

MARCH 2021



British Embassy
Paris

VOISINS VOICES

A BRITISH EMBASSY PARIS NEWSLETTER

WELCOME

Welcome to the March edition of Voisins Voices! This month, we look at the rules affecting cross-border workers and the impact of covid-19 restrictions on travel. As always, our online Living in France Guide 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.

British Ambassador to France: Early signs of brighter days

Each month the British Ambassador to France, Ed Llewellyn, shares an insight into his role through The Connexion. Here is his latest:



'Brighter times are ahead' writes British Ambassador to France Ed Llewellyn, and reminds us to see the 'colour in these sometimes gloomy days'

By Ed Llewellyn

In last month's column, I included some photos I took of Paris in the snow, and I hope you will indulge me another I took of the city, once again in a cold snap.



British Embassy in the snow

The days are growing longer, if not necessarily warmer, reminding us that it has been almost a year since our lives in France, the UK, and around the world were changed by the pandemic. To help prevent the spread of new variants of the Covid virus, both the UK and France have introduced new restrictions and are keeping measures under constant review. To keep up to date with the latest travel advice, visit [Foreign Travel Advice for France](#).

Due to the duration of the pandemic, we have now celebrated almost every holiday in the calendar in a novel way, usually online. Most recently, the Embassy ran a virtual Burns Night. Although I missed the chance to host a dinner and ceilidh in person, I was still able to don my kilt in honour of the Scottish side of my family.



Celebrating Burns Night in January 2021

I enjoyed hearing Scottish musicians play and my colleagues recite the odes to the haggis and more. Please enjoy the clips on our social media channels: <https://fb.watch/3-7warAlZp/>

I started March in the best possible way with my colleagues from the Welsh government celebrating St David's Day. This included a short lesson in how to pronounce my surname properly!

<https://twitter.com/EdLlewellynFCDO/status/1366454604960063492?s=20>

March will also mark International Women's Day on the 8th. We will host a webinar exploring the links between gender equality and protecting the environment. Anne-Marie Trevelyan, International Champion for COP26, will open the discussion and invite a range of other influential women, both British and French, to share their perspectives. We welcome you to register and join in, through updates on our social media or via this link

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/women-for-climate-les-femmes-actrices-du-changement-tickets-141662527433>

The Prime Minister hosted an important virtual meeting of his fellow G7 leaders in February.

This will be part of a sequence of meetings in the run-up to the annual G7 summit in June, which the UK will be hosting in Cornwall. In this initial meeting, which was also President Biden's first major multilateral engagement, the Prime Minister lead a discussion on how the world can build back better from coronavirus.

I was delighted to hear that over 100,000 British citizens and their families have already applied for a residency permit under the Withdrawal Agreement in France. On the other side of the Channel, more than five million EU citizens have applied to the EU Settlement Scheme in the UK. I would encourage anyone who is eligible and has not yet done so to start the process as soon as possible.

I know the speed of processing applications may not always be as fast we would like it to be, but Prefectures continue to work as fast as they can.

I would like to conclude with another photo, of the first flowers poking their heads above ground in the Residence garden: a reminder of brighter times ahead, and the importance of finding colour in these sometimes gloomy days.



Working across the border: special edition

Frontier workers

Frontier workers are defined as EU citizens or UK nationals who regularly undertake economic activity in one or more Member States in which they do not reside, irrespective of whether they also work in the state of residence. Frontier workers may be employed or self-employed. This will often look like a commuter pattern, returning each day or at least once a week to the frontier zone of a neighbouring country in which they reside. This pattern is protected under the Withdrawal Agreement if it existed before 1 January 2021. [See more here](#).

