

---

# Welcome Pack

for arrivals from  
Hong Kong on the  
British Nationals  
(Overseas) visa



HM Government



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

# Welcome Pack for arrivals from Hong Kong on the British Nationals (Overseas) visa

This welcome pack is for people from Hong Kong who have been granted leave on the [British National \(Overseas\) visa](#). This pack is intended to help you settle into life here, taking you step by step through how you can access the public services that are available to you. From what you will need to do find work here, to registering you and your family with a Doctor, or finding a school for your children.

In some places this pack covers specific services in England only – there are links on the GOV.UK Landing Page to webpages for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The information in this pack reflects the current position at the time. The pack will be kept under review and any changes will be reflected in an updated version of the pack.



## Foreword from the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

On behalf of the whole country let me be among the first to wish you the very warmest of welcomes to the United Kingdom.

While I can conceive of few prospects more daunting than uprooting your family and beginning a new life on the other side of the world, I have no doubt that you are going to feel very much at home here.

First, because the UK has a long and proud history of embracing those who arrive on our shores seeking the inalienable rights and freedoms denied to them in their homeland.

And while the UK and Hong Kong may be many thousands of miles apart and very different in so many ways, the fundamental principles that underpin life here will already be more than familiar to you. After all, for more than a century we flourished as free societies and thriving economies where people can express themselves as they please and rise as far as their talents allow.

So I don't want you to think of this publication as a guide to navigating a strange new world. Rather, it is here to help you put down roots, build a life, start a business, educate your children and so much more in a place that you have always known.

It's fantastic to have you here, and I hope this information makes your move as successful as it can be for yourself, for your family, and for this wonderful country that we now share.

## **Foreword from Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government &**

### **Rt Hon Priti Patel MP, Secretary of State for the Home Department.**



The United Kingdom is a country that champions democracy, freedom, and the rule of law. We keep our word, and we will live up to our responsibilities to the people of Hong Kong, with whom we share a deep and special bond. We are making a historic offer to British National Overseas – or BN(O) – status holders and their dependents. We know that if you choose to take advantage of it, you will make a major contribution to British society, as the British-Hong Kong communities in the UK have done for generations.



The Government has been working hard to make your move here as comfortable and easy as possible. We want you to feel at home. In partnership with local councils, we have put plans in place to help you with access to work, setting up a business, education and, where needed, English language tuition.

This guide contains useful information about accessing that support, along with tips for settling in the UK, such as advice for finding housing, employment, and business opportunities.

In order to be granted the visa, you will have demonstrated your ability to accommodate and support yourself here for at least six months. However, we know that sometimes people fall on hard times, so this guide also sets out how you can access additional help.

This information is intended as a useful starting point, but more detailed advice about specific services in your local area will also be available through our welcome centres, local councils, and civil society.

No move to another country can come without its trials and challenges. But I want to take this opportunity to emphasise how much the British-Hong Kong communities are valued by this Government. We will do everything within our power to ensure that you are treated with the exact same dignity and respect bestowed upon everyone in the United Kingdom; we want to help you take full advantage of all the opportunities that lie ahead.

It is our profound hope that, in time, you will come to recognise the UK as a place in which you will always have the freedom and opportunity to thrive and flourish. A place you can call home.

## Contents

1: Your status once you have been granted the BN(O) visa .....	4
2: Life in the UK.....	6
3: Employment .....	15
4: Starting a new business or expanding your existing business to the UK.....	20
5: Housing and Services .....	25
6: Healthcare .....	27
7: Access to education .....	31
8: Applying to access public funds .....	36
9: Legal Rights and Responsibilities.....	37
10: Acting on discrimination .....	38
Annex A: Contact details of professional groups .....	39
Annex B: Buying your own home .....	42
Annex C: Information for Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) on obtaining a school place for their children in England.....	45

## 1: Your status once you have been granted the BN(O) visa

The Hong Kong British National (Overseas) visa route was launched by Rt Hon Priti Patel, the Home Secretary - you can read her statement at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hong-kong-bno-visa-uk-government-to-honour-historic-commitment>

### *Your status*

If you have been granted the BN(O) visa it means that:

- You and your eligible family members will be able to come to the UK to live, study and work in virtually any capacity, on a pathway to citizenship. After five years in the UK, you and your family members will be able to apply for settlement, followed by citizenship after a further twelve months.
- You can access public services e.g. healthcare and schools
- You can work
- You will have 'No Recourse to Public Funds' but can apply to change this in exceptional circumstances (see section 8 – Applying to access public funds)

### *Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)*

Once you have been granted the BN(O) visa, depending on how you applied you will either be able to view immigration status information online (if you applied using the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app) or receive a sticker (called a 'vignette') that goes in your passport.

If you have a vignette, you have to collect a [biometric residence permit \(BRP\)](#) after you arrive. You must do this before the vignette sticker expires or within 10 days of arriving in the UK, whichever is later. You will choose where to collect your BRP from during your application.

Your BRP will include:

- your name, date and place of birth
- your fingerprints and a photo of your face (this is your [biometric information](#))
- your immigration status and any conditions of your stay
- whether you can access public funds, for example benefits and health services

Please keep this important document safe as it is evidence of your legal status in the UK and shows how long you may stay in the UK for.

### *Digital immigration status*

If you applied for the BN(O) visa using the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app to scan your BNO, HKSAR or EEA passport, you will not receive a vignette and you will not need to collect a BRP. Instead, you will be able to view your immigration status information online. You can also use the online service to share your immigration status information with others, for example employers or universities. Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/view-prove-immigration-status>

Your online status will show:

- your name, date and place of birth
- your immigration status and any conditions of your stay
- the dates your visa is valid (start date and end date)

As BN(O) visa holders you are entitled to live where you want in the UK.

For information on how to apply for British citizenship and guidance on aspects of living in the UK including registering to vote, please see here:

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/citizenship/citizenship>

## 2: Life in the UK

### *Population*

The UK is a country committed to freedom, liberty, tolerance, and mutual respect, where people from all backgrounds live and work together. Around 66 million people live in the UK. Some areas of the UK are more diverse than others, especially larger cities. In 2011, at the time of the last census, over 14% of the population identified themselves as being part of an ethnic group other than 'White'. The census is being undertaken this year: <https://census.gov.uk/>

### *The British-Hong Kong Community*

The UK is home to large British-Hong Kong communities residing in different parts of the country. The contributions of these communities to Britain are immense. From the early migrants to today, the community has flourished in an impressive range of fields. In education, health, media, business and trade the British-Hong Kong community is at the heart of the success of our nation.

Whether we look to the world of film or look to science, we will always find great examples of the British-Hong Kong contributions to our country.

The British-Hong Kong community are making a big difference every day, in our communities as our teachers, small business owners, NHS staff, carers and Armed Forces personnel.

### *Choosing Where to Live*

As BN(O) status holders, you are entitled to live where you want in the UK.

There will be a few things you may want to consider when choosing where to live: This includes the availability of jobs in certain industries (see Chapter on Employment below), schooling, housing, local or cultural connections including family and friends.

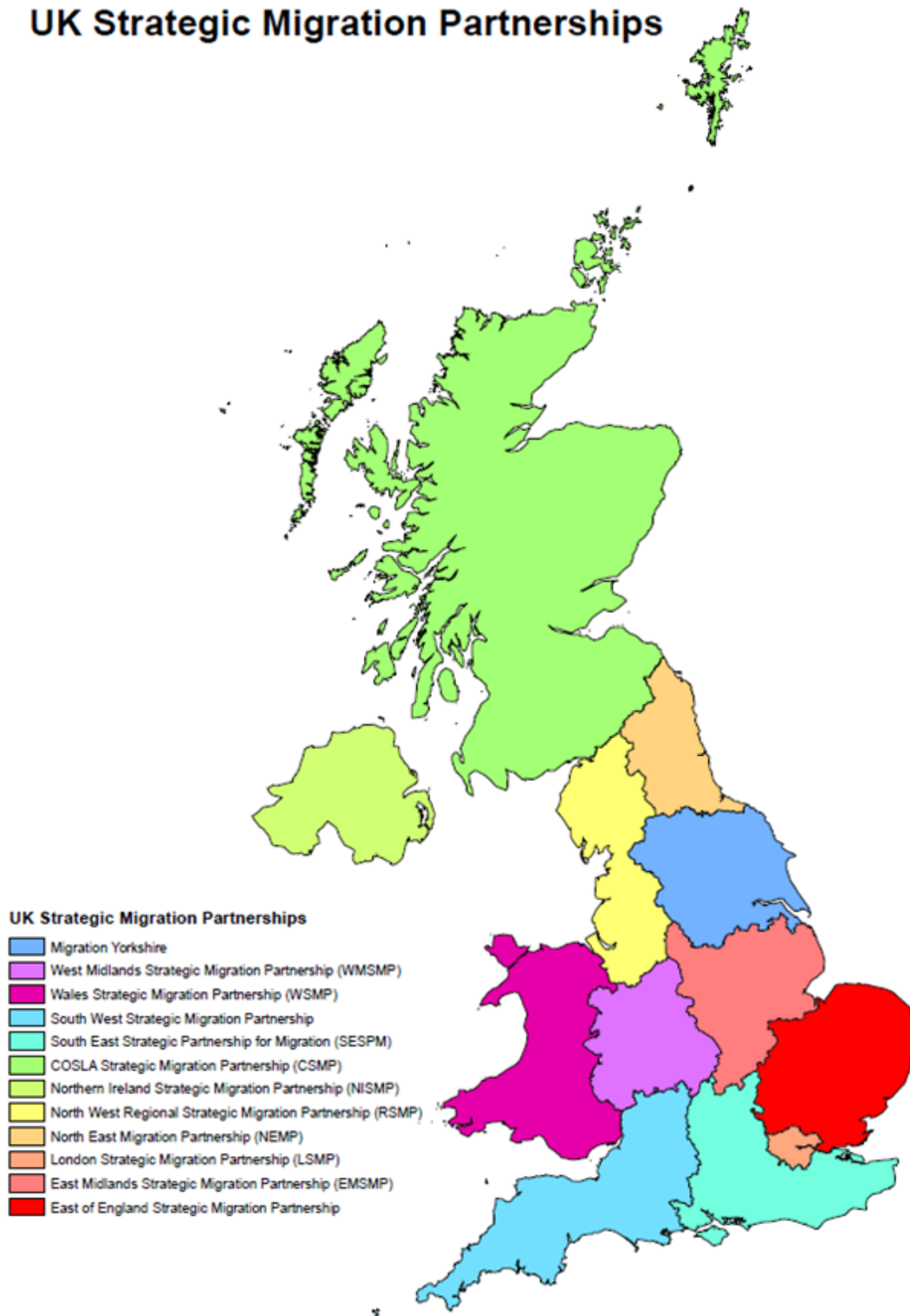
There are various regions across the four nations in the UK with brilliant industries and strengths – you can read more about them in links such as these: <https://northernpowerhouse.gov.uk/> or <https://www.midlandsengine.org/>.

