

# EU Citizens' Rights Project - Scotland

Outreach and training project for EU27 citizens in Scotland facing barriers in accessing public services and for their advisers, February - April 2019

## Report



*Edinburgh 30.04.2019*

### Summary

EU Citizens' Rights Project - Scotland provides information, advice and support for EU27 citizens in Scotland and connects groups and organisations working with the community.

In the period February - March 2019, we organised two series of events: five training sessions for advisers working with EU citizens, and nine events for EU citizens facing barriers in accessing information about their rights, especially about the new "EU Settlement Scheme." In addition, we assisted two sessions for EU citizens as guests. The events were attended by over 500 people (over 200 charity workers and over 300 EU citizens) across Scotland. The focus of these sessions was to reach otherwise unengaged groups, due for example to a language barrier, digital exclusion, social exclusion, remoteness, and lack of awareness of the scheme or disability, among others. The programme of events was accompanied by a robust online and offline information campaign.

The project has received positive feedback, both from participants and partner organisations. It showed a need to engage further with certain EU citizens groups, in particular the deaf community, workers assisting victims of domestic abuse, and EU citizens in rural areas experiencing language barrier.

## Background

The outreach and training programme developed by the EU Citizens' Rights Project (EUCRP) in the period between February - April 2019 answered the need in the community for increasing Brexit awareness among EU citizens and among those working with them, identified in the earlier stages of the Project. In particular, it was developed in response to feedback received from our outreach events in the period November - December 2018 (see the report in the Appendix) and recommendations from our research report [Brexit and EU citizens in Scotland: Impacts, challenges and support needs](#).

The research report, among others, highlighted the need to “develop ways of supporting EU citizens who may not be able to access information or make an application [under the EU Settlement Scheme] due to issues such as literacies, mental health problems, and disabilities” and to “build on trusted contacts to facilitate accessing information and support.” Meanwhile, EUCRP experience in providing outreach activities for vulnerable EU citizens in partnership with organisations across Scotland proved the value of this collaborative approach, while also revealing the need to provide more information about EU citizens' rights and the new EU Settlement Scheme for third sector workers and advisers working with EU nationals, not just the EU27 community itself.

## Training sessions

To answer these needs, in March 2019 EUCRP provided a programme of 5 training sessions for advisers held in [Dundee](#), [Perth](#), [Inverness](#), [Aberdeen](#) and [Glasgow](#). The training sessions consisted of three presentations (for the presentations, please see the Appendix):

1. EU citizens' rights before and after Brexit;
2. EU Settlement Scheme;
3. Sources of further help available both to EU citizens and third sector workers.

The presentations were delivered by a panel of pro bono legal speakers, including Kenneth Campbell QC, advocate Paul Harvey, Mark Lazarowicz (advocate and chair of the project) and by the experts provided by Drummond Miller solicitors, EUCRP staff and, in Perth and

Inverness, by representatives of local authorities (presenting on the topic of local pre-Brexit preparations to support EU citizens).

These sessions were primarily directed at third sector workers whose clients may be EU citizens, but who do not necessarily specialise in immigration (e.g. advisers helping to access public funds, supporting the homeless population, etc.) or members of small, sometimes informal community organisations, who are likely to receive queries about Brexit from their clients, but do not necessarily have the specialist knowledge required to help. Other audience members included any advisers and local authorities staff who may need more information about the EU citizens' rights before and after Brexit. The organisations engaged varied from small migrant NGOs to nation-wide organisations, such as Shelter Scotland, Women's Aid and Deaf Action. The full list may be found in the Appendix.

### Feedback from the training sessions

The feedback from the sessions was delivered on standardised paper forms, asking about the usefulness of the training (for the form, see the Appendix). On average, the sessions were scored as "4.18" out of 5 on a scale of usefulness. Out of 210 session participants, all opted in to be contacted with more materials in the future.

