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Home Office

Minister for Future Borders and Immigration
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14th October 2021

Dear Luke,

Thank you for your letter of 6 August addressed to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and the Minister for Future Borders and Immigration. This letter responds to that letter, as well as to Monique Hawkins' letters of 18 and 23 August.

The Government remains committed to reaching all eligible EU, EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members to support them to secure their rights, and continues to use every possible channel to encourage those who are eligible for the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) to apply. We are delighted the latest figures show more than 6.2 million applications had been received by 30 September 2021.

Following the end of the grace period on 30 June 2021, EU, EEA and Swiss citizens have been required to have a valid UK immigration status in order to access benefits and public services here. Notwithstanding that, EU, EEA and Swiss citizens without a valid immigration status and in receipt of benefits at the end of the grace period have not seen their benefit payments stop automatically from 1 July 2021. However, it is important all those who are eligible for the EUSS, but have not yet applied, do so quickly to ensure that benefit payments and access to public services are protected. It is worth noting the vast majority of EU, EEA and Swiss citizens in receipt of Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) benefits have now applied to the EUSS or have status already.

On receipt of an EUSS application, the Home Office will issue the applicant with an acknowledgement letter or email. Once the application has been validated, the applicant will receive a Certificate of Application (CoA) which provides information on how they can prove their rights while their application is pending.

Since 2019, the Home Office has run an extensive public information campaign across hundreds of digital and broadcast channels, investing £7.9 million in such activity. This has been complemented by communications from DWP and HMRC using their own channels and stakeholder networks.

DWP is working very closely with the Home Office and HMRC to identify those who are eligible but have yet to apply to the EUSS. Letters were sent to individuals *in* May, providing *step* by step, practical advice on how to apply, which helped signpost thousands of people to the EUSS.

In August 2021, further letters were sent to EU, EEA, and Swiss citizens who may have still needed to apply to the EUSS, urging them to either contact the Home Office to be removed from our lists if they had already applied to the EUSS or held other valid status, or - if they had not - to make a late application to the EUSS, assisted by further guidance in the letter on how to do so. No action on a person's benefit was taken as a consequence of receiving the second letter. On 24 September 2021, a third letter was sent by DWP to customers in receipt of DWP benefits. In both the August and September letters, individuals were informed that they needed to make contact within one calendar month from the date of their letter to provide evidence of their status or of a pending application.

DWP is continuing to engage with relevant customers through scheduled face to face appointments and telephony contact, SMS messages and Universal Credit (UC) journal prompts to remind them of the need to apply to the EUSS scheme. The Department has arranged home visits to inform claimants of the need to apply to the EUSS scheme for those unable to attend jobcentres.

Please see overleaf for responses to the questions and concerns raised in your letters of 6, 18, and 23 August.

Yours sincerely,



David Rutley MP
Minister for Welfare Delivery



Kevin Foster MP
**Minister for Future Borders and
Immigration**

Questions (6 August):

1. We understand that there have not been any amendments to relevant legislation since the consequential regulations earlier in the year, what is the legal framework that is in place to implement this policy?

The European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020 and the subsequent consequential regulations that were laid in Parliament ensure that the UK fulfils its commitments as set out in the Withdrawal Agreement (WA). This implementing legislation provided EU, EEA and Swiss citizens sufficient time to apply to the EUSS before the end of the grace period on 30 June 2021. The consequential regulations brought EU, EEA and Swiss citizens without EUSS status within scope of section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

For a time limited period, DWP and HMRC are exercising maximum flexibility using their existing powers to allow an opportunity for direct communication to individuals without status encouraging them to apply to the EUSS and retain their entitlement to benefits before any compliance action is undertaken by DWP. In order to provide the time to identify, reach and engage existing benefit claimants who had not yet applied to EUSS, DWP sought and secured agreement to make extra-statutory payments for a time limited period. In a similar fashion, HMRC also sought and secured agreement to use its discretionary powers to enable payments to continue for a limited period.

2. On what basis are decisions being made to extend entitlement and ultimately (where applicable) terminate entitlement?

As of 1 July 2021 EU, EEA and Swiss nationals and their family members without a valid UK immigration status have been considered to be a person subject to immigration control (PSIC) when seeking to access income related benefits and public services.

Through a data matching exercise with the Home Office, DWP and HMRC have been able to identify individuals who appear not to have obtained valid UK immigration status. We have then sent out letters and other forms of communication (outlined below) to encourage application to the EUSS prior to the end of the grace period.

