

# Home Office minister commends Scottish charity's work supporting EU Settlement Scheme

Home Office Minister Kevin Foster met Scottish charity Perth & Kinross Association of Voluntary Service Ltd (PKAVS) today, commending the exemplary support they have been providing to help vulnerable EU citizens apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

PKAVS provide invaluable support to help victims of human trafficking or domestic abuse, those with severe mental health conditions, those without a permanent address, and those who are elderly or isolated apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

It is one of the eight charities in Scotland, and 57 organisations and local authorities across the UK, being awarded up to £17 million in funding to help vulnerable EU citizens apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. PKAVS alone has already provided support to more than 1,700 vulnerable EU citizens living in Perth & Kinross.

The [latest official statistics](#) show there have been 185,900 applications in Scotland so far with the [highest number of applications](#) coming from Polish (60,680), Romanian (14,140), Italian (13,620) and Spanish (11,670) nationals.

Minister for Future Borders and Immigration Kevin Foster said:

It's fantastic there have already been more than 185,900 applications to the EU Settlement Scheme in Scotland given there is still plenty of time to apply before the 30 June 2021 deadline.

Charities like PKAVS in Perth & Kinross, which the Home Office has funded, have been doing a superb job providing support to ensure vulnerable EU citizens are able to secure their status.

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, people in Scotland have had access to a [range of support](#) either online, by email or by telephone to help them apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. This includes over 40 [Assisted Digital](#) locations for those who do not have the appropriate access, skills or confidence to apply online.

There are also over 1,500 Home Office staff working on the EU Settlement Scheme with 250 Settlement Resolution Centre staff in place to provide assistance to applicants with any questions about the scheme or who need help applying.

Chief Executive of PKAVS Paul Graham said:

We at PKAVS are delighted to host a virtual visit from the Minister, and welcome the opportunity to share some of the great outcomes we have been able to achieve for local EU citizens through our partnership with the Home Office.

PKAVS Minority Communities Hub has been supporting people from around the world who have chosen to make Perth & Kinross their home for over 10 years. Through assisting EU citizens to apply for and secure their settled status, we are proud to play our part to support the enormous contribution EU citizens make to the social, economic and cultural vibrancy of Perth & Kinross and the UK as a whole.

We would like to thank the Home Office for their excellent support throughout the EU Settlement Scheme process, which has helped PKAVS to empower 1,700 people to understand and apply for the EU Settlement Scheme.

To help raise awareness of the scheme at a local level, the Home Office has held a series of pop-up events across the UK where staff answer questions and help people to apply in person.

In September to October 2019, and February of this year, the Home Office ran local events in nine locations across the UK, including Aberdeen, Great Yarmouth, London, Nottingham, Leeds and Birmingham. The Home Office also supported an event to raise awareness of the scheme which was led by PKAVS in February 2020.

The Home Office also ran a £4 million marketing campaign in 2019 to encourage EU citizens to apply and a new wave of advertising began earlier this year to encourage those who have not yet applied to do so.

We have also translated [communication materials](#) into 26 EU languages, including Welsh and Irish.

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## [Man who repeatedly stabbed student on a Loughborough street in jail for longer](#)

A man who stabbed a female university student three times in the leg as she walked home after a night out will be imprisoned for longer following the intervention of the Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP.

On 9 June 2019, the victim, in her 20s, left a nightclub in Loughborough

around 2:30am to walk home. She had just finished her degree and gone on a night out with a friend to celebrate.

While walking home, the victim noticed that a man had started to follow her. The offender, Hani Habte, aged 18 at the time, then ran alongside the victim and tried to speak to her.

The victim tried to walk away from Habte but the offender grabbed her arm and pulled her to the ground. The victim tried to defend herself, hitting the offender with her bag, but Habte grabbed at the bag and proceeded to stab the victim three times in the leg. The offender then fled from the scene.

The victim was taken to hospital, having sustained three puncture wounds and bruising to her right thigh. She repeatedly passed out due to blood loss.

The offender was later linked to the attack through CCTV evidence and a trace of the victim's blood on his left trainer.

On 19 March, Habte was originally sentenced at Leicester Crown Court to 5 years' detention for wounding with intent.