The sessions showed generally low awareness levels about EU citizens' rights and the details of the new EU Settlement Scheme, as well as low levels of recognition of schemes for organisations wishing to help EU citizens prepare for Brexit, e.g. the Home Office EUSS grant or the "We Are Digital" service. Alarming, many advisers had not been aware that providing immigration advice requires OISC registration on their part. Interestingly, the most widely recognised service offered to EU citizens in the face of Brexit was the new CAS EU Support service funded by the Scottish Government.

Not surprisingly, given the target audience profile, the sessions showed a need for more in depth training to be delivered in the future for specific organisation dealing with particularly vulnerable citizens, such as victims of domestic abuse or people threatened with homelessness. The participants of the training sessions scored their capacity to advise EU citizens on average at "3.28" out of 5. Their requests for further information included "Information about what rights EU citizens will lose with settled status," details of the process for non-EEA family members, support for EU citizens dealing with mental health problems and for those relying on legal aid access in making an application.

## Outreach sessions

In March 2019 we also delivered a programme of 9 (instead of the proposed 8) outreach sessions for EU citizens facing multiple barriers. These included migrants with poor English skills, poor digital literacy, general literacy issues, groups in remote locations without access to local help centres and a session for the BSL EU community in Dundee. These sessions were delivered across Scotland with help of local partner organisations who work with these vulnerable groups.

The partners for the outreach sessions were selected from a pool of organisations previously contacted by the project as well as through a general call out to community organisations across Scotland in February 2019. The EUCRP provided specialised information, language support and publicity for the sessions, and the partner organisations provided valuable insight into their clients' needs and availability. Partners also helped to create trust between EUCRP and local communities. In addition to the eight originally planned series with legal support, we delivered an additional session for the rural community in Blairgowrie and we helped at two special sessions for the EU citizens in need as guest speakers during local surgeries. During these special sessions we did not provide legal advice, but instead signposted EU citizens to other sources of help and distributed factsheets about the EU citizens' rights and the EUSS scheme. The full list of events and partner organisations can be found below.

Table 1. The List of Partner Organisations for the Outreach Events

	Location	Partner	Community	Needs and barriers	Attendees (est)
1	Glasgow, Govanhill	The Space	Roma community	No English; poor literacy; poor digital literacy; low trust levels; often 'chaotic' lifestyles	35 women with children (total for 3 preparatory sessions + the final session)
2	Kirkcaldy	Fife Migrants Forum	Agricultural workers, mainly Polish, Romanian, Bulgarian, Spanish	Language provision; remoteness	18 EU citizens
3	West Kilbride	Ken Gibson MSP office	EU citizens of various backgrounds,	Language barrier; low digital literacy; lack of local services (CAB);	54 EU citizens, including elderly, retired, relying on

			including elderly	complex legal cases	public funds
4	Glasgow, Maryhill	WSREC	Polish and Lithuanian	Language barrier; chaotic life-styles; reliance on public funds; unsociable hours at work	35
5	Dingwall	High Life Highland	Polish and Bulgarian	Low language skills; low confidence in accessing public services; remoteness and lack of local centres; few complex legal cases	35
6	Aberdeen	NRPF North East Partnership	Destitute of various backgrounds	Homelessness; language barrier; complex legal cases	35
7	Dundee	North East Sensory Services	BSL Latvian community	No BSL language provision for the EU community	30
8	Glasgow Queen Cross	QC Housing Association	Polish community, relying on public funds	Language barrier, precarious employment, homelessness risk	25
9	Blairgowrie (additional session)	ESOL and Polish Saturday School	Polish agricultural workers	Language; precarious employment	5
10	Brodick (additional session)	Cllr Ellen McMaster	EU citizens of various backgrounds	Remoteness, lack of local services (CAB)	11
11	Brechin (additional session)	Mhairi Gougeon MSP, CAS	Various, mostly Eastern European	Remoteness, lack of services, language skills	15

Each session was advertised according to the needs of each community. In some cases individual invitations were sent (West Kilbride, Dundee BSL), in some others building personal relationships with the group in need during visits and surgeries was indispensable (Govanhill, Queen Cross). Most sessions were advertised more traditionally by leafleting and social media activity (Kirkcaldy, Maryhill, Dingwall, Brodick, Brechin, Blairgowrie).

