The mass lobby to guarantee the rights of residence of EU citizens (Monday 20 February 2017)

Briefing
Thank you for registering for the lobby organised by the3million, New Europeans and UNISON. This briefing gives you useful information about what will be happening on the day. Please read it in advance as it will help you plan what to say to your MP.

1. Preparing for the day
Hopefully you have written to your MP using the link provided when you registered for the event. If not it would be useful if you did this as soon as possible. If you don’t still have the link please contact Katia Widlak at UNISON (k.widlak@unison.co.uk)

Your MP will come back to you with a time for your meeting. Two rooms have been booked for meetings with MPs - Committee Room 14 from 2.15-4pm and Committee Room 9 from 4-6pm. Stewards will be on hand to direct you to the rooms.

2. On the day

Come to Central Hall Westminster
We have booked the central Library room in the Central Hall Westminster opposite Parliament (map)

You are welcome to drop in anytime between 11.30am and 5pm to come and talk to New Europeans, the3million or UNISON, meet other lobbyists, or use the Hall’s facilities and cafe.

At 1pm, we will do a group photo shoot for the media – if you would like to be included please be in the Library at 12.30pm.

There will be a photo booth in the Library so you can take pictures and video and use them on social media. (Please use #righttostay for all social media.)

Queue up early for your MP appointment
The lobby will run from 2-6pm. We advise you arrive at least an hour before your appointment time with a copy of the letter of appointment. Join the queue at the House of Commons Cromwell Green entrance - see map at https://www.parliament.uk/documents/facilities/maps/colmap.pdf)
All lobbyists must go through the “airport style” security to gain access to Parliament and at busy times this may take up to an hour, so please allow plenty of time. Stewards in orange UNISON orange tabards will be outside Parliament to help you enter the queue and they will do their best to prioritise people who have a specific time to meet their MP (you must have written confirmation, an email may not be sufficient).

If your appointment is between 2 and 2.30pm then please make sure you join the queue by 1.15pm. Those with later appointments need to get in the queue at least an hour before their appointment time.

Banners, posters and T-shirts with slogans are not allowed in the Houses of Parliament.

When you get inside Parliament
If you have a specific appointment with your MP there will be UNISON stewards to direct you to the committee rooms we have booked. If you don’t have an appointment with your MP they will direct you to the Green Card information desk.

If you don’t have an appointment you can ask to see your MP using the Green Card system – this is how:

1. In the Central Lobby there is a desk staffed by officials from the Serjeant-at-Arms Office.
2. Go to that desk and ask for a ‘green card’. Enter your name and address and the purpose of your visit – which is “to highlight the need to ensure EU citizens’ right to remain in the UK after exiting the EU”. You should say on the green card that, if your MP can’t meet you today you would like to request a meeting in their constituency. This means the card will be sent on to the MP’s office.
3. Wait for your MP in Central Lobby.
4. If your MP has been found your name will be called out in Central Lobby, so please listen carefully.
5. Your MP may suggest going somewhere for your discussion. If not, you could politely suggest that you go to either Committee Room 14 or 9 (depending on the time – see earlier section of this briefing) as it will be quieter and make it easier to chat.

If your MP does not appear within about half an hour it is unlikely that they will come at all. Sometimes they will send their staff on their behalf if they are caught up in other meetings. You decide how long to wait but the longer you stay the less chance others behind you in the queue will have to get in and submit their Green Cards.

Disabled access
If you are disabled, telephone the Serjeant-at-Arms’ office at the House of Commons, who will advise you of the procedures for entering the building (0207 219 3000 and ask for the Serjeant’s office).
Talking to your MP
Remember your MP is paid for by your taxes, they are accountable to you and you are well within your rights to ask them any questions (politely!).

When talking to your MP be as brief, clear and courteous as possible. It’s best to think in advance about what you want to say and what questions you want to ask. If they send their researcher instead, treat them in the same way. You should thank him or her for taking the time to see you, establish how much time they have, have your points or story ready and most importantly ask them to explain their views.

The pledge
We will all be asking Parliamentarians to sign a pledge board that says:

"I call on Theresa May to guarantee unilaterally the rights of EU citizens living in the UK."

So, at some point in your meeting please ask them if they will sign the pledge for you. Below are some other issues you may wish to raise with your MP.

Points from UNISON
- As a member of UNISON I am proud my union has jointly organised this lobby today and is raising the need for the government to protect my existing EU rights for both living and working in the UK
- The #righttostay pledge asks that the government guarantees my rights now so that myself/my family are free from uncertainty
- Explain personally what you may lose if your right to stay is not guaranteed and talk about the work you do in public services and how you add value to the public services so many people rely on
- UNISON has been engaging with public service employers to make sure that they are aware there have been no changes to my current employment status in the UK. However it would be much better if the government told employers this and assured them that there would be no future changes in my employment status
- We need the #righttostay and the government to guarantee unilaterally the rights of EU citizens living in the UK so that we are also able to more confidently challenge workplace racism and xenophobia currently emerging as a consequence of the Brexit negotiations

Additional information for you to use if you are a health and social care worker
(You may want to pick out some of these facts to tell your MP)

There are 55,000 EU nationals working in the English NHS alone that makes up 5% of its workforce. This includes 10% of doctors and 4% of nurses. In the past few years thousands of EU nurses have been recruited to cover gaps in staffing, and the NHS has become increasingly reliant on EU nationals to keep it on its feet.
The need to continue to recruit EU nurses in NHS England will be critical due to the falling numbers of enrolment of student nurses (UK, EU, and non-EU) January 2017. There has been a significant reduction of 23% of student applications in England following the government’s decision to abolish bursaries for healthcare students in England; a 9% drop in English domiciled applicants for nursing courses in Wales; a 16% drop in English domiciled applicants for nursing courses in Scotland.

