



British Embassy
Brussels

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CITIZENS' RIGHTS NEWSLETTER

A monthly update for UK nationals resident in Belgium under the Withdrawal Agreement

This month, we are looking at healthcare rights under the Withdrawal Agreement for different groups of UK nationals. You can find previous editions of our newsletter [here](#).



SETTLED IN BELGIUM?

MAKE SURE YOU'RE
REGISTERED FOR
HEALTHCARE



IT'S TIME TO TAKE ACTION. FIND OUT MORE
AT GOV.UK/LIVING IN BELGIUM



What does the Withdrawal Agreement say about healthcare?

UK nationals who were residing and/or working in Belgium before 1 January 2021 continue to have life-long healthcare rights provided they remain within scope of the Withdrawal Agreement (WA). This means existing healthcare arrangements will not change for these UK nationals, for as long as they live in Belgium. These rights under the Withdrawal Agreement are not affected by the new Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) which was agreed on 24 December 2020.

However, all UK nationals must apply for the new residence card 'M' by 31 December 2021 to secure their rights under the WA. More information on the Office for Foreigners' website [here](#).

Does my health cover continue if I work in Belgium?

Yes! If you were resident in Belgium before 1 January 2021, you make social security contributions to the Belgian system and you are already registered for healthcare with a mutuelle/ziekenfonds, you do not need to do anything. Your rights to access healthcare remain the same as before the end of the transition period for as long as you remain resident in Belgium. Find out more on our [Healthcare in Belgium page](#).

What about trips to the UK or around the EU?

If you make social security contributions in Belgium, then you should be entitled to a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) issued by Belgium. All EU-issued EHICs remain valid for necessary care when visiting the UK and other EU Member States. We still recommend taking out comprehensive [travel insurance](#), including health cover, when travelling as an EHIC does not cover everything. For more information on getting a Belgian EHIC, get in touch with your mutuelle/ziekenfonds.

Reciprocal Healthcare for UK State Pensioners in Belgium before 1 January 2021

What are my rights? UK nationals who retired in Belgium before 1 January 2021 (including UK state pensioners who access healthcare via a UK S1 form) continue to have life-long reciprocal healthcare rights under the WA for as long as they live in Belgium. Existing healthcare arrangements for these UK state pensioners do not change.

What about trips back to the UK? If you were resident in Belgium before 1 January 2021, you can still access the NHS in England with a copy of your S1 form. More details [here](#). Different arrangements exist for Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland.

What if I haven't yet started drawing my pension? UK nationals covered under the WA who are not yet at state pension age will have the right to apply for a UK S1 form once they start drawing their UK state pension. At that point, they will also be entitled to a UK-issued EHIC/GHIC valid for travel across the EU. See below for information on GHICs.

For more information on S1 forms, click [here](#).

Remember! If any of your personal circumstances change, including a new address, remember to inform the International Pension Centre via telephone or post. Click [here](#) for contact information.

Reciprocal Healthcare for Frontier Workers in Belgium before 1 January 2021

What are my rights? If you were a frontier worker before 1 January 2021, your situation is also **protected** under the WA. This means your healthcare arrangements will be broadly the same as they were before the UK left the EU. You will continue to have comprehensive healthcare cover both where you work and where you live, and benefit from equal treatment.

What steps do I need to take? You should contact the social security authorities in the country where you work to find out if you are eligible for an [S1 form](#). In terms of securing your working pattern, check out our [video for frontier workers](#) in Belgium and neighbouring countries.

Reciprocal Healthcare for Posted Workers in Belgium

What are my rights? If you were posted to Belgium before 1 January 2021, you can continue your posting and continue benefitting from your existing healthcare arrangements.

What steps do I need to take? If you meet the above requirement, current S1 forms remain valid and you can apply to renew it through [HMRC](#) should it expire during your posting. You can also apply for a GHIC by contacting [NHS Business Services Authority](#).

Friends and Family visiting you from the UK (GHIC/EHIC)

Can they still use their UK-issued EHICs in Belgium? It has been agreed that people can continue to use their current UK-issued EHIC to access necessary healthcare while on a short stay in the EU until they expire (no need to take any action until then). However, the UK-issued EHIC will be replaced with a new UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). This will operate like the current UK scheme. So if your friends and family don't have an existing EHIC or they need a new one, they will most likely be issued with a GHIC.

What if they forget their EHIC/GHIC at home or they didn't notice it was expired? If they forget their EHIC/GHIC or it has expired and they need treatment while visiting, they are still covered and should contact the [NHS Business Service Authority](#) to request a Provisional Replacement Certificate. More on EHICs/GHICs [here](#).

February Facebook Q&A - Top Questions

Residency

The Belgian authorities are still experiencing a delay in the production of the new M residence cards. However, you can still submit your application at your Commune/Gemeente, and must do so before the end of 2021. Once you apply, you will receive a certificate of application (annexe 56). You can also continue to use your existing residence card until the new one is ready, so do not hand it back to your local municipality when you submit your application.

Some UK nationals are being told by their Commune/Gemeente to apply for an F card if, for example, they have family with an EU nationality. If you were legally resident in Belgium before 1 January 2021, you are entitled to apply for the new M residence card which is direct proof of your rights as a UK national in scope of the Withdrawal Agreement. Official guidance from the Belgian Office for Foreigners [here](#).

If you would like to see all the questions received at this month's Facebook Q&A, please click [here](#) (no Facebook account needed).

Upcoming Embassy Events

3 March 2021 from 17:00 to 19:00
Q&A Session on British Embassy [Brussels Facebook Page](#)

Tell a Friend

If you know any UK nationals living in Belgium who would benefit from receiving these newsletters, please do not hesitate to spread the word! They can sign up to receive the newsletter by [sending a blank email using this link](#).

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