From 1 July 2021, DWP secured agreement to make time limited extra statutory payments to allow time to reach and engage claimants before any compliance action is taken. HMRC made the decision to use its discretionary powers to enable special time limited payments from 1 July 2021 to EEA nationals, Swiss nationals and their family members who were in receipt of HMRC benefits but who had not applied to the EUSS. DWP has continued to work with the Home Office and HMRC to undertake further engagement activities and give those without status further opportunity to apply to the EUSS before any compliance action is taken. DWP has issued letters, SMS messages and journal messages (UC claimants only), in addition to telephony and face to face interventions. DWP is also sending out visiting teams for those who have not responded, are vulnerable or are unable to attend their local jobcentre.

Officials will assist all those identified with providing the necessary information to complete their EUSS application, as well as signposting individuals to the Settlement Resolution Centre, where additional support is required to complete the EUSS application process.

The Home Office has also released guidance for late applicants and reiterated the general approach under the EUSS which is to look to grant status, rather than looking for reasons to refuse. Those who submit a late application to the EUSS will also be able to access benefits and services, if they are eligible, from the point they have made a valid application, which includes verification of their identity documents. More information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-information-for-late-applicants>.

Throughout the life of the EUSS, protections / processes have been put in place which help to support potentially vulnerable individuals who may be eligible for status. We are proactively working across national government, local authorities, and with the third sector to identify and assist vulnerable groups in applying. We remain committed to making sure everybody eligible for the EUSS can apply, including those who are vulnerable or need extra support. As announced today, a further £3 million in grant funding has been awarded to the network of Grant Funded Organisations, who support people across the UK in applying to the EUSS who have vulnerabilities such as language barriers or limited access to IT.

These organisations have helped more than 360,000 vulnerable people to apply to the EUSS already, and the further funding means this assistance can continue until at least 31 March 2022. This will ensure that provision remains in place for eligible EU citizens with reasonable grounds for missing the 30 June 2021 deadline to access the support they need to make a late application.

This funding boost means that since 2019, the Home Office has now made £25 million in grant funding available for the network of 72 organisations across the UK, which includes charities, local authorities and community groups, whose work ensures important information and assistance gets through to those who are hardest to reach and no one is left behind. Their provision of advice and support includes liaising with relevant government departments, such as DWP and HMRC.

More information is available at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-community-support-for-vulnerable-citizens/list-of-organisations.

Where individuals are facing life impacting events (which would for example affect their ability to access housing, healthcare, benefits etc.), their applications have been processed as a priority.

Where claimants are identified as vulnerable, advanced customer support processes are followed before any suspension or termination action. Further details of the precise support we offer those individuals is outlined in response to question 18.

3. What data sharing arrangements have you put in place between the Home Office and DWP to ensure compliance with GDPR and other obligations? Is there a data sharing agreement and can you send us this?

The processing of personal data is lawful and fully complies with the GDPR. Departments are sharing data they already hold on individuals in accordance with legislation and individuals are made aware that their personal data can be shared with other government departments. A data sharing agreement is in place which covers the key aspects of the exchange including the legal basis the data is being shared under, fields shared and the process followed. A copy of this Memorandum of Understanding between the DWP and the Home Office is attached.

4. How have existing recipients of DWP benefits been identified who are entitled to status but have yet to apply to the EUSS?

DWP and HMRC undertook a data matching exercise with the Home Office in April 2021 in order to identify EU, EEA and Swiss citizens potentially eligible for the EUSS but who had yet to apply, and who were in receipt of DWP and HMRC benefits. In May, HMRC and DWP wrote to individuals to inform them that they should apply to the EUSS. This helped signpost thousands of people to the EUSS. The exercise was re-run after the end of the grace period. In August 2021, the Home Office contacted all those in receipt of benefits who we believed still had not applied to the EUSS to encourage them to apply.

The information that DWP shared with the Home Office was sourced from the DWP Data Analytics Data Warehouse which holds data from legacy systems, the UC database and the Migrant Workers Database. DWP identified people on the basis of the nationality they provided when they claimed benefits to ensure we reached as many people as possible to make sure they were given the opportunity to apply to the EUSS. Where the Home Office have identified someone has since naturalised since their claim, we have removed their information.

