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EU and EEA citizens working in  
the NHS in Scotland

9 April 2019

Dear Colleagues,

## **EU AND EEA CITIZENS WORKING IN THE NHS IN SCOTLAND**

You may recall that I wrote to you in September last year, and again to all those working in both the health and social care sectors in December, with regards to the UK's exit from the EU. I had hoped then that, by this point, we would have had more clarity. Unfortunately, it is still the case that the UK Parliament has not agreed a deal or a clear way forward. As a result, our future remains uncertain. Given this, I wanted to write to you again today to provide you with the most recent and accurate information we have.

Let me first of all assure you that my top priority continues to be to ensure that your rights are protected and that you have access to the information and assistance you require. As I said in my last letter, your contributions are very much valued. We want you to continue to live and work in Scotland. We are very grateful for the work you do, and the contribution you make, not just to patient care, but also to the health, care and wellbeing of Scotland as a whole. We want you to continue to live and work in Scotland.

I want to reassure you that we have been working very closely with NHS Scotland Boards and health and care partners over the past months to do all we can to make sure that the sectors are as prepared as they can be for the various scenarios we might face over the coming days, weeks and months. This includes doing what we can to ensure continuity of supplies, including of medicines, medical devices, clinical consumables, and non-clinical goods.

### **EU Citizen Settlement Scheme**

The EU Settlement Scheme fully opened on 30 March 2019, allowing EU citizens to apply for the UK immigration status they need to continue to live and work in the UK. Any EU citizen who applies must prove their identity, show that they reside in the UK, and declare any criminal convictions, before they can be assigned either pre-settled or settled status. This process is free and I would encourage all EU staff members, and their families, to apply, if they have not already done so, as soon as possible. This can be done by following the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families/applying-for-settled-status>

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Those who applied during one of the pilot phases and were required to pay a fee will be refunded. The Home Office has announced that this will happen automatically from 30 March 2019, and a confirmation email will be sent to the email address provided on the application, when the refund has been processed. Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eu-settlement-scheme-application-fee-refunds>

The Home Office also recently confirmed that even if the UK leaves the EU without a deal, EU citizens who are resident in the UK before the withdrawal will continue to be eligible to apply to the settlement scheme, until at least 31 December 2020. Arrangements after this date have yet to be agreed upon.

To provide further support and advice to EU citizens, the Scottish Government has now launched a 'Stay in Scotland' campaign. The campaign will provide additional reassurance to EU citizens, support and advice for those applying for Settled Status, and a toolkit for employers to assist them in holding meaningful and supportive conversations with EU staff. Further information about the campaign, and relevant materials, will be circulated to NHS Boards in the coming days, which I hope will prove helpful.

### **Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications**

I recognise the significant concerns staff have had about their continued registration status in the event that we leave the EU without an alternative mutual agreement in place. However, the UK Government has now confirmed that the professional status of all non-UK healthcare professionals currently working with full registration in the UK is permanently protected, subject to ongoing compliance with the conditions of their professional registration.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to the EU Exit section within the mygov.scot website, which contains the most up-to-date information about how EU Exit could affect people and businesses in Scotland. I would encourage you to look at this should you have any questions and to regularly check for updates. The website can be found here: <https://www.mygov.scot/eu-exit/>

Thank you again for all that you do. I hope this letter provides some comfort and reassurance in these uncertain times.

Kind Regards,



**JEANE FREEMAN**

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