To understand the skills needed in each region you can look at the Skills Advisory Panel webpage for the area you are interested in: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-advisory-panels/skills-advisory-panels-list>

If education is an important issue for your family when moving to England, please refer to Chapter 7 and Annex C for information.

A network of 'Hong Kong Welcome Hubs' is being set up across the UK. These will be hosted by existing 'Strategic Migration Partnerships' (SMPs). There are 12 SMPs across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland (please see the map below). SMPs have a coordinating and supporting role in delivering key national priorities on migration across the UK and will play an integral role in the delivery of the Hong Kong UK Welcome Programme. More information will be provided on the Welcome Hubs in due course on GOV.UK.

## UK Strategic Migration Partnerships





## *Weather*

The UK is well known for the variability of its weather. Its position on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean with its relatively warm waters, yet close to the continental influences of mainland Europe, plays a major role in this. Changes in topography and land use over relatively short distances, together with a long coastline and numerous islands, all add to the variety of weather.

In general, places in the east and south of the UK tend to be drier, warmer, sunnier and less windy than those that are further west and north. Also, these favourable weather conditions usually occur more often in the spring and summer than in autumn and winter. But that is by no means the whole story, and there are climate descriptions on the Met Office website that illustrate the all-important regional and seasonal variations in more detail: [UK regional climates - Met Office](#)

## *Places of worship*

The largest religion in the UK is Christianity, with 33.2 million people (59% of the population). The second largest religion is Islam, with 2.7 million people (5% of the population). Around a quarter of the UK population practise no religion.

The UK is a multi-faith society and there are mosques, churches, synagogues, temples and other places of worship in larger towns or cities. Many newcomers to the UK have found that they have had support and help through their place of worship and have also made friends who have helped them to adapt and made them feel welcome. There are groups like the Inter Faith Network for the UK (<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/>) which may help you to find a place of worship such as a local church, mosque or Buddhist temple.

Many churches in the UK have put themselves forward as churches to welcome people from Hong Kong – these can be found at <https://ukhk.org/>

## *Languages*

The UK uses British spelling, which differs slightly to American English. There are many different regional accents across the UK. Welsh is also widely used and taught in Wales and there are other recognised regional languages such as Scots Gaelic, Scots, Irish/Gaelic and Cornish.

## *Weekends & public holidays*

The UK weekend falls on Saturday and Sunday when most offices close. Banks and post offices are usually open Monday-Friday and on Saturday morning, but close on Saturday afternoon and Sunday. However, most shops and restaurants remain open on Saturday and for much of Sunday.

There are a number of public holidays throughout the year. Some apply across the entire UK and some are specific to England and Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland. Most businesses close, but shops, restaurants and leisure facilities usually remain open.

## *Culture*

Throughout the year there are festivals of art, music and culture, such as the Notting Hill Carnival in London and the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland. The main Christian festivals are Christmas and Easter, and there are also customs and traditions from various religions, such as Eid (Muslim), Diwali (Hindu) and Hanukkah (Jewish) which are widely recognised and celebrated amongst communities in the UK.

The UK is home to some of the world's top museums and art galleries – many of which are free to visit – music venues and theatres. Outside the cities there is beautiful countryside and many castles, historic houses, parks and gardens.

- Visit Britain - The official tourism website of Great Britain, which gives an overview of opportunities to enjoy British arts, culture, outdoor activities and more.
- National Trust - A national charity which looks after nature, beauty and history for the nation to enjoy. They care for miles of coastline, woodlands, countryside and the hundreds of historic buildings, gardens and precious collections across the UK.
- BBC British History - An overview of British history through the ages.

## *Your local neighbourhood*

Your local area will likely have a range of local facilities and amenities. Large cities and towns will have a local post-office, pharmacy, supermarkets and food shops that cater for a range of tastes. Your local neighbourhood will have a leisure centre or gym where you can play sport or exercise, local parks and libraries where you can borrow books and access the internet if you do not have it at home. Libraries and parks are free to everyone and leisure centres are often cheap to use.

Many social media channels will have community groups run by local people or local councils which will provide information about local amenities.

## *Volunteering*

Volunteering is a great way to meet new people and learn about your area. This could be a charity, voluntary organisation or associated fund-raising body or statutory body. To find out more about volunteering, visit: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/> or <https://nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk/> for COVID-19 vaccination volunteers.

## *Political system*

Core British values include Democracy, Rule of Law, Respect, Tolerance and Individual Liberty.

The UK is a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary democracy. The monarch - Queen Elizabeth II - is the Head of State, but power rests in the democratically elected parliament. The Prime Minister leads the government. The government is

usually formed by the largest political party who are elected to the UK Parliament through free and fair elections.

The power to make laws rests in the two [Houses of Parliament](#) - the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The House of Commons is made up of 650 representatives (Members of Parliament or MPs) from geographical constituencies, elected every five years by the general public. The House of Lords is made up of appointed members.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland also each have their own government, and while their responsibilities differ, typically they have responsibility for issues such as healthcare and education.

You can find out more about the services in those nations via these links:

Scotland: <https://www.scotland.org/live-in-scotland/moving-to-scotland#/welcome>

Wales: <https://sanctuary.gov.wales/>

Northern Ireland: <https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/>

### *Register to vote*

You can find more information about how to register to vote at:

<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>. Your local MP is listed on the UK parliament website at: <https://members.parliament.uk/members/Commons>

If you are a BN(O) status holder, you will be a qualifying commonwealth citizen with leave in the UK, and therefore will have full voter rights. However, if your dependents aren't registered BN(O) status holders they may not qualify until they have reached citizenship, unless they hold another form of citizenship which would make them eligible.

### *Local Government*

In the UK, local government is responsible for a range of vital services for people and businesses in defined areas. Among them are well known functions such as social care, schools, housing and planning and waste collection, but also lesser known ones such as licensing, business support, registrar services and pest control.

Local authorities receive funding from a range of sources, including Government grants, council tax and fees and charges. Council tax is set by each individual local authority each year, and the amount each household has to pay depends on the value of their house and their income. Some exemptions may apply; more information can be found out. <https://www.gov.uk/council-tax>

Local councils, which is the most common type of local authority, are made up of councillors who are elected by the public in local elections.

Councillors work with local people and partners, such as local businesses and other organisations, to agree and deliver on local priorities. The decisions are implemented by permanent council staff and council officers. Councillors are elected by local

people. You can also contact your councillors if you have any local issues you feel that they can raise on your behalf. <https://www.gov.uk/find-your-local-councillors>

Many parts of England have 2 tiers of local government:

- county councils
- district, borough or city councils

In some parts of the country, there is just one (unitary) tier of local government providing all the local services. The three main types are:

- unitary authorities
- London boroughs
- metropolitan boroughs

There is an additional type of regional authority, Combined Authorities, where two or more councils collaborate and take collective decisions across council boundaries.

Further information on how to find your local council is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

### *The Law in the UK*

Respect for the law is very important in the UK and everyone must obey the law. If you break the law, there are consequences. You could receive a fine or you could go to prison.

The law applies to everyone in the UK. Cases are decided by judges in a court of law. In every case both sides are treated fairly. Every person can be represented by a lawyer.

There are two types of law in the UK:

- Civil Law, which settles disputes between people
- Criminal Law, which covers crime and punishment

Both govern what you can and cannot do in the UK.

Some specific laws vary between England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

### *The police and their duties*

The police exist to protect the public, their rights and the law. The police are there to help and assist you and you should not be afraid to approach them if you are the victim of a crime, see a crime happening, or for general assistance for example if you are lost.

If you need the police because of a crime, then you should call the following telephone numbers:

**999** – This is the number to call if you have an emergency, for example if you are the victim of an assault or see a crime taking place. When you call, say you need ‘police’, as this is also the number to call an ambulance or if there is a fire.