To complement the data matching exercises that have taken place between DWP, HO and HMRC, DWP has also undertaken a supplementary exercise to identify those who are claiming UC through the exercising of an EEA Treaty Right but have not yet applied to the EUSS. This has allowed DWP to identify extra cohorts of people who need to apply, such as third country nationals, and ensure that they are signposted to the EUSS via journal messages, telephony and face to face interviews within the job centre. This exercise has also enabled us to reinforce the letters through digital messages via the UC journal, check whether claimants are securing status in real time as well as identifying those that the data matching exercise has missed. The advanced customer support procedures outlined in question 18 are in place for those individuals identified where it is noted that they have vulnerabilities.

5. Has the scan of the Home Office's database included those with pending applications?

This exercise has included those with pending and unvalidated applications where they were present on the electronic databases at the time the data was checked, whether they were submitted online or by post.

Where a person was identified to have a pending application, they were not sent a letter. For our August mailout, some of those who submitted paper applications may not have appeared on our electronic databases prior to the mailout due to the time taken to manually input their applications, so may have received letters. The letter made clear that people in this position did not need to take any further action.

We can confirm that all paper applications have now been added to the electronic databases and so those who had applied were not included on the list of those who were contacted by DWP in September.

6. Is it the case that you are exclusively using Housing Benefit data to establish recipients?

Please see response to question 4.

7. Has the pool of recipients been broadened to include other benefit types in recent and future data matches?

We have not broadened the pool of recipients beyond the original parameters. As stated in question 4, the information shared with the Home Office by DWP was sourced from the DWP Data Analytics Data Warehouse which holds data from legacy systems, the Universal Credit database and the Migrant Workers Database. The data matching exercise was designed to identify as many people as possible who appeared to be eligible for the EUSS but had not made an application, so they could be encouraged to apply to avoid losing access to benefits. For those individuals claiming UC the DWP carried out further work to identify those without status under the EUSS, which was detailed in our response to question 4.

8. Why are only those who are in receipt of DWP benefits being contacted and not HMRC recipients of child benefit and other habitual resident test assessed benefits?

Those in receipt of HMRC administered benefits, including Child Benefit and tax credits, are also in scope of this cross-government data matching exercise and have received letters and other forms of communication similar to DWP claimants. HMRC has undertaken a range of social media and stakeholder communications and complemented the targeted letter campaign with text messages to customers. Messaging on HMRC's mobile app and phone lines has also been included and adapted versions of these messages have remained live following the 30 June deadline.

9. Will the same data matching exercise be undertaken before issuing letters in September? If so, what will this data set consist of? Will it include:

2a. Those with pending applications without Certificates of Application being issued?

b. Those with pending applications who have Certificates of Application issued?

The data matching exercise was repeated prior to DWP sending letters in September. Data was matched against everyone who had submitted an application

to the EUSS – both those with a Certificate of Application (COA) and those awaiting validation of a pending application.

Where Home Office records indicated that someone had a valid immigration status, or had applied for one, or had verified their status in the UK by contacting the dedicated helpline, their information in almost all cases was not passed to DWP and/or HMRC.

Due to timescales, the DWP mailout exercise took place slightly ahead of the Home Office's finalisation of its list of those who had contacted the dedicated helpline and verified their immigration status. As such, there are a small number of cases where letters have been sent to someone who is a British or Irish citizen, or somebody who has already been granted leave under the EUSS. In these cases, the letter sent by DWP in September makes clear those individuals should call DWP and evidence their eligibility to ensure that no action is taken on their payments.

Of the letters being sent out, they are being issued by DWP and HMRC to those who are in receipt of benefit payments and are yet to apply to the EUSS, where we have been unable to verify their immigration status in the UK, or where their status was verified after the timescales indicated in letters had passed.

10. Does the data set include non-EEA/Swiss nationals who are family members of EEA/Swiss nationals or other EU right recipients?

It has not been possible to identify third country nationals who need to apply through the data matching exercise with the Home Office, though those who received letters were encouraged to make sure their family members applied. DWP has however been able to identify third country nationals accessing UC through an EU treaty right, and has sent targeted communications through the individual's UC journal, called and invited them to face to face appointments to signpost them to apply to the EUSS.

11. What measures are in place to ensure that there are people included in the data set who should not be? We understand that there have been cases where people have received letters who should not have.

The Home Office, DWP and HMRC have done everything possible to ensure that letters are only sent to those who appear to be EU, EEA or Swiss citizens living in the UK and who may not have a valid UK immigration status, and have not applied to the EU Settlement Scheme.