Following the Solicitor General's intervention under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme, the Court of Appeal today increased his sentence to 5 years' detention with 3 years extended licence.

Commenting on the increase, the Solicitor General said:

"Habte targeted a vulnerable victim, subjecting her to a callous attack and causing significant psychological harm. I am pleased the Court of Appeal agreed to increase the offender's sentence and hope this brings some comfort to the victim and her family."

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## **UN Human Rights Council 44: Interactive Dialogue with the UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria**

Thank you Madam President,

The UK remains a strong supporter of the Commission's work and we thank the commission for their comprehensive report on the situation in Idlib and surrounding areas.

The United Kingdom is gravely disturbed by the commission's findings, including those of war crimes committed by the Russian-backed regime forces and by terrorist groups. We note the finding that the displacement of one million civilians, as a result of the brutal offensive by the Syrian regime,

may constitute a crime against humanity.

We urge all parties to allow humanitarian access and abide by the current ceasefire and international law. We are deeply disappointed by the shameful actions of Russia and China in the Security Council who, by use of their vetoes, have further reduced the ability of humanitarian actors to provide life-saving assistance to the suffering population in northern Syria. The Bab Al-Salam crossing supplied aid to 1.3 million people in the Northern Aleppo, including Afrin, an area hundreds of thousands of civilians had fled to.

Madam President,

The human rights situation across the whole of Syria remains deplorable. We will present a resolution this session, which notes our concerns about the continued extensive use of arbitrary detention, torture and enforced disappearance, particularly by the regime, and requests the Commission to prepare a report on arbitrary imprisonment in Syria.

Thank you.

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## **Government launches Health and Care Visa to ensure UK health and care services have access to the best global talent**

The Home Secretary and Secretary of State for Health and Social Care have today announced the new Health and Care Visa will be launched this Summer, creating a new fast-track visa route for eligible health and care professionals and delivering on a key manifesto commitment.

They have also today announced further details on how the exemption to the Immigration Health Surcharge will work for health and care staff, who will now be permanently exempt from this charge.

The Home Secretary and Health and Social Care Secretary have together developed the Health and Care Visa to demonstrate the government's commitment to deliver for the NHS and wider health and care sector. It is designed to make it easier and quicker for the best global health professionals to work in the NHS, for NHS commissioned service providers, and in eligible occupations in the social care sector.

The legislation needed to open this new route will be laid in Parliament today and health professionals will be able to apply from August.

The new Health and Care Visa will come with a reduced visa application fee compared to that paid by other skilled workers, including exemption from the Immigration Health Surcharge. Health and care professionals applying on this route can also expect a decision on whether they can work in the UK within just three weeks, following biometric enrolment. Those working in health and social care who do not qualify for the Health and Care Visa will still be able to claim a reimbursement from the Immigration Health Surcharge if they have paid this on or after 31 March.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

We are indebted to overseas health and care professionals for their tremendous contributions, not just in saving thousands of lives throughout this crisis, but for the vital role they play year-round.

This new visa is part of our new immigration system making it quicker, cheaper and easier for the best and brightest health and care professionals from around the globe to work in our brilliant NHS.

Health and care professionals from all over the world have played a vital role in hospitals and care homes across the country fighting coronavirus. The introduction of the Health and Care Visa follows a number of unprecedented measures to show the UK's gratitude to health workers from overseas.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock said:

Our health and care system has always had a proud tradition of welcoming overseas staff to work, train and live in the UK, and I'm proud that the NHS is a destination of choice for talented people from around the world.

The unwavering commitment, skill and compassion staff have shown during the fight against this deadly virus is nothing short of phenomenal, and the reimbursement of the immigration health surcharge recognises the enormous contribution of those who have come to the UK to work in health and social care.

I'm incredibly proud of our health and care workforce and look forward to welcoming new professionals from across the globe to continue the fantastic work to ensure our health system remains the best in the world.

Right across the immigration system the Home Office is already supporting frontline healthcare staff through initiatives such as visa extensions and the creation of the bereavement scheme.

The Prime Minister has previously announced that health and social care

workers will be permanently exempt from the Immigration Health Surcharge going forward, and Immigration Health Surcharge payments made since 31 March will also be refunded.

