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British Embassy
Paris

VOISINS VOICES

A BRITISH EMBASSY PARIS NEWSLETTER

WELCOME

Welcome to the October edition of Voisins Voices! This edition includes an interview with our Ambassador Menna Rawlings, and we also cover pending and late applications for residency in France under the Withdrawal Agreement, updates to our Travel Advice, advice for new arrivals to France, passports, Healthcare Surgery Sessions, Facebook Q&As and the latest on the UK Nationals Support Fund.

Do please forward this to any friends, family, or new acquaintances living in France. To be 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. 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.

Menna Rawlings interview with The Connexion

UK's first female ambassador to France optimistic for new era

New British ambassador Menna Rawlings is the first woman in the role after 36 men since the time of the Duke of Wellington, who bought the building which is her official residence (see below). She spoke to The Connexion's Sarah Smith and Liv Rowland.



It must feel a big milestone to be the first ambassadrice to France?

Yes, it does. I feel the weight of history, of the Franco-British relationship, and of working in this incredible, historic residence, and the weight of all those men that came before. I'm talking to you from the library, created by Duff Cooper all those years ago, and it does all feel quite male. There's a list here of the former ambassadors going back to Wellington.

On the other hand, being the first woman feels an honour and privilege and also a huge opportunity.

The time is right. I can bring a fresh perspective, not just because I'm a woman but because I've worked all over the world previously.

Ed [Llewellyn] was amazing and generous in the handover phase but it's a different era now and I'm the first ambassadrice of the post-Brexit era. It's a real opportunity to look forward.

The UK now has women in its ambassadorial roles to all G7 countries. Is it a deliberate policy?

The foreign office is pushing to be more representative of British society and part of that is having more visibility of women, including in senior roles. But some of it is just a question of evolution over time.

When I joined the foreign office in 1989 there were almost no women at the top; there were only two female ambassadors and the first with kids had only been appointed two years before, but it was a legacy of the society of the past, and the marriage bar which meant women when they got married, until 1973, couldn't stay in the foreign service. Over time, recruitment has become much more diverse, and that's percolating upwards. It's like a dam, with all these women pushing at the wall, and then you spring a leak here and there and then suddenly this tidal wave of women comes through at the same time. So it feels dramatic, but it's been building up for a long time, and to have amazing female colleagues in place in Washington, Ottawa – all the G7 countries and many others – is very uplifting. I feel a lightness to know that I'm not alone and there are lots of women representing the country on the world stage.

Have you formally presented yourself to President Macron yet?

When you arrive, you see the chief of protocol at the French foreign ministry and give him a copy of your letters of credentials to the French government, so you can effectively start work.

In strict protocol terms, until I present my letters to the president, I'm not fully the ambassador, but the system here is very pragmatic.

They only do credential ceremonies twice a year so don't want me sitting in the Residence just drinking tea for months. So I can do most things already though there are a very small number of things I can't do, such as personally seeking to call on the president.

I am also here with my husband and son, and have two older girls back in the UK. We came together on a big family trip. On our first weekend, we cycled around Paris on Vélib' bikes. We were awestruck by what a fantastic city it is. My son has started school, and we are looking forward to being part of the community, as well as being ambassadrice and whatever you call the husband of an ambassadrice.

Do you have a pet at the Residence?

We have a rescue dog called Cinders – we got her in the US when she was a year old and she's now 13. She's bamboozled by the Residence. We have a top-floor flat: To get down to the garden she has to use the lift. That has confused her, but otherwise she's settling well.

Is the library your main office?

It's my main office in the residence, and Ed worked there a lot during the Covid pandemic, but we've had an amazing project going on in the Embassy next door to upgrade and modernise the office to be more open plan, and I'm based part of the week there too, to meet the teams, who are starting to come back after Covid.

The renovations have just come to fruition at the right time. It's been a tough time, with everyone working from home, and not being able to use the Residence fully as the beating heart of the UK in Paris. It's great now, with the appropriate gestes barrières, to bring people back.

In the Embassy we have around 300 people, including around 100 sent out from the UK, representing around 14 government departments, and the others are recruited locally, some French, some dual-nationals or bilingual Britons with French families. It's an amazing, talented team.

How did you learn French?

At school. Then, when I joined the Foreign Office, I went to Brussels for two years and started at the European Commission as a stagiaire and got thrown into a French-speaking division. I dealt with the European Parliament and came to Strasbourg on the train once a month.

I've come back to France on lots of holidays. I love the outdoors, so have spent a lot of time in the Alps and in the south-west. I've walked in the Massif Central and visited Paris and Lille.

