

# IS THE UK A PLACE TO CALL HOME? NEW FREE-TO-ACCESS APP DEVELOPED TO HELP EU NATIONALS ANSWER SETTLED STATUS QUESTIONS

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Firm news

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Almost two million EU nationals currently living in the UK do not yet know if they will be granted 'settled' status in post-Brexit Britain. The result is increasing levels of confusion for families, who remain unclear about their right to access education or healthcare in the UK, and businesses, who are unable to plan for the recruitment or retention of employees.

Against this backdrop of uncertainty, London-based charity The AIRE Centre, with pro bono support from law firm Herbert Smith Freehills, has developed two free-to-access apps designed to help EU citizens better understand their legal rights. One has been designed to help individuals establish eligibility to apply for settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme. The other assesses individuals' entitlement to permanent residency in the UK, under EU law.

Individuals concerned about their rights can access either app via The AIRE Centre's website, <https://www.airecentre.org/>. Each app poses series of up to 12 questions relating to users' travel within the EU, length of employment in the UK and proof of EEA citizenship and the answers are mapped against relevant aspects of EU law to provide an indication of the decision likely to be made by the Home Office. Users can download a pdf of their questions and answers and the likely outcome and share this with The AIRE Centre or local advice providers who can then supplement the findings with personalised advice.

Matthew Evans, Director of The AIRE Centre, says: "Brexit is not just about backstops, deals and political debate. For millions of vulnerable people, whether they are elderly, victims of trafficking or unable to find long-term employment because of current uncertainties, the reality is that life is standing still. How can they plan or provide for their families without knowing whether they have a place to call home? Our new apps are designed to help answer some of these questions and point individuals in the right direction so they can secure the help they need."

Each app has been designed to work seamlessly across multiple operating platforms and devices so that the user experience is straightforward. Users submit information anonymously and can download the results, enabling them to share the guidance with legal support of their own choosing.

Evans concludes: "More than 8,000 individuals have been helped with information, advice and litigation assistance since The AIRE Centre first began operating. Understandably many are scared, fearful of the outcome and scarred by previous experiences with the Home Office. Through these apps, we hope to harness technology so that, for those that are eligible, they are able to understand and exercise their fundamental rights under EU law."