**101** – This is the number to call for less urgent situations, for example if your property has been damaged, to give police information about a crime, or any general enquiries.

If you are not satisfied with the service you have received from the police, you can complain directly to the police unit or office in question or the [Independent Office for Police Conduct](#), which is responsible for overseeing the system for handling complaints made against police forces in England and Wales, the [Police Investigations & Review Commissioner](#) (PIRC) in Scotland or the [Office of the Police Ombudsman](#) for Northern Ireland. The role of these latter institutions is to impartially, and independent of the police, investigate conduct and behaviour.

### *Money*

The currency in the UK is the Pound Sterling (£). £1 (one pound) = 100p (100 pennies, or pence). Cash is accepted in most places but increasingly people use debit/credit cards to pay for goods and services.

### *Opening a bank account*

There are a range of banks and you can choose one that suits you best. There are also online-only providers which you can use.

To open a bank account, you will usually need to show a form of identification such as your passport or a driver's licence or a recognised identity card as well as proof of your address, such as your tenancy agreement or a gas, electric or phone bill. You should ask about any charges when you open a bank account.

Once you open your account, you will usually be issued with a debit card. Many cards are contactless - some shops will only accept contactless payment as will some transport providers, for example in London – ask your bank about this.

You can also arrange for bills to be paid directly from your account using 'direct debit'.

Further information on how to open a bank account is available at:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/banking/getting-a-bank-account/>

### *Carrying Cash into the UK*

You can bring cash with you when you come to the UK. However, if it is £10,000 or more (or the equivalent in any currency) when you enter the UK you must make a declaration. More details of how to find and fill in the declaration can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/bringing-cash-into-uk>

### *Paying tax*

In the UK the Government (through Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)) collects tax on labour and assets. Central government revenues come primarily from income tax, National Insurance contributions, value added tax, corporation tax and fuel duty.

Foreign income of United Kingdom residents is taxed as United Kingdom income, but to prevent double taxation the United Kingdom has agreements with many countries to allow offset against United Kingdom tax what is deemed paid abroad. These deemed amounts paid abroad are not necessarily as much as actually paid.

Taxpayer's income is assessed for tax according to a prescribed order, with income from employment using up the personal allowance and being taxed first, followed by savings income (from interest or otherwise unearned) and then dividends.

You have a responsibility to pay the right amount of income tax. Income tax is a set percentage of your yearly income. If you are employed by someone else, it is often deducted directly from your monthly salary through a system called Pay As You Earn (PAYE). If you are not employed by a company or another person but earn an income, you have a responsibility to declare that income and pay the right amount of tax. The amount of tax you pay depends on how much you earn. You can check this at <https://www.gov.uk/estimate-income-tax>

Rental income on a property investment business (such as a buy to let property) is taxed as other savings income, after allowing deductions including mortgage interest.

For further advice, you can contact HMRC directly, or Citizens Advice, as well as professional accountants.

### *Paying National Insurance contributions (NICs)*

You pay National Insurance contributions to qualify for certain benefits and the State Pension.

You pay mandatory National Insurance if you're 16 or over and are either:

- An employee earning above £184 a week;
- Self-employed and making a profit of £6,515 or more a year.

There is no requirement for those who have reached State Pension age to pay National Insurance Contributions.

You may be able to pay voluntary contributions to avoid gaps in your National Insurance Contributions.

More information on National Insurance can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/national-insurance>

### *Public Transport*

There is an extensive train and bus network across the UK. To use public transport, you usually have to buy a ticket before travelling. For national trains or buses, tickets are usually much cheaper if bought in advance. You can find out more information on the national rail website: [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

You don't need to show identification to travel between England and Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland unless you are travelling by plane.

### *Driving*

If you have a Hong Kong driving licence, you may drive small vehicles (such as motorcycles, cars, and vehicles up to 3500kgs or with up to 8 passenger seats) for up to a year on your national driving licence, provided it is still valid. To continue driving you must exchange your licence for a GB one. Licences must be exchanged within 12 months of becoming resident in the UK, or you must stop driving.

If you do not hold a Hong Kong licence or one issued in a country or territory whose licence the UK Government recognise for exchange, you must apply for a provisional driving licence and pass a British driving test. All applicants for a driving licence must meet the normal British requirements on health and minimum ages.

Drivers wishing to exchange their licences for a GB equivalent must meet the following requirements:

- i. Meet the necessary residency requirements;
- ii. Licences must be valid at the time of application;
- iii. Applicants must show that they did not obtain the licence by way of a previous exchange for one issued in a third country whose licensing and testing standards do not meet those applied in Great Britain;
- iv. Licences issued as a result of a test passed in a vehicle with automatic transmission will be exchanged for a British licence with entitlement to drive automatic vehicles only.

Applicants will need to complete a D1 application form available from Post Offices (<https://www.postoffice.co.uk/>) and from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-licensing-agency>) and send it together with supporting documentation including proof of identity and proof of lawful residency. If the document(s) you provide is not in English, you will need to provide a translation that has been issued in the UK and signed by an official translator belonging to the Institute of Linguists or the Institute of Translation & Interpreting. A translator who is employed by a recognised translation company, who is a member of the Association of Translation Companies, is also acceptable.

Please note that passports containing a visa/residency stamp must show indefinite leave to remain. Applicants in possession of a BRP card must send them with the application. The application should be sent to:

*The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, Swansea, SA99 1BT*

Further Information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/exchange-foreign-driving-licence>

### 3: Employment

In the UK, workers are entitled to certain employment rights, including:

- Getting the national Minimum Wage
- Protection against unlawful deductions from wages
- The statutory minimum level of paid holiday
- The statutory minimum length of rest breaks
- To not work more than 48 hours on average in a week or to opt out of this right if you choose
- Protection against unlawful discrimination
- Protection for whistleblowing -when reporting wrongdoing in a workplace
- To not be treated less favourably if you work part-time

You may also be entitled to:

- Statutory Sick pay
- Statutory Maternity Pay
- Statutory Paternity Pay
- Statutory Adoption Pay
- Shared Parental Pay

Agency workers have specific rights from the first day of employment.

For more information on Employment rights, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/employment-status/worker>

Should you require further assistance in understanding your employment rights, contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/rights-at-work/>

#### *Finding a job*

Finding a job will not only increase your income but will help you settle into your new life.

You have the right to work as soon as you have been granted the BN(O) visa.

However, you will not automatically be given a job.

To understand the skills needed in each region of England you can look at the Skills Advisory Panel webpage for the area you are interested in:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-advisory-panels/skills-advisory-panels-list>.

The Government offers a free recruitment service that connects jobseekers with thousands of employers across the UK through Find a Job (<https://www.gov.uk/find-a-job>), a free service which allows jobseekers to search for work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can search for jobs without an account. To apply, you need to create an account or sign in. This also allows you to track your activities, create tailored job alerts, and store multiple CVs.



You are also encouraged to register with other external and independent agencies to widen your job search on job boards such as:

- [Indeed](#)
- [Reed](#)
- [CV Library](#)
- [The Guardian Jobs](#)
- [Total Jobs](#)
- [Monster](#)
- [Jobsites](#)

### **Section 1 has more information about the regions such as the Northern Powerhouse.**

The Skills Advisory Panels will be publishing reports on local skills online, and they contain good career information for local people.

#### *Getting a job*

To get help to find a job, you can:

- Look in local and national newspapers or recruitment websites where jobs are advertised;
- Register with a recruitment agency who can find job vacancies for you;
- Visit local companies to enquire about job vacancies.

#### *Applying for a job*

Once you have identified a job you want to apply for, applications are usually made through an application form, or a CV ('curriculum vitae' - a formal list of your qualifications and experience) and a covering letter.

You can get careers advice and support from the National Careers Service. The National Careers Service delivers careers information, advice and guidance to adults in England – in the community, online and on the phone. Young people aged 13+ can also access information via the helpline 0800 100 900. The website contains a range of different career roles and progression routes. Further information can be found on <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

Employers may also ask to see your documentation. It will help if you can bring your original documents such as your BRP or be prepared to show your digital status to show evidence of your right to work in the UK. College diplomas and any other proof of your qualifications and experience will be helpful to show to employers. Employers may also ask for references from people who can verify your suitability for employment (such as a former manager, teacher or colleague).

#### *Working in the National Health Service (NHS)*

The NHS is the largest employer in the UK and there are currently over 80,000 vacancies for clinical and non-clinical (managerial, administration and auxiliary) roles in the health and care sector, all of which are open to Hong Kong citizens holding either a BN(O) visa or, if the role is clinical, the Health and Care visa (see

<https://www.gov.uk/health-care-worker-visa>). Internationally trained staff have been part of the NHS since its inception in 1948 and continue to play a vital role. 16% of nurses and 36% of doctors in England trained outside of the UK. Similarly, the social care sector employs 35% of nurses and 16% of all social care workers from beyond the UK. Working for the NHS offers a career working in world-leading hospitals while receiving extensive continuous professional development (for example £1,000 per nurse per year has been invested in professional training over the next three years). A good website to look at is NHS Jobs (<https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>) and for Social Care, Adult Social Care Jobs (<https://www.everydayisdifferent.com/home.aspx>). NHS Employers holds guidance for the NHS regarding the acceptance of the BN(O) visa: <https://www.nhsemployers.org/news/2021/03/bno-visa>. Nurses working in the NHS from Hong Kong have recently set up their own diaspora group which can provide advice and support to those looking for career in nursing on arrival to the UK. Their website is <https://hknauk.org/>.