In our effort to be as comprehensive as possible in communicating with those needing to apply for the EUSS, some individuals who already hold a valid UK immigration status, have been naturalised as a British citizen, or who have acquired status since the data match appeared on our mailing list. No action on a person's benefit payments was taken as a consequence of receiving letters in May or August 2021.

To mitigate this, amendments were made to the data matching processes and a wash against HM Passport Office's database was conducted.

The letters that were sent in August also make it clear that if a recipient is a British or Irish citizen, or has valid immigration status, then they do not need to apply.

Other scenarios, such as discrepancies in names, which might lead to incorrect letters being sent out, are addressed in our response to the letter sent by your organisation on the 23 August (question 2). We have asked individuals who do not believe they should have been included in the mailing to get in contact with the Home Office and the letter detailed a specific contact point for them to do so, following which we removed them from the mailing list if they made contact prior to the 28-day deadline.

This dedicated phone line closed on 8 October, but assistance is still available from the Home Office to those who need it, through the Settlement Resolution Centre (on 0300 123 7379) or the UK Visas and Immigration helpline (on 0300 790 6268). Home Office phone lines are being regularly monitored to ensure that it is as easy as possible for people to contact the Home Office directly and we are proactively working on reducing wait times and the number of calls handled. Individuals wishing to evidence their eligibility for benefits should contact DWP and/or HMRC as appropriate to their individual circumstances.

Those who still have not applied to the EUSS or confirmed their status in the UK with the Home Office, have been contacted by DWP and/or HMRC to determine whether they remain entitled to their benefits. Individuals wishing to evidence their eligibility for benefits should contact DWP and/or HMRC as appropriate to their individual circumstances.

12. What efforts have been made to ensure that recipients are receiving these letters? For example, how up to date are addresses etc.?

It is the responsibility of all benefit recipients to ensure that DWP and HMRC have their most up-to-date contact information and they are required to notify us of a change of address. They should therefore be receiving letters at their current address.

Communicating via letter is an effective method and common practice for DWP. There are well established processes in place for letters that have been returned due to an incorrect address and we are confident that claimants of DWP benefits have been receiving the letters.

Where a letter was 'returned to sender' from the first letter exercise in May and an alternative address was identified for the individual, HMRC and DWP customers were issued a letter to the updated address. This mailing exercise ran during the same period as the Home Office letter in August and sought to ensure individuals received information on EUSS, the support available, and the need to apply to secure their benefits. The necessary action remains the same for customers receiving a letter whether it is from the Home Office, DWP or HMRC.

We recognise the importance of maintaining high standards of data quality within our systems, and frameworks are in place to manage data quality; both proactively and in response to issues when they are identified.

Evidence so far indicates that DWP and HMRC benefit claimants are both receiving and responding to the letters and making applications to the EUSS.

Through improvements to the data matching exercise and as a result of people applying to the EUSS after receiving the first and second letters, the number of people being contacted directly by DWP and HMRC to establish their eligibility has decreased significantly. DWP is also using telephony and face to face interventions to engage with claimants identified through the data matching exercise and issuing SMS messages and UC journal messages to encourage those who are eligible to apply to the EUSS or to verify their immigration status with us. The Department has arranged home visits for those customers unable to attend jobcentres.

As the Government remains committed to reaching all eligible EU, EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members to support them, there may be occasions where the information held on an individual by DWP differs slightly to that which is held by HMRC. In our attempt to contact as many eligible people as possible, letters have been sent based on both variations of the information held. This may result in one person receiving a letter twice, but, as you have highlighted in your correspondence, the content of both letters is the same. This approach has maximised the number of people who need to take action being contacted.

13. Are there other measures in place to contact recipients of correspondence? Telephone for example?

DWP is taking all reasonable steps to engage claimants identified through the data matching exercise and is supplementing the letters through outbound calls, face to face interventions, home visits, SMS and journal messaging.

Letters are an effective way the Government can communicate with people who we do not believe have applied to give them the support needed to go through the process. Sending letters to customers is a long established and secure process which is one of the reasons that there is a requirement for customers to inform us of any change of address. Letters sent in May signposted thousands of people to the scheme. However, as explained above, this is not the only mechanism which has been used in this exercise; and very considerable effort has been made to engage with relevant individuals through a wide range of means, including telephone calls and in-person home visits.

14. Where there are joint claimants or claimants who are reliant on others to acquire benefits, will the immigration status impact on them and how is this being assessed?

