

APRIL 2021



British Embassy  
Paris

# VOISINS VOICES

A BRITISH EMBASSY PARIS NEWSLETTER

## WELCOME

Welcome to the April edition of Voisins Voices! In this edition, we look at the changes to Stamp Duty, the impact of the Withdrawal Agreement on Students, and how the Franco-British Network is helping UK Nationals apply for residency in France. 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.

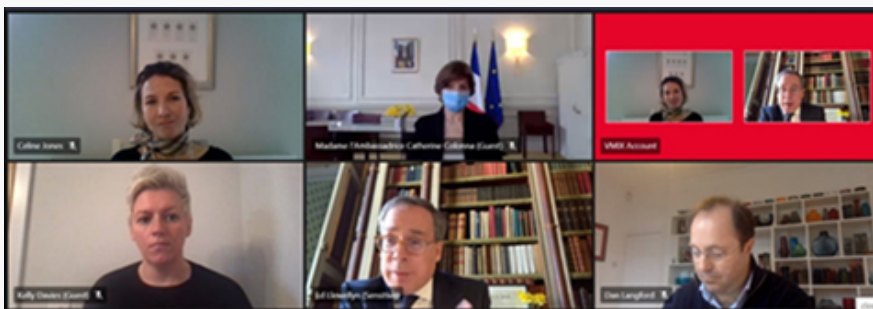
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## British Ambassador to France: April Article for Connexion France

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

### By Ed Llewellyn

March opened with our online celebration of St David's Day. It was my huge pleasure to discuss the cultural and economic links between France and Wales with France's Ambassador to the UK, Catherine Colonna. We saw and heard first-hand the talent of Rhydian Jenkins, rugby player and remarkable opera singer.



Given my family's Welsh heritage and the fact my grandfather spoke Welsh as his first language, I'm sad to say I don't speak much myself. In the run up to St David's Day, my colleague Elin taught me a little more about the meaning behind my surname, as well as how to say the beautiful (but long!)

Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch. You can find the videos of my lessons on my Twitter account. I challenge you to try!



And then St Patrick's Day was an opportunity to whet people's appetite to visit stunning Northern Ireland as soon as we are all allowed to travel again! You can see more of how we celebrated all these events on the Embassy's social media channels.



We work closely with France on all the great global challenges. Chief of these, of course, is climate change. The UK hosts the COP26 UN climate conference in Glasgow this November, so I was delighted to welcome President-designate Alok Sharma to Paris this month. He met many of the key French players, from Government Ministers to energy experts to those who made the Paris Agreement such a landmark moment back in 2016.

You can read his op-ed with the President of COP21 in Paris, Lauren Fabius, [in Le Monde](#).



Image: Alok Sharma meeting Laurence Tubiana, former French Climate Change Ambassador and Special Representative for COP21, and key architect of the Paris Agreement.

International Women's Day saw us return online. Some terrific speakers, including Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Minister of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy as well as International Champion for COP26, Journalist Patricia Loison, and Dr Rhian-Mari Thomas, Chief Executive of the Green Finance Institute, helped us look at the role that women leaders can play in combating climate change. My favourite take-away? "Let's be good ancestors for future generations," Inès Leonarduzzi, CEO of Digital for the Planet and Franco-British Young Leader. We also launched a chain on Twitter, sharing the names and achievements of women who have inspired us - and I was delighted to see that it reached all the way to Mexico!

Of course, International Women's Day is also about promoting gender equality. The horrific death of Sarah Everard while walking home in Clapham, London, was a stark reminder of the threat facing women and how we still need to do more to ensure their safety. The UK will continue to campaign globally for a world in which women and girls can prosper, with initiatives to tackle violence against women & girls.

