

Guidance

Living in Belgium

Information about moving to, living or retiring in Belgium – including visas, working, healthcare and driving.

From: **Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-development-office)**

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Getting help with living in Belgium

Help from the Belgian government

For any questions about moving to or living in Belgium, you may be able to get help from the:

- [Belgian Embassy in London \(https://unitedkingdom.diplomatie.belgium.be/en/embassy-and-consulates/embassy-london\)](https://unitedkingdom.diplomatie.belgium.be/en/embassy-and-consulates/embassy-london)
- [Belgian Immigration Office \(https://dofi.ibz.be/en\)](https://dofi.ibz.be/en)

The UK government and the British Embassy in Brussels cannot give personalised advice on moving to, living or retiring in Belgium.

Professional help in Belgium

You can also [get help from English-speaking professionals \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/professional-services-if-you-are-abroad\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/professional-services-if-you-are-abroad) in Belgium, including:

- lawyers
- translators
- notaries
- funeral directors

Help from the UK government

Read the [travel advice for Belgium \(https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/belgium\)](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/belgium) to understand the risks you may face if you live in or visit Belgium. This includes the latest information on:

- visas and entry requirements
- laws and cultural differences
- safety and security

Read our guidance on [moving, living or retiring abroad \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad).

[Get help from the UK government abroad \(https://www.contact.service.csd.fcdo.gov.uk/\)](https://www.contact.service.csd.fcdo.gov.uk/), including in an emergency.

Visas, residency and citizenship

Make sure you meet the [entry requirements for Belgium \(https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/belgium/entry-requirements\)](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/belgium/entry-requirements) before you travel.

Visas and residence permits

Check which [visa or residence permit \(https://dofi.ibz.be/en/themes/third-country-nationals\)](https://dofi.ibz.be/en/themes/third-country-nationals) you need to live in Belgium.

You can get a visa to:

- work
- study
- volunteer
- do research
- live with family in Belgium
- live in Belgium without working, if you can financially support yourself

For more information, read the Belgian government's:

- guidance on [residence documents for Belgium \(https://www.belgium.be/en/residence-documents-for-belgium\)](https://www.belgium.be/en/residence-documents-for-belgium)

[family/residence_documents_for_belgium](#))

- [frequently asked questions on visas and residency \(https://dofi.ibz.be/en/themes/faq\)](https://dofi.ibz.be/en/themes/faq)

Registering as a resident

Once you arrive, you need to register your residency in Belgium. The Belgian government's guidance on [moving to Belgium \(https://www.belgium.be/en/housing/moving_to_belgium\)](https://www.belgium.be/en/housing/moving_to_belgium) explains how to do this.

If you have any problems or questions about registering your residency contact:

- the [Belgian Immigration Office \(https://dofi.ibz.be/en\)](https://dofi.ibz.be/en)
- an [English-speaking lawyer in Belgium \(https://find-a-professional-service-abroad.service.csd.fcdo.gov.uk/find/lawyers/?country=belgium\)](https://find-a-professional-service-abroad.service.csd.fcdo.gov.uk/find/lawyers/?country=belgium)

Extending or replacing your visa or residence permit

Contact your local municipality ('commune' or 'gemeente') for information on how to:

- [extend your visa or residency permit \(https://dofi.ibz.be/en/themes/faq/extending-visa-or-residence-permit\)](https://dofi.ibz.be/en/themes/faq/extending-visa-or-residence-permit)
- replace a lost, damaged or stolen visa or residence permit

You can also read the Belgian government's guidance on [loss or theft of identity cards or passports \(https://ibz.be/en/single-digital-gateway/loss-or-theft-of-identity-cards-or-passports\)](https://ibz.be/en/single-digital-gateway/loss-or-theft-of-identity-cards-or-passports).

Long-term residency

You can apply for long-term residency in Belgium if you have lived there legally and continuously for at least 5 years.

To find out if you're eligible and how to apply, read guidance on [long-term resident status in Belgium \(https://dofi.ibz.be/en/themes/third-country-nationals/long-term-resident/acquisition-long-term-resident-status-belgium\)](https://dofi.ibz.be/en/themes/third-country-nationals/long-term-resident/acquisition-long-term-resident-status-belgium).

Citizenship

Belgium recognises [dual citizenship \(https://www.gov.uk/dual-citizenship\)](https://www.gov.uk/dual-citizenship) with the UK. This means that you do not have to give up (renounce) your British citizenship to become a Belgian citizen.

To find out if you're eligible for Belgian citizenship:

- read guidance on [citizenship in Belgium \(https://justice.belgium.be/en/themes_and_files/children_and_youth/citizenship\)](https://justice.belgium.be/en/themes_and_files/children_and_youth/citizenship)
- contact your local municipality ('commune' or 'gemeente')
- contact the [Belgian Embassy in London \(https://unitedkingdom.diplomatie.belgium.be/en/embassy-and-consulates/embassy-london\)](https://unitedkingdom.diplomatie.belgium.be/en/embassy-and-consulates/embassy-london)

Help with visa, residency and citizenship applications

The British Embassy in Brussels cannot help with Belgian visa, residency and citizenship applications.

For any questions or issues, contact:

- your local municipality ('commune' or 'gemeente')
- the [Belgian Immigration Office \(https://dofi.ibz.be/en\)](https://dofi.ibz.be/en)
- the [Belgian Embassy in London \(https://unitedkingdom.diplomatie.belgium.be/en/embassy-and-consulates/embassy-london\)](https://unitedkingdom.diplomatie.belgium.be/en/embassy-and-consulates/embassy-london)
- an [English-speaking lawyer in Belgium \(https://find-a-professional-service-abroad.service.csd.fcdo.gov.uk/find/lawyers/?country=belgium\)](https://find-a-professional-service-abroad.service.csd.fcdo.gov.uk/find/lawyers/?country=belgium)

Residency if you moved to Belgium before 1 January 2021

If you moved to Belgium before 1 January 2021, and have been legally living there since then, you and your family members have [rights under the Withdrawal Agreement \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-europe\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-europe).

Residency documents if you moved to Belgium before 1 January 2021

'M' cards

If you moved to Belgium before 1 January 2021, make sure you have an 'M' card. This shows that you have rights under the Withdrawal Agreement.

Read the [Belgian government's Brexit guidance \(https://dofi.ibz.be/en/themes/third-country-nationals/brexit\)](https://dofi.ibz.be/en/themes/third-country-nationals/brexit) for more information.

Under the new digital [Entry/Exit System \(EES\) \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eu-entryexit-system\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eu-entryexit-system), you'll need an M card or other valid residence document when entering or leaving Belgium. [Annex 22 of the Schengen Border Code \(PDF, 1062KB\) \(https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/94241914-26f6-464d-be28-c601d8ded4d5_en?filename=handbook-annex-22_en_1.pdf\)](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/94241914-26f6-464d-be28-c601d8ded4d5_en?filename=handbook-annex-22_en_1.pdf) explains which residence documents are accepted.

If you have an M card or other valid residence document, you will not have to register with the EES when [entering, leaving or travelling within the Schengen area \(https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/entry-exit/non-eu-nationals/index_en.htm\)](https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/entry-exit/non-eu-nationals/index_en.htm). Without one, you may be wrongly identified as overstaying in the Schengen area and denied entry to Belgium or other Schengen countries.

'P' and 'S' cards

If you were resident in Belgium with a special residence permit ('P' or 'S' card) before 1 January 2021, you have [rights under the Withdrawal Agreement \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-europe\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-europe).

You can choose to register with your local municipality ('commune' or 'gemeente') and get a new M residency card.

Read the [Belgian government's guidance on special residence permit holders \(https://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/protocol\)](https://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/protocol).

If you do not have a residence document

If you were living in Belgium before 1 January 2021, but do not have a residence document, you must [apply for a residence card \(https://dofi.ibz.be/en/themes/brexit/procedures/procedures-residence-card-beneficiaries-withdrawal-agreement\)](https://dofi.ibz.be/en/themes/brexit/procedures/procedures-residence-card-beneficiaries-withdrawal-agreement). You'll need to submit evidence to prove that you met the residency criteria at the time.

If your application is successful, you'll get a residence card called an M card.

If your application is unsuccessful, you may be able to appeal. Your refusal letter, known as Annex 59 ('Bijlage 59') will tell you how to appeal. Consider getting legal advice from an [English-speaking lawyer in Belgium \(https://find-a-professional-service-abroad.service.csd.fcdo.gov.uk/find/lawyers?country=belgium\)](https://find-a-professional-service-abroad.service.csd.fcdo.gov.uk/find/lawyers?country=belgium).