### *Your National Insurance Number*

You have a National Insurance number to make sure your National Insurance contributions and tax are recorded against your name only. It's made up of letters and numbers and never changes.

You can look for and start work without a National Insurance number if you can prove you can work in the UK. You can also go online to <https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work> which allows you to authorise an employer to access your data to prove that you have the right to work in the UK.

Employers are required to conduct mandatory Right to Work checks on all prospective employees. Having a National Insurance number is not part of these checks, and the possession of a National Insurance number does not prove that an individual has a right to work.

If you do not have a NI number you can find further information on how to obtain one at: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number>, when making an application you will need to provide a copy of your passport and proof that you have the right to work. You will be advised of the documents you will need to provide when making your application.

### *Qualifications recognition*

BN(O) status holders with a non-UK professional qualification may need to have their qualification officially recognised to work in a profession that is regulated in the UK. It will need to be recognised by the appropriate regulator for their profession across the UK. In some cases, the qualification may need to be recognised by a national authority, rather than UK-wide authority, depending on the nation in which you intend to work.

Professionals with non-UK qualifications should contact the appropriate UK regulator for further information. If professionals are uncertain of the appropriate regulator, they can contact the [UK Centre of Professional Qualifications \[UKCPQ\]](#) to find out which regulatory or professional body they should contact for further information on how to get their professional qualification recognised.

If your qualification has already been officially recognised by the relevant UK regulator, make sure you understand the terms of your recognition decision by checking in with that regulator.

A list with contact details and website addresses for some of the larger professions can be found at Annex A.

### *Teachers from Hong Kong*

Teachers from Hong Kong can gain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in England by completing an accredited course of teacher training in England. Alternatively, experienced teachers from Hong Kong with a degree could complete the assessment only route. There is more information on these available at: There is more information on these available at: <https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/>

Teachers can also work without QTS in academies and free schools. Overseas teachers, including those qualified in Hong Kong, can also work in maintained schools without QTS for up to four years.

Teaching vacancies is the official job-listing service from the Department for Education and used by 17,000 schools to post their teaching roles. You can search for a job at a school or trust in England, save jobs and set up job alerts. You can access Teaching Vacancies at <https://teaching-vacancies.service.gov.uk/>

### *Your rights and protection at work*

When you go to work, you have the right to be treated fairly and work in a safe environment. You also have the right to be able to work without fear or harassment from your employer, colleagues or customers.

Every employer in the country must pay their employees a minimum amount per hour. How much this is, depends on how old you are. Please check <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates> for the most up-to-date information.

The terms and conditions of your work will be outlined in your contract. Make sure you read this carefully, with an interpreter if necessary, before you sign.

You can get further advice about your rights and Employer's responsibilities by contacting ACAS on 0300 123 1100.

### *Equality and discrimination in the workplace*

Organisations and businesses have a legal duty to treat everyone fairly in the workplace and in the way they recruit people for jobs. It is illegal to discriminate against anyone applying for a job or in the workplace on the basis of sex and gender reassignment, race, religion, being married or in a civil partnership, disability, age, sexual orientation or if they are pregnant.

Employers must therefore respect the needs of an employee as long as it does not interfere with the work they are employed to do.

If you think you have been unfairly discriminated against you can get further advice and support from the Equality Advisory Service: [www.equalityadvisoryservice.com](http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com)

If you are being forced to work or your employer isn't willing to respect your rights, you can also get advice from the Modern Slavery Helpline by calling 0800 0121 700.

## 4: Starting a new business or expanding your existing business to the UK

### *Setting up a business in the UK*

Whether you are starting a new business or expanding your Hong Kong business, the UK is a great place to start and grow a business. It offers a robust and secure business environment, global connectivity, a breadth of industries with a highly educated workforce that helps companies succeed.

- **Stability:** Robust legal and regulatory environment – the UK is a safe and trusted place to do business
- **Services:** World leaders in professional services that are vital to business, such as banking, accountancy, law and auditing, with depth and diversity of experience
- **Entrepreneurial:** One of the most innovative countries in the world

The UK has always been a place in which entrepreneurial foreign-born migrants have thrived. A recent study by The Entrepreneurs Network found that of Britain's 100 fastest growing companies, 49% had at least one immigrant co-founder. In fact, 17% of non-UK nationals own their own business compared to 10% for UK nationals.

The UK is ranked in the top ten countries globally for doing business according to the World Bank and is also one of the easiest places to start a business. Over 100,000 new businesses were started in the UK in 2020, giving an indication of the UK's innovative spirit, entrepreneurial workforce and business-friendly environment.

To start a business, you will first need to decide its legal form. Most businesses are set up as sole traders, limited companies or partnerships. If you decide on a company, you will probably need to [register your business with Companies House](#). Depending on the type of business you set up you may have to make sure you have certain licences or permits (for example to sell food or trade on the street) or insurance coverage. There are also rules you must follow if you are selling goods online, importing or exporting goods, or if you are storing or using personal information.

For new businesses starting up or for existing businesses wishing to scale up, the main source of advice and guidance is the GOV.UK website at: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/business> As business support is largely a devolved matter, the GOV.UK website also signposts to the support provided by devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Here is a summary of the key considerations:

#### A. Decide on legal structure

- Your commercial aims will determine the type of operation that you need to establish and help define your legal and tax status.
- Most businesses are set up as sole traders, limited companies or partnerships.

#### B. Register at Companies House

- To [register with Companies House](#) you'll need:
  - a suitable company name
  - an address for the company
  - at least one director
  - details of the company's shares - you need at least one shareholder
  - to check what your Standard Industry Classification '[SIC' code](#) is - this identifies what your company does
- You'll also need:
  - shareholders to agree to create the company and the written rules known as '[memorandum and articles of association](#)'
  - details of people with significant control (PSC) over your company, for example anyone with more than 25% shares or voting rights
- Registration can be completed online at a cost of £12 if you have everything you need to set up. A professional advisor may also undertake this for you.

#### C. Set up business bank accounts

- If you are intending to trade in the UK, then a UK bank account will be needed. Not only does it give your business credibility in the UK, but if you have numerous transactions it will be cheaper to handle these locally, rather than through overseas bank transfers which are invariably costly. In addition (should you need to be VAT registered), having a UK bank account accelerates the process.
- When setting up the business bank account you will need to bring along the following:
  - Business customer application form,
  - Mandate for companies registered under the Companies Act,
  - Registration of the company,
  - identification documents and verification of address for all the directors.
- In addition to the traditional banks, the UK also has a thriving fin-tech sector, with numerous companies offering digital banking services. These digital options can make accessing business banking services faster and easier with the application process taking place entirely online.

#### D. Register for corporation tax and Value Added Tax (VAT)

- Corporation Tax - You must give HMRC specific information about your company within 3 months of starting up in business. HMRC will use this information to work out when your company must pay Corporation Tax. You can do this online once you've got your company's Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR) – sent usually within a few days of the company being registered. This does not apply to sole traders
- You must register for VAT with HMRC if your business' VAT taxable turnover is more than £85,000. Most businesses can register online. By doing this you'll register for VAT and create a VAT online account. You need this to submit your VAT Returns to HMRC. This applies to any type of business, once the taxable turnover reaches £85,000

#### E. Register for payroll

- As an employer, you normally have to operate PAYE as part of your payroll. PAYE is a HMRC system to collect Income Tax and National Insurance from employment.
- [Register as an employer with HMRC](#) and get a login for [PAYE Online](#). You must register before the first payday.
- A number of options exist for recruiting staff in the UK through online recruitment agencies who can assist with the recruitment process.

#### F. Search for property

- For companies setting up in the UK, the key property decision is whether to rent premises (known as “leasehold”) or to buy premises (known as “freehold”).
- Look into the [Business Rates](#) for that property.

#### G. Get business insurance

- In the UK, insurance protection is compulsory to cover you against a number of risks. You must arrange insurance as soon as your new company employs staff. UK law requires that you hold Employers’ liability insurance and third party motor insurance. Other insurance to consider includes assets, income, liabilities, people and other risks.
- Insurance can be provided from a number of operators in the UK.

Support is also available via the Business Support Helpline (England only) on Freephone 0800 998 1098 and the UK-wide British Business Bank.

### *Expanding your Hong Kong business to the UK*

The business and legal environments in the UK and Hong Kong are very similar, making expanding your business to the UK very straightforward. Most of the information described in the section above will also be applicable to companies expanding their existing Hong Kong business to the UK. The only difference is that you will have to decide if the UK entity will be set up as a branch of the Hong Kong business, or as a subsidiary.

By registering a branch of your Hong Kong company in the UK, your company does not create a separate legal entity. Instead, it registers your company to do business in the UK. A branch does not get the limited liability benefits of a UK limited company. Please see here for more information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overseas-companies-in-the-uk-registration-filing-and-disclosure-obligations>

A subsidiary is a separate legal entity from the overseas company and is usually set up as a private limited company. In most cases, the shares are wholly owned by the overseas parent company, but the overseas company will have no legal liability for the subsidiary's debts and obligations.

### *Funding for businesses*



The British Business Bank is the UK's government-owned development bank. The British Business Bank's online Finance Hub is available at [www.british-business-bank.co.uk/finance-hub](http://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/finance-hub)

The Start Up Loans Company, part of the British Business Bank, provides Government-backed business loans of between £500 and £25,000 at a fixed interest rate of 6% per year with repayment terms of 1 to 5 years. As well as finance, every loan recipient is also offered a dedicated mentoring service and access to a free expert business mentor for 12 months to help them with every aspect of setting up a business.

