



A positive future for EU citizens in the UK

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[REDACTED]

Direct Communications Unit
Home Office

DECS Reference: TRO/0983411/23

Thursday, 19 October 2023

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for [your letter](#) of 19th September, in response to [our letter](#) of 4th August to Mr Jenrick and Lord Murray.

Settled is grateful that the Home Office has considered the concerns that we raised and sent a detailed reply.

The sponsorship scheme has indeed been an overwhelming success; but it is disappointing that the Home Office has not accepted our recommendation that, for the most urgent cases, a new visa route should be established which does not rely on Ukrainians finding their own UK based sponsor. We still believe that this additional route is needed.

We appreciate your sharing of internet safety resources. We have, though, always advised against looking for potential sponsors through open social media groups, not least because of the very real dangers of scamming, noted in our initial letter. Rather, Settled signposts to reputable matching organisations that are recommended on the Home Office's website.

Settled welcomes the confirmation that, "Upon arrival, where Border Force identify that a Ukrainian has been the victim of exploitation, they are able to issue leave outside the rules which allows them to apply for the Ukraine Extension Scheme..." However, we believe exercise of this discretionary power should be the norm to prevent victims of immigration fraud in Ukraine being left in legal limbo on arrival to the UK. We reiterate

our recommendation that, “clear guidance be rolled out to all border officers who may encounter Ukrainians in this situation, so that there is greater consistency in providing discretionary Leave to Remain.”

Since writing to the Home Office, Settled has seen more cases where Border Force officers have taken the helpful step of issuing Ukrainians without leave with permission to enter and remain in the UK outside the rule for six months and stamping their passports with such a vignette as evidence.

Unfortunately, since our initial letter, we have seen a new problem emerging. Staff from local authorities, job centres, and other service providers do not always accept the stamp in their passport as evidence of their eligibility to public services and benefits, despite them being eligible. This leaves some Ukrainians destitute and with compounded trauma.

There is therefore also a need for communications outputs and training aimed at local authorities, DWP and others, to explain the rights of Ukrainians with this stamp in their passport. Settled is willing to help disseminate any such information produced by the Home Office.

Thank you again for your response. I hope our further points in reply will also be of use.

With best wishes,

[signed on behalf of Settled]