

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

By Email: public.enquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk

4 May 2021

Dear Home Secretary,

Extension of the deadline for the EU Settlement Scheme

We are writing to request that you extend the deadline for EU, EEA and Swiss nationals to register for the EU Settlement Scheme to enable further publicity of the requirement to register for the Scheme, more targeted promotion of the support available and increased time for older people to complete their applications.

We share concerns that some older people, particularly those who may have lived in the UK for many years, or are living in care homes or living with dementia, may be unaware of their requirement to register for the Scheme.

The Covid-19 pandemic and elections scheduled across the UK have limited the opportunities available to older people, who must apply for it, to find out about the Scheme. Much of the publicity has also been focused on individuals' rights to work in the UK and could therefore have not seemed relevant to older people that have retired and lived here for many decades.

Many older people may also face barriers to accessing the application due to the digital-only nature of the process and could have difficulty accessing the relevant documentation required to be able to prove their eligibility, particularly those living in care homes. These documents may have been lost, destroyed or are not accessible, and extending the deadline would provide more time for these documents to be recovered.

Whilst the levels of registration vary across the different nations and regions of the UK, we must ensure that all those that need to register can do so and that no one is left behind.

Given this risk, we also call on you to provide assurance that no older person will lose their rights, be denied treatment and other benefits, or be forcibly removed from the UK because they were unaware that they needed to register for the Scheme.

We must avoid a repeat of the shocking injustice faced by members of the *Windrush Generation* and ensure that all older EU, EEA and Swiss nationals are given the widest opportunity to register for the EU Settlement Scheme and retain their rights to continue living in the UK and contributing to our communities.

Yours sincerely,

Heléna Herklots CBE, Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Victoria Lloyd, Chief Executive, Age Cymru

Brian Sloan, Chief Executive, Age Scotland

Dr Donald Macaskill, Chief Executive, Scottish Care

Caroline Abrahams, Charity Director, Age UK

Deborah Alsina MBE, Chief Executive, Independent Age

Eddie Lynch, Commissioner for Older People in Northern Ireland

Linda Robinson, Chief Executive, Age NI