

Post Funding Evaluation 2023-24

Evaluation is an objective process of understanding how a grant programme was implemented, what effects it had, for whom, how and why. Good quality evaluations can play important roles in setting and delivering priorities and objectives, demonstrating accountability, and providing evidence of outcomes delivered by the funding programme. They enable grant programmes to be improved and can justify reinvestment or resource savings. They can show if they are delivering as planned and if resources are being used effectively.

1. Grant Scheme Title	Grant Award (£)	Contract Manager
EU Citizens Rights Project	£100,000	Lizzi Trueblood
2. Grant Scheme Overview		
<p><i>Please provide a brief overview of the initial aim of the funding scheme.</i></p> <p>As set out in the Primary Grant agreement dated May 2019.</p> <p>The purpose of the funding is for the provision of information and advice services for EU, EEA and UK citizens. These services will be free to clients, person-centred and quality assured. The service will provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specialist advice service, including tribunal and/or Court representation services when appropriate, which will be required to enable EU, EEA, and UK citizens and other migrant citizens who have the Right to Work, to resolve any exploitation and/or discrimination issue related to employment. <p>All EU Citizens accessing the Specialist Advice Services will, if necessary, be offered appropriate advice and assistance to help them to understand, determine and apply for their right to Settled Status.</p> <p>All EU, EEA and UK Citizens accessing services must be offered, as necessary, interpretation services to ensure they can adequately engage with advisors/caseworkers.</p>		
3. Highlights		
<p><i>Please capture the highlights of the scheme. Example case studies, staff training/experiences, stakeholder development.</i></p> <p>Having a local casework service for people whose first language is not English/Welsh was beneficial. One area of our service employed two engagement staff with a range of languages who were already embedded in the migrant work communities in Wrexham and Flintshire, which gave excellent access to the target group. Having direct access to specialist employment advisers enabled both action to be taken where employers were not following the law and increasing awareness and confidence of the client in our services.</p> <p>Having a caseworker who could respond to Home Office queries for further evidence enabled quick decisions making about applications. Providing caseworkers, in partnership with Trade Unions, at outreaches in local employers like factories worked well.</p>		

Understanding the problems facing EU nationals, and how that can translate to other migrant demographics has been key in understanding how to help as an organisation. For example, we supported hundreds of EU nationals having issues accessing their online accounts and status. There were delays to employment, benefit claims and local authority support, meaning that financial support had been unnecessarily delayed. The upcoming changes to the rules around physical Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) cards put us in a good position to understand the system used and the likely issues our clients will face.

We built good relationships throughout the project, working with Local Authorities and other agencies. At the beginning of the project, we attended MS surgeries to help raise awareness of the service. We worked with TGP Cymru, sharing leaflets with them to advertise and promote the service. We co-hosted 6 webinars with Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team (EYST), attended 8 networking events organised by local authorities, provided 3 information and outreach sessions at schools and colleges, 11 roadshows and events across West, South and Mid Wales, delivering presentations about our services. We also hosted an outreach at a local Portuguese bakery and provided a joint outreach with the Portuguese Consulate in Cardiff.

Delivering presentations and participating in COVID-19 webinars provided opportunities to engage with a broader range of clients and stakeholders. These stakeholders included other organisations assisting with the project, local authorities, and Consulates. This created a useful network of referrals and support for the project and the clients needing help.

Additionally, generalist advisers and staff at a number of Councils were also trained by our team on the EU Settlement Scheme.

The experience and knowledge gained from delivering this service, helped us apply for funding from the Welsh Government to deliver training in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 on migrants rights and entitlements, to frontline workers in the third sector and local authorities. Without this background from the project, we would not have been able to draw on our experiences when delivering the training. As a result we were able to up-skill a significant amount of people.

Case study

We supported a client with multiple applications, from settled status, all the way up to their first British passport application. The client was supported for around 2.5 years and was very happy with the service provided.

The client had not applied for settled status and got in contact with our service because she wanted to become a British citizen. She is a French citizen who has lived in the UK since 1992, working as self-employed. Her partner is British and her children hold dual nationality.

What we did and how it made a difference

Firstly, we assisted the client with her settled status application as this was still required to secure her rights in the UK post-Brexit. Once this was completed we helped her with the

process of applying to become a British citizen. This is a lengthy process and she was advised that the decision making time could be as much as 6 months.

The client contacted us in November to let us know that her application had been successful and she was delighted to confirm that she would be attending her citizenship ceremony in January. She will soon be receiving help with a passport application. As soon as the client arrived home from the ceremony she emailed our team to let us know how it had gone.

The client said: *“Just to let you know that today was the day... All went well, thank you again so much for all your help in making today a successful and memorable ceremony. Wishing you health, peace, joy and all the best for the future, God bless”*

4. Challenges

Please capture the challenges the scheme faced, including areas for improvement, and what would work for future schemes.

