# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Continued support for EU citizens wishing to stay in Wales** |
| **DATE**  | **20 October 2021** |
| **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 to EU citizens, and also EEA and Swiss nationals, who wish to continue to live and work in Wales, until at least 31 March 2022.

Since June 2019, the Welsh Government has provided a suite of free support to those EU citizens who wish to stay here. We have always been determined to ensure that EU citizens who have chosen to make Wales their home continue to feel valued members of our communities and we want all citizens to be reassured that the Welsh Government wants Wales to be a welcoming nation. In continuing to provide this support, I hope everyone is reassured that we are doing everything in our power to encourage EU citizens to stay.

The support to date has meant that EU 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 99,000 applications have been made by Welsh residents and many of those individuals have accessed some form of support in completing their applications. Since June 2019 Citizens Advice Cymru has supported 2,846 individuals, dealt with 11,172 queries and have supported 1,699 EUSS applications. In addition, Newfields Law has supported over 500 individuals since April 2021.

Despite the passing of the deadline for applications to the EUSS on 30 June 2021, we know that there continues to be significant ongoing need for support. This is now wider than assistance with EUSS applications, covering also late applications, appeals against refusals of applications, conversions from pre-settled to settled status, applications to join family members, rights and entitlements and general information sharing. With this in mind the Welsh Government has recognised the need to continue its provision of support until at least 31 March 2022 and will continue to fund Citizens Advice Cymru, Settled and Newfields Law.

In addition to this, the Welsh Government continues to facilitate meetings of the EU Settlement Scheme Wales Co-ordination Group. This Group brings together external third sector organisations funded by the Home Office, along with the other key delivery partners and agencies to support and co-ordinate the successful delivery of EUSS advice and support 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.
* Identify any gaps in the current supported provisions and assist the Welsh Government/Home Office in finding solutions to overcome any issues.