

Buckinghamshire Brexit Preparedness



10th December 2018

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Buckinghamshire County Council

Overview

Buckinghamshire County Council continues to work closely with partners to proactively prepare for Brexit, taking practical actions to mitigate risks and harness opportunities as these become clearer. This paper provides an overview of Buckinghamshire's preparedness for Brexit as a place, with an emphasis on the work of the Council to date.

We continue to engage with national and regional organisations, other local authorities, and the business community. Over the last few months we have been approached by a number of councils keen to replicate our preparations. Following a Brexit presentation for a number of Bucks businesses, we have been invited to present and share our approach at a business workshop in Thame. We continue to demonstrate leadership in this policy area and expect to remain at the forefront of local government preparations over the coming months.

Nationally, there is still significant lack of clarity regarding the UK's future relationship with the EU and forthcoming government policies arising from Brexit, although it is expected that these will become clearer over the next few months.

Government have recently advised local authorities that departments will shortly be increasing engagement with councils to ensure their readiness for EU exit. This is a welcome development and is likely to result in an increase in the pace of our Brexit preparations.

109 days
to Brexit



79 working days
to Brexit

Brexit date
11pm
29th March 2019

Buckinghamshire County Council

Brexit Preparedness

Key Issues

Topic	Overview	RAG
EU nationals & Integrated Communities	Clear government guidance on the EU Settlement Scheme, following Home Office teleconferences. BCC actively implementing actions and working with partners to disseminate information and support to businesses and residents. No local community cohesion concerns at present.	Green
Workforce & Migration	Reduction in net migration since the EU referendum, but this remains high by historic standards. Buckinghamshire's labour market remains stable. Lack of clarity on future UK immigration policy, although a white paper is expected this Autumn.	Yellow
Trading Standards, Customs & Supply Chain	Lack of clarity regarding future customs arrangements with the EU (subject to ongoing negotiations). Any disruption unlikely to affect Buckinghamshire disproportionately. New regulatory arrangements being put in place. Unlikely to see major changes in the short term. Potential increase in Trading Standards workload (possible capacity issues).	Yellow
Structural Funds	Lack of clarity regarding future arrangements (UK Shared Prosperity Fund). BTVLEP currently receives the lowest amount of EU funding in the country.	Yellow
Economy & Infrastructure	Short and long term effects of Brexit on the local economy remain difficult to predict. Buckinghamshire's economy remains robust and well placed to mitigate risks and harness opportunities. BCC actively working with BBF and the LEP to support businesses prepare for Brexit and further develop a business environment conducive to growth. Investment in infrastructure developments not currently expected to change.	Yellow

Next Steps

- **BCC to work with social care providers to promote EU Settlement Scheme take-up by EU nationals working in the sector.**
- **BCC to undertake all EU Settlement Scheme suggested actions (assuming positive follow up).**
- **BCC to develop and deliver, in partnership with BBF, a second Brexit Summit as part of the Buckinghamshire Business Festival.**



EU nationals & Integrated Communities



EU Settlement Scheme – following Home Office teleconferences

- Agreement reached with the EU. Not confirmed but **highly likely** that the same will apply in the event of a 'no deal'
- EU Settlement Scheme is currently being phased in until it is fully open by the end of **March 2019**
- Pre-Settled or Settled Status means that EU citizens will have the **same rights and access to services and benefits as now**