Other sources of advice and resources that can help you start a business include:

- Local growth hubs in England or chambers of commerce can provide tailored advice and help you finance and grow your business here. A list of these in your area can be found at: [www.gov.uk/business-finance-support](http://www.gov.uk/business-finance-support).
- Online resources for writing business plans. For example, you can download business plan templates from The Prince's Trust website ([www.princes-trust.org.uk](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk)) or get detailed information on how to write a business plan on Start Up Donut ([www.startupdonut.co.uk](http://www.startupdonut.co.uk)).

### **Find Business Support Scotland**

Online at <https://findbusinesssupport.gov.scot/>

Telephone: 0300 303 0660

Textphone: 0800 023 2071

Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5:30pm

### **Business Wales**

Online at <https://businesswales.gov.wales/>

Telephone: 0300 060 3000

Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5:30pm

### **Northern Ireland Business Info**

Online at <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/>

Telephone: 0800 181 4422

Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5pm

Support is also available via the Business Support Helpline (England only) on Freephone 0800 998 1098

### *The Department for International Trade (DIT)*

The Department for International Trade (DIT) is the UK Government's Department that secures UK and global prosperity by promoting and financing international trade and investment and championing free trade.

In Hong Kong, the DIT team is part of the British Consulate-General and it supports Hong Kong companies and entrepreneurs that plan to set up or expand their business operations and investments in the UK.

DIT offer feedback and advice, information about all aspects of setting up and running a business in the UK, introductions to relevant contacts in the private and



public sectors, as well as market and industry insights and information about high potential opportunities.

For more information, please see here: <https://www.great.gov.uk/> or contact the DIT team in Hong Kong: Email: [DITHongKong@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:DITHongKong@fcdo.gov.uk)

Telephone: +852 2901 3182

## 5: Housing and Services

### *Buying your own home*

Buying a house can be complicated but extremely satisfying when you get the right place. Knowing what to expect and how to go about it the right way is crucial. Further information can be found at Annex B.

This section summarises the process of buying your own home, and for more information the Government has published a detailed guide here; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-buy-a-home/how-to-buy>

Before you begin viewing properties you should get a mortgage decision in principle. This is a written statement from a lender giving an estimate of what you can borrow. It gives you some indication of your budget and signals to sellers that you are serious about buying a property. Getting a decision in principle from one lender does not mean you have to take out a mortgage with them. However, as part of the decision in principle, most lenders will carry out a credit search. Some lenders will carry out an initial enquiry that will not affect your credit score. Other lenders will undertake a hard enquiry that may affect your credit score. You should find out what type of enquiry lenders use, as too many hard enquiries could negatively affect your credit score.

A verbal offer can be renegotiated at any time up to until contracts are exchanged, but you should think carefully before renegotiating and only do so when a change is justified; for example, if the home survey identifies significant issues. Attempts to renegotiate the offer when a sale nears completion may cause delays and could risk the sale falling through.

### *Renting your home*

As a BN(O) visa holder you have the right to rent in the UK. You will be able to use your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) or your digital status to evidence your immigration status in the UK, including your right to rent. To prove your status digitally to a landlord or letting agent you can use the online service, which is found at: <https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-rent>

Letting agents are free to carry out any referencing checks within the law as they deem appropriate before accepting a new tenant. This may include income requirements or the need for a guarantor, dependent upon the decision of the individual landlord. If providing references proves challenging for you, we would encourage you to discuss your personal circumstances with the letting agent or landlord about alternative forms of reference that might be acceptable.

Rented housing can be found through local lettings agents and on property listings websites. The types of privately rented housing available is different across the country.

When you find a house or flat you will probably need to pay a deposit. You will then need to sign a 'tenancy agreement'. This is a legal contract between you and the landlord. Your tenancy agreement will set out how much rent needs to be paid and how often, a list of repairs and maintenance that are your responsibility and which

are the landlord's responsibility, and any other rules or restrictions e.g. smoking restrictions.

The tenancy will usually be for a fixed period of 6 or 12 months. The landlord must allow you to stay in the property for a minimum of 6 months. If you want a longer initial fixed period, you can ask whether the landlord is willing to agree to this. You will be obliged to pay the rent for the duration of the tenancy.

You can find out about your responsibilities and rights as a tenant in the Government's 'How to Rent Guide', which is at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent/how-to-rent-the-checklist-for-renting-in-england>

### *Council Tax*

You are liable for paying Council Tax for your property. This is a set amount for the financial year which runs from April to March, and you can pay this monthly.

Council Tax is a tax which goes to your local authority for local services such as care, social services, police and local facilities.

People who have no recourse to public funds are not entitled to receive local council tax support. However, you might be entitled to a discount or exemption, for example, if you are living alone. Your local authority will be able to let you know. Advice on the types of discount and exemption is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/paying-the-right-level-of-council-tax-a-plain-english-guide-to-council-tax>

### *Homelessness Assistance and Council Housing*

In England, your local authority must help if you become legally homeless or at risk of homelessness soon. There are different types of support your local authority could offer you. For example, they may offer you advice, emergency housing, support to find longer-term housing or help so you can stay in your home. The type of help that is offered depends on your eligibility for assistance, if you're in "priority need", and what caused you to become homeless.

If you become at risk of homelessness, you should contact your local authority as soon as possible. Your BN(O) visa has a "no recourse to public funds" condition attached, which will limit the support the local authority can provide. However, if you become unable to meet your essential living needs or do not have adequate accommodation, you can apply to have this condition lifted.

If you have successfully applied to have the "no recourse to public funds" condition attached to your leave, you may be able to apply for council housing in England. You can apply for council housing through your local council. You'll usually have to join a waiting list and you're not guaranteed to get a property.

## 6: Healthcare

### *Access to health services*

If you are settling in the UK under the BN(O) visa you will be entitled to access most NHS services free of charge after you have paid the Immigration Health Surcharge and your visa has been granted.

People who have paid the surcharge are then entitled to NHS care without paying on the same basis as a permanent resident in the UK, although you may still be required to pay for additional services.

You may have to pay for some services such as prescriptions and dental care. You can access the following services free of charge: General Practitioners (GPs), also known as family doctors, Hospitals, and Maternity services.

Your health will not affect your immigration status or affect what NHS services are available to you. None of the people who work for the NHS, including doctors, nurses and interpreters will pass on any information about your health to any other person or organisation outside of the NHS without your permission (except in very exceptional circumstances, such as if the doctor believes you may be of harm to yourself or others).

### *What services do I access in an emergency?*

If you or a family member has an accident or a sudden serious illness you should go to your nearest hospital with an Accident and Emergency department which is free for everyone.

If it is an extreme emergency call **999** and ask for an ambulance to transport you to a hospital. This service is free of charge and should only be used in an emergency. If you are able to, you may also make your own way to the **Accident and Emergency** department.

Do not use Accident and Emergency for minor medical problems.

Once your medical situation has been stabilised in the Accident and Emergency department you may need to stay in a specialist department of the hospital until you have fully recovered and can return home.

If you urgently need medical help or advice but it's not a life-threatening situation call **NHS 111**.

The following information is about the health service in England – please check the separate websites for Wales, Scotland and NI.

### *Registering with a Doctor - a General Practitioner (GP)*

A GP is the first doctor you will usually visit when accessing healthcare in the UK. GPs are highly skilled doctors who are trained in all aspects of general medicine e.g. child health, adult medicine and mental health. Practice nurses are qualified and registered nurses who usually run clinics for long-term conditions e.g. diabetes.

Other healthcare professionals also work in GP practice, for example pharmacists and physiotherapists.

You will need to register at a GP surgery, also called a practice, near where you are living as soon as possible, even if you are not currently ill.

You can find out how to register with a GP surgery in the UK at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/how-to-register-with-a-gp-surgery/>

To register with a GP, you will need to give your name, date of birth, address and telephone number if you have one. GP surgeries may ask to see proof of identity with your name and date of birth (such as your passport or recognised identity card) and proof of address. However, they cannot refuse to register you if these are not available.

After you have registered with your new GP you might be asked to have a health check. This will usually be carried out by a nurse. It is important that you go to this appointment even if you are well. If you move to a different part of the UK, you will need to register with a new GP. You can only be registered with one GP practice.

### *Mental Health Services*

Mental health problems range from the worries we all experience as part of everyday life to serious long-term conditions. Anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and depression are the most common problems. If you have been feeling depressed for more than a few weeks or your anxiety is affecting your daily life, make an appointment to speak to your doctor.

Advice is also available on the NHS website (<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/>) to support you on your way to feeling better. The NHS website also gives details of support organisations and their helplines that you can contact for help and advice.

### *How do I access medication from the pharmacy?*

Your GP may want you to take medicines and will write you a prescription. Take your prescription to the pharmacy or chemist.

You can visit NHS Choices to find your local pharmacy: <http://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Pharmacy/LocationSearch/10> or ask for advice at your GP surgery.

The pharmacist can also give free advice on treating minor health problems, such as colds and coughs. You can buy some medicines from the pharmacy without a prescription, including some painkillers and cough medicines however you will have to pay for these medicines. You may be charged for prescription medicines.

