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VOISINS VOICES

A BRITISH EMBASSY PARIS NEWSLETTER



British Embassy
Paris

WELCOME

Welcome to our February edition of Voisins Voices! It has been a busy first few weeks of the year and we have received many questions, on Facebook, at our first Live Online meeting of the year and through our enquiries webform. So this is another bumper edition with lots to read and suggestions for where you can find more information or assistance if you need it. And do remember that our online Living in France Guide always has the most up to date information - please click on this [link](#) to see more detail and register to be notified of updates.

Do please forward this to any friends, family, or new acquaintances living in France. To get added to the distribution list, simply email France.Enquiries@fcdo.gov.uk or follow this [Link](#) and fill in the form with your email address and name.



Settled in France?

- Apply for residency now and obtain your Withdrawal Agreement Residency Permit
- Make sure you're registered for healthcare
- Check your passport validity online and renew it now if you need to

Find out more at [gov.uk/livinginfrance](https://www.gov.uk/livinginfrance)

- ✓ Check
- ✓ Change
- ✓ Go

British Ambassador to France: Covid and Climate High Hopes

Every month the British Ambassador to France, Ed Llewellyn, shares an insight into his role through Connexion (<https://www.connexionfrance.com/>) France. Here is his column from 26 January 2021



New rules, continuity and high hopes on coronavirus and climate in the ambassador's column for February 2021

By Ed Llewellyn

Happy New Year! Although this is my first printed column of the year, it's not quite my first appearance in Connexion in 2021. I hope some of you may have seen my online [interview](#), in which I discussed our exit from the EU and the changes we will see in Britain's relationship with the EU and France.

New rules for travel and trade

Since January 1, there are new rules for how we travel and trade. The EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement offers clarity on how we will move forward into this next chapter. It offers some continuity, too. For those not covered by the Withdrawal Agreement, I am pleased to confirm that your French EHIC (Carte Européenne d'Assurance Maladie – CEAM – in French) will give you access to medically necessary healthcare when you travel to the UK or EU countries. And when friends and family visit France, their EHICs will remain valid until they expire, after which they can apply for a Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) for the same medical access. You can find details on the [gov.uk Healthcare for UK nationals visiting the EU page](#).

Right now, though, coronavirus continues to make it hard to cross the Channel. Recently, new measures were introduced on both sides, requiring travellers to have tested negative for Covid-19 no more than 72 hours before departure. To enter the UK, PCR, LAMP and antigen tests are accepted – but it is important to look at the guidance on gov.uk. To enter France, only PCR tests are permitted. Remember, you will still have to self-isolate on arrival in either country, even with a negative test.

Almost half of all the world's genome sequencing of coronavirus is carried out in the UK, with the data shared internationally. This allows us to monitor the virus's development and put in place measures that will keep us safe.

Ultimately, vaccines will allow us to break free from Covid-19. The rollout in the UK inspires hope and allows us to look ahead to a future where we can travel freely again.

As of January 20, more than 4.6 million people have received their first dose of a Covid-19 vaccination in the UK. This is a formidable effort, by the NHS, the military, and all the volunteers who are making it happen.

The UK has pledged £1.3 billion to support countries' efforts to test and immunise their populations. 'The development and distribution of vaccines is a global effort, and a reminder that fighting this virus requires that we all work together'

The UK will play a leading role driving forward international cooperation across the board in 2021.

We are looking forward to hosting the Climate Summit – COP26 – in Glasgow in November, where we will build on the progress made in Paris five years ago.

The UK has set a high bar, with our commitment to reduce emissions by at least 68% by 2030.

In my previous article, I mentioned that the Prince of Wales and the Prime Minister spoke on the fifth anniversary of the Paris agreement, encouraging global action.

COP26 will be the largest summit the UK has ever hosted, bringing together representatives from nearly 200 countries, including world leaders, experts and campaigners.

The UK will also use our presidency of the G7 this year, including the summit in June, to ask leaders of the world's leading democracies to seize the opportunity to "build back better" from coronavirus, and unite to make the future fairer, greener, and more prosperous.

The summit will take place in Carbis Bay in Cornwall. Hopefully, the waters will be as warm and tempting as those off Biarritz, site of the G7 summit in 2019.



