

Brexit Preparedness: Impact Assessment of Local Government Workforce

Summary and Recommendations

COSLA has carried out a survey of councils on the size of the non-UK EU/EEA workforce employed in Scottish Local Government. We have collated responses so far from 28 councils and interim findings are included in this report. The survey results will help us to understand the total number of non-UK EU/EEA nationals employed by each council and who will potentially be affected by the ongoing Brexit negotiations. The report aims to stimulate discussion on the level of data we need to gather and collate to better understand and prepare for the likely impact of Brexit on the Local Government workforce.

This paper invites Leaders to:

- i. Note the interim findings from the Brexit workforce survey;
- ii. Discuss what information we need and can access to better prepare for the likely impact of Brexit on the Local Government workforce; and
- iii. Agree that their councils be invited to carry out further work to expand and refine the information required on our non-UK EU/EEA workforce.

References

Previous reports on [topic]:

- COSLA Leaders August 2018 – EU Settlement Scheme
- CWB Board May 2018 – Brexit: EU Settlement Process and Engagement with EU Citizens
- COSLA Leaders May 2018 – Brexit update
- COSLA Leaders November 2017 – Migration Policy: Brexit Implications

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Purpose

1. COSLA, in collaboration with City of Edinburgh Council and the Society of Personnel and Development Scotland (SPDS), has been working on an impact assessment on the Scottish Local Government workforce in the light of Brexit.
2. We sent a survey out to councils over the summer and have received 28 complete and interim responses. COSLA has collated these responses from councils and produced interim findings which are summarised in the table in Appendix 1.
3. The purpose of collecting this data is to understand the total number of non-UK EU/EEA nationals employed by each council, and the types of roles that they undertake. This will provide a collective view of the likely impact of Brexit on the Scottish Local Government workforce. It will also be invaluable if councils have a clear idea of their non-UK EU/EEA workforce and can supply them with relevant information, such as information on the EU Settlement Scheme.
4. The survey will not only provide us with an evidence base on the implications of Brexit on our current workforce, but will also provide a strong lobbying position for our future workforce needs and a flexible immigration system post-Brexit.

What is changing?

Gathering the data

5. The City of Edinburgh Council has led on this work and has undertaken an impact assessment of its workforce which has helped the Council to shape thinking as to what Brexit means for it as an organisation and for its employees. We have used Edinburgh's survey template for the survey of all councils. The template covers: gender, nationality, age profile, current length of service and a break-down of role level data. Role level data has been categorised into Education and Families, Health and Social Care Partnership, Facilities Management and Other.
6. COSLA would like to thank councils for undertaking this work. We recognise that accessing data on non-UK EU/EEA citizens from employee files has been a resource intensive exercise. There are gaps in the data due to disclosure issues (for instance, there are examples where nationality cannot be identified from systems due to non-returns of Equalities Monitoring Forms or when employees have chosen not to state their nationality), as well as gaps in recording due to transferring to new systems/technology, and systems which do not identify individual countries. There are also gaps in service areas. This is particularly relevant when examining social care data and casual/supply workers. Due to these barriers, our findings underestimate the number of non-UK EU/EEA employees in the Local Government workforce.

7. The table in Appendix 1 provides an overview of our interim findings, but also highlights the complexity of extracting this data from our workforce systems, the gaps in our evidence base, and the difficulty of extrapolating from incomplete data.

Interim findings

8. According to the most recent population survey by the National Records of Scotland (NRS), there are 235,000 EU nationals living in Scotland, representing 4% of the resident population¹. According to our interim findings, non-UK EU/EEA nationals make up approximately 1.5% of the Local Government workforce. However, as highlighted above, there are significant gaps in our data and this does not capture all of our non-UK EU/EEA workforce.
9. From the interim findings, it is clear that education services have some of the most significant numbers of non-UK EU/EEA workers. According to our interim findings, 44% of our non-UK EU/EEA workforce are in schools and early years.
10. As mentioned above, for some councils there were significant barriers to accessing data from health and social care services. The table does not therefore reflect the make-up of council health and social care services or, indeed, wider social care services. In the Scottish Government's report '[EU Workers in Scotland's Social Care Force](#)' the estimated percentage of people employed within adult social care and childcare that are non-UK EU nationals is 5.6%.
11. The 'other' category covers non-UK EU/EEA citizens employed across all council services. This includes accounts, auditing, administration, culture, economic development and IT.
12. In terms of age profile, 58% of our non-UK EU/EEA workforce are under 40 years old. This was calculated from the 23 council responses which included age profile.

Proposed COSLA position

13. This information will inform the work of the COSLA/Scottish Government Brexit Preparedness Group. This is exploring four key areas: people (including workforce), goods and services, impact on places, and finances.
14. COSLA is also working with the Home Office on the potential EU Settlement Scheme. The survey work should ensure councils are clearer on their non-UK EU/EEA employees and can communicate important information on securing their status.
15. In addition, Scottish Government has committed to meet the settled status fees for EU citizens working in devolved public services. This was confirmed in the recently published Programme for Government. COSLA Community Wellbeing Spokesperson, Cllr Whitham, has written to the Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development, Ben Macpherson MSP, to seek clarity on who this commitment will actually cover. Cllr Whitham will meet the Minister in November to discuss this commitment, as well as wider Brexit issues. The survey results will be useful for Scottish Government in identifying EU citizens and delivering on the commitment.

Next steps

16. These interim findings have generated a number of questions as well as answers. For instance, what further data do we need to gather and collate to better understand and

¹ <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/population-estimates/pop-cob-17/pop-cob-nat-17-publication.pdf>

prepare for the likely impact of Brexit on the Local Government workforce, and how can we gather and use it to best effect? We would welcome Leaders' thoughts in this regard and will continue to work with all Councils to improve this data and gain an accurate picture of non-UK EU/EEA nationals in the Scottish Local Government workforce.

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