At the start of the project, there was some difficulty in engaging with the target client group due to multiple, similar services on offer. This was further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, which meant that we were unable to visit all the counties in the region as planned. Our teams had intended to target the service sector in Conwy but the COVID-19 restrictions prevented this. In response to these challenges, our teams moved to digital solutions.

There were initial difficulties with dealing with applications remotely, especially with clients who were not confident with IT or did not have access. However, ways around this were found, such as the use of paper applications and clients consenting to sending their documents into the office via post for the adviser to complete the application. This did however result in applications taking longer to process.

We found there was a lack of awareness among migrants about who needed to apply for settled status, specifically affecting those with old permanent residency and families with children. So, after the lockdown, a huge amount of work was done to promote awareness and the need for EU migrants living in Wales to apply by the deadline.

Finally, our teams report that the broad range of languages was a challenge initially. This was addressed by increasing our provision of translation support and working with key stakeholders within communities.

5. Final Targets

Please [see the table at the end of the document](#).

6. Lessons Learned

List the lessons learned during the funding scheme period that impacted on the delivery of the service and how these can be resolved in any future scheme.

Working on the project from inception, we've learned a lot about a very complex advice area. We have gained a good understanding of the immigration system and feel confident in supporting clients with cases regarding immigration, or specific issues EU nationals could face.

We learnt that to maximise our ability to reach the target communities, we needed to work with people from within those communities and promote internal referrals to our specialist service where required.

We used advertising on platforms such as Facebook to target geographical areas and provided videos in four languages. This helped extend our reach when COVID-19 restrictions limited our presence in person, introducing us to people where English / Welsh was not their first language, and those that had no previous knowledge of the Citizens Advice service.

On a process front, we've learnt that there needs to be a way to ensure the telephone advice for online applications matches the simpler nature of face-to-face support. Ensuring all aspects of the online application process can be completed over the phone by addressing issues such as the client's ability or capability to send documents via post or electronically, or access the security codes sent to a client's phone.

Finally, we've also learnt that networking with other agencies and local authorities opened the channels of referrals and advice to clients who may otherwise have not accessed services.

7. Future Demand

Please include any trends emerging or on-going cases that are still in need of having a support service in place (these can be internal observations, experiences etc and external current research).

A notable trend was that EU nationals were trying to access the EU Settlement Scheme despite not being eligible. For example, they had no previous UK residency, no close family members in the UK, and were trying to come to the UK after 31 December 2020.

We anticipate a continued need for support by EU nationals with pre-settled status and their families. There have been changes to the rules on the back of legal action that will likely need to be communicated regularly.

There are also still a few clients who have attended the drop in in Cardiff who have still not made an application for a status due to their applications being rejected and needing assistance with further evidence or appeals. These have been directed to Settled for further assistance.

We also anticipate repeat requests for advice on how to replace BRP cards in the online system. This could likely make entitlement-based enquiries more complex, as it won't be immediately obvious to the adviser what their status is. It also means clients will be required to log into their immigration account, pass the security process and have an understanding of how to complete these processes. Our experiences in dealing with EU nationals and the online system suggests there will be considerable confusion and difficulty over the next 12 months. We are concerned that these difficulties will be compounded by the reduced numbers of providers able to deliver services to this cohort of people.

Section 5: KPI performance

Description of the target	Target	Q4 outcome	Q3 outcome	Q2 outcome	Q1 outcome	Annual figure
Number of existing clients' cases brought to resolution	123 per annum	8 cases closed in Q4	99 cases closed in Q3	68 cases closed in Q2	93 cases closed in Q1	268 (+145 over target).
Number of new (2023/24) clients supported with advice.	120 per annum	2 new clients supported in Q4	57 new clients supported in Q3	76 new clients supported in Q2	97 new clients supported in Q1	232 (+112 over target)

Client Satisfaction KPIs

Area	Target	Result
Clients reporting improved knowledge of rights and resilience following advice	85%	91%
Clients who felt their situation had improved	75%	91%
Clients expressing satisfaction with the service.	85%	100%

Geographic distribution of new clients in 2023/24:

- all new clients (so including those who had 'information' or 'casework' as their advice level)

LCA	No. of new clients 2023/24 supported with advice
Cardiff	84
Flintshire	33
Vale of Glamorgan	26
Wrexham	18
Not recorded/not applicable	12
Newport	12
Swansea	11
Neath Port Talbot	5
Ceredigion	5
Blaenau Gwent	4
Gwynedd	4
Isle of Anglesey	4
Rhondda Cynon Taf	4
Caerphilly	3
Carmarthenshire	2
Torfaen	2
Pembrokeshire	2
Conwy	2
Powys	2
Bradford	1
Stoke-on-Trent	1
Denbighshire	1