



2019-0015717NZPO

Nadhim Zahawi MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

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Robin Walker MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for
Exiting the European Union
9 Downing Street
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Your ref: MC2019/03393

13th May 2019

Dear Robin,

Thank you for your letter of 15 April, about the concerns raised by Emma Lewell-Buck MP, at Oral Parliamentary Questions on 4 April, around the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) and EU citizens who are looked after or who are care leavers.

I appreciate the concerns Ms Lewell-Buck raises and her suggestion that EU citizens who are looked after or who are care leavers should receive automatic settled status and that citizenship fees should be waived. As you will know, the policy and operation of the EU Settlement Scheme, in relationship to applications for citizenship, are the responsibility of the Home Office. However, this department has been working closely with the Home Office on the design of the scheme, as we recognise the role the state plays with regards to this group of vulnerable children and young people.

As you have stated, local authorities (LAs) have a key role to play in supporting these vulnerable children and young people through the application process. That is why departmental officials have worked with the Home Office to arrange for five LAs across England to test the Settlement Scheme's application process before it was rolled out nationally.

Whilst the number of children and young people applying for settled status during this test phase was relatively small, I understand that it was useful in identifying changes needed to reflect the particular issues faced by many of these children and young people. This included issues associated with a lack of relevant identity documents which has subsequently been addressed by the Home Office.

The department has also worked with the Home Office to ensure that information has been shared widely with LAs and with other interested organisations to help ensure that action is taken with respect to all eligible children. This has included the production and distribution of specific guidance for LAs to support them with their responsibilities.

The department remains committed to working closely with the Home Office, to monitor uptake of the EUSS and to ensuring the needs of looked-after children and care leavers are considered a priority.

Thank you for writing in this important matter, and I hope that this response is useful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Zahawi', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nadhim Zahawi MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families