

News story: Swiss Citizens' Rights Agreement

The UK has reached an agreement with Switzerland which protects the rights of UK and Swiss nationals who have chosen to call each other's countries home. This agreement protects the rights of 14,000 Swiss nationals living in the UK and 40,000 UK nationals living in Switzerland, as well as around 2,600 UK frontier workers in Switzerland. This agreement broadly mirrors the citizens' rights part of the EU Withdrawal Agreement.

This means that UK and Swiss nationals living in each other's countries at the end of the implementation period will be able to continue enjoying broadly the same rights as they do now. This includes arrangements on residency, access to healthcare, pensions and education, social security coordination and mutual recognition of professional qualifications.

The agreement will be subject to ratification processes in each of the relevant states, including Federal Council approval in Switzerland and the provisions of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act (CRaG) 2010 in the UK. The agreement will be concluded before exit day and, alongside the EU Withdrawal Agreement, it will be legislated for through the EU (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill. However, the effects of international agreements with Switzerland will continue for the duration of the implementation period. This means that individuals will face no immediate changes in current rules. Swiss nationals living in the UK will be able to apply to the UK's Settlement Scheme in the same way as EU citizens.

This agreement also applies in a 'no deal' scenario, in which case it would apply to UK and Swiss nationals living in each other's countries before exit day.

The UK and Swiss governments issued the following joint statement on this announcement:

In light of the UK's exit from the EU, Switzerland and the UK have been in discussions on a citizens' rights agreement. The legal text of this agreement has now been finalised and agreed by both governments. This will ensure citizens can continue living their lives broadly as now, and secure the rights Swiss and UK citizens currently enjoy. We want to put in place new arrangements from the end of the implementation period to protect our historic relationships.