

Jane Hutt MS
Minister for Social Justice

26 July 2022

Dear Jane

EU Settlement Scheme

At our meeting on 11 July we considered the latest available statistics on EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) applications from European citizens living in Wales, and subsequently published our most recent monitoring report.

The report marks our first year of monitoring the EUSS and it notes several key issues that we have identified during the course of this work. These are set out below and we would be grateful for your response to each:

Pre-settled citizens

Our report notes that the number of those applying to convert their status from pre-settled to settled status are captured in statistics on repeat applications, although information is not provided by UK nation. Could you please set out:

- whether the Welsh Government has obtained statistics from the UK Government where statistical gaps exist, in particular with regards to the number of citizens in Wales seeking to convert their status from pre-settled to settled; and
- whether the Welsh Government has the data to be able to identify citizens with pre-settled status, including for the purpose of providing support and reminders for second applications.

In your letter of 13 April 2022, you noted that Welsh Government policy officials would soon be reviewing the publication by the Migration Observatory 'How Secure is Pre-Settled Status for EU Citizens After Brexit?'. Please could you set out the key findings and outcomes of that review.

Late and no applications

We note that the number of late applications from Wales increased to 6,180 on 31 March from 4,240 on 31 December 2021, and has increased month-on-month during this period. Please could you set out:

- your view of the increases in the number of late applications from Wales;
- your view on how late applications from Wales are being handled by the UK Government; and
- whether the Welsh Government is aware of any issues relating to late applications.

We are aware that if a person has not applied to the EUSS and they come into contact with UK authorities, they will be issued with a 28 day notice to apply. The UK Government says that people who have not applied after the 28 day notice period will not be eligible for work, benefits or services and will not pass tenancy checks. Could you confirm whether the Welsh Government is aware of any issues relating to citizens who have made no application?

Free advice and support

Further to your earlier [announcement](#) on extending the deadline for the funding of free advice and support services to European citizens applying to the EUSS to at least the end of September 2022, could you please clarify:

- whether the Welsh Government is intending to extend support beyond September 2022;
- the Welsh Government's involvement in the UK Government's additional funding to UK-wide organisations, [announced in April](#), including whether the organisations in receipt of the funding are key partners of the Welsh Government; and
- how the Welsh and UK governments coordinate in funding allocation for EUSS support.

In your [letter](#) of 22 February 2022, you committed to sharing the minutes of the EUSS Co-ordination Group for as long as the group continues to meet. To date we have received minutes from a meeting that took place on 13 January 2022. Could you confirm whether any further meetings have taken place and if so, could you please provide the minutes as previously agreed.

Ukraine and EUSS family permits

Our report notes that an extension to the EUSS family permit scheme's 29 March deadline was not granted by the UK Government and this route is now closed to eligible Ukrainian family members unless they can meet the late applications criteria. The Committee shares the Welsh Government's disappointment that the deadline was not extended.

The [latest statistics](#) show that, UK-wide, 13,030 Ukrainians had applied to the EUSS up to 31 March. Information by UK nation is not available. Please could you confirm:

- if the Welsh Government has the figures for the number of applications received from Ukrainians arriving in Wales who applied to the EUSS; and
- whether any further discussions have taken place between the Welsh and UK governments on this issue.

We look forward to receiving a response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Jenny Rathbone".

Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee