

The wait for information is nearly over - an agreement has now been reached with the European Commission providing more certainty about the rights of EU citizens and their family members.

In summary, the agreement confirms the following:

- EU citizens who arrived by 29 March 2019 **and** have been continuously **and** lawfully living in the UK whilst exercising EU Treaty Rights for 5 years will be able to apply for settled status – this means being free to live in the UK with access to public funds and services.
- Settled status is required to be held for one year before anyone is allowed to apply to naturalise and become a British Citizen.
- Family members either living with or joining EU citizens by 29 March 2019 will also be able to apply for settled status after living in the UK for 5 years.
- Close family members will be able to join EU citizens after the UK exits the EU as long as the relationship exists on 29 March 2019 and existed when they come to the UK.

Other key points to note are:

1. Those already holding permanent residence as an EEA national will be able to convert their paper residence card for a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) free of charge.
2. There is no indication of the fee structure or the actual process for those applying for “settled status” using the proposed new system.
3. Those currently exercising a treaty right either as a student or self-sufficient will not need to demonstrate that they have comprehensive health insurance. It has not been confirmed as to when this will come into effect – we will keep you posted.
4. Those not qualifying for settled status in March 2019 will be able to continue to reside until they qualify provided they meet the 5-year residence requirement by March 2021.
5. The new immigration system will go live at some point in 2018.

Currently, the fee for applying for Permanent Residence is £65 per applicant. The online application process does not request for absences and the forms are no more than 7 pages. Further, the checking service – operated by various councils – enables the application to be processed without having to submit the applicant’s passport.

We are getting closer to understanding how immigration will operate post Brexit, but please understand that the proposals may be subject to further change.