

Senedd Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Materion Allanol a Deddfwriaeth
Ychwanegol
Ymadael â'r Undeb Ewropeaidd:
Paratodau yng Nghymru ar gyfer
diwedd y cyfnod pontio
EAAL(5) EUP13
Ymateb gan Coleg Nursio Brenhinol Cymru

Welsh Parliament
External Affairs and Additional Legislation
Committee
Exiting the European Union:
Preparedness in Wales for the end of
the transition period

Evidence from Royal College of Nursing Wales

There are three important topics that the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Wales would like to raise.

Shared Prosperity Fund

Wales received about £295 million from the European Structural and Investment Fund. Wales was the biggest benefactor from this fund in the UK. To replace these funds post Brexit the UK Government committed to establishing a Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF).

Despite the UK government first announcing that it would replace the European Structural and Investment Fund with the SPF in 2017 there are currently no definitive plans surrounding the SPF.

The absence of detailed plans by the UK Government to replace this funding and lack of priority shown to the SPF is deeply troubling – especially with the added burden of COVID-19.

The UK Welsh Affairs Committee published a report on the SPF in early October 2020. The report comments that the 'UK Government has made negligible progress in developing its replacement for EU economic development funding in Wales'. MPs have called on the UK Government to offer urgent reassurance and to guarantee that there will be no cliff-edge end to EU funds from January 2021.

The Welsh Government has also raised similar concerns with the UK Government. I encourage the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee and Welsh Government to continue to do so to avoid unnecessary and damaging delays to crucial funding for Wales.

Mutual recognition of professional qualifications (MRPQ)

RCN Wales is concerned by the lack of arrangements regarding the mutual recognition of professional qualifications (MRPQ).

The MRPQ requires UK regulators to recognise EEA and Swiss qualifications which are of an equivalent standard to UK qualifications. However there is no longer certain obligations on UK regulators, such as offering compensation measures and partial access in circumstances where EEA/Swiss qualifications are not of an equivalent standard to UK qualifications.

The MRPQ will have an impact on the health and social care workforce in Wales, especially in a no-deal scenario. I would welcome an update on these arrangements and the interaction of the Welsh and UK Governments.

Settlement Status

RCN Wales values all EU/EEA nationals working in the health and social care sector in Wales. Furthermore RCN recognises that it is not just about the professionals, but also their families and the communities they live in.

EU/EEA staff should be able to apply for the free Settled Status Scheme and should be supported by the Welsh Government.

After the 31st December, the UK Government state that, 'EU citizens living in the UK must have registered and obtained settled or pre-settled status in order to be able to continue to live in the UK and access NHS services free of charge.' The Welsh Government should ensure that its package of free support is readily available to help EU citizens to work and live in Wales.

The three matters raised in this letter highlight the importance of cross nation communication and stakeholder engagement. With only a few months left of 2020, it is important that there are clear plans in place across the UK relating to these matters to avoid unnecessary delays and hardship.