Summer by the sea feels a long way off right now, particularly after the recent snow in Paris. But although we may still be in the middle of winter, brighter days are on the horizon. The snow served, too, as a reminder of the beauty of this wonderful city and country.

Snow falling in the French capital

Applying for Residency in France and Available Support

As you know, if you were legally resident in France before 1 January 2021, you must apply online for the new residency permit before 1 July 2021, in line with the Withdrawal Agreement. You need to have your new residency permit before 1 October 2021.

Most UK nationals who are resident in France will be able to complete the simple online residence application by themselves. But those who need help can get support from organisations funded by the UK Nationals Support Fund (UKNSF). There are four of these in France, and we are profiling a different one each month. You can find contact details for all of them at the end of this newsletter.

This month, we feature the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). We spoke to some of those working for the IOM, who are delivering this service, to find out what it's all about.

Would you like to introduce yourselves?

Hi, we're Elizabeth, and Loïca from IOM France, the St Briec office. We've been helping UK nationals living in Brittany, Normandy, Ile-de-France, Pays de la Loire and Hauts-de-France register for residency since May 2020.



I, Elizabeth, have a background in Immigration and Consular work

I, Loïca, have a Masters in EU and International law with a background in migration. We have really enjoyed being able to help UK nationals register for residency in France, providing reassurance that their residency rights are secure here for the future.



How many people have you been able to help so far?



We've seen a really positive uptake with over 7,000 people accessing our information about the UKNSF since March 2020. We have received enquiries from over 600 people, by both telephone and email, which has resulted in giving further support to more than half of them. We are able to answer most questions quite simply, often by signposting them to information that is already available online, or guiding people through the process over the phone. Where necessary, we provide support that is more tailored to individuals' needs, especially for those who are facing particular challenges in submitting their applications.

What sort of people have you been helping?

All sorts of people have contacted us, and there are some specific reasons why people might have difficulties with the application process. For instance, we have helped elderly couples, those with dementia or other illnesses, those who do not have IT equipment or do not speak French, and those who live in isolated places without family or friends to help them. We have also provided guidance on the required supporting documents.

For those without IT equipment, we have been able to welcome them in our offices or met them in a maison de services au public. There should always be a way for us to help you if you need support!

What has surprised you most about the experience and the process overall?

We have been really pleased that for most people the application system is straight-forward to navigate, and that we can help guide people if they need assistance.

It's also been great the level of support we have had from local French authorities and communities, such as maison de services au public, where we can use their facilities to provide more direct support to particularly vulnerable UK nationals.

What would be your key message to anyone who has not yet applied for their Withdrawal Agreement Residency Permit?

Start as soon as you can, it is probably easier than you imagine but give yourself time. It is really important that you do not miss the deadline of the end of June this year! If you have started the process but are having problems, do get in touch with us. We also hold outreach events to answer your questions and are planning our next one for the Vendee in February! And one final quick tip from us: if you are getting stuck on the final page of the online application when it asks you to do a simple maths equation as anti-spam check, make sure you enter the answer in numeric rather than word form!

Next Month: SSAFA

British Embassy Outreach so far this Year

This year, we have already held three Facebook Q&A Sessions and one Online Outreach Live event - thank you to everyone who joined us! We were particularly pleased to have officials from the French Health Ministry and the French Interior Ministry answering questions direct from over 300 Brits at our Online Outreach last week. Our next Online Outreach will take place on 24 February, and our Facebook Q&A sessions take in questions every Monday evening for a personal answer by the following Thursday - except in the week of the Online Outreach. Overall this month, we have answered over 400 questions. Five of the most popular are below, along with trouble shooting ideas if you found it difficult to log in on the night.