Renewing your residency document if you moved to Belgium before 1 January 2021

You'll need to renew your residence card every 5 or 10 years.

Contact your local municipality ('commune' or 'gemeente') for information on how to renew your residency document.

Bringing family members to Belgium if you moved there before 1 January 2021

The [Belgian government's guidance for family members \(https://dofi.ibz.be/en/themes/brexit/procedures/procedures-residence-card-beneficiaries-withdrawal-agreement/you-are\)](https://dofi.ibz.be/en/themes/brexit/procedures/procedures-residence-card-beneficiaries-withdrawal-agreement/you-are) explains:

- which family members can join you in Belgium
- how and when they should apply for their residence document

Passports and travel

Read our guidance on [moving, living or retiring abroad \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad). This covers how to:

- apply for a British passport from abroad
- travel urgently without your British passport

If you have a Belgian residence card or long stay visa, the time you spend in Belgium does not count towards the 90-day visa-free period you can spend in the Schengen area.

Always carry your passport and residence card when [entering, leaving or travelling within the Schengen area \(https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/entry-exit/non-eu-nationals/index_en.htm\)](https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/entry-exit/non-eu-nationals/index_en.htm). If you're asked to show your passport at border control, make sure you also show your residence card or other evidence of residence status. Your passport may be stamped if you do not.

If you have dual citizenship with an EU or [European Free Trade Association \(EFTA\) \(https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:European_Free_Trade_Association_\(EFTA\)\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:European_Free_Trade_Association_(EFTA)) country, you should enter and leave Belgium using your EU or EFTA passport.

Dual citizens travelling to the UK

When travelling to the UK, British citizens must carry a valid [British passport](https://www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/passports) or [certificate of entitlement](https://www.gov.uk/right-of-abode/apply-for-a-certificate-of-entitlement). Read guidance on [dual citizenship](https://www.gov.uk/dual-citizenship).

European Entry/Exit System (EES)

Under the new digital [Entry/Exit System](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eu-entryexit-system) (EES) there are new rules for [entering, leaving or travelling within the Schengen area](https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/entry-exit/non-eu-nationals/index_en.htm). Non-EU nationals will need to have their photo and fingerprints taken or verified at the border. This data will be stored in a digital record and used to monitor how long visitors have spent in the Schengen area.

British nationals legally resident in Belgium, and who have a valid residence card or other residence document, do not need to register with the EES. [Annex 22 of the Schengen Border Code \(PDF, 1062KB\)](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/94241914-26f6-464d-be28-c601d8ded4d5_en?filename=handbook-annex-22_en_1.pdf) explains which residence documents are accepted.

If you are legally resident in Belgium but do not have a residence document, contact your local municipality ('commune' or 'gemeente') for information on how to get one.

For more information about the EES, read:

- [EU guidance on the EES](https://travel-europe.europa.eu/ees_en)
- [guidance on the EES for UK nationals](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eu-entryexit-system)

Healthcare in Belgium

Read our guidance on [moving, living or retiring abroad](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad). This covers how to:

- plan your healthcare
- take medicine abroad

As a resident, you must register with a health insurance fund ('mutuelle' or 'ziekenfonds') to access the healthcare system in Belgium.

To find out how to get medical treatment:

- read guidance on [healthcare in Belgium](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-in-belgium/) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-in-belgium/>) and [health in Belgium](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/belgium/health) (<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/belgium/health>)
- read the [Belgian government's guidance on health and social security entitlements](https://www.belgium.be/en/brexit/i_am_private_citizen/british_citizens_belgium/health_and_social_security_entitlements) (https://www.belgium.be/en/brexit/i_am_private_citizen/british_citizens_belgium/health_and_social_security_entitlements)
- find [English-speaking medical facilities and doctors for British nationals in Belgium](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/belgium-list-of-medical-facilitiespractitioners) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/belgium-list-of-medical-facilitiespractitioners>)

Working in Belgium

Read our guidance on [moving, living or retiring abroad](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad>). This covers working abroad, including documents you may need from the UK government.

