



Work and Pensions Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
Tel 020 7219 8976 Email workpencom@parliament.uk

From the Chair

Guy Opperman MP
Minister for Pensions and Financial Inclusion
Department for Work and Pensions

30 March 2021

Dear Guy,

I am writing to you about concerns that, because it has not been possible to hold face-to-face verification appointments during the pandemic, many EU/EEA nationals in the UK have been unable to obtain a National Insurance Number (NINo). This means that they cannot apply for Universal Credit and other benefits, or be furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. As a result, these problems are having a significant impact on people's daily lives.

In response to a recent Parliamentary Question, you said that the Government's new digital solution, Apply for a National Insurance Number, should be available to all applicants who are not required to verify their identity face-to-face from the end of March. In a previous answer, you said that the Department was exploring alternative methods of identity verification for people who are normally required to attend a face-to-face appointment, such as EU/EEA nationals.¹

It would be helpful to have answers to the following questions:

- 1. Is it still your intention to make the digital Apply for a National Insurance Number service available to all by the end of March? If not, when do you expect it to be available?**
- 2. What alternatives to face-to-face verification have you identified, and have these been tested?**
 - a. Could you set out the Department's timeframe for implementing any of these solutions?**
 - b. Does the Department plan to offer alternative verification methods to all EU/EEA nationals, or will this option be available only to people with settled or pre-settled status?**

¹ PQ [130119](#) and PQ [155070](#)



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- 3. Following the announcement of the Prime Minister's roadmap out of lockdown, does the Department have a timeframe for when it expects face-to-face verification appointments to resume?**
- 4. The Department uses online services, such as Verify and Confirm Your Identity, to verify people's identity when they claim Universal Credit. Why has it not been possible to use these services to verify EU/EEA nationals' identities during the pandemic?**

We would be grateful for a response by Thursday 15 April.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP

Chair, Work and Pensions Committee