The UK government has reached an agreement with the European Union on citizens’ rights in negotiations on the UK’s withdrawal from the EU. This will provide certainty about the future to millions of EU citizens and their families in the UK. Most importantly, it will allow you to stay here after we leave the EU on 29 March 2019, and to continue to access public funds and services.

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This leaflet explains what that agreement means for EU citizens living in the UK and what you need to do. It covers:

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The agreement with the EU

The agreement we have reached for EU citizens and their families is:

- People who, by 29 March 2019, have been continuously and lawfully living here for 5 years will be able to apply to stay indefinitely by getting ‘settled status.’ That means they will be free to live here, have access to public funds and services and go on to apply for British citizenship.

- People who arrive by 29 March 2019, but won’t have been living here lawfully for 5 years when we leave the EU, will be able to apply to stay until they have reached the 5-year threshold. They can then also apply for settled status.

- Family members who are living with, or join, EU citizens in the UK by 29 March 2019 will also be able to apply for settled status, usually after 5 years in the UK.

- Close family members (spouses, civil and unmarried partners, dependent children and grandchildren, and dependent parents and grandparents) will be able to join EU citizens after exit, where the relationship existed on 29 March 2019.

EU citizens with settled status or temporary permission to stay will have the same access as they currently do to healthcare, pensions and other benefits in the UK.

Assessment of settled status applications

You’ll be able to apply for settled status if you’re a citizen, or the family member of a citizen, of an EU country. We’ve agreed with the EU that the conditions for EU citizens and their family members to get settled status in the UK will be the same as, or more generous than, those set out in the existing Free Movement Directive. In most cases this means you will need 5 years of continuous and lawful residence in the UK. The criteria will be set out in the withdrawal agreement between the UK and the EU.

If you meet the criteria and submit a valid application you will be granted status, unless:

- you weren’t resident in the UK by 29 March 2019 (see note 1)
- you’re refused on the grounds of your serious criminal convictions or for security reasons

The withdrawal agreement will become a part of UK law and so the Home Office will not be able to refuse an application for any reason not covered by the agreement.

Note 1: Unless you’re a close family member of an EU citizen living in the UK but were living outside the UK when the UK left the EU.
Applying for settled status

EU citizens and their family members in the UK will need to apply to get their status document. Getting this status will prove (for example, to employers or public service providers) that they have permission to continue living and working here in future.

The application fee will be no more than the cost charged to British citizens for a UK passport. If you already have a valid permanent residence document, it will be free.

We’re making the application process as streamlined, quick and user-friendly as possible. We’ll use existing government data to reduce the amount of evidence you will need to provide. For example, HMRC’s employment records will show us your UK work history.

As an EU citizen applying to the scheme, you will need to:

- provide an identity document and a recent photograph to confirm your identity and nationality
- declare any criminal convictions

You won’t have to:

- account for every trip you’ve taken out of the UK
- show evidence that you held comprehensive sickness insurance
- give your fingerprints

The Home Office will provide support to ensure your application isn’t turned down because of simple errors or omissions. We will contact you where it appears a simple omission has taken place and help you fix it. We will also let you know if you need to provide more evidence, before a decision is made.

We expect the online application form to go live in late 2018. So people have enough time to apply, the scheme will remain open for applications for a considerable period, at least 2 years, after the UK leaves the EU. During this period your rights in the UK will be protected. If you apply under the scheme, but don’t receive a decision before the end of this period, you can continue living here until the decision is made.
Irish citizens

Irish citizens residing in the UK will not need to apply for settled status to protect their entitlements.

The agreement with the EU does not affect Common Travel Area arrangements between the UK and Ireland and the rights of British and Irish citizens in each other’s country.

People working across the border

EU citizens working in the UK but residing in another EU state (frontier workers) will retain the rights they currently enjoy to enter and to work in the UK.

Further information

You can find more information on citizens’ rights and sign up for email updates by visiting www.eucitizensrights.campaign.gov.uk