

Shock revelation that Theresa May blocked EU nationals' right to stay is a "badge of shame"

The Liberal Democrats have criticised Theresa May as "cold and heartless," following the shock revelation she blocked attempts to guarantee the right to stay for EU nationals immediately after the referendum.

In a scathing editorial in the Evening Standard today, George Osborne revealed that "in the days immediately after the referendum, David Cameron wanted to reassure EU citizens they would be allowed to stay. All his Cabinet agreed with that unilateral offer, except his Home Secretary, Mrs May, who insisted on blocking it."

It comes as the Liberal Democrats have set out a list of four demands that must be addressed in the government's paper on the rights of EU nationals on Monday, including ending the "bureaucratic nightmare" faced by EU citizens applying for permanent residency.

A recent report revealed that at the Home Office's current workrate, it will take around 11 years to process the millions of expected residency requests from EU nationals.

Liberal Democrat Brexit Spokesperson Tom Brake said:

"It is a badge of shame that Theresa May blocked attempts to guarantee the rights of EU nationals after the referendum. It shows how cold and heartless she is.

"Now that mean-spirited decision is coming back to haunt her as we see an exodus of skilled EU workers, from nurses to academics.

"Simply setting out vague assurances without giving a clear guarantee or sufficient resources for the Home Office is not good enough.

"People who have made their lives here shouldn't have to face a bureaucratic nightmare to apply to stay, or see their applications arbitrarily rejected.

"We urgently need a new, streamlined process that gives all EU nationals who have made the UK their home an easy route to permanent residency."