### *Coronavirus (COVID-19)*

The UK is currently experiencing a Coronavirus pandemic. The UK Government's COVID-19 advice webpage <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> has information about how to report symptoms and support if you need to self-isolate at home. It also outlines the rules in place about what you can do during the Coronavirus pandemic, for example how many people you can gather with, keeping a safe distance, and the wearing of face masks in all public places. You can also find information about the

'roadmap' out of national restrictions which explains how Coronavirus rules may change over the coming months.

If you are arriving in the UK from a '[Red List](#)' country, you must quarantine in a Government approved hotel for ten days on arrival.

### *Booking a coronavirus vaccination*

You are eligible for a free COVID-19 vaccination through the NHS. Here are details of how you can book a coronavirus vaccination if you are registered with a GP; <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>

The vaccine will be offered and made available to everyone living in the UK free of charge. You do not need to be registered at a GP surgery or have an NHS number to receive the vaccine. Community Pharmacies, Primary Care Network (PCN) vaccination hubs, 'pop-up' sites and roving models of vaccine delivery will be able to offer help to those who have not yet registered with a GP.

### *Register a birth or death*

These Government web pages give advice on the steps to take to register a birth or death in the family:

- <https://www.gov.uk/register-birth>
- <https://www.gov.uk/when-someone-dies>

### *Maternity care and services*

All maternity care, including all antenatal, intrapartum and postnatal services provided to a pregnant person, a person who has recently given birth, or a baby, is covered by the NHS for an Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) payer.

Due to the severe health risks associated with conditions such as eclampsia and pre-eclampsia, and in order to protect the lives of both mother and unborn baby, all maternity services will be treated as being immediately necessary. No one must ever be denied, or have delayed, maternity services due to charging issues.

Maternity services cover care from the beginning of pregnancy through to sign off by a midwife: this is usually around 10 days after the birth but can be up to 6 weeks postnatally. Midwives ensure that personalised care is provided throughout pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period. Much of this care will be provided directly by midwives, who will also coordinate the provision of obstetric or other medical involvement if necessary.

Anyone settling in the UK under the BN(O) visa should contact a GP or midwife as soon as you find out you're pregnant. It's important to see a midwife or GP as early as possible to get the pregnancy (antenatal) care and information you need to have a healthy pregnancy. Information on all you need to know about pregnancy, labour, birth and NHS maternity services can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/>

Please see this link for further information:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/977345/Main\\_Guidance\\_post\\_February\\_2021\\_v3.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/977345/Main_Guidance_post_February_2021_v3.pdf)

### *Dentistry/dental care and services*

If you are settling in the UK under the BN(O) visa you will be entitled to NHS dentistry, which is a universal service and does not require residency. NHS dentistry is **not free** except for patients in an exempt category, so anyone settling in the UK under the BN(O) visa will have to pay just as a UK resident would.

Free exemptions apply in the following cases:

- the treatment is free (for example to remove stitches, stop bleeding in the mouth, repair dentures)
- the person is under the age of 18, or under 19 in full-time education
- the person is pregnant or has had a baby in the last 12 months. A MAT B1 certificate or maternity exemption certificate (MatEx) must be shown to the dental practice.

## 7: Access to education

Education is a devolved matter; issues relating to education and children's social care is the responsibility of the devolved nations, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

### *Childcare*

You could get free hours childcare when your child is aged 2 to 4. You might be able to apply for:

- **Universal 15 hour entitlement:** available for all 3 and 4-year-olds living in England, regardless of immigration status.
- **15 hour entitlement for disadvantaged 2 year olds:** available to 2-year-olds considered to be disadvantaged. Eligible households include parents who are in receipt of government support such as Universal Credit or Tax Credits and earn below a certain income threshold. In addition, children who are looked after or have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) are eligible. Households with no recourse to public funds can access the 2 year old entitlement as long as they meet the income requirements (earn less than £15,400 a year) and have a child in need or because they are the main carer of a British citizen.

For more information, please go to: <https://www.gov.uk/get-childcare>

### *School*

If you are settling in England and have a child aged 5 but under 16 you are required to ensure that they receive a full-time education.

This can either be:

- within a state-funded school, which cannot charge you for your child's education;
- within an independent school (otherwise known as a private school or public school), which will normally charge fees for your child's education; or
- you can choose to home-educate your child.

4-year-olds will normally also receive a full-time education in a primary school but you have the option of taking up a place part-time until the start of the term immediately after your child turns 5.

Alternatively, you can apply for your child to start school from the start of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. Some schools will also provide education for young people aged 16-18. These young people can also apply to sixth form colleges - which normally provide education for young people aged 16-19 - or colleges of further education which can provide education for anyone aged 16 and over.

### *Obtaining a school place for your child*

If you live in England contact [your local council](#) to find:

- state-funded schools in your area



- [admission criteria](#) for the schools you're interested in

We provide information for parents upon navigating the English school admissions system [here](#), and in Annex C of this pack.

We provide information on the rights of foreign national children to enter the UK to access a school in England [here](#).

If you are settling in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland those two links above provide links across to the websites for those nations.

More detailed guidance on obtaining a school place is set out below. It is likely, when you first arrive in England, that your application will be under the in-year process, so pay special attention to that section of the guide.

### *Further Education*

Further education (FE) includes any study after secondary education that's not part of higher education (that is, not taken as part of an undergraduate or graduate degree).

Eligibility for age 16-19 funding requires an individual to have the right to reside in the UK in line with the immigration rules determined by the Home Office. Your school or further education institution will be able to assist you in checking that you meet the residency requirements.

Find information on Further Education courses and funding [here](#).

Find information on Further Education courses and qualifications for 14-19 year olds [here](#).

### *Apprenticeships*

An apprenticeship is a real job where you learn, gain experience and get paid. You're an employee with a contract of employment and holiday leave. By the end of an apprenticeship, you'll have the right skills and knowledge needed for your chosen career.

It can take between one and six years to complete an apprenticeship depending on which one you choose, what level it is and your previous experience. It's funded from contributions made by the government and your employer.

You will be eligible for apprenticeship funding in England if you have permission to live and work in the UK and meet the residency eligibility criteria in place at the time, as set out in the funding rules. One key eligibility requirement is the need to have been ordinarily resident in the UK for at least the previous three years before the start of the apprenticeship, but you will be exempt from this rule if you have successfully obtained leave to remain. 16 to 18-year-old children of BN(O) status holders who have leave to remain will also be eligible for apprenticeship funding in England but may have to have been ordinarily resident in the UK for at least the previous three years before the start of the apprenticeship.

You will be eligible for apprenticeship funding in England if you have permission to live and work in the UK and meet the residency eligibility criteria in place at the time, as set out in the [funding rules](#).

To become an apprentice, you must:

- be 16 or over
- not already be in full-time education
- live in England

You can start an apprenticeship whether you're starting your career, want a change or you're upskilling in your current job. You can have a previous qualification like a degree and still start an apprenticeship.

If you don't live in England, please see apprenticeship options in [Scotland](#), [Wales](#), or [Northern Ireland](#).

For more information on apprenticeships please visit:

<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk>

### *School Transport*

Your children may be able to get free transport to school depending on how far the walk is, any special needs they have and whether the walk is safe.

All children between 5 and 16 qualify for free school transport if they go to their nearest suitable school and live at least:

- 2 miles from the school if they're under 8
- 3 miles from the school if they're 8 or older

Find details on [free school transport](#) from your local council

### *Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)*

All mainstream schools and colleges in England are expected to identify and meet the needs of children with SEND. Every school has a SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator), who plays a key role in supporting children with SEND and their families. In addition, every school publishes a SEN Information Report on the school website so that prospective families can get a good understanding of the type of support that an individual school will provide for special educational needs. Schools cannot refuse admission to a child on the grounds that they have a special educational need.

Where a child has more complex special educational needs that may require support beyond what is normally provided in mainstream schools, there are special schools in every local area that can make suitable provision. Local authorities have a duty to identify children and young people in their area who have or may have SEN or have or may have a disability. As part of that duty, we would expect LAs to respond appropriately to arrivals who may require support, and to ensure these families are provided with advice and information as to how to ensure their needs are met most

appropriately. Every local authority publishes a Local Offer which provides families with detailed information on the range of specialist provision in the local area

### *Further Education and training for adults*

You will be eligible to access further education and training including English language courses funded through the Adult Education Budget (AEB) if you are aged over 19 and meet the published residency eligibility criteria including the 3 years ordinary residency requirement. The AEB funding rules set out the general eligibility and residency criteria - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/adult-education-budget-aeb-funding-rules-2021-to-2022>

Education and training will either be fully funded or co-funded (approximate 50% Government contribution) depending upon your age, prior attainment, and circumstances.

For more information please contact your [local council](#) or visit the website: [Improve your English, Maths and IT skills](#)

Privately run English language courses if you are wishing to pay a fee can be accessed via the British Council - [Learn English | British Council](#)

Information on proving your English language abilities with a secure English Language Test can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prove-your-english-language-abilities-with-a-secure-english-language-test-selt>

### *Higher Education*

You can search and apply for most higher education courses online.

You usually have to be 18 or older to take a higher education course. They're usually taught in:

- universities
- colleges
- specialist institutions like art schools or agricultural colleges

Higher education qualifications include:

- diplomas
- bachelor degrees
- foundation degrees
- postgraduate degrees

Universities control their own admissions policies and requirements so you should contact the relevant higher education provider you are interested in directly if you have any questions.

As the policy currently stands, you will still be an international student for fee purposes until you complete your pathway to settlement and receive indefinite leave to remain.

To qualify for home fee status in the UK, a person must have settled status or a recognised connection to the UK. There are also requirements associated with

ordinary residence in the UK. Subject to meeting the normal eligibility requirements, you will be able to qualify for home fee status once you have acquired settled status in the UK. This also applies to any dependants.

Information on UK study options and the application process can be accessed via [Study in the UK | British Council](#)

### *Qualifications*

The UK European Network Information Centre (UK ENIC, and formerly UK NARIC) provides expert advice on behalf of the UK Government on the comparability of international qualifications, including those from Hong Kong to UK qualifications.

UK ENIC has conducted research into the comparable levels of the years of study that precede the full completion of the HKDSE and are therefore able to issue Statements of Comparability, despite the formal exit qualification not having been completed, to help guide schools and colleges on A level enrolment and 16-19 funding exemptions.

For more information, please visit [www.enic.org.uk](http://www.enic.org.uk)

## **8: Applying to access public funds**

### *No recourse to public funds*

When you are granted leave on the BN(O) visa, you will have 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF). This means that you will not be able to access most public funds including benefits, tax credits and housing assistance that are paid by the state. However, we recognise that people might fall on hard times and therefore, those granted leave on the BN(O) visa will be able to apply for a change of conditions to have their NRPF condition lifted in the event that they become destitute or are at imminent risk of destitution.

To apply for a change to your conditions, you will need to complete and submit a form to show that you are eligible for this change. The form and further information can be found at the following link: <https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/change-of-conditions>

You will be asked to provide sufficient evidence to show you meet the terms of the policy, including evidence of your financial circumstances and/or living arrangements.

## 9: Legal Rights and Responsibilities

### *Rights and freedoms*

Every person in the UK has the same basic human rights and freedoms, which are protected in law. These underpin how people live in the UK. For example:

Every person has a right to liberty.

Every person has freedom of thought and the right to practice their religion. However it is illegal if, as part of this, you take part in activities which break UK laws. It is against the law to discriminate against or persecute someone because of their beliefs.

### *Values and responsibilities in the UK*

Based on the rights and freedoms protected in law, everyone living in or visiting the UK is expected to adhere to a set of shared values and responsibilities:

- Respect and obey the law
- Respect the rights of others, including their right to their own opinions
- Treat others with fairness

### *Marriage*

There is a distinction between civil and religious marriages. Religious marriages are not recognised unless they are registered by the state. Some religious marriages are not recognised in the UK and couples entering into them must have a civil marriage as well.

The legal minimum age to marry in the UK is 16. In England you need parental consent to marry between the ages of 16 and 18.

In England it is legal and accepted for men and women to marry, for women and women to marry and for men and men to marry. All of these marriages are protected by law.

A marriage should be entered into with the full and free consent of both people involved.

## 10: Acting on discrimination

In the UK it is illegal to treat anyone differently because of their gender, race, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation.

Racism is unacceptable in the UK. It is a serious offence to injure, harass or verbally abuse someone because of their race or to damage their property for that reason. It is also against the law to stir up racial hatred. It is unacceptable to discriminate against another person because of their race, ethnicity or where they came from. You should not be treated any differently because of your race when applying for a job, looking for somewhere to live, using the National Health Service (NHS) or just buying something in a shop.

You should not experience racial harassment at work, school or in public (where other people make comments about your race or where you come from that are offensive or make you uncomfortable).

If you or someone you know is the victim of racism do tell the Police about it. Do not try to deal with racism or racist attackers on your own.

### *Being a victim of crime*

We are confident that BN(O) status holders who choose to make the UK their home, and move here with their families, will be welcomed and able to integrate. Over the last year, police have worked with Chinese, East Asian and South East Asian communities to strengthen the services available to victims.

Targeting someone because of their race or other characteristic is completely unacceptable and should not be tolerated and we encourage anyone who suffers hate crime, or receives a serious threat against them to report it to the police, either by calling 101, 999 in an emergency or online at [www.report-it.org.uk](http://www.report-it.org.uk). People should be able to live their lives free of harassment and fear.

Further reassurance for victims of Hate Crime can be found here at [https://www.report-it.org.uk/covid\\_19\\_and\\_racis\\_hate\\_crime](https://www.report-it.org.uk/covid_19_and_racis_hate_crime)

You can find out more information about support if you are a victim of crime at: <https://www.gov.uk/get-support-as-a-victim-of-crime>

## Annex A: Contact details of professional groups

Profession	Regulator(s)	Contact information
Nurses and midwives	Nursing & Midwifery Council	Nursing and Midwifery Council 23 Portland Place, London, W1B 1PZ 0207 637 7181 <a href="https://www.nmc.org.uk/registration/joining-the-register/register-nurse-midwife/">https://www.nmc.org.uk/registration/joining-the-register/register-nurse-midwife/</a>
Doctor of Medicine (including specialists)	General Medical Council	General Medical Council 3 Hardman Street, Manchester, M3 3AW 0845 357 8001 <a href="https://www.gmc-uk.org/registration-and-licensing/join-the-register/registration-applications/application-registration">https://www.gmc-uk.org/registration-and-licensing/join-the-register/registration-applications/application-registration</a> <a href="https://www.gmc-uk.org/contact-us">https://www.gmc-uk.org/contact-us</a>
Social worker	<p>England: Social Work England 1 North Bank, Blonk Street, Sheffield, S3 8JY 0808 196 2274 <a href="https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/registration/apply-to-register-eea-swiss-and-overseas/enquiries@socialworkengland.org.uk">https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/registration/apply-to-register-eea-swiss-and-overseas/enquiries@socialworkengland.org.uk</a></p> <p>Scotland: Scottish Social Services Council Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive, Dundee, DD1 4NY 0345 603 0891 <a href="https://www.sssc.uk.com/knowledgebase/article/KA-01106/en-us">https://www.sssc.uk.com/knowledgebase/article/KA-01106/en-us</a> <a href="mailto:registration@sssc.uk.com">registration@sssc.uk.com</a></p> <p>Wales: Social Care Wales</p> <p>Northern Ireland: Northern Ireland Social Care Council</p> <p>Northern Ireland: Northern Ireland Social Care Council 7th Floor Millennium House, 19-25 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7AQ</p>	<p>England: Social Work England 1 North Bank, Blonk Street, Sheffield, S3 8JY 0808 196 2274 <a href="https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/registration/apply-to-register-eea-swiss-and-overseas/enquiries@socialworkengland.org.uk">https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/registration/apply-to-register-eea-swiss-and-overseas/enquiries@socialworkengland.org.uk</a></p> <p>Scotland: Scottish Social Services Council Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive, Dundee, DD1 4NY 0345 603 0891 <a href="https://www.sssc.uk.com/knowledgebase/article/KA-01106/en-us">https://www.sssc.uk.com/knowledgebase/article/KA-01106/en-us</a> <a href="mailto:registration@sssc.uk.com">registration@sssc.uk.com</a></p> <p>Wales: Social Care Wales Southgate House, Wood Street, Cardiff, CF10 1EW 0300 30 33 444 <a href="https://socialcare.wales/registration/how-to-apply">https://socialcare.wales/registration/how-to-apply</a> <a href="mailto:registration@socialcare.wales">registration@socialcare.wales</a></p> <p>Northern Ireland: Northern Ireland Social Care Council 7th Floor Millennium House, 19-25 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7AQ</p>



		028 9041 7600 <a href="https://niscc.info/internationally-qualified-social-workers/registration@niscc.info">https://niscc.info/internationally-qualified-social-workers/registration@niscc.info</a>
Other health and care professions	Health and Care Professions Council	Health and Care Professions Council Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London, SE11 4BU 0300 500 4472 <a href="https://www.hcpc-uk.org/registration/getting-on-the-register/international-applications/international@hcpc-uk.org">https://www.hcpc-uk.org/registration/getting-on-the-register/international-applications/international@hcpc-uk.org</a>
Teachers	<p>England: Teaching Regulation Agency</p> <p>Scotland: General Teaching Council for Scotland</p> <p>Wales: Education Workforce Council</p> <p>Northern Ireland: General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland</p>	<p>England: Teaching Regulation Agency Cheylesmore House, 5 Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT 0207 593 5394 <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/qualified-teacher-status-qts">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/qualified-teacher-status-qts</a> <a href="mailto:qts.enquiries@education.gov.uk">qts.enquiries@education.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Scotland: General Teaching Council for Scotland Clerwood House, 96 Clemiston Road, Edinburgh, EH12 6UT 0131 314 6000 <a href="https://www.gtcs.org.uk/registration/qualified-outside-scotland.aspx">https://www.gtcs.org.uk/registration/qualified-outside-scotland.aspx</a> <a href="mailto:QOSProfreg@gtcs.org.uk">QOSProfreg@gtcs.org.uk</a></p> <p>Wales: Education Workforce Council 9th Floor, Eastgate House, 35-43 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 0AB 029 2046 0099 <a href="https://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/registration/practitioners-trained-outside-wales.html">https://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/registration/practitioners-trained-outside-wales.html</a> <a href="mailto:registration@ewc.wales">registration@ewc.wales</a></p> <p>Northern Ireland: General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland 3rd Floor Albany House, 73-75 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7AF 028 9033 3390</p>

		<a href="https://gtcni.org.uk/registration/getting-registered">https://gtcni.org.uk/registration/getting-registered</a> <a href="mailto:registration@gtcni.org.uk">registration@gtcni.org.uk</a>
--	--	---

## **Annex B: Buying your own home**

Knowing what to expect and how to go about buying your own home is crucial. Before you start looking for a new home, you should have an idea of how much you can afford to spend on a property. Most buyers will require a mortgage in order to purchase a home, and you should shop around for suitable mortgage products.

