

News story: UK government publishes proposals on rights of EU citizens

[Speaking in the House of Commons](#), the Prime Minister said that EU citizens make an invaluable contribution to the UK and the government wants to provide them with certainty about the future of their lives.

Theresa May said a [policy paper](#) published by the government would make clear the UK's 'fair and serious offer' to maintain EU citizens' rights, which will be enshrined in UK law.

The Prime Minister once again made it clear these proposals should be part of a reciprocal agreement for EU citizens in the UK and UK nationals in Europe, which the government wants to agree as quickly as possible.

The Prime Minister said:

EU citizens are an integral part of the economic, cultural and social fabric of our country and I have always been clear that I want to protect their rights.

That is why I initially sought an agreement on this before we triggered Article 50. And it is why I am making it an immediate priority at the beginning of the negotiations.

That agreement must be reciprocal because we must protect the rights of UK citizens living in the EU too.

Our offer will give those 3 million EU citizens in the UK certainty about the future of their lives. And a reciprocal agreement will provide the same certainty for the more than 1 million UK citizens who are living in the European Union.

In its policy paper, [Safeguarding the position of EU citizens in the UK and UK nationals living in the EU](#), the government makes clear how EU citizens looking to remain in the UK can do so.

The paper confirms the creation of a new 'settled status' for EU citizens who arrive before a cut-off date, which is yet to be specified and will be agreed as part of the negotiations with the EU.

Applicants who already have 5 years' continuous residence in the UK will be immediately eligible for settled status. Those who arrived before the specified date but do not yet meet the 5 year threshold by exit day will be allowed to stay until they reach that milestone and can also secure settled status.

Those EU citizens who are granted settled status will be treated like a

comparable UK national, entitled to broadly the same rights and benefits.

And a grace period of up to 2 years will be in place for all EU citizens, including those who arrive after the cut-off date, allowing them to regularise their status to remain in the country.

All those applying to remain in the UK will undergo full criminality checks.

The paper also confirms:

- family dependants who join a qualifying EU citizen in the UK before the UK's exit will be able to apply for settled status after 5 years
- EU citizens looking to remain in the UK will be asked to apply for documentation under a new streamlined, user friendly scheme
- protection for the existing healthcare arrangements for both EU citizens in the UK and UK nationals in the EU. This includes seeking continued participation in the European Health Insurance Card scheme for all UK nationals and EU citizens, including for temporary visits
- the UK intends to provide certainty by continuing to export and uprate the UK State Pension within the EU, as well as offering reassurance that those exporting a benefit at the specified date will be able to do so, subject to ongoing entitlement
- EU citizens who arrived before the specified date should be able to continue to be eligible for Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) student loans and 'home fee' status.
- the UK intends to continue to recognise professional qualifications obtained in the Member States prior to the UK's withdrawal from the EU. This would be part of a reciprocal deal which ensures professional qualifications obtained in the UK and EU Member States continue to be mutually recognised.

Notes for editors

In addition to the publication of the policy paper, the government has updated its [advice for EU citizens living in the UK](#).