Where there are joint claimants or claimants reliant on the immigration status of others, a lack of immigration status for the primary claimant may result in a loss of benefits for the individual. The Government has been clear that EU, EEA and Swiss citizens who started living in the UK by 31 December 2020 and their family members must apply to the EUSS to continue to live, work and receive income-based benefits in the UK. We continue to emphasise the importance of valid immigration status for all benefit recipients in order to continue accessing benefits for themselves, any joint claimants, and those reliant on their status to access benefits.

15. When you come to establish which benefits will be suspended, what criteria will be adopted? How will you distinguish between those claimants who should and should not be considered for suspension?

EU, EEA and Swiss citizens require valid UK immigration status in order to access income related benefits and public services.

Those identified through the data matching exercise will be given further opportunities to acquire or evidence a form of UK immigration status.

Where it is identified that a claimant is vulnerable, DWP and HMRC have in place advanced customer support measures to ensure officials identify and provide additional support necessary for the claimant to complete the required actions, as discussed in detail in question 18.

16. Those who go on to apply late will not be able to make a claim for benefits. Why is this the case?

Those in scope of the Withdrawal Agreement who submit a late application to the EUSS will be able to access benefits and services, if they are eligible, from the point their application is validated.

17. If an existing DWP benefit recipient who has applied late to the EUSS moves to a different benefit or their entitlement changes will they be refused on the grounds that they are subject to immigration control?

If a DWP benefit recipient who has submitted a late application moves to a different benefit the customer will, as relevant, undergo a review which assesses their eligibility and entitlement to benefit, including whether or not they are in scope of the Withdrawal Agreement.

18. With this cohort of those who are to have their entitlement suspended, what assessments will be undertaken to ensure that vulnerable people will not see their benefits suspended?

Where it is identified that a claimant is vulnerable, DWP and HMRC have in place advanced customer support measures to ensure officials identify and provide additional support necessary for the claimant to complete the required actions, including by working closely with external partners.

Colleagues receive training to help them support our customers, and we also provide tailored support through our Visiting Officers and Advanced Customer Support Senior Leaders. At the heart of our service is a tailored, empathetic approach that recognises the different needs of different customers.

Advanced Customer Support Senior Leaders (ACSSLs) form a network of support throughout England, Scotland and Wales, providing escalation routes for cases involving customers requiring advanced support, when all other business as usual channels have been exhausted.

They work with teams within their geographical area, helping colleagues to deliver the tailored service that our most vulnerable customers require.

ACSSLs are instrumental in forming strong, external relationships with partner organisations, and internally across DWP. ACSSLs represent the department at forums such as Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH or equivalent), working with other organisations to support our customers. They are integral to bringing different services together and forming a joined-up community at the heart of our offer to customers.

Officials will also signpost individuals to the Settlement Resolution Centre in the event that additional support is required to complete the EUSS application process.

The Home Office has a range of support available to vulnerable claimants applying to the EUSS. As announced today, a further £3 million has been awarded to go toward the network of Grant Funded Organisations, who support people across the UK apply to the EUSS. Meaning a total of £25 million in grant funding has now been made available for the network of 72 organisations across the UK, which includes charities, local authorities and community groups, whose work ensures important information and assistance gets through to those who are hardest to reach and no one is left behind. Their provision of advice and support includes liaising with relevant government departments, such as DWP and HMRC.

These organisations can support a range of people in applying to the EUSS, including those who are disabled, elderly, isolated, have language or literacy problems, are the victim of domestic abuse, struggle with technology or have further vulnerabilities.

Individuals can use a postcode checker to find the nearest organisation in their area, and the list of organisations available can be found [here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-community-support-for-vulnerable-citizens/list-of-organisations](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-community-support-for-vulnerable-citizens/list-of-organisations)

19. Why was the decision taken to terminate existing recipients' benefits? This is not translated in other areas of deadline mitigation such as right to work and rent where there is no time limit on their continuing work/rent.

From 1 July 2021, non-UK nationals (excluding Irish citizens) are required to have a form of UK immigration status in order to access income related benefits and public services. DWP has ensured EU, EEA and Swiss citizens without a form of UK immigration status and in receipt of benefits did not see their payments automatically stop from 1 July 2021. We are providing claimants with multiple opportunities to either acquire or verify their UK immigration status before we undertake compliance action.