EU Settlement Scheme - Criteria

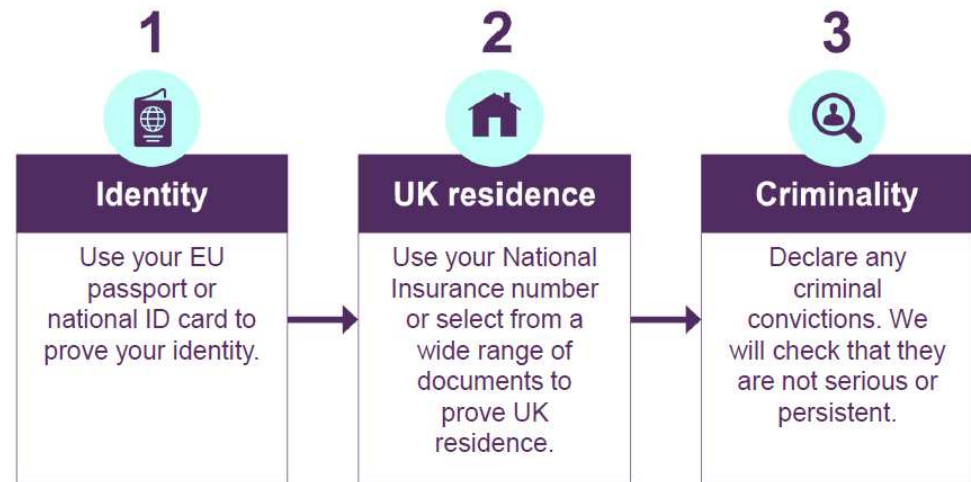


EU nationals & Integrated Communities



EU Settlement Scheme - Application

- Applications will be done online and will cost £65 for adults and £32.50 for children under 16
- Majority of EU nationals in Buckinghamshire will be expected to pay for their application
- It will be free for EU citizens with documented permanent residence, indefinite leave to remain, and for looked after children
- Same application process for settled and pre-settled status
- Citizens who are given pre-settled status will not have to pay again to convert it to settled status (available after 5 years residency period)



EU Settlement Scheme - First Pilot

- Initial pilot with **12 NHS Trusts** in the North West and **three universities** in Liverpool, now complete.

Results:

- Over **350 applications** processed
- Average of **15 minutes** to complete application
- **96%** thought the process was easy to follow

21,000
estimated EU nationals in
Buckinghamshire (**3.98%**)



EU nationals & Integrated Communities



EU Settlement Scheme - Second Pilot

Late October

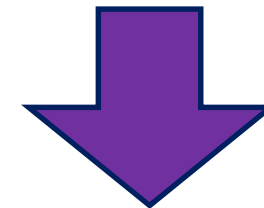
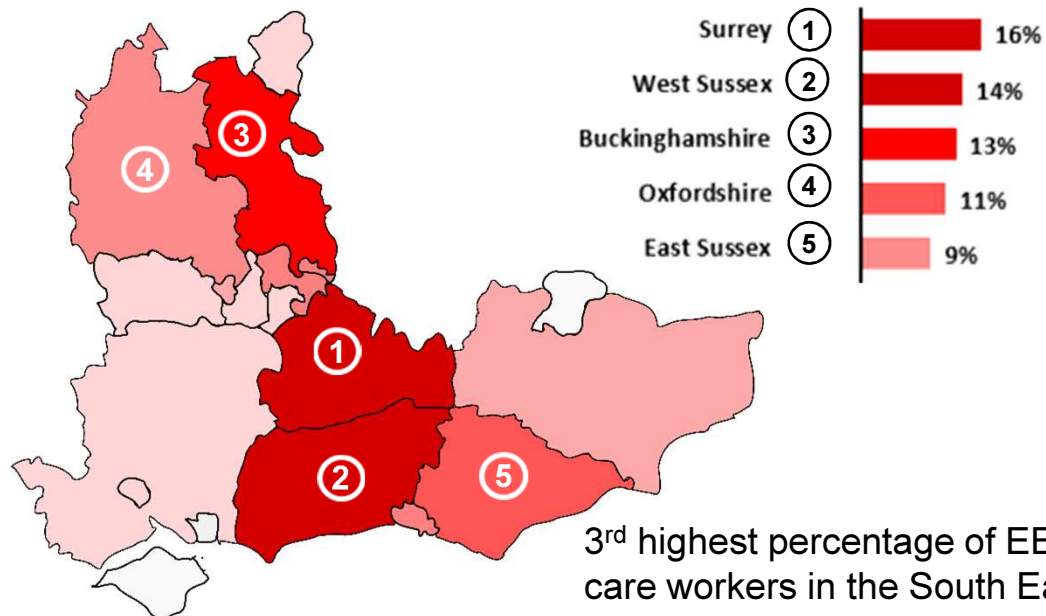
NHS Trusts – a few more NHS trusts in the North West can apply

Mid November

Employees of Higher Education Institutions (registered as a tier 4 sponsor) nationwide can apply

End November

EU citizens working within the health and social care sector can apply



BCC to work with social care providers to promote take-up by EU nationals working in the sector



EU nationals & Integrated Communities



EU Settlement Scheme

Suggested Local Government Actions

Local Authorities

- Make applications on behalf of EU **looked after children** (costs waived)
- No implementation date yet available

Libraries – Assisted Digital Service (funding available)

- Telephone support to complete online form
- Face to face support at libraries to provide digital support
- Face to face support at home for those unable to access telephone or library assistance

Passport and ID Card Checking Services

- In-person service to check biometrically chipped passports and ID cards
- A fee can be collected for identity verification services
- Similar process to the current European Passport Return Service (BCC registrars previously delivered this)

BCC Actions

Children's

- 8 EU looked after children in BCC's care
- Children's currently clarifying 26 'nationality unknown'

CHASC

- Libraries currently following up Assisted Digital Service with Home Office to clarify funding available, processes and expectations
- Registrars currently following up Checking Services with Home Office to clarify funding available, processes and expectations