To work in Belgium, you may need a work permit or work visa. Our guidance on [travelling to Belgium for work](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-to-belgium-for-work) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-to-belgium-for-work>) explains the different work permits and visas available to you.

You do not need a work permit or visa if you both:

- have been living in Belgium legally since before 1 January 2021
- hold an 'M' or 'N' residence card, or have applied for one

This is because you have [rights under the Withdrawal Agreement](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-europe) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-europe>).

To apply for a job, you may need to provide a:

- [UK police certificate](https://www.acro.police.uk/s/acro-services/police-certificates) (<https://www.acro.police.uk/s/acro-services/police-certificates>)
- Belgian criminal records certificate, which you can request at your local municipality ('commune' or 'gemeente')

If you live in Belgium and were regularly commuting to work in another EU or [European Free Trade Association \(EFTA\)](https://ec.europa.eu/) (<https://ec.europa.eu/>)

[eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:European_Free_Trade_Association_\(EFTA\)\)](https://www.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table?table=1000001&plugin=1) country before 1 January 2021, read [guidance for frontier workers \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/frontier-workers-in-eu-and-efsa-countries\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/frontier-workers-in-eu-and-efsa-countries).

Recognition of qualifications

If you want to work in Belgium, you may need to [get your foreign qualifications recognised \(https://www.belgium.be/en/work/coming_to_work_in_belgium/recognition_of_qualifications\)](https://www.belgium.be/en/work/coming_to_work_in_belgium/recognition_of_qualifications).

Driving in Belgium

Read our guidance on [moving, living and retiring abroad \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad). This covers how to:

- drive abroad legally
- take your UK vehicle abroad
- get driving licence letters

The Federal Public Service of Mobility and Transport provides information on [driving in Belgium \(https://mobilit.belgium.be/en/road/driving\)](https://mobilit.belgium.be/en/road/driving), including how to:

- [exchange your driving licence \(https://mobilit.belgium.be/en/road/driving/driving-licences/foreign-driving-licences\)](https://mobilit.belgium.be/en/road/driving/driving-licences/foreign-driving-licences)
- [apply for a Belgian driving licence \(https://mobilit.belgium.be/en/road/driving/driving-licences/beldrive-application-driving-licence\)](https://mobilit.belgium.be/en/road/driving/driving-licences/beldrive-application-driving-licence)

For more information read guidance on:

- [driving in the EU \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/driving-in-the-eu\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/driving-in-the-eu)
- road travel in Belgium, in [safety and security in the travel advice for Belgium \(https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/belgium/safety-and-security\)](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/belgium/safety-and-security)

Driving in Belgium using a foreign driving licence

You can drive in Belgium for up to 185 days using a driving licence issued in:

- the UK
- Gibraltar
- Jersey
- Guernsey
- the Isle of Man

You cannot replace or renew any of these licences if you live in Belgium.

Exchanging a UK, Gibraltar or Isle of Man driving licence

To continue driving after 185 days, you must [exchange your driving licence \(https://mobilite.belgium.be/en/road/rijden/rijbewijzen/foreign-driving-licences#:~:text=The%20exchange%20procedure%20can%20be,to%20comply%20with%20the%20procedure\)](https://mobilite.belgium.be/en/road/rijden/rijbewijzen/foreign-driving-licences#:~:text=The%20exchange%20procedure%20can%20be,to%20comply%20with%20the%20procedure) for a Belgian one if it was issued in:

- the UK
- Gibraltar
- the Isle of Man

You can apply for the exchange before the 185 days is over. Applications may take time to process, and you'll need your Belgian licence to drive legally.

Once you start the exchange process, you will not be able to drive until you get your Belgian licence.

Applying for a Belgian driving licence

You cannot exchange your driving licence if it:

- was issued in Jersey or Guernsey
- has expired
- does not meet any of the other conditions required for you to [exchange your driving licence \(https://mobilite.belgium.be/en/road/rijden/rijbewijzen/foreign-driving-licences#:~:text=The%20exchange%20procedure%20can%20be,to%20comply%20with%20the%20procedure\)](https://mobilite.belgium.be/en/road/rijden/rijbewijzen/foreign-driving-licences#:~:text=The%20exchange%20procedure%20can%20be,to%20comply%20with%20the%20procedure)

If this is the case, you can apply for a Belgian licence as a non-EU national.

