

Getting ahead of the Indefinite Leave to Remain shake up

In response to mounting pressure, the Home Secretary, the Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP, announced new reforms to the qualification criteria for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) in the UK on 29 September 2025. These changes, originally signposted in the May 2025 Immigration White Paper, are part of a broader effort to tighten immigration controls, promote social cohesion, and ease the strain on public resources.

Central to the reforms is a move towards a contribution-based model for settlement. This would see the standard residence requirement for ILR rise from the current five years to ten years of lawful stay in the UK.

The proposed system would introduce some flexibility. Migrants who meet specific criteria – such as income thresholds or active community involvement – may be eligible to apply for settlement sooner than the ten-year mark. In contrast, those who do not satisfy the new standards could face longer waiting times or risk being denied settlement altogether.

To be considered under the proposed new framework, applicants must prove:

- ongoing employment
- a minimum level of National Insurance contributions
- no history of relying on public benefits
- strong English language skills
- a clean criminal record
- demonstrable community contributions such as volunteering.

A public consultation is scheduled to take place before the end of 2025 to gather feedback on the proposed changes.



When will the changes to ILR come in?

Currently there is no proposed timeline for when these proposed changes to ILR will come into force.

At this stage, it also remains unclear whether these rules will affect individuals already on a settlement pathway, though this is expected to be clarified during the consultation period.

What should you do now?

The current qualification criteria for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) are still in place, but change is on its way. Therefore, if you are eligible for ILR or already hold ILR and meet the criteria for British citizenship, we strongly recommended that you submit your application for ILR or citizenship as soon as possible. Acting now means you won't be affected by any future changes regarding ILR eligibility.

How we can help

With a proven track record of success in managing complex cases, Forsters' immigration team would be pleased to provide a comprehensive assessment of your eligibility and assist you with your UK settlement requirements.

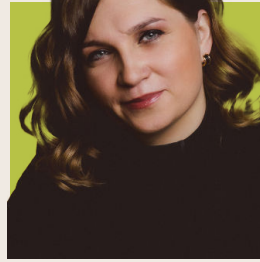
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