

Pre-1924

The **Aliens Act of 1905** was the first piece of UK legislation that purported to restrict immigration to the UK.

It defined an 'undesirable immigrant' as someone who does not have the financial means to support themselves. This is something that will be echoed in various visa categories in subsequent legislation, all the way to the present day.

The **British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act 1914** and **the Aliens Restriction Acts of 1914 and 1919** introduced powers over 'Aliens', who were non-British subjects. These powers included prohibiting them from entering the UK, restricting their movements within the UK and deporting them from the UK.

As a result of the xenophobia engendered by the First World War, the status of 'Aliens' in the UK was more highly monitored than ever before.

Immigrants needed permission from an Immigration officer to enter the UK, by way of a passport stamp. The Immigration officer could attach conditions to the grant of leave.

Requirements were also introduced for Aliens to carry identification.

1951

The **1951 Convention Relating to Status of Stateless Persons** was drafted to protect refugees (originally only European refugees but later extended to all countries) fleeing Nazi persecution.

The convention defined the term 'refugee' and the core principles of non-discrimination, non-penalization and non-refoulement. Through the principle of non-refoulement, the agreement holds that no state can expel or return ("refoul") a refugee to a territory where their life or freedom would be threatened.

1971

The **Immigration Act 1971** laid the groundwork for the modern immigration system that is in place today.

Immigration Rules were laid pursuant to the 1971 Act. Work permits were issued for specific jobs in a particular period. Indefinite leave to remain was granted to individuals already living in the UK for a certain period, allowing them to stay in the UK permanently without restrictions.

1973

The UK joins the European Economic Community

The European Economic Community was the ancestor of the European Union. Its aim was economic integration through a common market and customs union. There was no impact on immigration yet but being a member of the European Economic Community led the UK to be a member of its successor, the European Union.

1993

Formation of the European Union

EU free movement of people laws introduced between member states. EU citizens (followed by EEA and Swiss nationals) could travel freely within the Territory of the European Union, the EEA and Switzerland for up to 90 days. If staying for more than 90 days, they must fall in to one of the following categories:

- Employed
- Self-employed
- Full-time student with comprehensive sickness insurance
- Self-sufficient with comprehensive sickness insurance

2020

The UK leaves the European Union – Withdrawal Agreement

On 31 January 2020 the UK left the EU. Transition Period until 11pm on 31 December 2020, the UK is treated as member state.

All EU, EEA and Swiss nationals living in the UK until 31 December 2020 can apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to protect their immigration status.

- Settled or pre-settled status.
- Deadline 30 June 2021, but late applications accepted if reasonable grounds for delay.
- Removed need to evidence comprehensive sickness insurance, more lenient.

1 Jan 2021 - present day

From 1 January 2021 to present day

Free movement ends. With late applications to the EU Settlement Scheme becoming more and more scrutinised, EU nationals looking to live in the UK need to rely on routes such as Skilled Worker, Senior or Specialist Worker, Global Talent, High Potential Individual or Family. These are the same routes that are available to nationals from around the world.

Government Authorised Exchange visas are useful for those looking to undertake an internship in the UK.

In the near future pre-settled status should be extended by 5 years automatically.

The future

- Will any future British government look to negotiate free movement of people between the UK and the EU, or perhaps seek a more limited migration agreement?
- For example, could there be a [Youth Mobility Scheme-style agreement](#) allowing 18-35-year olds to come to the UK for a period of 2 years to live and work here?

