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Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP
Minister of State
Home Office
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Dear Caroline,

Waiving Citizenship Fees for Looked After Children and Care Leavers

At Oral Parliamentary Questions on 4 April, Emma Lewell-Buck MP raised concerns that there will be complications in the EU Settlement Scheme for EU citizens' children who are looked-after or care leavers. I committed to raising these concerns with the Home Office.

I am informed that local authorities (in England, Wales and Scotland) and Health and Social Care Trusts (in Northern Ireland) will have a vital role to play in supporting vulnerable children through the application process. They will be required to ensure that applications are made on behalf of all looked after children for whom they have parental responsibility and who are EEA citizens or family members of EEA citizens. I welcome the support the Home Office is providing to local authorities to ensure they are able to deliver this requirement, and the guidance your department has published, with support from the Department of Education, on what local authorities must do, including guidance on obtaining passports and ID documents.

Ms Lewell-Buck has declared that she would like to see automatic settled status and the waiving of fees for citizenship for children who are looked after or care leavers. Ms Lewell-Buck has argued that all looked after children and care leavers have care plans with their nationality included, so identifying these children should not prove too difficult or onerous. She believes that the numbers would be small but the impact of doing this will be significant for these children.

I would be grateful if you could clarify the Home Office's position in relation to waiving citizenship fees for looked after children and care leavers.

ROBIN WALKER MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
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