Now, it wouldn't be a monthly column if I didn't mention applying for residency in France under the Withdrawal Agreement. There are just over three months left before the deadline. If you haven't yet applied, now is the time to do so. My team are in regular touch with the Ministry of the Interior and Préfectures up and down the country. We know from these conversations that they are taking a flexible approach and looking to grant residency wherever possible. Even if you don't yet have all your documents, apply, explain your situation in the comments box of your application, knowing you can add documents later if necessary. You can use your confirmation email for proof of residence, if requested by employers or local authorities.



I know that some of you are worried about when you'll get your Préfecture appointment or card. The Préfectures are working as fast as they can within COVID restrictions and still aim to issue all permits by 1 October 2021. You can help them by applying sooner rather than later and responding as soon as you are contacted, including if you can't make an appointment. While you may be tempted to ask them for updates, doing so actually slows them down. And remember that if you need help with your application, the UK Nationals' Support Fund organisations are there to help you. You can find out more about them in our Living in France Guide or throughout this monthly newsletter.

## Residency adverts

Did you spot one of our adverts encouraging UK nationals in France to apply for their residency permits? This picture was sent to us from sunny Bordeaux!

Don't forget, if you are a UK national who was living in France before 1 January 2021, you can apply for a Withdrawal Agreement Residency Permit here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-france#visas-and-residency>. More than 125 000 applications have been made for a Withdrawal Agreement Residency Permit – make yours now!



# France Travel Restrictions Update

Restrictions have been eased on travel into France from some countries outside of the European space, including the UK. When travelling between France and the United Kingdom, or between France and Australia, Israel, Japan, New Zealand or South Korea, it is no longer necessary to provide a reason for essential travel. However, international travel is still heavily restricted – please see details of remaining requirements below.

From 27 March, 19 French Departements will be in lockdown: Aisne, Alpes-Maritimes, Aube, Essonne, Eure, Hauts-de-Seine, Nièvre, Nord, Oise, Paris, Pas-de-Calais, Rhône, Seine-et-Marne, Seine-Saint-Denis, Seine-Maritime, Somme, Val-de-Marne, Val-d'Oise, Yvelines.

In these areas, non-essential shops are closed. Travel to other regions is banned, apart from for professional purposes, or in exceptional circumstances. Exercise is permitted within a 10km radius. In these areas, attestations (or self-certificates) are required if you go further than 10km from your home. Please visit the French Interior Ministry website or use the 'Tous anti-Covid' digital app for further information.

A curfew is in force across France between 1900 and 0600. Outdoor gatherings of more than six people are not permitted and are subject to fines. You can find full details, including links to attestation forms, here [www.interieur.gouv.fr](http://www.interieur.gouv.fr)

Travellers between the UK and France still need to follow the requirements below:

## Travel to the UK from France

### Travellers must:

- Complete a passenger locator form <https://www.gov.uk/provide-journey-contact-details-before...>
- Have proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken within 3 days of departure (if 11 years or over) <https://www.gov.uk/.../coronavirus-covid-19-testing-for...>
- Quarantine for 10 days <https://www.gov.uk/.../how-to-quarantine-when-you-arrive...>
- Complete COVID-19 tests on day 2 and 8 of your quarantine <https://www.gov.uk/.../providers-of-day-2-and-day-8...>

You may be denied boarding if you do not comply with these requirements, or fined if found to have broken the rules. If you entered France from a red-listed country less than ten days before you arrive in England, then you will need to use managed quarantine (<https://www.gov.uk/uk.../self-isolating-when-you-arrive>).

