EU and EEA citizens working in the NHS in Scotland

November 2019

Jean Colleagues

EU AND EEA CITIZENS WORKING IN THE NHS IN SCOTLAND

I have written to you a number of times over the past 12 months with regards to the UK’s exit from the EU. You may recall that in my last letter, dated April 2019, I had expressed that I wished we had more clarity. We are in a situation now where the EU has granted the UK Government a further extension to 31 January. However the prospect of a General Election and the decisions that the UK parliament will take after such an election mean UK’s membership of, or future relationship with, the EU remains uncertain.

We know that helpful information and supportive comments from employers are important, and I want to assure you that we continue to work very closely with NHS Scotland Boards and health and care partners to spread the message that your contribution to the health and wellbeing of Scotland is hugely valued. I know that this will be an increasingly worrying and anxious time for you and I want to assure you, as I have before, 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.

We are also continuing to work closely with NHS Scotland Boards to make sure that preparations for the UK exiting the EU are fit-for-purpose and adaptable to the various scenarios that could evolve over the coming months.

As I said in April, and in my previous letters, the Scottish Government greatly values the huge contribution that you continue to make to our health service. We want you to continue to live and work in Scotland.
EU Settlement Scheme

The EU Settlement Scheme has now been oper for over six months, and we know that over 92,000 applications have been received from EU citizens in Scotland. This is encouraging, but it is less than half of the estimated total number of EU nationals living in Scotland.

Although the UK Government have said that EU citizens are not required to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme until December 2020 at the earliest, I would encourage all EU staff members and their families to apply as soon as possible, if they have not already done so.

NHS Boards and health and social care partners have been made aware of, and been sent materials relating, to the Stay in Scotland campaign, which highlights how much the Scottish Government values the contributions made by EU citizens living and working in Scotland. This is an extremely useful resource and a Stay in Scotland toolkit is available for employers to use to help inform and communicate essential information about staying in Scotland post-EU Exit.

The Scottish Government is also funding Citizens Advice Scotland to deliver an advice and support service for EU citizens and their families. This service is for anyone who would like to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme but who may need additional help. You can access the service through your local Citizens Advice Bureau or by calling the full-time freephone helpline on 0800 916 9847.

The First Minister has also written an open letter to EU citizens encouraging them to take the necessary steps to continue living in Scotland. If you would like to read it, it can be found on the Scottish Government website at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/first-ministers-letter-to-eu-citizens-in-scotland-october-2019/

I once again want to say thank you for all that you do. I hope that this letter provides further reassurance you that you are welcome in Scotland, that you are valued, and that we would like you to stay.

Kind regards,

JEANE FREEMAN

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