Most recently I was in Bordeaux for three weeks doing immersion language training, living with a lovely couple and going to the Alliance Française for French lessons every day. I had a wonderful time.

What key dates are coming up?

We've already had our first visit from a British minister, from Anne-Marie Trevelyan [then energy minister, now minister for international trade], and it's great to see visits start again after Covid and our exit from the EU. We are re-opening the Residence to guests and have a James Bond launch party coming up.

The big thing in the autumn is the COP26 climate change summit in Glasgow, a great opportunity to work closely with French counterparts on the ambition and pace we need to decarbonise our economies.

We are partners on this – for example investment by EDF in the UK is important to the UK economy and we are doing a lot together on clean energy, such as wind farms. We also need to lobby in a coordinated way around the world.

I'm optimistic about the summit and really hope it delivers the results the whole world needs.

How do you feel about taking over post-Brexit?

I feel excited and have a grounded optimism. I'm here for four years and we have an opportunity to reshape the bilateral relationship. There are bright things on the horizon, including the Rugby World Cup in 2023 and Olympics in 2024. I'm a great believer in sporting and cultural connections to keep countries close together.

But of course there are still challenges and we've had a fairly bumpy period due to different issues, and those around fishing or the Northern Ireland protocol are still to be resolved.

There are other challenges, including illegal migration on small boats across the Channel and the pressure it's putting on the UK asylum system, and the risk to life. So, there are many issues to get my teeth into, but I believe in this relationship.

We have so many shared values and interests, so I'm optimistic we will see a real spirit of partnership in coming months and years.

Issuing residency cards to Britons seems to have mostly gone well?

Yes, there have been 162,000 applications [as of September 6] and I think, on the whole, it's gone well, but if anyone hasn't applied yet, please do so.

We're in touch with the French as to what will happen from October, but flexibility has been there so far. We are seeking assurances about those who do not have their card yet, but our current advice would be to make sure you have your email application receipt [Editor's note: The deadline to hold a card has been extended since this interview].

There has been a lot of embassy outreach to the British community in France. Will that continue?

How we support Britons overseas, especially those who are vulnerable, is really important to me. We've had an intense period of engagement that was necessary through the evolution of Brexit but now I'm taking stock with the team as to how we move forward.

Covid forced more things online but do we continue with that? I very much want to connect with British nationals.

As I go around the country I am meeting with partner organisations, and am looking forward to hearing from more of them. It may not be exactly the same as before, but that's because the situation has changed. We all have to adapt. But I won't be hiding away, I have committed to get to every region in my first year.

The pandemic has been disruptive, especially to tourism. Are you looking forward to things getting more back to normal?

Definitely. It will be a 'new normal', but it's great to see the border more open again.

In my first week I saw the juxtaposed controls at the Gare du Nord and met the Border Force team and Eurotunnel staff. There was life and energy and there more trains per day, but passenger traffic is still 35% of pre-Covid, so there is a hill to climb back up, but I'm keen we get there.

Having Brits here and French people in the UK is part of the essential emotional glue of this relationship.

Also important are the cultural connections between universities and think-tanks – a vibrant life that we've lost during Covid, along some of the challenges of EU exit. There are lots of opportunities to bring that back and I'm very excited by that.

There are new issues regarding moving to France or studying here, post-Brexit. Do you think things will be ironed out?

There's a period of adjustment, and people need to get used to new requirements. But we have the new global scholarship Turing Scheme to support British students overseas, and the take-up has been strong with a high number of applications to French universities. I hope we will see more school exchanges on both sides – my first trip to France was aged 13 on an exchange to Mantes-la-Jolie [Yvelines], near Paris, and it was inspirational to me; I'd never travelled before. It's what set me on the path to becoming a diplomat.

With regard to coming here, I know there are different processes to get used to, and it can be irritating; as a dog owner I had to jump through a few more hoops than before, for example, but it was still possible. You have to plan a bit more. But British exports to France are recovering very well, and I'm confident businesses and people will find a way. On exports, heavy machinery and aircraft are important from the UK to France, in the other direction a lot of food and drink. We're massively invested in each other's economic success.



Applying for Residency in France

PENDING AND LATE APPLICATIONS

The deadline for applying for your Withdrawal Agreement Residence Permit (WARP), known in French as a 'carte/titre de séjour « accord de retrait du Royaume-Uni de l'Union Européenne »', was 30 June 2021. The online application portal closed on 4 October 2021.

You must be in possession of your WARP before 1 January 2022. [Read more about the residence permit you need.](#)



If you have applied for a WARP but have not yet received it, you must keep your certificate of application (from your initial email confirmation) and continue the process.

