



**Independent Monitoring Authority**  
For the Citizens' Rights Agreements

# Stakeholder Toolkit

## Five-Year Anniversary

We Mind The Gap

# Background

This December the IMA is marking five years since it was established as a result of the Withdrawal and Separation Agreements negotiated between the EU, EFTA states and the UK following the Brexit vote. You can find out more about who we are and what we do [here](#)

As we look back on our five years in operation, we reflect on the importance of the work being done by highlighting some stories from people who are directly impacted

To highlight the experience of citizens in the UK, and understand more about how rights are protected, we have also recently published the findings of our latest survey

This year, the aim of the survey was to hear from more people who represent the diversity of needs and awareness within the community to better understand what challenges people are still facing in accessing their rights

Important to us throughout all of this is hearing from citizens' themselves about their experiences in the UK and Gibraltar which is why we are sharing their stories as part of an #IMACitizen series

# Thank you for your support

**The aim of this work to mark our fifth anniversary is to help shine a light on the very real experiences of citizens and how they contribute to life in the UK and Gibraltar**

**We would very much welcome your help in amplifying that aim**

**This toolkit provides you with some background information, our survey results, downloadable assets, example messaging for promotion and details on how you can get involved**

**If you have any queries or would like more information, please contact [comms@ima-citizensrights.org.uk](mailto:comms@ima-citizensrights.org.uk)**

# IMA

For the Citizens'  
Rights Agreements

# Concept



# Context

**The IMA minds the gap - this means we are part of the efforts to close the gap between the rights EU and EEA EFTA citizens, and their family members are entitled to and what they are able to access in practice**

**The rights are that broadly citizens can continue to live here, working and raising their families as they did before Brexit**

**We also have statutory duties under the Withdrawal and Separation Agreements to monitor and promote the rights of these citizens**

**Our work therefore helps citizens continue to contribute, grow and thrive following Brexit**

# IMA Citizen

**As part of this programme of work we have been privileged to interview a number of citizens living in the UK and Gibraltar**

**We have been talking to them about their stories; what they do and how they contribute to the UK and Gibraltar helping both to grow and thrive**

**We are grateful for their support and are sharing their stories on our social media channels throughout December under a hashtag #IMA citizen. We would welcome your help in sharing them too**

**You can find out more about the IMA including our statutory duties and specific powers on our website: [www.ima-citizensrights.org.uk](http://www.ima-citizensrights.org.uk)**

# Products

We will be publishing an EUSS Spotlight Report. This details the development of the EUSS

A timeline which illustrates what has happened in terms of citizens' rights can be accessed via our website [here](#)

A podcast discussing the survey results and how things have and haven't changed for citizens in the five years since Brexit is being produced and will be accessible on our website later this month

A webinar discussing the survey and five years since Brexit will also be held early next year. It will feature a range of researchers working in the field of citizens' rights, please keep an eye out on our channels for how to get involved and when it's taking place

And we also have our citizen stories about their experiences living in the UK and Gibraltar following Brexit – IMA Citizen, which can be accessed on our social media channels along with some social media content about how citizens contribute, grow and thrive in the UK and Gibraltar

# IMA

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# Survey results



# Survey Background

In March 2025 the IMA launched a survey to hear the views of EU and EEA EFTA citizens and their family members living in the UK and Gibraltar

We knew that our previous surveys were not inclusive or accessible enough. This year, our aim was to hear from more people who represent the diversity of needs, awareness and ability within the community

We partnered with BMG research, a social research company to help deliver our survey in multiple languages, both digitally and face to face

This year our aim was to try and hear from more vulnerable groups of people, and those who may be less aware of their rights

The findings of this survey will help the IMA better understand the issues and concerns faced by EU and EEA EFTA citizens and their family members in the UK and Gibraltar

With this understanding, the IMA can take action to reduce barriers and ensure these citizens encounter fewer obstacles in exercising their rights

# The full survey report

**Below is a link to the full IMA survey report**

[IMA-Citizens-Rights-Survey-report.pdf](#)

**Below is a link to our press release**

[EU citizens face ongoing barriers five years after Brexit - Independent Monitoring Authority for the Citizens' Rights Agreements](#)

# Executive summary

## **The majority of respondents held EUSS status**

Nine in ten of those who completed our survey had applied for the EUSS. The majority of applicants were granted status – 74% have settled status and 21% have pre-settled status.

Reported reasons why a minority of respondents have not applied for the EUSS include exemption due to Irish citizenship and/or holding an alternative immigration status.

## **The available data on refusals from the survey is limited**

A small proportion (1%) of respondents in our survey said their EUSS application was refused.

When asked the reasons for refusals, these included a lack of documentation, ineligibility based on place of residence (e.g. Gibraltar), and failure to meet the UK residency requirements during the qualifying period.

## **Three in five parents/guardians surveyed said they have applied for the EUSS for their children**

60% of respondents with children under the age of 21 said they had applied to the EUSS for at least some of their children – with nine in ten of children being granted status as a result.

There was a considerable proportion (38%) of parents/guardians who had not applied for their children. The top reason for not applying being the belief that their child was a British citizen (72%).