## Exemptions

There are a small number of exemptions to these rules, including for hauliers and certain professions, which you can find here <https://www.gov.uk/.../coronavirus-covid-19-travellers...>

In England, you can still use the Test and Release scheme to end quarantine early, if you take a test after 5 days <https://www.gov.uk/.../coronavirus-covid-19-test-to...>

You can find specific information here if you are travelling to Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland <https://www.gov.uk/.../ending-self-isolation-early...>

### Travel to France from the UK

It remains illegal to travel internationally from the UK for leisure, and a fine of up to £5,000 for anyone trying to travel abroad from England without good reason is due to come into force next week. Note that if you do not reside in the UK and are in England temporarily, you would have a permitted reason to leave the UK. More information and other valid reasons for travel are listed here: <https://www.gov.uk/guid.../national-lockdown-stay-at-home....>

### Travellers must:

- Complete a Declaration Form for international travel <https://www.gov.uk/.../coronavirus-covid-19-declaration...>
- Have proof of a negative COVID-19 test (PCR only) taken within 72 hours of departure (if 11 years or older):
- Self-isolate for 7 days upon arrival, before taking another PCR test.
- Complete a sworn statement that they are not suffering from any symptoms associated with coronavirus, and have not been in contact with any confirmed cases in the preceding fortnight <https://uk.ambafrance.org/COVID-19-rules-for-travel-to...>

The following exemptions apply for completing the Declaration Form for international travel <https://www.gov.uk/.../coronavirus-covid-19-travellers...>

Please continue to follow our Travel Advice for France <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/france> and @BritishinFrance on Twitter.

If you are travelling from France elsewhere within the European space, please do check our Travel Advice for the relevant country in case of border restrictions and/or testing requirements <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>.

You can find general advice on travelling abroad from the UK here <https://www.gov.uk/travel-abroad>.

## Exchanging driving licences

We understand the frustration and anxiety many of you are facing because of the French authorities not currently accepting new applications to exchange UK licences. A bilateral agreement is being negotiated. We will update our Living in France Guide as soon as we have any more information on the exchange process. In the meantime, only valid UK licences are recognised in France.

You might also find this post useful <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-france...>

## Studying in France after Transition

### Living and Studying in France before 1 January 2021

If you were legally resident in France before 1 January 2021, you have the same rights to access education as French nationals. However, you must apply for a Withdrawal Agreement residency permit in France. You should continue to be eligible for broadly the same support, including fees, as French students. Further information on this can be found in our Living in France Guide: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-france#working-and-studying-in-france>

### Moving to France to study after 1 January 2021

VISAS - If you are planning to move to France and study after 1 January 2021, make sure you meet all visa requirements before you arrive. If you are staying for more than 90 days in France or the French Overseas Territories, you will need a Long Stay visa. You can find all the latest information on visas on the French Embassy's website: <https://uk.ambafrance.org/BREXIT-all-visa-related-provisions> and the online visa-checker: [https://france-visas.gouv.fr/en\\_US/web/france-visas/ai-je-besoin-d-un-visa](https://france-visas.gouv.fr/en_US/web/france-visas/ai-je-besoin-d-un-visa)

You will also need to ensure your passport is valid for travel: <https://www.gov.uk/check-a-passport-travel-europe>

FEES - University tuition fees for UK nationals coming to France to study from 1 January 2021 may be higher due to the French government's reforms to public university tuition fees. Contact the relevant Higher Education provider in France to check what fees you may have to pay.

Increased fees will not apply to:

- UK students already enrolled on a course of study when the reforms were announced (September 2019) for the duration of that course
- UK students starting a course during the transition period (i.e. before 31 December 2020), for the duration of that course

Check with your grant provider for any continued eligibility for student support and read the Campus France guidance on tuition fee reforms.

- <https://www.etudiant.gouv.fr/fr/vos-aides-financieres-1896> (in French)
- <https://www.campusfrance.org/en/tuition-fees-France>

### **Financial Support from the UK**

You may be eligible for financial support from Student Finance England if you're enrolled on a course in England and want to do part of your course in the EU. You will not be eligible if you're enrolled on a course wholly provided abroad.

Contact your relevant student funding body if you're from Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

### **Healthcare for students**

You can use an EHIC or a GHIC to get medically necessary healthcare until the end of your study period: <http://www.nhs.uk/ghic>

You can find more information about Healthcare in France here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-in-france-including-martinique-and-guadaloupe> and NHS advice on planning healthcare abroad here: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/moving-abroad/planning-your-healthcare/>

## **Applying for Residency in France and Available Support**

Apply now for a Withdrawal Agreement Residency Permit, even if you already have a carte de sejour. 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.