If you have not had a response to your WARP application, check your email and spam folder, and contact your prefecture. You should also email the Interior Ministry: contact-demandeenligne-brexit-dgef@interieur.gouv.fr. Respond promptly to requests, to help prefectures process your application quickly. Keep copies of your correspondence, even if you do not receive a reply.

If your application is refused, you will be notified about the appeals process. Read the French government advice on [how to appeal a residency decision](#) (in French).

If you have not yet applied, you can still [apply for your WARP at your local prefecture](#) if you have reasonable grounds for missing the deadline. This is the case if you are in one of the following situations:

- you become an adult after 4 October 2021;
- family members join you in France after 4 October 2021;
- you were unable to complete your application due to legitimate reasons (e.g., reasons relating to your medical condition, force majeure, etc.).

In these cases, contact your prefecture. [Find out more here.](#)

You will need to provide evidence of why your application is late.

You must renew your WARP when it expires. Check your [prefecture's website](#) to find out the process for renewing your WARP locally.

UK NATIONALS SUPPORT FUND

In France, [British Government funded organisations](#) have been helping UK nationals secure their residency rights. They have been providing practical support to individuals finding it harder to complete Withdrawal Agreement 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.

Support from the UK Nationals Support Fund will end on 15 October 2021.

You should contact the UK Nationals Support Fund implementing partners before this date if you require additional support.

If you are already being assisted by our implementing partners, they will continue to assist you until you have made your application. Contact details below.

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

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

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

NEW ARRIVALS

Moving to France?

If you settled in France after 1 January 2021, you must apply for a residence permit for non-European nationals at your local prefecture.

British nationals arriving in France after 1 January 2021 are subject to the provisions of the common law, except when they are close family members of a British national settled in France before that date.

All British nationals and family members over 18 who wish to settle in France for a stay of more than three months must hold a residence permit. Minors under 18 years of age are exempt from this obligation unless they need a residence permit to work.

A residence permit must be issued directly in the prefecture. [See more here.](#)

Passports

The rules for travelling to the UK are changing!

From 1 October 2021 most EU, EEA and Swiss citizens will need a valid passport to enter the UK.

ID cards will no longer be accepted as a valid travel document.

If you do not have a passport, you are liable to be refused entry.

For more information and exceptions [visit GOV.UK.](#)



Had your passport stamped upon entry or exit to France despite being a resident in the EU?

When you travel, especially within the Schengen area, proactively show your residence document or frontier worker permit issued under the Withdrawal Agreement, in addition to your valid passport.

If you have applied for, but not yet received, your WARP, carry your email confirmation. Your passport may be stamped on entry and exit but this will not affect your rights in the country or countries where you live or work.

If a passport is incorrectly stamped, the stamp is considered null and void when you can show evidence of lawful residence. If you have rights under the Withdrawal Agreement you do not need any extra months on your passport to enter or exit EU countries. [See more here.](#)

Note that different rules apply for visitors to France who usually live in the UK. [See Travel Advice.](#)

Travel Update



The FCDO no longer advises against non-essential travel to France. You should continue to check [FCDO travel advice](#) before booking travel. See below for details on travelling between the UK and France.

Current French Anti-Covid Measures

Everyone over 12 attending events and cultural spaces with over 50 people will be asked to demonstrate their COVID-19 status through the “pass sanitaire”.

You will need this to access a range of leisure facilities (bars, restaurants, museums, cinemas), hospitals, retirement homes and modes of transport such as long distance train and bus journeys and planes.

You can find more information on how to access the “pass sanitaire” (for those resident in France) or (for those visiting France) how to demonstrate that you are fully vaccinated in our [Travel Advice](#).

Covid-19 Vaccination Passes

Remember that if the name on your vaccination certificate does not match the name in your passport, you may need to present a piece of additional evidence, such as a marriage or birth certificate.

Travel to the UK from France

Fully vaccinated* travellers from France no longer need a pre-departure test for travel to England if they are fully vaccinated, though they do still need to take a test on or before day 2 after arrival. [You can find all details here](#), including the rules for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

(*NB: In the UK, “fully vaccinated” means two doses of a two dose vaccine, including Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca. The UK does not recognise prior infection + 1 dose as fully vaccinated. However, where 2 doses of a vaccine are required for a full course, you are able to:

- mix 2 different types of vaccine, for example Oxford/AstraZeneca and Moderna
- have the 2 vaccinations under 2 different approved programmes, for example Australia and Japan, UK and USA, EU and Canada.)

