

From the Chairman of the Association
Cllr James Jamieson

11 February 2020

Alexandra Bulat
Chair of Young Europeans
Project Manager, Citizens' Led Engagement Programme (Young Europeans)
via e-mail: alexandra.bulat@the3million.org.uk

Dear Ms Bulat.

Thank you for your open letter to councils of February 2020.

Officials at the Local Government Association have been working well with the 3 million organisation to help ensure that the non-UK EU residents in our communities have the right information and support to ensure that are applying for Settled Status before the December deadline.

We want to do all we can to ensure that all residents feel welcome in their community. Many EU citizens help deliver vital local public services and play important roles in the private sector. I am very grateful that you recognise the central role that councils can play in supporting our local communities.

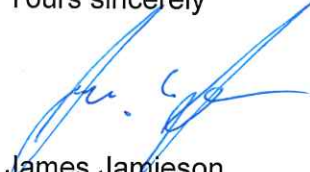
Government reports that more than 3 million people have so far applied for Settled Status. When the nationally-funded support services were established to support applications, local government was not eligible to apply for the funding available. However, councils across the country have worked hard to support their communities, despite their financial capacity being very stretched. As well as supporting children in their care through the EUSS scheme, many councils have been working hard to ensure their local residents are aware of the Scheme and have all the information they need, by using the campaign and information resources provided by central Government. Based on their understanding of their local communities, many are running their own local information campaigns, working with local partners, stressing the role EU citizens play in their local area.

We recognise that the remaining applications may bring new challenges, especially supporting more vulnerable members of our communities. We hope that Government's move to a more regional approach will provide greater support for the remaining members of local communities. We are working with Government to ensure that the duties for supporting such applications are clear and that there is adequate funding available to make this happen. I am pleased that you recognised in your letter that properly-funded local outreach work from councils will be needed to achieve this important goal.

Over the last year, councils have delivered European, national and local elections well, with some at very short notice. Whilst EU Treaty obligations regarding the right to stand and vote in UK municipal elections no longer apply, UK law is unchanged and such rights remain. In January, Cabinet Office ministers confirmed that EU citizens will be able to vote in the May 2020 local, London Assembly and Police and Crime Commissioner elections. It was also confirmed that those elected to office will be able to serve their full terms and that this will also apply to those elected before 2020. We do recognise that clear communication is needed to avoid any doubt. We will be discussing this issue with Government.

We remain keen to share what works in raising awareness of the scheme and we look forward to continue to work with the 3 million. Could I thank you for recognising the role that local government plays in supporting our communities and the need for adequate resources for this vital local work. I am making my reply to your open letter available on our website.

Yours sincerely



James Jamieson
Chairman