Regularising your work pattern and residency status

If you were a frontier worker before 1 January 2021, you are protected by the Withdrawal Agreement, but will likely need to apply for a permit in the country where you work to ensure you can continue working in this way. For example:

If you live in the UK or in an EU or EFTA country and were regularly commuting to work in France before 1 January 2021 you need a “frontier worker permit” in France. You must apply for this permit from the Prefecture where you work before 1 July 2021. See more here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-france#working-and-studying-in-france>. You will need a valid passport, a recent photograph; a certificate of employment or proof of self-employed activity on French territory. For more information, speak to the Prefecture. Make sure you also check the residency requirements on the [Living in Guides](#) in the EU/EFTA country where you live.

If you live in France and were regularly commuting to work in another EU or EFTA country before 1 January 2021, you may need a permit to show you are a frontier worker. Check out this video to find out more <https://twitter.com/BritishinFrance/status>. You must also apply for a Withdrawal Agreement residency permit in France. You can find out how to apply for French residency here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-france#visas-and-residency>.

If you live in France and work in the UK: you can continue to visit and work in the UK by virtue of your British passport. In this instance, you will not be considered as a frontier worker under the Withdrawal Agreement, although you must apply for a Withdrawal Agreement residency permit in France.

Getting appropriate healthcare

If you are a frontier worker, reciprocal healthcare arrangements remain 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.

However, you need to ensure you have the correct healthcare arrangements in place:

If you live in one EU or EFTA country and travel to work in another, you should contact the country where you work to find out if you are eligible for an S1 form. To find out more, contact your local Caisse Primaire Assurance Maladie (CPAM) in France. You can find EU-wide information here and France-specific information here and here.

If you live in France and work in the UK: Contact HMRC National Insurance enquiries to see if you are eligible for an S1 form. If you moved to France before 1 January 2021, you'll also be eligible for a UK-issued EHIC for emergency treatment in other EU Member States and be able to access the NHS in England with a copy of your S1. More on accessing the NHS during trips to the UK here.

Once you have an S1 form, you must register it at your local CPAM office. This will mean you and your dependants will be entitled to healthcare in France on the same basis as a French citizen. Find more information here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-in-france-including-martinique-and-guada>.

COVID-19 restrictions

We know that Covid-19 restrictions mean it may not always be possible to continue working as before, and regret that we cannot advise on individual cases. If you are concerned that a change in your situation means that the social security rules of another country apply to you, please contact HMRC.

You do not need to contact HMRC if your circumstances have not changed – you will continue paying social security contributions (National Insurance contributions in the UK) as before. You do need to contact HMRC if your circumstances have changed, for example you have taken up a new job outside the UK or your country of residence has changed.

If you have an A1 certificate which has expired, you or your employer should contact HMRC if you require a renewal - for example if you have been sent by your employer to work temporarily outside the UK and you need to extend your stay. HMRC will assess your eligibility and make a decision on whether the validity of the A1 certificate can be extended.

Please follow the guidance below if you are applying for a new A1 certificate. An A1 certificate shows that you continue paying social security contributions (National Insurance contributions in the UK) in the country where you normally work while temporarily working in another country, either in the UK, the EEA or Switzerland.

- If you are working temporarily outside the UK, you should follow the HMRC guidance on National Insurance for workers from the UK working in the EEA or Switzerland.
- If you are working temporarily in the UK, you should follow the HMRC guidance on social security contributions for workers coming to the UK from the EEA or Switzerland.

For the latest information on quarantine and testing arrangements at the border, see France Travel Advice: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/france>.

Taxation and Benefits

The UK has a double taxation agreement with France to ensure you do not pay tax on the same income in both countries. Ask the relevant tax authority your questions about double taxation relief.

Existing double taxation arrangements for UK nationals living in France have not changed.

You can find further information here, but you should get professional advice on paying tax in France if necessary: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-france#money-and-tax>

Applying for Residency in France

In the last couple of months, Embassy teams have spoken to 13 Prefectures to get and give feedback on the residency application process, as well as maintaining regular contact with French Interior Ministry. Prefectures are working through applications they receive and are aiming to deliver all WA residency permits by 1 October. Help them by applying sooner rather than later and avoid asking for updates if possible as this only slows them down.