BCC to undertake all suggested actions (assuming positive follow up)

EU nationals & Integrated Communities



Upcoming Guidance

- The Home Office is currently developing a **Community Leader Toolkit** for local authorities and community groups (expected in November)

Other BCC Actions

- Home Office **Employer Toolkit** already shared with HR, all BCC suppliers and businesses in Bucks (through BBF)



Community Cohesion

- No concerns raised by partners or community groups to date
- Not currently expecting social unrest issues in Bucks



Workforce & Migration



- Small reduction in net migration since the EU referendum, but this remains positive and high by historic standards
- Buckinghamshire’s labour market remains stable, but important to note ongoing skills needs. If the UK’s immigration policy becomes significantly more restrictive, it may be beneficial to increase investment in ‘growing our own’
- BCC’s EU workforce remains stable (slightly higher than at the 2016 referendum)
- Currently awaiting **Immigration Policy White Paper** (Autumn 2018)

Net migration in the UK by nationality

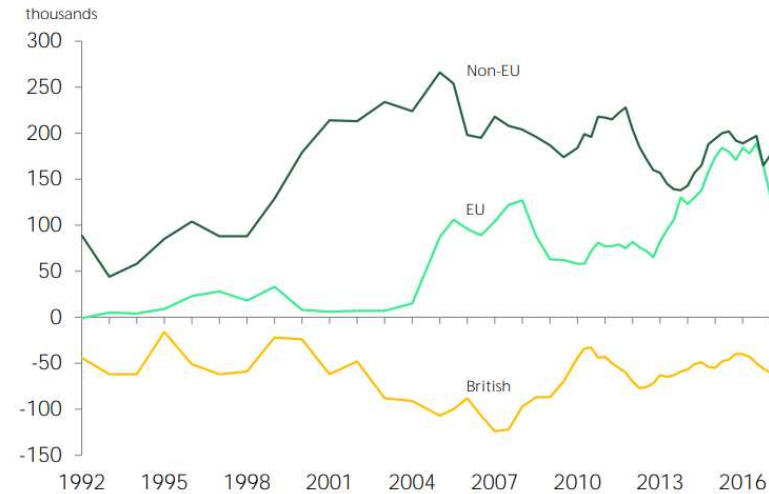
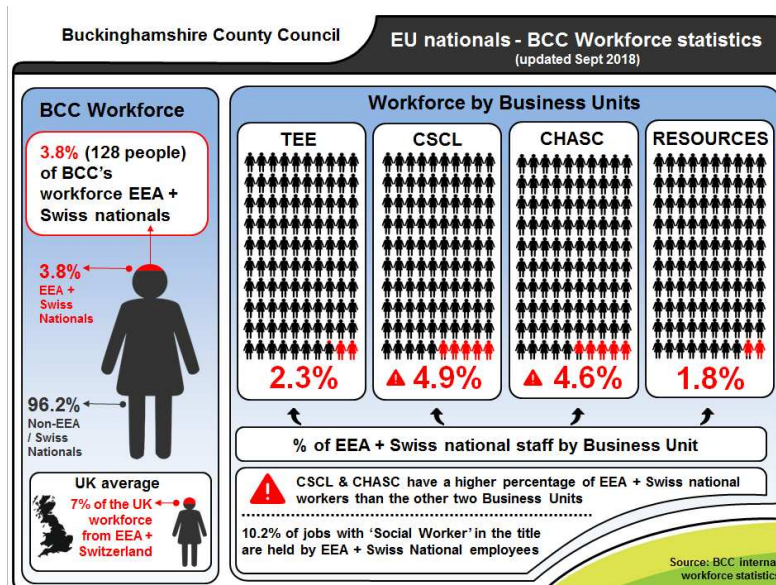


Table 3: Most sought skills, year to August 2017

Specialised skill	Job postings no.	%
Customer Service	5,284	8.3
Microsoft Excel	5,091	8.0
Business Management	3,748	5.9
Microsoft Office	3,381	5.3
Project Management	3,124	4.9
Sales	2,942	4.6
Teaching	2,872	4.5
Product Sales	2,513	3.9
Accountancy	2,417	3.8
Contract Management	2,182	3.4
Key Performance Indicators	2,159	3.4
SQL	2,033	3.2
Budgeting	1,990	3.1
Business Development	1,966	3.1
Invoicing	1,874	2.9
Customer Contact	1,858	2.9



Trading Standards, Customs & Supply Chain

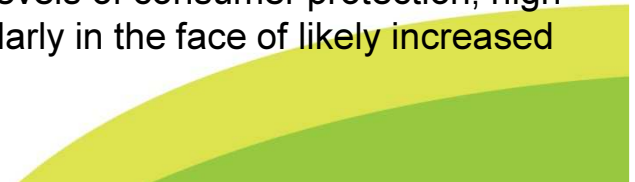


- The UK's future customs arrangements with the EU are still the subject of ongoing negotiations, and at present it is unclear what the implications are likely to be for borders and customs.
- Due to Buckinghamshire's geographical position, it is unlikely that the county will be disproportionately affected by any possible disruption at ports and borders.
- As this is a matter of national competency, the Council has focused on making businesses aware of the potential for short-term disruptions to supply chains and trading in general.