As part of the launch of the Health and Care Visa, those who apply via the visa and their dependants will be exempt from the Immigration Health Surcharge. The government has already begun refunding Immigration Health Surcharge payments for any healthcare professionals on Tier 2 visas who have paid since 31 March 2020, and this process will continue. More information will be published on the Immigration Health Surcharge GOV.UK pages for customers to contact us directly if they believe they are due a refund. The Department of Health and Social Care is currently working with the sector to set up operational arrangements for reimbursing health and social care staff outside the scope of the Health and Care visa. These arrangements will commence from 1 October in 6 month reimbursements.

The new Health and Care Visa will apply to eligible roles within the health and care sector. The events of recent months have illustrated just what a crucial role the care sector plays in UK society. The government is working closely with the sector to support and recognise the contributions of care workers. This includes a widespread focus on training and introducing a proper career structure to provide opportunities for those in the sector and makes it an attractive profession for prospective carers.

The independent Migration Advisory Committee has been very clear that immigration is not the answer to the challenges in the social care sector and, as we implement the new immigration system, we want employers to focus on investing in our domestic workforce.

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## [Welsh Secretary visits company developing Covid-19 beating technology](#)

On his first official engagement in Wales since the easing of coronavirus lockdown restrictions, Mr Hart visited Creo Medical, where he heard how the company will use a £2m Cardiff Capital Region investment to develop its Cool Plasma technology which the company says has been shown to be effective in inactivating and decontaminating the Covid-19 virus.

In response to the pandemic Creo Medical will prioritise developing pioneering technology that meets the urgent needs created by Covid-19, including sterilisation of PPE and medical equipment.

The £2m loan, repayable over five years, has been provided by the Cardiff Capital Region. The UK Government is committed to supporting ground-breaking research and development in Wales and has committed £500million to the Cardiff Capital Region, helping them to support innovative companies such as

Creo Medical.

The Welsh Secretary was also shown Creo's range of advanced energy surgical endoscopy products. Products that are already being used to revolutionise bowel cancer treatment and could soon be used to treat other forms of cancer, such as lung and pancreatic cancer.

**Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:**

It is fantastic to see Welsh companies stepping up to the challenges created by this pandemic and developing technology that can make a real difference in the fight against Covid-19.

The Cardiff Capital Region's £2 million investment will boost the innovative research that is already taking place at Creo Medical and help enhance south Wales' position as a leader in the development of medical technology.

**Craig Gulliford, Chief Executive Officer of Creo, said:**

We were very pleased to welcome the Secretary of State for Wales to our facilities here in Chepstow. We are proud to have taken our expertise in developing innovative medical devices and applied them to our plasma technology to develop products that could help halt the spread of Coronavirus.

Wales has a strong reputation for producing technology rich and innovative life sciences companies and I am delighted we have established a platform to develop critical medical tools here in the UK that will benefit cancer patients worldwide, and to protect our nation against a resurgence of COVID-19.

**Peter Fox, Leader of Monmouthshire County Council and Vice Chair of Cardiff Capital Region Cabinet, said:**

Cardiff Capital Region Cabinet is delighted to support Creo Medical in developing their Cool Plasma technology. This tremendous innovation in sterilisation couldn't have come forward at a better time and this new technology will be a game changer in killing bacteria and viruses and has already proved that it can be effective against COVID-19.

The MedTech industry is a key area of development and opportunity for the Cardiff Capital Region. It is fantastic we have Creo in our midst – a leading light in medical science. Providing this loan ensures this crucial technology can be developed at speed.

Our region is an exciting place to be and our City Deal stands

ready to unlock further opportunity. We are so pleased to be working with forward thinking companies such as Creo medical and we look forward to working with them.

Creo Medical's expertise as an innovative medical device designer has been established through its range of advanced energy surgical devices that can be used endoscopically to safely treat a wide range of gastrointestinal complications including the early signs of bowel cancer. Pioneered in the UK by leading NHS endoscopists, the use of Creo's first product, Speedboat has been demonstrated to save NHS hospitals nearly £5,000 per procedure versus traditional surgical techniques. Creo's technology allows operations that previously took place under general anaesthetic to be done quickly and safely as outpatient procedures – providing benefits for the NHS in terms of economics and reducing waiting lists, but also providing better outcomes for patients.