For more information, read guidance on:

- [how to get a driving licence in Flanders](https://www.vlaanderen.be/en/how-to-obtain-a-driving-licence-in-flanders) (<https://www.vlaanderen.be/en/how-to-obtain-a-driving-licence-in-flanders>)
- [how to get a driving licence in Wallonia](https://www.wallonie.be/en/demarches/obtain-your-driving-licence-your-municipality) (<https://www.wallonie.be/en/demarches/obtain-your-driving-licence-your-municipality>)
- [how to get a driving licence in Brussels capital region](https://be.brussels/en/transport-mobility/drivers-license-and-vehicle-registration/getting-your-driving-licence) (<https://be.brussels/en/transport-mobility/drivers-license-and-vehicle-registration/getting-your-driving-licence>)

You will need to pass a theory and practical driving test.

Disabled drivers

You may be able to apply for:

- a [Belgian disabled parking card \(in Dutch\)](https://handicap.belgium.be/nl/andere-hulp/parkeerkaart) (<https://handicap.belgium.be/nl/andere-hulp/parkeerkaart>)
- an [EU parking card for people with disabilities](https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/transport-disability/parking-card-disabilities-people/index_en.htm) (https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/transport-disability/parking-card-disabilities-people/index_en.htm)

If you have a [UK Blue Badge](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/blue-badge-scheme) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/blue-badge-scheme>) and live in Belgium, you must return it to the original UK issuing authority.

Tax

Read our guidance on [moving, living or retiring abroad](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad>). This covers tax, including paying UK tax and National Insurance.

The UK has a [double taxation agreement with Belgium](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/belgium-tax-treaties) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/belgium-tax-treaties>) so that you do not pay tax on the same income in both countries.

Contact the [Federal Public Service Finance](https://finance.belgium.be/en) (<https://finance.belgium.be/en>) for any questions about double taxation relief.

You should get professional advice on [paying tax in Belgium](https://fin.belgium.be/en/private-individuals/international) (<https://fin.belgium.be/en/private-individuals/international>). To do this, find an [English-speaking lawyer in Belgium](https://find-a-professional-service-) (<https://find-a-professional-service->

[abroad.service.csd.fcdo.gov.uk/find?serviceType=lawyers&country=Belgium](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-belgium)).

Declaring your assets

All residents must declare assets outside Belgium, including:

- bank accounts
- securities
- insurance
- annuities
- property

The declaration is separate to the annual tax return. There are severe penalties and criminal charges if you do not do this.

All non-residents must file an annual Belgian tax return if they receive income, including a pension, from Belgium.

National Insurance

Check if you need to [pay National Insurance if you're going to work in the EU, Gibraltar, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, or Switzerland \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-insurance-for-workers-from-the-uk-working-in-the-eea-or-switzerland\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-insurance-for-workers-from-the-uk-working-in-the-eea-or-switzerland).

Pensions

Claiming your UK pension

Read our guidance on [moving, living or retiring abroad \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad). This covers:

- how to claim your UK State Pension
- where the UK government pays an annual increase in the State Pension

Your UK State Pension is calculated differently [if you've previously lived in Australia, Canada or New Zealand \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/state-pension-if-youve-lived-in-australia-canada-or-new-zealand\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/state-pension-if-youve-lived-in-australia-canada-or-new-zealand) and now live in the EU.

Claiming a Belgian pension

Contact the [Federal Pensions Service \(https://www.mypension.be/en\)](https://www.mypension.be/en) to find out whether you can claim a pension in Belgium.

Benefits

Claiming UK benefits

Read our guidance on [moving, living or retiring abroad \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad). This covers how to claim UK benefits abroad, including Child Benefit.

You can also read guidance on [benefits and pensions for UK nationals in the EU, EEA or Switzerland \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/benefits-and-pensions-for-uk-nationals-in-the-eea-or-switzerland\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/benefits-and-pensions-for-uk-nationals-in-the-eea-or-switzerland).

Claiming Belgian benefits

You may be entitled to some Belgian benefits.

