

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	19 SEPTEMBER 2023
Report Title:	SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING DIRECTORATE POLICIES –THE EUROPEAN UNION SETTLEMENT SCHEME
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Responsible Officer:	JOE BOYLE POLICY OFFICER – SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules
Executive Summary:	This report outlines the process undertaken to develop this new policy for implementation across the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate which is the approach to supporting children and young people and/or care leavers who may be eligible to settle in the UK under the European Union Settlement Scheme

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval of the new policy named and attached within the document at **Appendix 1** in order to support care experienced children and young people who have the right to apply to settle under the European Union Settlement Scheme.

2. Background

- 2.1 Following the UK decision to leave the European Union (EU) in 2016, the UK government created the EU settlement scheme to support those that are eligible to settle and remain in the UK. The deadline for this scheme was the 30th June 2021, however if individuals and families have gained pre-settled status this deadline does not apply. If a family or an individual has pre-settled status they can apply to settle under this scheme once they have lived in the UK for five consecutive years.

2.2 Local authorities are required to provide direct support to care-experienced children and care leavers from EU countries whilst applying for settled/pre-settled status. We are required to identify eligible children, including those in shared care arrangements, and care leavers. If there are uncertainties about the child, for example there are no ID documents, then we must consider applying for them through the relevant embassy. We are required to check the eligibility of any new children that come into scope and also ensure whether any non-EU children have any direct family members that hold EU citizenship. For any identified young people that are progressing through the application process, detailed records are required to be kept as set out in the policy.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 Relevant members of the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate were engaged and provided support in the drafting of the policy content regarding the need for each relevant area of the service.

3.2 The European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS) policy has been developed to support the processes of identifying and supporting any children and young people looked after by Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) or care leavers that are or potentially are eligible to settle in the UK under this scheme. This policy has been developed for use across Children's services.

3.3 The policy has been produced following meetings held with the Independent Monitoring Agency – Citizens Rights who have been tasked by the UK Government to oversee and assess how local authorities are supporting children and young people against this settlement scheme.

3.4 The policy sets out the following arrangements:

- Determining the eligibility of children and young people
- Processes for supporting children with care, interim care, or placement orders
- Processes for supporting accommodated children
- Processes for supporting children receiving any other BCBC support
- Process for supporting care leavers and signposting them to the process
- Supporting children and young people in secure youth settings
- The importance and requirements of data recording relating to applications and numbers of children and young people
- The process of supporting children and young people that decide to appeal or request administrative reviews.

3.5 The policy has also been produced in line with the government guidance and information that has been provided in relation to the EU Settlement Scheme which has also been disseminated to the relevant managers in Children's services. This guidance and links will also be included on the Social Services and Wellbeing Policy and Procedure Intranet pages for staff to access for additional information and guidance.

3.6 The policy sets out, in plain language, the law which governs the European Union Settlement Scheme, the Council's principles which shape the work of all departments, and commitment and action towards this area.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on these policies.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report,

Involvement	This policy has been informed by the review of relevant legislation and guidance, along with meetings and discussions with relevant service members and through liaising with the Independent Monitoring Agency-Citizens Rights to ensure our approach to supporting children and young people to apply under the EUSS is appropriate and streamlined.
Long term	There will be a positive long-term impact of these policies by enabling more children and young people to be more settled by staying in the UK.
Prevention	This policy sets out to ensure that no care experienced child or young person that is eligible to settle under the European Union Settlement Scheme is missed and ensures all are given the opportunity to apply where they are eligible.
Integration	This policy will be integrated across the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate in Children's services as set out above and as required.
Collaboration	These policies have been developed collaboratively by working groups involving staff from across the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There is no direct impact on Climate Change through the implementation of this policy.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 The new policy will enhance the Council's ability to discharge its statutory duties under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, and relevant regulations associated with the European Union Settlement Scheme.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications relating to the implementation of this policy. There is no cost associated with making an application for a care experienced child, young person, or care leaver as the Scheme is free to apply to.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended Cabinet consider and approve the new policy for the European Union Settlement Scheme as attached as **Appendix 1**.

Background documents

None