo and immigration status can be checked"

Case Four:

"Last week I travelled to Turkey for a 8 day trip and when I was at the check in desk to return to from Antalya to London I was denied boarding. My passport clearly states I have British residency and UK is place of birth. As I was born before XXX I am automatically a British citizen and of course my DOB appears on my passport but none of these details were enough. I was being asked to show my ETA and questioned as to why I was visiting the UK when the matter of fact is I am a British born citizen that lives and works in the UK and NOT visiting. Boarding for my flight had started and the ground crew advised me to call the home office which over the weekend and bank holiday was not open. They were not very helpful and left me to deal with this extend my frustrating situation. I did not know where to start as I was so upset and thought I may have to stay trapped in Antalya for at least 5 days or when the home office phone lines were open. I couldn't believe I was being denied re entry into my home country where I was born and permanently live."

Case Five:

"Got to check in desk refused to board my husband on his Italian passport with settled status. Would not let him speak just was made to take our cases of the belt this was in Tenerife BA flight nobody would help us the police came they kept saying he needed an ETA after 2 hours they said they will get him a ETA on his phone the gate was closing so we payed £148.57 it never downloaded to his phone but they said you can board now . Running to the gate just in time to board he is 75 years old .lived in the uk for 54 years never had a problem before. I have cancer . It was so stressful as they said they could keep us there for 3 days . We just wanted to come home . Now we are so worried about going away again."