## **Most respondents were aware of their rights under the Agreements**

The majority of respondents were aware of their rights, such as the right to work (94%) and access healthcare (94%). Awareness was slightly lower for the right to access housing support (81%).

Groups less likely to be aware of their rights include family members and younger respondents. Individuals with pre-settled status were also less likely to be aware of their rights — a trend similarly observed in data from the Migration Observatory

# Executive summary continued

## However, challenges to accessing these rights remain

One in five said that they had experienced difficulties exercising at least six of the nine rights listed.

Respondents reported having faced most difficulties in exercising their right to equal treatment and freedom from discrimination.

Additionally, one quarter of those who hold professional qualifications reported having experienced difficulties getting these recognised in the UK/Gibraltar since Brexit.

## Respondents have interacted with and trust public bodies

Distrust is higher among certain groups, such as older respondents (aged over 65) and those who have experienced difficulties accessing their rights.

Reasons for distrust included a fear that UK/Gibraltar institutions will not uphold their rights in the future.

Around two in five said they have engaged with public bodies or support organisations about their EUSS application or their rights since Brexit.

## One in five report feeling that they have been discriminated against by public bodies since Brexit

One in five respondents felt they had been discriminated against due to their national origin. A similar proportion (18%) reported discrimination based on their ethnicity.

Among those who felt discriminated against on at least one basis, around one in five reported experiencing this from GPs/hospitals, a local authority, or the Home Office

## Awareness of the IMA is low, but desire for action is high

Three in ten said they were aware of the IMA before taking part in the survey.

Those more likely to be aware of the IMA include family members and those with pre-settled status.

Despite low levels of awareness, 73% of respondents had a desire for the IMA to take at least one action that would make a big difference to their lives. Commonly selected actions included ensuring fair access to status and supporting future generations.

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# How to get involved



# Details of how you can be involved

1. Use the communications resources in this toolkit on your channels such as social media, newsletters or your website, and encourage your networks to do the same.
2. Share our I'MA citizen videos using our hashtag **#IMACitizen** and tag us in your posts. Translating our messaging on social media is especially helpful!
3. If you know of someone who would like to contribute their own I'MACitizen video and share it on our channels that would be great.
4. Follow us on our social media channels and help create greater online engagement for our networks.
5. Signpost to the IMA website from your channels or website so that your networks and audiences can access the most up-to-date information as well as content that can be translated and made easier to read.
6. Send us your details so we can signpost to your organisation.

# Social media and website

The IMA has social media channels that you can follow and tag.

X (formerly Twitter) [@IMA\\_CitRights](https://twitter.com/IMA_CitRights)

BlueSky [@imacitrights.bsky.social](https://imacitrights.bsky.social)

Facebook [@imacitizensrights](https://www.facebook.com/imacitizensrights)

LinkedIn [@Independent Monitoring Authority](https://www.linkedin.com/company/independent-monitoring-authority)

YouTube [@imacitizensrights](https://www.youtube.com/imacitizensrights)

We also have a website enabled with language accessibility and inclusion software.

Independent Monitoring Authority for the Citizens' Rights Agreements

Info on how to use the language accessibility and inclusion tool



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# Downloadable assets



# Design links and assets

## IMA Avatars

If you would like to use our avatars to create your own promotional materials, then you can access them via the Dropbox link below.

## Resources

If you would like to download pre-made promotional materials, then please click the link below.

Or you can simply share them directly from our social media channels as a repost or share.

## Dropbox Link

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# Example messaging



# Five Year Key Messaging

**The IMA minds the gap - this means it is part of the effort to help EU citizens and their family members living in the UK and Gibraltar to contribute, grow and thrive following Brexit**

**The IMA is an independent body with a wide and far-reaching remit and an important role in holding public bodies to account**

**The IMA has statutory duties under the Withdrawal and Separation Agreements to promote and monitor the rights of EU citizens**

**EU citizens and their family members have a big role to play in helping the economies of both the UK and Gibraltar grow and thrive**

**The IMA will continue to prioritise monitoring and promoting the effective implementation of the Agreements with public bodies, ensuring their correct application within the delivery of the EUSS**

**Citizens can contact the IMA if they are concerned about whether public bodies are upholding their rights; there is complaints portal and a more informal route to share information available on their website**

# Survey Key Messaging

The Independent Monitoring Authority has just released findings from their latest survey of over 2,200 EU and EEA EFTA citizens living in the UK and Gibraltar. The results reveal ongoing challenges:

- While almost all respondents (97%) know their rights, one in five are still reporting difficulties in accessing those rights, including the right to work, live, and travel
- More than a third (35%) report feeling discriminated against by public bodies since Brexit
- Despite these challenges, 61% of citizens still trust public bodies to uphold their rights and 73% want the IMA to take meaningful action
- Read the full report on their website: <https://orlo.uk/Jz7T8>
- IMA survey of 2,200+ EU citizens reveals ongoing barriers 5 years after Brexit. While 97% of respondents are aware of their rights, 1 in 5 reported experiencing difficulties in accessing them, including the right to work, live, and travel



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Thank you for your support