To find out if you're eligible and how to claim:

- read the [Belgian government's guidance on social security in Belgium \(https://www.belgium.be/en/family/social_security_in_belgium\)](https://www.belgium.be/en/family/social_security_in_belgium)
- read guidance on the [Belgian social security system \(in English, French, German and Dutch\) \(https://www.socialsecurity.be/\)](https://www.socialsecurity.be/)
- contact your local municipality ('commune' or 'gemeente')

Buying and renting property in Belgium

Read our guidance on [moving, living or retiring abroad \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad). This covers buying and renting property abroad.

Contact an [English-speaking lawyer in Belgium \(https://find-a-professional-service-abroad.service.fcdo.gov.uk/find/lawyers?country=belgium\)](https://find-a-professional-service-abroad.service.fcdo.gov.uk/find/lawyers?country=belgium) if you're considering buying property or land.

Voting in Belgium

UK elections

Read our guidance on [moving, living or retiring abroad \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad). This covers how to:

- vote in UK elections from abroad
- register as an overseas voter

Belgian elections

You may be eligible to vote in local elections in Belgium. For more information, contact your local municipality ('commune' or 'gemeente').

You cannot vote in:

- federal or regional elections in Belgium
- European elections, unless you hold citizenship of an EU country

Studying in Belgium

If you plan to study in Belgium, you must meet all [visa requirements \(https://dofi.ibz.be/en/themes/third-country-nationals/study\)](https://dofi.ibz.be/en/themes/third-country-nationals/study) before you travel.

You do not need a student visa if you have been living in Belgium legally since before 1 January 2021, as you have [rights under the Withdrawal Agreement \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-europe\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-europe).

The federal states provide information on:

- [education in Flanders \(https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/en\)](https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/en)
- [education in Wallonia and Brussels \(in French\) \(http://www.enseignement.be/index.php\)](http://www.enseignement.be/index.php)

For more information, read guidance on:

- [studying in Belgium \(https://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/travel-belgium/studying-belgium\)](https://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/travel-belgium/studying-belgium)

- [studying in the EU \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/study-in-the-european-union\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/study-in-the-european-union)
- [travel grants for students studying abroad or on placements \(England\) \(https://www.gov.uk/travel-grants-students-england\)](https://www.gov.uk/travel-grants-students-england)

You can also contact:

- your higher education provider in the UK or Belgium
- the [Belgian Embassy in London \(https://unitedkingdom.diplomatie.belgium.be/en/embassy-and-consulates/embassy-london\)](https://unitedkingdom.diplomatie.belgium.be/en/embassy-and-consulates/embassy-london)

Children

Read our guidance on [moving, living or retiring abroad \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad). This covers moving abroad with children, including:

- getting permission to take your child abroad
- claiming UK Child Benefit abroad
- child maintenance payments if a parent lives abroad

Schools and education

The European Commission provides information about the school system in the:

- [Flemish community \(https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurypedia/belgium-flemish-community/overview\)](https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurypedia/belgium-flemish-community/overview)
- [French community \(https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurypedia/belgium-french-community/overview\)](https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurypedia/belgium-french-community/overview)
- [German-speaking community \(https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurypedia/belgium-german-speaking-community/overview\)](https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurypedia/belgium-german-speaking-community/overview)

All children aged 5 to 18 must attend school or home school in Belgium.

For more information, read guidance on how to:

- [enrol your child in school in Flanders \(https://www.vlaanderen.be/en/studying/school-enrolment-and-registration\)](https://www.vlaanderen.be/en/studying/school-enrolment-and-registration)
- enrol your child in [basic education \(nursery or primary\) \(https://wallonie.be/](https://wallonie.be/)

[en/demarches/enrolling-my-child-basic-education-nursery-or-primary\) or secondary education \(https://wallonie.be/en/demarches/enrolling-my-child-secondary-education\)](#) in Wallonia

- [enrol your child in school in Brussels \(in French or Dutch\) \(https://instructionpublique.bruxelles.be/faq\)](#)

Childcare

Each Belgian community government is responsible for early childhood education and care in their community. For more information, read guidance from:

- [Child and Family \('Kind en Gezin'\) \(in Dutch\) \(https://www.kindengezin.be/nl\)](#), for the Flemish community
- [ONE \(Office de la Naissance et de l'Éducation\) \(in French\) \(https://www.one.be/public/\)](#), for the French community
- [Kaleido Ostbelgien \(in German\) \(https://www.kaleido-ostbelgien.be/\)](#), for the German-speaking community

You can also read the European Commission's guidance on:

- [early childhood education and care in the Flemish community \(https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurypedia/belgium-flemish-community/early-childhood-education-and-care\)](#)
- [early childhood education and care in the French community \(https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurypedia/belgium-french-community/early-childhood-education-and-care\)](#)
- [early childhood education and care in the German-speaking community \(https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurypedia/belgium-german-speaking-community/early-childhood-education-and-care\)](#)

Births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships

Births

If your child is born in Belgium, register the birth with the Belgian authorities. Read guidance on [births in Belgium \(https://www.belgium.be/en/family/births\)](#).

