

Workforce fears prompt call for Brexit review

Organisations from across the UK are supporting plans for an independent review of Brexit's impact on health and social care.

The development comes in response to concerns from third sector organisations across Scotland that changes in rules related to the EU workforce, medicines research and funding reported by organisations such as the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland, Disability Wales, Camphill Scotland, Coalition of Care Providers Scotland, Genetic Alliance UK, Inclusion Scotland, Scottish Care and SCVO.

More than forty third sector organisations are signed up in support of an amendment to the EU Withdrawal Bill from Scottish MPs Joanna Cherry MP, Dr Philippa Whitford MP and Martyn Day MP which proposes a review of the impact of leaving the EU on the four health and social care systems operating across the United Kingdom.

The amendment is likely to be heard in the House of Commons over the coming weeks as MPs consider a raft of changes to the legislation which will lead to the UK leaving the European Union.

Ian Welsh, Chief Executive of the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland, said: "ALLIANCE members have raised significant concerns about the impact Brexit will have on their operations after the 2019 leaving date. By supporting an independent review of its impact we hope to highlight the impact of leaving the EU for organisations supporting people with long term conditions and ways of addressing these concerns."

Dr Neil Henery, Director, Camphill Scotland, said: "Camphill was founded in Scotland by Austrian refugees and remains very much a European and international movement. 170 (or 68%) of the 251 short-term volunteer co-workers currently living and working in Camphill communities in Scotland are from other EU countries. Without them Camphill could not continue in its present form to the great detriment of the over five hundred people with learning disabilities and other support needs who depend on us for their care, education and support."

Rhian Davies, Chief Executive of Disability Wales, said: "Health inequality is a major challenge in Wales due to the high proportion of disabled people in the population and higher than average levels of poverty. It is vital that steps are taken to ensure that the situation in Wales is not made worse following changes in the health and social care workforce following Brexit."

Notes to editors:

- For further information please contact Andrew Strong, Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland Assistant Director (Policy and Communications), andrew.strong@alliance-scotland.org.uk or Robert McGeachy, Policy and Engagement Manager, Camphill Scotland Robert@camphillscotland.org.uk.
- Amendment NC44 to the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill proposes a duty to implement an independent evaluation of the impact of the Bill and 'Brexit' on the health and social care sector after consulting Scottish Ministers, the Welsh Ministers and the relevant Northern Ireland department, service providers, those requiring health and social care services, and others.
- The health and social work sector in Scotland currently employs 12,000 EU nationals, which accounts for 3% of total employment in this sectorⁱ.
- In England an estimated 130,000 EU Nationals are working in health and social careⁱⁱ, and as at September 2015 "there were around 55,400 EU nationals working in NHS hospital and community health service in England - representing 5% of the overall workforce" ⁱⁱⁱ.
- One of the key issues emphasised in a report^{iv} recently published by the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE) was the potential loss to the health and social care workforce of people from across the EU as a result of Brexit. It is feared that this could exacerbate the existing difficulties of recruitment, highlighted in the recent Care Inspectorate report on staff vacancies. This found that "more than a third of social care services across Scotland have reported unfilled staff vacancies in the past year", and "almost half of those faced difficulty recruiting the right staff"^v.
- More than 45 organisations support the amendment including Camphill Scotland, The ALLIANCE, Coalition of Care Providers Scotland (CCPS), Disability Wales, Genetic Alliance UK, Inclusion Scotland, Scottish Care, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), Advocard, Angus Cardiac Group, Befriending Networks, C-Change Scotland, Carers Trust Scotland, Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, Community Pharmacy Scotland, Contact – for families with disabled children, COPE Scotland, Deafblind Scotland, Dumfries & Galloway Citizens Advice Service, East Lothian Cardio-Pulmonary Rehabilitation Group, Ecas, ENABLE Scotland, ENeRGI, In Control Scotland, Leonard Cheshire Disability, Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living (LCiL), MECOPP, MND Scotland, Neighbourhood Networks, Parkinsons UK, PASDA, REACH Advocacy Scotland, Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) Scotland, See Me Scotland, Scottish Council on Deafness

(SCoD), Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA), Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care (SPPC), Scottish Youth Parliament, SeAscape, SKS Scotland CIC Ltd, South Ayrshire Befriending Project, tsiMORAY, Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire (VAER), Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA), Western Isles Carers, Users and Supporters Network (WICUSN).

References:

- ⁱ Scottish Parliament Information Centre, Financial Scrutiny Unit Briefing: EU nationals living in Scotland, 3 November 2016.
- ⁱⁱ NHS Confederation, 29 June 2016, The UK voted to leave the EU: what now for the NHS? Elisabetta Zanon.
- ⁱⁱⁱ NHS HSCIC NHS Staff Groups by Nationality September 2015
- ^{iv} http://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/download/library/lib_57d8095f0f5d3/
- ^v Care Inspectorate, Staff vacancies in care services 2016, (October 2017), <http://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/4091/Staff%20vacancies%20in%20care%20services%20in%202016%20-%20a%20statistical%20report.pdf>