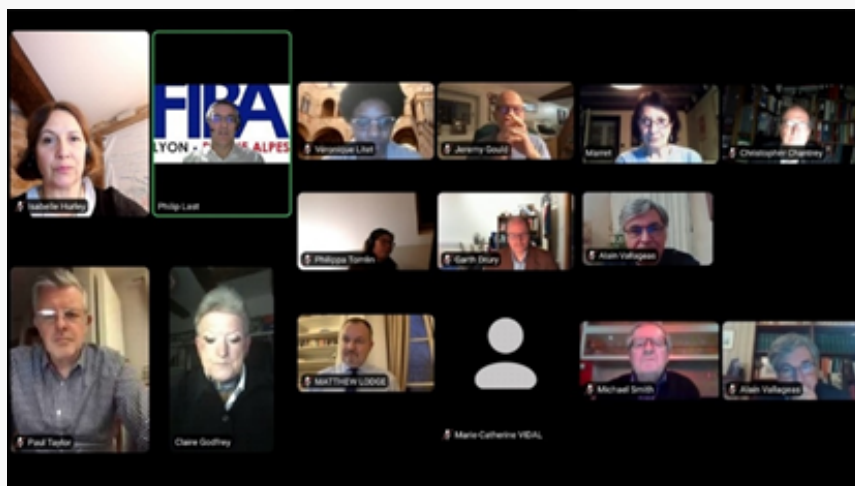
The next Online outreach event is due 24 February 6pm.

You can read more about what it looks like to attend an event on Microsoft Teams via this link: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/attend-a-live-event-in-teams-a1c7b989-ebb1-4479-b750-c86c9bc98d84>

If you cannot connect or have other issues, you can check whether your system or platform supports Teams Live events via this [link](#). If you don't seem to be able to register from Eventbrite, please reply to your confirmation email and you will be directed to our support team.

If you have asked us a question on Facebook and not had an answer, do please check when you posted it. We regret that we are only able to answer questions asked between 1800 - 2000 on Mondays when we are running a Q&A session. If you have missed this window, please wait until the next event - or, if it is urgent, remember that you can send in your question 24/7 via our webform: <http://www.gov.uk/contact-consulate-paris>.

The Embassy was also hosted by FIBA in Lyon for a round-table on The new relationship between France and the UK - building for the future. If your organisation would like to host a similar event, please contact us.



HOW DOES THE WITHDRAWAL AGREEMENT AFFECT... CHILDREN

In each edition of Voisin Voices, we will look at how the Withdrawal Agreement affects certain groups of UK nationals who fall within its scope. To begin, we are going to focus on children.

Children in Scope of the Withdrawal Agreement

Eligibility and scope

All UK nationals who were lawfully resident in France before 1 January 2021 are able to stay. If you are covered by the Withdrawal Agreement, so are your children. This applies if you have, or legally adopt, children in the future, and you have custody of them, no matter where or when they are born.

The Withdrawal Agreement covers 'extended' family members too. Therefore, step-children and step-parents may be covered in some circumstances. For example: where an extended family member is dependent on the UK national who is in scope; if a UK national in scope of the Withdrawal Agreement is dependent upon an extended family member, then they would be covered; and step-parents and step-children may fall under the 'durable relationship' point, subject to assessments being made.

Having children join you in France:

If, for whatever reason, your close family members (including children) were not living with you before 1 January 2021, they can still join you in France in the future on the basis of current EU rules. The definition of a close family member includes: spouses, registered partners, unmarried partners, children under the age of 21, grandchildren and dependent children and parents and grandparents.

Residency Permits

All UK nationals who were resident in France before 1 January 2021 must apply for a residency permit before 1 July 2021. However, children under the age of 18 are not required to hold a residence permit. A national identity document (passport) is sufficient. They will be able to apply for their Withdrawal Agreement residence permit when they reach 18. For young adults, the application for a residence permit must be submitted in their 18th year and no later than their 19th birthday. Therefore, UK nationals who will reach the age of 18 years before 1 October 2021 are advised to apply online for the residence permit by the July deadline.

See [here for residency](#) information for children studying abroad.

Travel and Passports

Children must have a valid passport to enter France, and a valid passport with at least 6 months before expiry to travel to most other European countries. You can find further details here, including how to check if a passport is valid and apply for a new one if needed:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-france#passports-and-travel>

Children can also obtain a travel document, called a "Document de Circulation pour Etranger Mineur" (DCEM) in French, if travelling in the EU, although this is not compulsory, and does not replace a passport. See more here: <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F2718>

Benefits

In some instances, you may be eligible to continue receiving UK child benefit when living in France. Please check this website to see if this affects you: <https://www.gov.uk/child-benefit-abroad>

To apply for child allowance, family income support, single-parent allowance or housing allowance in France, contact the CAF (Caisse d'Allocations Familiales) (in French) if you need help applying, request an appointment with the social worker at your local town hall (mairie).