To benefit from this exemption, travellers will need to show proof of being fully vaccinated with one of the authorised vaccines before travel. [You can find full details here](#).

Children under 18 who are resident in France (or the US or other EU countries) do not need to self-isolate or take a day 8 test if travelling from France to England or Scotland. They must follow the same rules as children and young people from the UK which are [available here](#).

If you cannot show proof of vaccination, you must follow the rules for those who are not fully vaccinated, including self-isolating for 10 days and taking a test on day 2 and day 8. [You can find more information about the rules for unvaccinated arrivals here](#).

In England, you can use the [Test and Release scheme](#) to end quarantine early, if you take a test after 5 days.

All adult travellers (regardless of vaccination status) must:

- [Complete a passenger locator form](#)
- [Have booked a COVID-19 day 2 test](#)

Unvaccinated travellers also need to complete an attestation to justify leaving France. Returning to your country of residence or origin is permitted. [Full details here](#).

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](#).

There are a small number of exemptions to these rules, which you can find [here](#).

If you are travelling to Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, you can find specific information [here](#).

Travel to France from the UK

The UK is currently on the French amber list. [You can read more about what this means here.](#)

Travellers who are fully vaccinated do not need an essential reason to travel to France and do not need to self-isolate on arrival. Fully vaccinated adults no longer need to present evidence of a negative test result before travel.

Fully vaccinated travellers will need to present the following documents:

- proof of vaccination status. If you live in England, France will accept the NHS app or your NHS letter to demonstrate your COVID-19 vaccination status. If you live in Scotland or Wales, France will accept your respective letter/digital certificate from health authority to demonstrate your COVID-19 vaccination status. Your NHS appointment card from vaccination centres is not designed to be used as proof of vaccination and should not be used to demonstrate your vaccine status;
- a completed 'sworn statement' (déclaration sur l'honneur) form self-certifying they are not suffering from symptoms associated with coronavirus and have not been in contact with confirmed cases in the preceding fortnight. [This can be found on the French government's website.](#)

Unvaccinated children aged 12 years old or over who are travelling with a fully vaccinated adult are required to present a negative test result (PCR or antigen). However, they do not need to provide an essential reason for travel, nor do they need to self-isolate on arrival.

Children aged 12 years old or over who are unvaccinated and travelling alone are subject to the same conditions as adults who are not fully vaccinated. Children aged 11 years old or younger do not need to present a negative test result to travel.

Those travelling to France from the UK who are not fully vaccinated will only be permitted to travel for essential reasons (further explanations [here](#)).

They will also need:

- [a completed International Travel Certificate to confirm their essential reason for travel.](#) In exceptional circumstances, the French Consulate in London may be able to assist with travel for an essential reason not listed on the International Travel Certificate.
- a completed 'sworn statement' (déclaration sur l'honneur) form self-certifying they are not suffering from symptoms associated with coronavirus and have not been in contact with confirmed cases in the preceding fortnight, and that they will self-isolate for seven days after arrival. [This can be found on the French government's website.](#)
- (for those aged 11 or over) evidence of a negative test taken within 24 hours of departure.

And they will need to self-isolate for 7 days after arrival, then take another PCR test following this period of self-isolation. You can find general advice on travelling abroad from the UK [here](#).

Healthcare surgery sessions



After last edition's success, our healthcare surgeries are back! These are ten minutes sessions where you can chat to one of our policy experts if you are having issues registering for local healthcare.

[Click here to book your session](#)

Please note that these sessions are to discuss healthcare, not health problems. If you have an illness or medical problem, please see, please seek advice from a doctor or healthcare [professional](#).

Facebook Q&As

Over the last few years, we have run near weekly Facebook Q&A sessions, to answer your EU Exit related questions about residency, driving licences, healthcare, travel and more. Thank you to everyone who has taken part. On our side, the Embassy's policy experts have enjoyed being able to point you towards the information you needed and have reported the issues you were facing to the French Ministry of the Interior. The number of questions has been steadily reducing over recent months. We are therefore reducing our Facebook Q&As to the rate of one per month to mirror demand – dates will be advertised ahead of time on Facebook, @BritishinFrance and by email to readers of Voisins Voices.

In the meantime, do remember that you will be able to find all the information you need on residency, healthcare and more in our [Living In France Guide](#), and on traveling our Travel Advice.

If your query is urgent our consular assistance team is available 24/7 on 01 44 51 31 00 or [via this webform](#).

And don't forget to follow us on social media for all the latest updates on [Facebook](#) @ukinfrance and on [Twitter](#) @BritishinFrance.

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.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](#) @ukinfrance and on [Twitter](#) @BritishinFrance.