20. We note that some of the questions and answers in the Q&A are potentially misleading.

For example, Q5 states:

Q5. I have applied to the EU Settlement Scheme and have not been given an immigration status? Am I able to get benefits?

A5. No. If you do not have an immigration status you cannot get UK benefits. If you disagree with the Home Office decision, please contact the EU Settlement Resolution Centre as soon you can on 0300 123 7379.

This gives the impression that those who have pending applications are not entitled to benefits when in previous questions the correspondence states that they are. Can these be reviewed and amended?

Those in scope of the WA who submit a late application to the EUSS will be able to access benefits and services, if they are eligible, from the point their application is validated. The Settlement Resolution Centre (SRC) issued an update to agents on 1 July 2021 advising that customers who submit applications prior to 30 June 2021 retain all existing rights to work, rent and public services/funds until their status is granted or pending the final determination of an administrative review or appeal. When the announcement relating to temporary protection for late applicants was made on 6 August 2021, the SRC issued an update to agents on 9 August 2021 advising that these customers' rights were now protected. The SRC does not issue prescriptive lines to agents as calls can relate to a variety of subjects. The guidance offered to agents is that they should reassure customers that once their application is validated, their rights are protected.

Questions (23 August):

1. You have records of people with EU Settlement Scheme status, people with Irish citizenship and people with British citizenship. What measures are you putting in place to prevent DWP from making a decision to terminate benefits for these people, including if they do not respond to this letter?

Please see response to question 11 above.

2. Will you agree to set up a meeting to discuss in detail the issues facing those whose name in everyday use does not match their EUSS name, and agree to look at our simple proposal to allow additional names to be shown on EUSS documentation alongside the name as found in the MRZ of the identity document?

EUSS status is issued in line with the name recorded in the machine readable zone (MRZ) of the applicant's passport provided at the time of application.

The Home Office has recently built in a process which, after EUSS status has been issued, allows applicants to request their name be changed on their status

to exactly match the name which is recorded in the Visual Inspection Zone (VIZ) of their passport instead. We are aware that for many French and Dutch married nationals, this will take the form of "Birth Name Wife of Married Name". This would enable applicants to have their married name displayed on their status whilst maintaining a link between the two names for security purposes.

Example: French passport VIZ shows Name: JANET SMITH ep. [spouse of] JONES. MRZ shows SMITH only. The applicant will be issued status under the name SMITH. However, if applicant wishes to update their name to their married name, they can request to have their name updated to JANET SMITH ep. JONES.

Where the personal details held by government departments differ, we have been unable to match the records held, and so some people in these circumstances will have received a letter both in May and August.

In these instances, the person is advised to contact the Home Office so that our records can be updated to reflect their circumstances and ensure that no action is taken on their benefit payments.

Following meetings between your organisation and our data teams, we have adapted the digital status process to allow people to change the name shown, as set out in the response above. Therefore, a further meeting is not required as the change being requested has already been implemented.

- 3. Will you urgently increase staffing resources for this helpline, lengthen the opening times to those of the EU Settlement Resolution Centre (08:00-20:00 Monday to Friday, 09:30-16:30 on Saturday and Sunday), and widely advertise these changed opening hours including on an automated message that people receive when telephoning the helpline during the original hours?**

We have no plans to extend the current helpline hours which were set out very clearly in the letters issued. The helpline provides an option for individuals who call out of these published hours to request a call-back. For both the helpline and call-back facility we continue to review the resource providing support to customers and will bring further agents and caseworkers on-line where necessary, to maintain our high level of customer service. As a result of these reviews, we have successfully reduced call wait times and handled more calls.

- 4. Will you immediately publish prominent information on the EU Settlement Scheme pages about the authenticity of this letter, provide a service like HMRC so that people can check letters from the Home Office are genuine, and send a letter of apology to exactly the same set of recipients as the 9 August 2021 letter informing them how they can check the authenticity of**

the letter? This letter should also make it very clear to people that they will not face imminent termination of benefits.

The Home Office published information on 8 June that further letters would be sent in August to EU, EEA and Swiss citizens who may still need to apply to the EUSS. A copy of this letter is available on GOV.UK here:

<https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/07/02/media-factsheet-eu-settlement-scheme/>

All letters sent on this matter have made it clear that no action on a person's benefit payments will be taken immediately as a consequence of receiving this second letter. If a person still does not apply to the EUSS or confirm their status in the UK with the Home Office, the DWP and HMRC will contact customers further to determine whether they remain entitled to their benefits.