

MAYOR OF LONDON

Len Duvall AM
City Hall
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Dear Len,

Thank you for your letter of 6 September in relation to London Assembly EU Exit Working Group's session on the concerns of EU nationals in London and the support they now need.

As you know, my message to EU nationals in London is clear: you are welcome here and, for those who have made the capital home, you are Londoners. This is an area where I and the Assembly have significant agreement and I am keen that we work together to make sure EU nationals here continue to feel that this is their city.

Your letter makes a number of important points, along with a number of recommendations for me to consider. I have responded to these below.

A good deal for EU citizens

My argument to Government has been consistent since the referendum: London needs to remain open. This cannot mean a hard Brexit and, since the General Election result, I have called for the UK to remain in the Single Market. I believe this is in London and the country's best interests. I have been vocal in calling on the Government, including in my regular meetings with the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, to give a cast iron guarantee to EU nationals living in the UK that they are entitled to remain here permanently - and for the EU to do the same for UK nationals in member states.

It is unacceptable that people's lives are left in limbo, along with the uncertainty this brings to employers and business. I believe the Government needs to recognise the right of EU nationals in the UK to permanent residence and to set up a straightforward process for confirming this, as soon as possible.

EU nationals feel welcome here

It is important that EU nationals are guaranteed their full rights and entitlements and the Government needs to provide clear guidance to service providers and employers. I will continue to raise this issue with Government to ensure the message and information provided remains clear and current. A number of the examples of discrimination you gave are, of course, relevant to people of any nationality. As an international place, with more than a third of Londoners born outside the UK, this goes against our reputation for being a welcoming and fair city. I will oppose all forms of discrimination - from barriers to access to housing and employment, to opening a bank account.

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On the latter, I believe it is important that financial services firms follow advice and guidance issued by the Financial Conduct Authority and other industry bodies to ensure customers are treated fairly. I would be happy to pass on any evidence to the Government of Londoners who have been unfairly discriminated against in applications for credit, such as mortgages, because of their status as EU citizens.

I will work with the Assembly to make sure we remain a city for all Londoners. As you indicated, this principle is an important part of the #LondonIsOpen campaign, which I launched immediately after the referendum result, and which is sending out a strong message across the world. This campaign is continuing, and you may have seen further #LondonIsOpen activity on Transport for London's transport system advertising network over the summer and autumn.

I am working with London boroughs, through London Councils and the London Strategic Migration Partnership, to improve the information available to Londoners, address the needs of migrants and provide effective strategic oversight of these complex issues. This is led by my Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement, Matthew Ryder. He will continue to develop wider engagement work with London boroughs and raise the issues faced by EU citizens across London. Through our work on social integration and community engagement, I will work in partnership with boroughs to ensure all Londoners feel welcome and integrated into local communities.

In April, I announced a new Citizenship and Integration Initiative, which has been developing work to help young Londoners access their citizenship and residence rights. I understand your concerns about the current needs of those seeking advice from agencies that are stretched and do not always have sufficient specialist knowledge. This is an issue we are considering carefully as part of that Citizenship and Integration Initiative work. It is clear that the system EU nationals go through should be as simple as possible and that the Government must provide information and support to all EU nationals, and especially those who are most vulnerable.

I have made a number of specific commitments on hate crime in my Police and Crime Plan published earlier this year. These commitments are designed to, among other things, raise awareness of hate crime, encourage those who are victims or witnesses of hate crime to report it, and increase the ways that hate crime can be reported. My Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime will be working with statutory and community partners, including those that support and represent EU citizens, on how best to deliver on these commitments. Hate crime will not be tolerated against anyone in London, whoever they may be and wherever they are from.

A good deal for London

You also raised the important issue of devolution and, in particular, the need for a new post-Brexit settlement. My position is that the UK should remain in the Single Market. This is vital for London's economy – the capital has thrived through the free movement of goods, services, capital and people.

I agree entirely with your call for a new London Fund to replace the European Regional Development and European Social Funds currently managed by City Hall - the Government's proposed *Shared Prosperity Fund* should devolve funding to local areas as city regions are best placed to identify local priorities and enable partnerships to deliver programmes effectively. I have made this case to Government and will continue to do so.

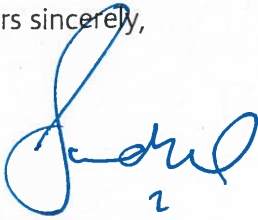
I also support your call for devolution of employment and skills budgets and commissioning powers. Whilst devolution of the Adult Education Budget is an important and welcome first step in

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helping to create a more integrated and responsive skills system for London, we need Government to go further. The existing heavily centralised system has offered limited scope to tailor provision to London's needs. My skills strategy will set out London's key priorities and my vision for skills. It will make the case for devolving funding, powers and responsibilities for 16-18 technical provision, careers and apprenticeships to London.

However, there is a strong case for devolution whether the UK is in or out of the EU. We are an over-centralised country and we need to see local control over a broader range of powers, including fiscal measures, to deliver long term investment in skills, housing, transport and other critical areas. I have found broad agreement on these issues across the Combined Authorities and other directly-elected Mayors. I look forward to continuing to work with them on these and other issues.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London