# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Continued support for EU, EEA and Swiss citizens wishing to stay in Wales** |
| **DATE**  | **08 September 2022** |
| **BY** | **Jane Hutt MS, Minister for Social Justice** |

I am pleased to announce that the Welsh Government will continue to fund Citizens Advice Cymru, third sector organisation Settled and immigration specialist lawyers, Newfields Law, to provide ongoing support, up to 31 March 2023, to EU, EEA and Swiss nationals who wish to remain in Wales.

Since June 2019, the Welsh Government has provided a suite of free support to those EU/EEA/Swiss citizens who wish to stay here. We have always been determined to ensure that those citizens who have chosen to make Wales their home continue to feel valued members of our communities and we want them to be reassured that Wales is a welcoming nation.

The support to date has meant that EU/EEA/Swiss citizens and family members have been able to access digital support with their applications for settled status, get help with basic queries about eligibility, access advice on social welfare issues and workplace rights and obtain free specialist immigration advice.

Since the beginning of the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) over 100,000 applications have been made by EU/EEA/Swiss citizens resident here in Wales and many of those individuals have accessed some form of support in completing their applications.

Despite the deadline for applications to the EUSS being over a year ago, we know there is an ongoing need for support, covering late applications, appeals against refusals of applications, conversions from pre-settled to settled status, and rights and entitlements.

With this in mind, the Welsh Government will continue its provision of support until 31 March 2023 in funding Citizens Advice Cymru, Settled and Newfields Law to ensure EU/EEA/Swiss citizens living in Wales can still access the support they may need.

In addition to this, the Welsh Government continues to facilitate meetings of the EU Settlement Scheme Wales Co-ordination Group which brings together, key partners and agencies to support and co-ordinate the successful delivery of EUSS advice services in Wales. The Group’s continued objectives are to:

* Share reports on the work of the supporting organisations, including on best practice and issues in relation to the EUSS;
* Promote public awareness of, and participation in, the EUSS in Wales;
* Maximise citizen access to the EUSS in Wales through focused publicity;
* Ensure there are consistent EUSS advice services available in Wales, with the right level of support targeted at the right people; and
* Identify any gaps in the current supported provisions and assist the Welsh Government/Home Office in finding solutions to overcome any issues.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Senedd returns I would be happy to do so.