Healthcare

Children can access free healthcare through their parents' or guardians' health insurance. This includes free dental check-ups until the age of 18. You can find full details of accessing healthcare in France here: <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F16620?lang=en>

Registering Births

If your child is born in France, you will need to register the birth locally. You can still apply for a UK passport for your child even if you do not register their birth in the UK. Find further details here: <https://www.gov.uk/register-a-birth>

Access to Higher Education in the UK

UK nationals continue to be eligible for home fee status (the fee rate that students who live in the UK are charged), and to be able to access Student Finance or Further Education 19+ funding, if:

- you were living in the EU before 1 January 2021, and you lived in the EU, EEA, EFTA countries, Switzerland, the UK and Gibraltar for at least the 3 years before starting a course in the UK
- you have lived continuously in the EU, EEA, EFTA States, Switzerland, the UK and Gibraltar between 31 December 2020 and the start of your course, and
- the course starts before 1 January 2028

You do not need to have lived in the UK to access this offer. Support from Student Finance will continue to be subject to meeting the eligibility criteria. Your children will also be eligible for support on the same terms, even if they are not themselves UK nationals, as long as both you and your children meet these conditions.

Read the guidance on support for [Higher and Further Education](#) in England.

Read the guidance for studying in [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#).

Please see full guidance here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-nationals-in-the-eea-and-switzerland-access-to-higher-education-and-19-further-education>

For further guidance on all topics, please see our Living in France Guide: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-france>

Some Frequently Asked Questions

Here are five questions that we have been asked regularly over the last month:

Q1: If I applied for my residence permit several weeks ago and haven't heard from the Prefecture, should I chase?

Answer: The Ministry of the Interior have assured us that the Prefectures are working through the applications for Withdrawal Agreement Residence Permits as fast as they can. Like all of us, however, they are contending with the impact of Covid on their operations. Each Prefecture is also different, with bigger or smaller teams, and greater or fewer numbers of permits to process. You do not need your residence permit until 1 October 2021. Asking for updates risks slowing your Prefecture down - they will contact you direct if they require more information.

Q2: What do the new travel restrictions mean in practice?

Answer: Travel into France is restricted, particularly for those travelling to or from countries outside the EU and Switzerland. You will always find the latest information, including links to the forms you will need to complete, on our Travel Advice <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/france>. If you are in need of Consular assistance, you can call us at any time on +33(0)1 44 51 31 00 or complete our web form here: <http://www.gov.uk/contact-consulate-paris> with more details of your situation.

Q3: Our children have French passports is it possible for them to also have a British one? If so how do we find details of how to apply?

Answer: You can find the answers to questions on British nationality here: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-citizenship-british-parent>. You will have to enter your children's details as you work through the form, which will then give you the answers you need. To apply for a passport, check this link, which will also give you details of documents that you need: <https://www.gov.uk/overseas-passports>

If you have specific questions or difficulties, then do get in touch by clicking this link and filling in the fields required <http://www.gov.uk/contact-consulate-paris>.

Q4: Do you have any idea of when we will hear about exchanging our driving licences. I know we have until the end of the year.

Answer: The French authorities are not currently accepting new applications to exchange UK licences while a bilateral agreement is being negotiated. We will update the Living in France Guide once we have any more information on the exchange process. In the meantime, valid UK licences continue to be recognised in France. You might also find this post useful <https://www.facebook.com/ukinfrance/posts/4081050525256255>.

Q5: I am being asked to show my residence permit to French authorities, and to my employer, even though it's not compulsory until 1 October. Can I continue to work while my residency application is being processed?

Answer: Yes, you can continue to work, and the French legislation confirms this – Chapter IV, article 7 of the decree says: “They must be in possession of this residence permit as of October 1st 2021. Before this date and if they reside in France, the British nationals mentioned in paragraphs 1° to 4° of article 3 enjoy the right of residence without holding a residence permit, together with the right to pursue an occupational activity and to exercise the resulting social rights.” You can share the legislation with the authority/employer that is asking. If they still have doubts, you can direct them to the Interior Ministry or to the British Embassy. This “circulaire” explains the French legislation in slightly easier language, which may also be helpful.