## **The Franco-British Network**

The Franco-British Network has been helping individuals take up residence in the Dordogne since 2013. Since April last year, they have focused their efforts on UK nationals applying for residence under the Withdrawal Agreement.



President Roger Haigh heads their team, supported by project manager Sasha, contact centre manager Tharwat, comms lead Simon, and contact centre agents Elena, Tory and Harry. All have extensive experience of living and working in the Dordogne, and are well placed to liaise with the local authorities and navigate French bureaucracy. Their motto is simple: It's never a problem, just "Ask FBN"!

The Franco-British Network offers free assistance to UK nationals living in the Dordogne, Auvergne/Rhone Alpes and Provence Alpes/Cote d'Azur, with a particular focus on those who are struggling most to complete their residence applications.

The Network seeks to help all those who ask for assistance and has developed a number of tools to help do this. These include:

- An interactive website to guide people through everything they need to know to complete an online application for a Withdrawal Agreement Residency Permit, including The [FBN Guide to Applying Online](#) and a "[signposting](#)" section to places such as The British Embassy's "[Living in France Guide](#)"
- English-language telephone and email helplines for you to ask specific questions about applying for a Withdrawal Agreement Residency Permit in France
- A newsletter and social media channels

With these tools, most people are able to complete the application by themselves. However, the Franco-British Network are also able to provide free digital and "1-to-1 handholding" assistance to those UK Nationals who are having real trouble completing their applications. This includes those who cannot upload documents, who are not confident using computers, or who do not have a computer or internet.

FBN's final message to anyone who has not yet started the registration process is to make sure you do so before the end of June this year! The process is designed to be simple, so do not be deterred. There are lots of resources out there to help support you, including the website and helplines of the Franco-British Network.

You can find further information in the Living in France Guide, along with contact details of all the support organisations providing free further assistance.  
[www.francobritishnetwork.fr/residency](http://www.francobritishnetwork.fr/residency).



[www.francobritishnetwork.fr](http://www.francobritishnetwork.fr)

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# Changes to Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) for Non-Resident Property Purchasers Announced

The UK Government has announced an important change to Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) which all property law and property tax professionals will need to be aware of. The change was first announced in the 2018 Budget, going through consultation between 11 February and 6 May 2019.

The change affects purchasers of residential property in the UK from 1 April 2021. For individuals, it's worth remembering that a person's residence status is determined by a simple and SDLT specific test which requires the individual to be present in the UK for a set number of days by reference to the effective date of the transaction.

## The new measure will mean:

- An additional 2% surcharge on existing SDLT rates for those who purchase residential property in the UK but are not UK residents.
- It will also apply to some UK resident companies controlled directly or indirectly by non-resident persons.
- The surcharge will apply to both freehold and leasehold properties in England and Northern Ireland.
- Professionals should make their clients aware of the impending change if they could be affected, particularly considering the length of time that property purchases can take to complete.

## Guidance

The government's online [calculator at GOV.UK](#) allows users to work out their likely SDLT liability ahead of a potential purchase.

Full guidance on the change, including how residency is determined for these purposes, can be found [here](#).

You can find out about purchasing property in France in our [Living in France Guide here](#).

# 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](https://bit.ly/WeeklyNewsflash)
- French government website: [www.brexit.gouv.fr](http://www.brexit.gouv.fr)
- Healthcare in France: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-in-france-including-martinique-and-guadaloupe>
- NHS advice on planning healthcare abroad: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/moving-abroad/planning-your-healthcare/>
- If you use social media, do also follow us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/ukinfrance> and on Twitter @BritishinFrance

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## 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](mailto: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](mailto:ukvie.support@ssafa.org.uk)

Hotline: 08 05 11 96 17