

Core brief

Monday 01 October 2018

Introduction

This issue of Core Brief details an open letter to all EU and EEA citizens employed in the NHS as we approach Brexit.

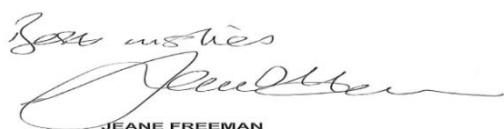
As we approach the date of the UK's exit from the EU, on 29 March 2019, I wanted to take this opportunity to write directly to EU/EEA staff working in the NHS in Scotland.

Over the summer, negotiations between the UK and EU on Withdrawal have continued, heading towards expected decisions this autumn. But the UK Government has also been stepping up its preparations for a possible 'no deal' scenario. I know this must be a very unsettling time for all of you. That is why I wanted to reiterate now how much I value the contribution of every member of staff, regardless of their nationality. Colleagues from across the EU, and beyond, bring valuable experience and skills that strengthen and improve the work of the Health Service, and benefit the patients and communities we serve. Scotland is absolutely your home and we very much want you to stay here.

After months of uncertainty, the Prime Minister's commitment in her speech on 21 September to protect the rights of EU citizens in the event of a no deal is welcome, but it has come far too late. The Scottish Government has been calling for the UK Government to do the right thing and provide certainty for EU citizens since the result of the referendum over two years ago. This unacceptable delay has caused huge and unnecessary anxiety. We have therefore been pressing the UK Government to provide absolute clarity and a guarantee to EU citizens that they will honour the rights already agreed back in March. Furthermore, we are also emphasising that EU citizens need further guarantees that the Settled Status scheme process Proposed for EU citizens in the UK does not become even more onerous in the event of a no deal.

My priority as Cabinet Secretary is to ensure your rights and place in Scotland are protected, as well as offering you the information and assistance you need at this difficult time. In June, the Scottish Government provided NHS Scotland Boards with guidance for EU/EEA staff and their line managers, which I hope was useful. Anyone with additional concerns or questions about citizenship and residency can find information on the Scottish Government website.

I hope this letter provides reassurance about how much we value your contribution, and I promise to keep you updated and informed as we move ever closer to EU Exit.


JEANE FREEMAN