

Scottish Government Debate – Contribution of EU Nationals

Thursday 20 December 2018

Our Position

There are currently an estimated 3,500 EU nationals directly employed in the Scottish third sector, [based on 2016 and 2017 data](#). EU nationals make an invaluable contribution to Scotland's third sector – as well as other sectors and industries closely linked to the work and concerns of the third sector. We fully support the right of EU nationals living in Scotland to remain here and are not supportive of UK Government plans to bring freedom of movement to an end.

SCVO is working to ensure EU nationals in the third sector have access to support and advice that we hope will help them to make a decision to remain in Scotland – and where their contribution is valued.

Demographic Change

Ensuring free movement of people has been highlighted to us as a key concern for many charities in Scotland. The implementation of the Scotland Act 2016 means public spending will be based more closely on the performance of the Scottish economy and the demographic make-up of the country. Scotland needs to address its demographic imbalance and immigration will play a key role in this – particularly given the fact that EU migrants tend to be younger and more likely to be in employment than the population as a whole.

Some charities have pointed out that the services they provide – particularly in the field of medical research and the care sector – are heavily reliant on an immigrant workforce.

British Heart Foundation, for example, pointed to the £62 million worth of research they carry out in Scotland and warned that end of freedom of movement could see an exodus of Principal Investigators (PIs) – individuals who secure funding, administer grants and lead research projects. It was pointed out that within six months of Switzerland's referendum rejecting freedom of movement, the number of PIs dropped from 21 to 2.

Camphill Scotland also have serious concerns. Founded in Aberdeen by Austrian refugees, it remains a profoundly European movement – with 40% of its total workforce coming from other parts of the EU.

SCVO supports continued freedom of movement across the EU, allowing citizens from across the EU to continue to work, study, volunteer and contribute to our society.

Settled Status

As part of the Withdrawal Agreement, The UK Government agreed to protect EU citizens who live in the UK to continue to live as they do now. The scheme will be open to EU residents currently living in the UK as well as anyone who enters the UK during the transition period. It will remain open until June 2021 - recognising that people may enter the UK until the end of the transition period and may apply late.

The requirement to prove Settled Status will only begin after 2020 and the date when freedom of movement ends. The EU settlement scheme will also be in place whether there is a deal or a no deal.

Key concerns:

- It is estimated that 10% of EU citizens are classed as vulnerable individuals. This group are unlikely to engage with or absorb marketing campaigns. There

are also likely to be barriers to engagement due to language, digital illiteracy, disabilities, and difficulties demonstrating they meet the requirements – e.g. homeless, no documents.

- At a cost of £65 for adults £32.50 for children this presents an obvious financial burden to larger families and those with children aged over 16.
- Applications will be processed individually – meaning families may worry each family members will receive different statuses.
- Pre-settled status will be an option to those can't prove how long they have been in the UK but are already here (an option for those with no footprint documentation). However, the problem could re-emerge if they still have no documentation after five years and the scheme is closed.
- The application form will be in English only – although accompanied by translated guidance.

Citizen Rights

The Human Rights Consortium Scotland (HRCS) have developed a series of briefings covering a range of matters relating to human rights protections and the potential threat posed to these by the UK's withdrawal from the EU – including the threat posed by Brexit to EEA Citizens Rights: [Brexit and EEA Citizen Rights](#)

EUareValued

We believe every person who works to make a difference to Scottish communities should be valued, and that includes our colleagues who have come from other EU countries to live and work here. Scotland's third sector is strengthened thanks to their contribution.

There are currently an estimated 3,500 EU nationals directly employed in the Scottish third sector, based on 2016 and 2017 data.

For many decades, citizens of other European nations have been free to travel to and work in Scotland. However following the publication of a new [White Paper](#) on immigration this freedom will be curtailed and EU citizens and their families in the UK will have to apply for permission to stay.

While the third sector can do little to influence immigration policy, we believe that as employers and employees, there is much we can do to encourage our EU friends and colleagues to stay and continue to make Scotland their home. It is crucial that we show solidarity with our European colleagues, make it absolutely clear that they are still very much welcome in Scotland, and to support them to continue doing the great work they do in our communities.

We've created our [EuareValued](#) campaign with the aim of helping third sector employers and employees understand the background and the changes affecting them, friends, family and colleagues. Information includes case studies, a short questionnaire, information on reporting hate crime and supporting resources.

About us

The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) is the national body representing the third sector. There are over 45,000 voluntary organisations in Scotland involving around 138,000 paid staff and approximately 1.3 million volunteers. The sector manages an income of £4.9 billion.

SCVO works in partnership with the third sector in Scotland to advance our shared values and interests. We have over 2,000 members who range from individuals and grassroots groups, to Scotland-wide organisations and intermediary bodies.

As the only inclusive representative umbrella organisation for the sector SCVO:

- has the largest Scotland-wide membership from the sector – our 2,000 members include charities, community groups, social enterprises and voluntary organisations of all shapes and sizes

- our governance and membership structures are democratic and accountable – with an elected board and policy committee from the sector, we are managed by the sector, for the sector
- brings together organisations and networks connecting across the whole of Scotland
- SCVO works to support people to take voluntary action to help themselves and others, and to bring about social change.

Contact

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