Read our guidance on [moving, living or retiring abroad \(https://www.gov.uk/](#)

[guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad](#)). This covers how to:

- register the birth with the UK authorities to get a UK birth certificate
- apply for your child's first British passport

Deaths

Read our guidance on [moving, living or retiring abroad \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad). This covers:

- what to do after someone dies abroad
- how to register the death with the UK authorities

If someone dies in Belgium, read guidance on:

- [what to do when someone dies in Belgium \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bereavement-information-pack-belgium\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bereavement-information-pack-belgium)
- [English-speaking funeral directors in Belgium \(https://find-a-professional-service-abroad.service.csd.fcdo.gov.uk/find/funeral-directors?country=belgium\)](https://find-a-professional-service-abroad.service.csd.fcdo.gov.uk/find/funeral-directors?country=belgium)
- [declaration of death in Belgium \(https://www.belgium.be/en/family/declaration_death\)](https://www.belgium.be/en/family/declaration_death)

Marriages and civil partnerships

Read our guidance on [moving, living or retiring abroad \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad). This covers how to get married or form a civil partnership abroad.

The Belgian government provides information on:

- [marriage in Belgium \(https://www.belgium.be/en/family/marriage\)](https://www.belgium.be/en/family/marriage)
- [statutory cohabitation in Belgium \(https://www.belgium.be/en/family/statutory_cohabitation\)](https://www.belgium.be/en/family/statutory_cohabitation)

Divorce and separation

Read our guidance on [moving, living or retiring abroad \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-living-or-retiring-abroad). This covers how to get a divorce or end a civil partnership.

The European e-Justice portal offers guidance on [divorce and legal separation in Belgium](https://e-justice.europa.eu/topics/family-matters-inheritance/divorce-and-legal-separation/be_en) (https://e-justice.europa.eu/topics/family-matters-inheritance/divorce-and-legal-separation/be_en).

Consider taking legal advice from an [English-speaking lawyer in Belgium](https://find-a-professional-service-abroad.service.csd.fcdo.gov.uk/find/lawyers?country=belgium) (<https://find-a-professional-service-abroad.service.csd.fcdo.gov.uk/find/lawyers?country=belgium>).

Documents for British people in Belgium

Our guidance on [documents for British people abroad](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/documents-for-british-people-abroad) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/documents-for-british-people-abroad>) covers:

- legalising and certifying UK documents
- marriage and civil partnership documents
- affirmations and affidavits
- witnessing signatures

Lawyers, translators and notaries

To find an English-speaking lawyer, translator or notary in Belgium, read guidance on [professional services if you're abroad](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/professional-services-if-you-are-abroad) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/professional-services-if-you-are-abroad>).

Pets

If you want to bring your pet with you to Belgium, read guidance on:

- [travelling with pets to Belgium](https://www.health.belgium.be/en/animals-and-plants/animals/animal-keeping-and-transporting/travelling-pets) (<https://www.health.belgium.be/en/animals-and-plants/animals/animal-keeping-and-transporting/travelling-pets>)
- [taking your pet dog, cat or ferret to an EU country](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad) (<https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad>)

Returning to the UK

Read [returning to the UK permanently](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/returning-to-the-uk) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/returning-to-the-uk>). This includes information on bringing family members back to the UK, tax and access to services.

If the NHS funds your healthcare in Belgium through the S1 form, [contact the NHS Overseas Healthcare Team \(https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/contact-overseas-healthcare-services\)](#) to cancel it.

Disclaimer

We provide this information as a guide only. For definitive information, contact the Belgian authorities.

Read our [consular information disclaimer \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-commonwealth-development-office-fcdo-consular-information-disclaimer\)](#).

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