In the meantime, your rights are protected under the Withdrawal Agreement – this includes the right to live in France without holding a residence permit, the right to pursue an occupational activity and to exercise the resulting social rights (see Chapter IV, article 7 of French [decree](#)). Decree translation available [here](#).

[Apply now](#) for a Withdrawal Agreement Residency Permit, even if you already have a carte de séjour. All UK nationals need to have this new permit, unless they have a second EU nationality.

There are a number of organisations dedicated to helping British nationals living in France in applying for a Withdrawal Agreement residency permit. Each month, we profile one of these organisations to highlight their great work and how they might be able to help you, or someone you know.

SSAFA Armed Forces Q&A for British Embassy, Paris Communications

Would you like to introduce yourselves?

SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, exists to help serving personnel (regulars and reserves), veterans and their families, whilst supporting their independence and dignity. We are also one of the partner organisations assisting predominantly at-risk UK nationals with their residency applications in France. We have set up an in-house team at SSAFA to provide this much-needed support. The team is comprised of local caseworkers based in France, assisted by our project management and marketing teams in the UK. Despite the COVID-19 restrictions, we have continued to provide assistance, both online and via telephone. This has proved really rewarding for all involved, especially helping those more at-risk than ever during the pandemic.

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

To date, 7,529 people have contacted us to find out about the support we offer, including via our website. We have supported 34 different individuals since the French portal went live in October 2020. The at-risk people we are helping include those in care homes, living in rural areas with no access to computers or the internet, as well as those suffering with mental health problems, including PTSD. We ensure they receive the practical help they require via our team of trained caseworkers, who often recognise other areas where people may need further assistance from SSAFA.

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

COVID-19 has meant we, as a charity, have had to think of new ways to contact those who need our help. They are often the hardest to reach. This is where the Armed Forces family has been invaluable. We have continually used our military networks, putting stories and advertising in military publications, using social media to push our message out – as well as asking both veterans and those still serving personnel to spread the word. There has been a real camaraderie between all those involved in this project, which has meant that all have helped in coming up with new ways of doing things. We've ran virtual events and all involved are really pushing hard to ensure people are informed and then supported when they come forward for help.

The way in which SSAFA volunteers have been able to adapt to supporting clients remotely has been a great success, by using phone, email or online chat. They also have access to PPE should they need to visit a client's home or deliver batches of applications to the appropriate authorities.

What would be your key message to anyone who has not yet applied for their WARP?

We are now urging people to make sure they have all the correct paperwork in place as soon as possible. All UK nationals living in France need to apply for the new residency permit before 1 July 2021, even if they already have a Carte de Séjour. We encourage you to apply as soon as possible. The process, although usually quite simple, can take time.

We recommend the following:

- Gather together all your paperwork to prove the time you have spent in France
- Ensure you and your family all have valid passports, with at least 6 months left before their expiry date
- Access the portal and register yourself, and if you have any problems, please contact telephone SSAFA either in France on 0805 1196 or in the UK on 0800 193 0474.

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And if you know a member of the UK Armed Forces, a veteran or a family member who might be in need of our help in any way, please ask them to get in touch and visit www.ssafa.org.uk/get-help



□ Our next two online events for British citizens on Microsoft Teams are now open for registration:

□ Thursday 18 March from 6PM to 7.30PM: register now ➔ <http://bit.ly/OnlineOutreach1803>

□ Tuesday 13 April from 6PM to 7.30PM: register now ➔ <http://bit.ly/OnlineOutreach1304>

The events will begin with an introduction and then the floor will open for questions. You can read more about what it looks like to attend an event on Microsoft Teams here ➔ <https://support.microsoft.com/.../attend-a-live-event-in-team....>

We also run a Facebook Q&A on Monday nights in the weeks in which we do not have an outreach event.

We look forward to seeing you there!

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