Trading Standards

- Most of the legislation dealt with by Trading Standards is based on EU law, which will be transferred into UK law. Currently there are many references and links to EU bodies and, in most instances, it has not yet been clarified which bodies in the UK will take over these roles, although we are aware that new regulatory arrangements are currently being developed.
- In the short term, Brexit could increase demand for Trading Standards services due to increased demand from businesses and residents for advice on any uncertainties related to Brexit.
- Brexit remains an opportunity to reform and invest in the UK's regulatory environment. Funding for frontline Trading Standards has fallen by over 50% over the past 7 years, and it is clear that government funding levels should increase in the run-up to Brexit to maintain high levels of consumer protection, high regulatory standards, and robust domestic market surveillance, particularly in the face of likely increased demand for services.



Structural Funds



	EU Structural Funds 2014-20 allocation	Population (2011)
UK	£10.8billion	63,182,000
Buckinghamshire	£13.8million (0.1278%)	505,283 (0.7997%)

- EU Structural funds are currently allocated on a ‘need’ basis, calculated based on relative deprivation levels. In 2014-20, Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP received the **lowest allocation** of funds in the UK, roughly 7 times less than if it had been based on population.
- With an ageing and changing population profile, Buckinghamshire would be significantly disadvantaged if the UK Shared Prosperity Fund were allocated on the same basis as current EU Structural Funds.
- The future UK Shared Prosperity Fund should also take into account **pockets of deprivation** present within some otherwise relatively affluent areas. While no part of Buckinghamshire falls into the most deprived decile in England, three areas fall into the second most deprived decile, and two into the third most deprived decile.

Economic Growth Potential

- Whilst we recognise the rationale for relatively more deprived areas to receive a greater share of successor funding arrangements, Brexit offers an opportunity to design a fund that is **more targeted, flexible, devolved and designed to promote economic growth**.
- Focusing some of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund on economic growth would accelerate growth across the country and increase the prosperity of some of our most deprived communities by creating economic and employment opportunities.

Lobbying

- Timescales for decisions/announcements still unclear
- LGA taking a strong lead lobbying on behalf of local authorities



Economy & Infrastructure



Economic Impact of Brexit on the Local Economy

- The macro-economic effects of Brexit in both the short and long term remain difficult to predict. Due to our economy's strength and dynamism, we expect Buckinghamshire to perform comparatively well in the event of either an economic downturn or expansion following Brexit

Promoting Economic Growth

- BCC continues to work with partners, including BTVLEP and BBF, to promote economic growth in the county. BBF, as the county's growth hub, leads this work and has disseminated Brexit preparedness information to businesses, including:
 - Brexit checklist for businesses
 - EU Settlement Scheme Employer Toolkit
 - 'No deal' preparation advice
- Further Brexit guidance and information will be disseminated to the business community as it becomes available.



Local Government Resilience

- Buckinghamshire County Council has a long history of prudent financial management, resulting in realistic budget plans and prudent level of reserves.
- However, these are financially challenging times for Local Government as a sector and especially for authorities which have responsibility for Social Care provision.
- Funding shortfalls in both Adult's and Children's Social Care should be addressed by central government to ensure local government is financially resilient and able to take action as needed.



Buckinghamshire County Council

Next Steps

- Buckinghamshire County Council will continue to work with partners to proactively prepare for Brexit, mitigating risks and harnessing opportunities to deliver the best possible outcome for our residents.
- We welcome engagement from government departments, national and regional organisations, other local authorities, businesses and residents, as we prepare to help deliver Brexit in Buckinghamshire.

2nd Buckinghamshire Brexit Summit

- As part of our ongoing Brexit work, we are currently developing Buckinghamshire's second Brexit Summit, in partnership with BBF, to be delivered in March 2019 as part of the first ever Buckinghamshire Business Festival.
- Aimed at the public sector, businesses, and the voluntary community sector, this event will deliver practical and expert information on:
 - Workforce
 - Supply Chains
 - Exports

BCC to develop and deliver, in partnership with BBF, a second Brexit Summit as part of the Buckinghamshire Business Festival