Figures also show a reduction of more than 90% in the number of nurses from the EU registering with the Nursing and Midwifery Council since the referendum vote. The extent to which the health and social care system depends upon staff from outside the UK, particularly Europe, should not be underestimated.

For some particular NHS organisations, the picture is even starker, with more than 10% of the workforce coming from the EU at a number of foundation trusts, primarily in London. At the Royal Brompton and Harefield this figure is as high as 15.3%. As the IPPR think tank notes, “Without them, the NHS would collapse. It is critical to public health that these workers do not seek jobs elsewhere.”

Social care is even more dependent on EU nationals, with 6% of the social care workforce in England alone being EEA migrants, equating to around 84,000 people. Of this number, 90% (78,000) do not have UK citizenship, meaning they could be at risk of changes to their immigration status following a UK exit from the European Union.

Given the size of the European workforce in our health and social care system, it is little surprise that there is major anxiety on behalf of key institutions about protecting the ability of our services to continue delivering excellence. For example, specialist hospitals have called for the government to clarify the rights of EU nationals to remain working in health and social care in the UK.

Professor Tim Briggs, chair of the Federation of Specialist Hospitals, said that for the NHS to remain at the forefront of medical advances, it was necessary to recruit the best people from the UK and abroad: “the NHS has always been very good at recruiting people from abroad because of what we have to offer. That needs to continue.

Points from the 3millions

Key messages
"We are not bargaining chips, we are people"
"We want a unilateral guarantee and we want it now."
"British citizens living in the EU do not want reciprocal guarantees"

Background note
3.3 million EU citizens in the UK are uncertain about our status and anxious about our future to the point where our children cannot sleep at night and some of us are thinking about leaving the UK.
The government has said that the rights that EU citizens currently enjoy will be transferred into UK law through the Great Repeal Bill. As a result, the amendment to the Brexit Bill which was tabled to protect EU citizen’s rights did not go through. The debate will flair up again when the Bill goes to the House of Lords and when it then returns again to the Commons.

We need to keep banging the drum and saying that we are not bargaining chips and we want a unilateral guarantee now and not reciprocal arrangements through negotiations.

Administrative reforms are needed. The procedure for applying for permanent residency needs to be drastically reformed. We did not think we would need to apply for permanent residency because we came to the UK in good faith as EU citizens. Now we are asking to produce detailed information about our employment and travel going back 20 years in some cases. This is unfair and unreasonable.

**Things you can say**

1) I am an EU citizen - I am one of the 3 Million
2) I am not a bargaining chip, I am a person - so are the other 3.3 million EU citizens the UK
3) Will you sign our pledge card?
4) Will you speak to the Home Secretary, Amber Rudd about my concerns?
5) Will you raise my concerns with the Prime Minister, Theresa May MP?
6) Will you raise my concerns with backbench committees including the 1922 (Conservative MPs) and PLP (Labour MPs) committees?
7) Did you know that UK citizens in the EU have said they do not want reciprocal arrangements?
8) How do I make an appointment for your surgery to follow up about this issue?

**Points from the New Europeans**

**Key messages**
"We are not bargaining chips, we are people"
"We want a unilateral guarantee and we want it **now**."
"British citizens living in the EU do not want reciprocal guarantees"

**Background note**
The government has said that the rights that EU citizens currently enjoy will be transferred into UK law through the Great Repeal Bill. As a result, the amendment to the Brexit Bill which was tabled to protect EU citizen’s rights did not go through. The debate will flair up again when the Bill goes to the House of Lords and when it then returns again to the Commons. We need to keep banging the drum and saying that we are not bargaining chips and we want a unilateral guarantee **now**.

New Europeans is also working with representative groups of UK citizens living in the EU. It has been made very clear by these groups that UK citizens in the EU are
not asking for "reciprocal arrangements" because they understand that it is definitively not in their own interests for the UK government to hold 3.3 m EU citizens hostage to the Brexit negotiations.

New Europeans wants a guarantee now from the government, which means the government should expedite legislation rather than wait for the Great Repeal Bill. We also want full consultation rights for representative groups of EU citizens in the UK and UK citizens in the EU throughout the Brexit process starting now.

**Things you can say**
1) I am an EU citizen and a member of New Europeans which champions my rights to non-discrimination, free movement and to vote in local elections.
2) I am here today to voice my concerns about how the government has been treating me since the referendum.
3) I am treated as if I was a bargaining chip. I am not a bargaining chip, I am a person.
4) I appeal to you to stand up for my right to be treated as a human being and not a bargain chip.
5) I ask you to sign our pledge card so there can be no doubt you support this general principle.
6) What further steps can you take to show your support for our pledge?
7) Will you agree to organise a meeting for EU citizens in your constituency to explain what the current situation is in relation to our status?
8) Can I visit your constituency surgery to follow up my visit here and maintain a dialogue with you about this issue?

**After the lobby**
We will be collecting reports back from all meetings with MPs so that we can compare what they have said and hold them to account. So, please do email Katia Widlak at k.widlak@unison.co.uk with any feedback.

Good luck.