Healthcare for UK Residents Visiting France on a Temporary Stay

Under our new agreement with the EU, UK residents' right to emergency and medically necessary healthcare will continue when travelling in the EU on a temporary visit. This includes medically necessary treatment for a pre-existing or chronic condition where treatment started in the UK.

Current European Health Insurance Cards (EHIC) are valid as long as they are in date and can still be used on trips to the EU. EU member state EHICs will continue to be accepted by the NHS in the UK- in France the EHIC is known as a CEAM (Carte Europeenne d'Assurance Maladie).

If you are resident in the UK, you will need to apply for a new Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) only when your current EHIC expires. Both cards will offer equivalent protection for emergency and medically necessary healthcare needs when in the EU on a temporary stay, which is a period during which you are staying in a place other than the one where you usually live. This includes holiday, study and business travel.

The new GHIC card is free to obtain from the official GHIC website (<http://www.nhs.uk/GHIC>). If you need one, you should apply at least 2 weeks before you plan to travel to ensure the card arrives on time.


The government always advises that when travelling overseas, whether to the EU or elsewhere in the world, you take out comprehensive travel insurance. EHICs and GHICs do not cover everything. See more: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-insurance>.

If you are travelling but do not have your card with you, you can get a Provisional Replacement Certificate (PRC) to prove your entitlement to medically necessary healthcare. Full details on how to apply for a PRC are available near the bottom of this page: <https://www.nhs.uk/.../apply-for-a-free-uk-global-health.../>.

UK National's resident in France must register for healthcare, and in addition, you can sign up for top-up health insurance. You can find all the information you need if you are a resident in France here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-france...>

You can find full details of the new GHIC here: <https://www.gov.uk/.../uk-launches-global-health...>

And there is further guidance on healthcare when travelling in the EU here: <https://www.gov.uk/.../uk-residents-visiting-the-eueea...>



ENTITLED TO A FRENCH-ISSUED EHIC?

YOUR EHIC REMAINS VALID FOR USE IN THE UK

The EHIC is not an alternative to travel insurance, so make sure you travel with both.

FIND OUT MORE AT [GOV.UK/LIVINGIN\(COUNTRY\)](https://www.gov.uk/livingin(country))

Check
Change
Go

USEFUL LINKS TO ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE OR SUPPORT:

Please visit the webpages below for more information. The links and contact details can signpost you in the right direction and also connect you to those who can provide support or offer help with technical matters if you need it.

Key websites:

- Living in France Guide: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-france>
- France Travel Advice: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/france>
- Sign up to the Business Newsflash: bit.ly/WeeklyNewsflash
- French government website: www.brexit.gouv

If you use social media, do also consider following us on Facebook @ukinfrance and on Twitter @BritishinFrance.

UK NATIONALS SUPPORT FUND

In France, [four British Government funded organisations](#) can help UK nationals secure their residency rights. They provide practical support to individuals finding it harder to complete applications, including pensioners, disabled people, those living in remote areas or who have mobility difficulties, and those who face language barriers or barriers in accessing technology.

[IOM - The International Organisation for Migration \(Brittany, Normandy, Ile de France, Hauts-de-France, and Pays de la Loire\)](#)

Visit the [IOM website](#)

Email: UKnationalsFR@iom.int

Hotline: 08 09 54 98 32 available during the following hours:

Mon - Tues 2pm to 4pm and Wed - Thurs 10.30am to 12.30pm

[FBN - The Franco-British Network \(Dordogne, Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes\)](#)

Visit the [FBN website](#)

Email: [The Franco-British Network](#)

Hotline: 05 19 88 01 09 available during the following hours:

Mon, Tues and Wed, 9am to 1pm; Thurs and Fri 1pm to 5pm

[Church of England - Diocese in Europe \(Nouvelle Aquitaine, Occitanie, Grand Est, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, Centre-Val de Loire, Corsica\)](#)

Visit the [Diocese in Europe Residency Support Project website](#)

Hotline: 05 32 80 00 05 available during the following hours:

Mon - Fri 9:30am to 12:00pm and 1:30pm to 4pm;

Tues 5.30pm to 8pm; Sat: 9:30am to 12:00pm

[SSAFA, The Armed Forces Charity \(veterans across France\)](#)

Visit the [SSAFA website](#)

Email: ukvie.support@ssafa.org.uk

Hotline: 08 05 11 96 17