## Feedback from the outreach sessions

Feedback from the sessions showed the positive impact of EURCP outreach on the local communities, not just in terms of the vulnerable communities gaining better understanding of issues surrounding Brexit, but also in communities feeling supported and becoming empowered. As a link worker from The Space, one of the EUCRP partner organisations has reported after the event (for the full feedback, please see the Appendix):

*The feedback I have had since the event has been overall, very positive. The women feel like they have gained a better understanding of what Brexit means.*

*One of the biggest changes, is that women are reporting that they feel less fearful of what might happen to them once Brexit is finalised. Many of them believed that they were going to be arrested (...). Within one day of the meeting, we were told of people who cancelled their move back to Romania, as they now understand that they do not have to leave the country as they have been told by various bosses and landlords.*

However, collecting standardised feedback from the outreach sessions, considering the complex needs of target communities and the language barrier, was impossible. Written feedback forms in varying formats were filled in at the sessions in Kirkcaldy (in English), Glasgow Maryhill (in Polish and Lithuanian) and Glasgow Queen's Cross (in Polish). In addition, written feedback was provided by emails by some attendees of the Dundee BSL event. Feedback from the other sessions was mainly informal, oral or visual (provided, by example, by glueing stickers to smiley or sad faces by the NRPF group in Aberdeen).

The collected evidence revealed an interesting and worrying trend, with some percentage (ca 20%) of attendees having been completely unaware of the new EUSS scheme prior to events, even those held in the last week of March, right before the launch of the scheme. Some participants revealed they thought of acquiring British citizenship as "the only route to safety," naming the cost as main barrier to accessing it. Some other participants, especially in Kirkcaldy and Glasgow Maryhill had been aware of the scheme prior to the meetings, but they still rated the events as "useful" and indicated that their knowledge and understanding of the scheme improved as a result of the session. Most of them reported that after the EUCRP session they would probably not need any further help just in order to apply for Settled Status. Across the country, those who said they would require further help in accessing the scheme named the language barrier as the main reason, with some indicating they would need help because of complex circumstances, no digital skills or lack of equipment.

## Highlights and further Project activities

Other than the successful engagement with and empowerment of some members of the Roma community in Govanhill, one of the most valuable outcomes of the EUCRP Spring 2019 programme was engaging with the BSL (mainly Latvian) community in Dundee. BSL users pointed out during the event that this was the first session of its kind delivered for them and indicated that this EU community in Scotland had been deprived of information due to funding constraints. As one of the session attendee wrote, after having commuted to Dundee from East Kilbride for the session:

*There are some deaf people that have some struggles when it comes to filling out forms or trying to navigate their way to the form online as they do not understand the English that well. Unfortunately Contact Scotland BSL can't help for online interpreters due to the funding specifically for Scottish resources but this is classified as the UK government so they cannot help.*

The attendee pointed out that, at the same time, the Scottish Government recognises BSL as a minority language and has set up advisory committees to help in implementation of the BSL Act 2015. He pointed out that organising more sessions and training BSL advisers could help to answer the need for information in the community. As a result, the EUCRP is planning to deliver another session for the BSL community in the upcoming months.

The events in more remote parts of the Highlands and Islands regions showed a need to work further with rural communities. EU citizens in these regions, often in precarious employment and working unsociable hours, do not receive support from their employers, lack language skills to fill in their applications and cannot afford to commute to main urban centres, such as Inverness, to access help centres, especially without guarantee of language provision. More events with these groups are in development.

