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Dear Kate

Thank you for your letter of 5 October on behalf of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma regarding the fees for children applying to the EU Settlement Scheme. I am replying as the Minister of State for Immigration, responding on behalf of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families.

EU citizens and their families make a significant contribution to the UK and the Government has been clear that we want them to stay. Our Settlement Scheme provides a streamlined and simple way for them to protect their status.

The approach we have taken to fees is fair and reasonable. It has been developed to meet the requirements of the draft Withdrawal Agreement as agreed with the EU. Under Articles 17(1)(g) and (h) of the draft Withdrawal Agreement with the EU the Government agreed that applications to the Scheme will not cost any more than the cost of a comparable document for UK nationals and that applications from holders of valid Permanent Residence documentation or indefinite leave to remain will be free of charge. This was also confirmed in the Prime Minister's open letter to EU citizens in the UK. The fee of £65 is the same as the current charge for documentation under EU law and is less than the cost of a British passport. A lower fee (£32.50) for applications from children under the age of 16 is consistent with the age at which reduced fees for a British passport apply. There is no charge for holders of valid Permanent Residence and indefinite leave to remain documentation or for children in local authority care.

I do, however, thank you for your suggestion and I would like to provide reassurances that the Home Office will keep the situation under review as we continue to engage closely with EU citizens about its design through working groups, our direct mailing list and ongoing community engagement.

Yours ever

Caroline

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