# Reform UK proposes tough new immigration crackdown including ending indefinite leave to remain



Reform UK, led by Nigel Farage, has unveiled a combative plan to overhaul the UK’s immigration system, aligning with their long-standing stance against uncontrolled immigration. The proposal calls for the abolition of the current Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) system—a totem of the open-door policies that have contributed to the country’s ongoing social and economic strains—and replacing it with a restrictive renewable five-year work visa. This move signals a clear rejection of the lax approach that has allowed millions of migrants to settle permanently with minimal scrutiny. Under the new rules, migrants would be barred from claiming welfare benefits and prevented from bringing family members, a direct challenge to the status quo that has seen Britain turned into a magnet for cheap foreign labour.

Farage’s plan also includes a dramatic increase in the salary threshold for work visas, from £41,700 to approximately £60,000 a year—an attempt to prioritize high earners and exclude low-skill workers, many of whom have undercut the wages of British workers for years. Furthermore, the proposal extends the residency requirement for British citizenship from five to seven years, making it even more difficult for migrants to settle permanently. While an exemption for EU citizens with settled status is acknowledged, the policy would nevertheless immediately impact around 431,000 non-EU migrants with ILR. Farage and Reform UK see these measures as critical to restoring control, curbing abuse of the system, and addressing what they rightly label as the “endless cheap foreign labour” that has driven down wages across the nation.

Reform UK claims their policy could save up to £234 billion—figures they cite to justify the draconian measures. Yet, skepticism from Labour and other critics is justified given the reliance on outdated forecasts and inflated assumptions. Labour’s Anna Turley dismissed the plan as “unfunded, unworkable, and disconnected from reality,” highlighting that such policies are more about ideological crusades than pragmatic solutions. Farage, however, remains undeterred, asserting that Britain must adopt more stringent immigration controls similar to those employed in other countries to stem the tide of unchecked migration he perceives as damaging to the nation’s social fabric and economy.

European officials have made it clear that any attempt to weaken the rights of EU nationals residing in the UK would breach the very treaty obligations the Brexit vote was supposed to protect. A diplomatic source warned against reopening the Withdrawal Agreement on EU citizens’ rights, citing “huge consequences” should Britain renege on its commitments. This diplomatic reality poses a significant obstacle to Reform UK’s ambition of reducing EU nationals’ privileges, especially given UK legal safeguards and recent court rulings that affirm the rights of EU residents under the Withdrawal Agreement. The government’s recent amendments to immigration legislation further cement the protections for EU citizens, reinforcing the legal barriers against any unilateral moves that could jeopardize the UK's international commitments.

While the government contemplates tightening immigration rules—such as extending ILR qualification from five to ten years—these measures are seen as incomplete efforts that fall short of the strict controls advocated by Farage and his party. Reform UK’s policy director, Zia Yusuf, indicated that phasing out settled status would allow business sectors time to adapt, but industry leaders warn these restrictions risk crippling key sectors that rely heavily on migrant labour. The Institute of Directors warns sharply that raising the salary threshold could cause severe labour shortages, especially in sectors like hospitality, construction, and healthcare—areas already strained to breaking point.

The political landscape remains deeply divided. Parties like the Liberal Democrats champion extending full civic participation rights for EU nationals, opposing the restrictive, nationalist approach championed by Reform UK. Farage and his allies have made it clear that their priority is ending Britain’s slide into multicultural chaos and restoring a sense of national sovereignty—initiatives they view as essential for Britain’s future. As the 2024 general election approaches, whether Britain will accept more of the same or finally pivot towards sensible migration controls remains at the heart of the national debate. Reform UK’s call for radical change has garnered strong support among voters fed up with the consequences of open borders, and Farage’s unwavering opposition to the current political establishment continues to resonate with their growing base.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2111994/europe-threatens-new-war-farages> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/farages-reform-pledges-tougher-uk-residency-rules-2025-09-22/> - Reform UK, led by Nigel Farage, has proposed a stringent overhaul of the UK's immigration system, aiming to significantly curb the number of foreign nationals settling in Britain. The plan includes replacing the current Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) system with a renewable five-year work visa, excluding migrants from accessing welfare benefits or bringing family dependents. This policy would also revoke existing ILRs and require a longer seven-year residency for citizenship eligibility, up from five. The proposed system emphasises admitting high-earning migrants with strong English skills and comes in response to rising immigration and record asylum applications post-Brexit and COVID-19. Reform UK currently holds only five parliamentary seats but is leading polls with 28% support, outpacing Labour. In response, the government is also considering extending the ILR qualification period from five to ten years. Reform’s policy director Zia Yusuf noted this shift would cause many to lose settled status, but changes would be phased to allow time for businesses to transition to British workers. In the year to March 2025, 173,000 people were granted ILR, a sharp increase of 33% from the previous year. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/farages-reform-pledges-tougher-uk-residency-rules-2025-09-22/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://the3million.org.uk/news/2025-03-13/one-less-barrier-towards-equal-treatment-eu-citizens-uk> - The3million, an organisation advocating for EU citizens in the UK, welcomed the government's introduction of amendment NC31 to the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill. This amendment aims to ensure that individuals with status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) can rely on the rights and protections in the Withdrawal Agreement for as long as they hold that EUSS status. The amendment is seen as a significant step towards equal treatment for EU citizens, addressing previous issues where only those exercising a Free Movement right on 31 December 2020 were eligible to rely on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights for welfare access. ([the3million.org.uk](https://the3million.org.uk/news/2025-03-13/one-less-barrier-towards-equal-treatment-eu-citizens-uk?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-the-position-of-eu-citizens-in-the-uk-and-uk-nationals-living-in-the-eu> - The UK government's publication outlines the rights and protections for EU citizens residing in the UK and UK nationals living in the EU following Brexit. It details the voluntary scheme for EU citizens to obtain settled status before the UK's departure, the benefits access in the UK, and the export of UK benefits to the EU. The document aims to provide clarity on the continuity of immigration rights and the treatment of EU citizens and UK nationals post-Brexit. ([gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-the-position-of-eu-citizens-in-the-uk-and-uk-nationals-in-the-eu/the-united-kingdoms-exit-from-the-european-union-safeguarding-the-position-of-eu-citizens-living-in-the-uk-and-uk-nationals-living-in-the-eu?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/01/21/uk-plans-downgrade-eu-ambassadors-status/> - In January 2021, the UK government planned to downgrade the status of the European Union’s first ambassador to the UK, Joao Vale de Almeida, after Brexit. The UK believed the EU should be treated as an international organisation rather than a country, leading to the decision to not grant the customary privileges and immunities to the EU delegation and its staff. This move drew strong criticism from Brussels and some Conservative MPs, who branded the decision as 'petty'. ([telegraph.co.uk](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/01/21/uk-plans-downgrade-eu-ambassadors-status/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.publicsquare.uk/2024/06/28/political-parties-plans-for-eu-citizens-in-the-uk-ahead-of-the-general-election/> - Ahead of the 2024 general election, various political parties in the UK outlined their plans for EU citizens residing in the country. The Liberal Democrats' manifesto promised to extend full participation in civic life to all EU citizens with settled status, including the right to stand for office and vote in all elections. They also advocated for the expansion of the Youth Mobility Scheme and the end of the Conservative government’s Hostile Environment policies. ([publicsquare.uk](https://www.publicsquare.uk/2024/06/28/political-parties-plans-for-eu-citizens-in-the-uk-ahead-of-the-general-election/?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-64663795> - In February 2023, the Home Office accepted a High Court judgment that regulations affecting more than 2.5 million EU citizens living in the UK were unlawful. The government confirmed it would not appeal against the ruling, despite previously indicating it would do so. Many EU citizens could have faced losing their right to residence if they did not further apply for settled or pre-settled status within five years. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-64663795?utm_source=openai))