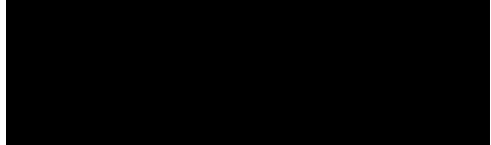


Stormont Castle  
BELFAST  
BT4 3TT



**Michael Potter**  
**Committee for TEO**  
**Parliament Buildings**  
**Ballymiscaw**  
**Stormont**  
**BELFAST**  
**BT4 3SR**

**9 November 2021**

**Dear Michael**

**RE: EU EXIT ISSUES - JUNIOR MINISTER ORAL EVIDENCE SESSION**

Thank you for your letter of 30 September 2021. The Coronavirus pandemic, along with changes to the UK's immigration policy, has impacted on almost all parts of our economy and has manifested itself in various forms, including labour shortages across a variety of sectors including Agri-food processing, Hospitality and Tourism and HGV Drivers.

The Department for the Economy and the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs continue to engage with the UK Government on its immigration policy with a view to ensuring that it reflects the needs of Northern Ireland's economy.

In particular, the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has been engaging extensively with stakeholders from across our food processing sector who are experiencing significant operational problems as a result of labour shortages. As Immigration Policy is a reserved matter, Minister Poots has ongoing communication with top levels of Government in Whitehall to highlight the severity of the problems, in the hope that we can remedy the situation as quickly as possible.

The EU Settlement Scheme was open to EU, EEA and Swiss nationals who were in the UK prior to the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020. There is no evidence to suggest that extending the closure of the scheme – which continues to accept late applications – would mitigate the labour market shortages currently being experienced. NICS Departments are addressing the residual transition issues while preparing to integrate the operational management of the changes resulting from EU Exit into

business as usual. The EU Future Relations Programme Board and Interdepartmental Steering Group (IDSG) co-ordinate the overarching objectives, strategy and engagement and operational activities associated with this work.

The IDSG provides oversight and, where necessary, co-ordination of the work being taken forward by the Department for the Economy and Department of Agriculture, Environments and Rural Affairs, as lead departments, on actions and mitigations to address the labour shortage challenges here .

Yours sincerely

**DAVID MCCREEDY**

**Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer**



## Committee for the Executive Office

David McCreedy  
Communications and Executive Support  
SD20  
Stormont Castle  
Ballymiscaw  
Belfast  
BT4 3TT

30 September 2021

Dear David,

### **EU EXIT ISSUES – JUNIOR MINISTERS ORAL EVIDENCE SESSION**

At its meeting on 29 September 2021, the Committee for the Executive Office received an update on EU exit matters from junior Ministers.

Junior Minister Kearney updated Members on the EU settlement statistics for Northern Ireland following closure to new applications on 30 June 2021.

The Committee agreed that I write to you to request further information on labour shortages across Northern Ireland following the closure to the EU settlement scheme and to ask what the inter-departmental steering group, as referred to by junior Minister Kearney, and the Future Relations Programme Board within The Executive Office are doing to monitor these issues going forward.

I would appreciate a response by **14 October 2021**.

Yours sincerely

*Michael Potter*

**Michael Potter Clerk, Committee for the Executive Office**

**Committee for the Executive Office  
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