The EUCRP has also received feedback from Womens' Aid offices in Edinburgh and Ayrshire, asking for support for their staff and service users. These meetings are now in development. Another unexpected and welcome outcome of one of the sessions was the establishment of a grassroots volunteer group to help in providing digital support for those lacking digital skills or access to equipment in West Kilbride.

### **Highlights of the EUCRP Feb - March 2019 programme can be summarised as follows:**

- Reaching communities who have never heard about the EUSS before
- Increasing confidence of those who need to apply
- Empowering destitute communities

- Identifying the information gap in the BSL community
- Raising awareness of help and support scheme among charity workers and advisers
- Raising awareness levels about regulations surrounding providing immigration advice and OISC registration
- Identifying opportunities to continue the project and organise more outreach events
- Developing multilingual materials about settled status, whose joint reach on social media and the website surpassed 50,000.

#### Lessons learnt:

The project was delivered to tight deadlines, resulting from delays in signing the funding agreement, Brexit schedule and the end of financial year. At the same time, many organisations and agencies contacted by the EU CRP in February preferred to schedule events for the latest possible date and preferably past Brexit date. This resulted in overlapping of deadlines and dates of events, which was a major challenge for the project. Although the project was successfully delivered and exceeded its targets, future programmes should be scheduled with more flexible deadlines in mind, allowing for the change in circumstances, especially considering the uncertainty that continues to surround Brexit and its schedule, partly alleviated by the launch of the EUSS scheme.

Delivery areas that could be improved with more flexible timing is increasing media engagement and visibility of the project and thus boosting attendance levels, and developing more new meaningful partnerships, in particular with businesses employing many EU citizens in rural Scotland. In this last phase of the project, the callout to employers did not elicit much of a response, with little time to follow up and develop new engagement strategies. Engaging this group, which potentially could offer access to many EU citizens in need of information, as well as delivering more training for relevant staff, remain important objectives for the project.



Appendix:

EU Citizens' Rights Evaluation Report: [Information, engagement and research project for EU27 citizens in Scotland, September - December 2018](#)

EU Citizens' Rights Research Report: [Brexit and EU citizens' in Scotland: Impacts, challenges and support needs](#)

Presentations from the sessions (please note not all formatting will be preserved):

[EU Citizens' Rights](#)

[EU Settlement Scheme](#)

[Sources of further help](#)

Additional materials

[List of documentary evidence \(EN, PL, RM, BG, SP\)](#)

[Settled Status Guide \(EN, PL, RM, BG, SP\)](#)

Feedback

[Training sessions feedback form template](#)

Outreach sessions feedback: [Letter from The Space \(Govanhill\) link worker](#)

Press mentions

[EU nationals in Scotland face unacceptable hurdles when applying for residency.](#)  
Scotsman, 28 Jan 2019

[Nicola Sturgeon tells EU citizens in Scotland you are welcome here.](#) The Guardian, %  
Apr 2019.

List of organisations engaged by the programme:

Aberdeen Cyrenians  
Action for Children Dundee  
Casa de Espana Aberdeen  
Children's Health  
Citizens Advice Service  
Civil Legal Assistance Office  
Deaf Action  
EL Patio  
ESOL Blairgowrie  
Faculty of Advocates  
Falkirk Community Trust  
Feniks Health Services Ltd.  
Fife Migrants Forum  
Friends of Romano Love  
Glasgowlife  
Govanhill Housing Association  
Grampian Regional Equality Council  
Health All Around  
High Life Highland

LGBT Health  
North East Sensory Services  
Oficina Precaria  
Perth & Kinross Association of Voluntary  
Service Ltd  
Polish Professional Forums  
Polish Saturday School Perth  
Salvation Army  
Sanctuary Housing  
SCVO  
Sikorski Polish House  
Shakti Women's Aid  
Shelter Scotland  
The Space  
Queen Cross Housing Association  
UNISON  
UNITE  
West of Scotland Regional Equality Council  
Women's Aid

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