There are many different types of mortgages on offer. Price comparison websites can help you to understand what types of product are available, or you may wish to engage a mortgage broker to get individualised mortgage advice (although you might have to pay a fee for this service). It may be especially useful to get individualised advice if you have unusual circumstances (e.g. if you are self-employed or have a low credit score), as this can limit the types of mortgages that are available to you. Equally, many lenders will have mortgage advisers who can advise on their own range of products.

Before you begin viewing properties you should get a mortgage decision in principle. This is a written statement from a lender giving an estimate of what you can borrow. It gives you some indication of your budget and signals to sellers that you are serious about buying a property. Getting a decision in principle from one lender does not mean you have to take out a mortgage with them. However, as part of the decision in principle, the majority of lenders will carry out a credit search. Some lenders will carry out a soft enquiry that will not affect your credit score. Other lenders will undertake a hard enquiry that may affect your credit score. You should find out what type of enquiry lenders use, as too many hard enquiries could negatively affect your credit score.

Estate agents, lawyers and mortgage lenders are required by law to check your identity to prevent money laundering and fraud. At several stages during the transaction you will have to produce documents to prove your identity or address and information on your source of funds. This could include receipts from the sale of another property, savings, inheritance monies and financial gifts from family and friends. Checking this information is a legal requirement to help safeguard your transaction, and failing to provide ID documents could slow down the process.

It may be beneficial to get the documentation you need together in advance to make sure that you are prepared:

- proof of identity – passport, driving licence.
- proof of address – driving licence, bank or credit card statement, utility bill (not more than 3 months old). Mobile phone bills are not a valid proof of address.
- proof of source of funds – including your last 3 months' payslips; P60 form from your employer; tax return and other documents if you are self-employed. More information on the documents you need is available on the Money Advice Service website.

Most people start their property search with online property sites or through local estate agents. Many properties feature virtual tours which can help you get a good

idea of whether the property is right for you, and you can also visit in person to inspect it more closely. You should consider different criteria when deciding if the home meets your needs; including the number of bedrooms, location, transport links, local schools, and whether the property is new build or second-hand. New build properties can be appealing as they will be clean and energy efficient, but they can also be more expensive than a similar-sized second-hand home.

When considering a property purchase, it is important that you know whether the property is freehold or leasehold. A freehold property means you own the property and land outright. A leasehold property means you only own the property for a fixed number of years. You have the right to live in that property, but you will need to follow any rules laid down in the terms of the lease; which often mean that you are limited in any alterations you can make to the property. You may also have to pay regular ground rent and service charges to your leaseholder throughout the duration of your lease. Flats are often leasehold, but houses can be too. The length of the lease will be specified in the contract, but you should ask the estate agent up front how long is left on the lease and should wait until you have this information before making an offer. As the lease length gets smaller, the property value will be affected, especially once it falls under 80 years; many lenders are reluctant to lend on properties with less than 80 years left on the lease. The following guide has more tips on buying a leasehold home: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-lease>.

When you have found a home that is suitable for you, you will need to make an offer to the seller to purchase the property. This is a big step, and you shouldn't feel pressured to put an offer in before you are ready. A second viewing is usually helpful when deciding whether it is the right home for you.

You do not have to offer the seller's asking price for the property – this price is the start of a negotiation process and you can make a lower or higher offer. The estate agent is legally obliged to pass on all offers to the seller and the seller is not obliged to accept any offer, regardless of how much it is.

Once you have made an offer which is accepted by the seller, you will need to engage a legal representative who will play a key role in carrying out the legal checks necessary and completing the legal work on transferring ownership of your new property. You should advise your estate agent of this legal representative, and you should receive a memorandum of sale from the estate agent which outlines your offer in writing. You will also need to complete a full application for a mortgage with the lender you decide to use; or if you engage a mortgage broker they will be able to do this on your behalf. You should strongly consider having a survey of your potential new property carried out before contracts are exchanged. This will advise you of major and minor maintenance work required on the property immediately and in the future.

A few days after your offer is accepted, check with your legal representative that the seller has instructed their own legal representative and the purchase is progressing. Purchasing a home can be a lengthy process; although timings vary, it can take

around twelve weeks. Property sales often take place in linked property chains where multiple transactions take place at the same time.

A verbal offer can be renegotiated at any time up to until contracts are exchanged, but you should think carefully before renegotiating and only do so when a change is justified; for example if the home survey identifies significant issues. Attempts to renegotiate the offer when a sale nears completion may cause delays and could risk the sale falling through.

Once you have exchanged contracts with the seller and paid a deposit, you have entered a legally binding commitment to purchase the property. If you withdraw from the commitment after exchange, you may lose your deposit and may have to pay compensation to the seller for other losses. At exchange, you will also confirm a completion date with the seller, often around 2-4 weeks later (although they can occur simultaneously).

You will need to consider how you will move your belongings into your new home. If you wish to engage a professional moving company, give them as much notice as possible of your moving date.

Completion occurs when your legal representative transfers the remaining funds to the seller's representative and you take ownership of the property. The keys are usually handed over around lunchtime on the date of completion; at which time you can move into your new property or start having work carried out on it.

## **Annex C: Information for Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) on obtaining a school place for their children in England**

### **Introduction**

If you are settling in England and have a child aged 5 but under 16 you are required to ensure that they receive a full-time education. This can either be:

- within a state-funded school, which cannot charge you for your child's education;
- within an independent school (otherwise known as a private school or public school), which will normally charge fees for your child's education; or
- you can choose to home-educate your child.

Children will normally begin to attend school, full-time, in the September after their fourth birthday but you have the option of taking up a place part-time until the start of the term<sup>1</sup> immediately after the child turns 5. Alternatively you can apply for your child to start school from the start of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Some schools will also provide education for young people aged 16-18. These young people can also apply to sixth form colleges - which normally provide education for young people aged 16-19 - or colleges of further education which can provide education for anyone aged 16 and over (and, exceptionally, for some children under that age).

This note will concentrate mainly on advising you how to apply for a state-funded school in England.

### **Guidance**

We provide information for parents on the English school admissions process [here](#)

We provide information on the rights of foreign national children to enter the UK to access a school in England [here](#).

If you are settling in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland these guides provide links across to their websites.

You cannot normally apply for state-funded school places significantly ahead of the date you want to take up a place. The exceptions are for 'co-ordinated' admissions for admission into a 'relevant age group' before the start of the school year- normally into reception and year 7 (see below and guidance [here](#)).

As a Hong Kong British National (Overseas) you are entitled to access a state funded school for your children if you live in the UK. You should normally, therefore, be resident within the UK before you apply for a school place. You can apply for a

---

<sup>1</sup> Terms: the school year is normally divided into 3. Although dates may vary from area to area, Autumn Term will begin after 31 August, Spring Term after 31 December and Summer Term after 31 March. Each term normally includes a short half-term break with a longer break between terms. The longest break is normally about 6 weeks between the end of Summer Term and the start of the next school year.

school place just before you move, but the place would not normally be allocated before you live in the country.

### **The co-ordinated admissions process.**

There is a process called the 'co-ordination of admissions' run by the local authority ('LA') where you live. You can find your home LA [here](#).

The co-ordinated process will apply when you are looking for a place for your child in a 'relevant age group for admission<sup>2</sup>' for the following September.

The relevant age groups are normally reception (for children who will be 4 years old by the following September) or year 7 (for children who will be 11 years old by the following September).

You apply for places to your home local authority on the common application form which it will publish on the 'school admissions' or 'schools' section of its website. You can set out at least 3 choices of school on the form and apply for schools in your own local authority and in other local authorities. You can express a preference for any school but in general, the closer to your home a school is, the better chance you have of being offered a place there. However, this is not the case with every school as it will depend on what admission arrangements the admission authority has put in place. Searching for the school on the internet and looking at its published admission arrangements should give you an indication of whether your child is likely to be offered a place.

You will be offered your highest available preference by your home local authority. If you cannot be offered any of your preferences, you will be offered an alternative school which has vacancies.

The closing dates for submitting applications for admission in the following September are:

- secondary – 31 October;
- primary – 15 January.

The national offer dates are:

- secondary – 1 March;
- primary – 16 April.

The co-ordinated process, with the local authority offering places in the above year groups, continues until 31 August for late applicants and those who cannot be offered a chosen school on the dates above.

### **Applications outside the above timeframe – 'in-year' admissions.**

The majority of applications from BN(O) families, at least in their first year in England, are likely to be what are called 'in-year' admissions.

---

<sup>2</sup> The normal admission year group for the school, usually its lowest year group. The most common relevant age groups are reception and year 7.

An in-year admission is:

- an application for a relevant age group (normally reception and year 7) after the start of the school year; or
- an application for any other year group at any time.

Although some schools will have places available throughout the year, your choice of school is likely to be limited by the fact that some of the most popular schools will be full when you are applying for an in-year place.

You can obtain information on which schools have places still available from the local authority within which the schools are located.

You would normally apply directly to the admission authority of the school for an in-year place. Advice on who the admission authority would be for a school is set out at the end of this guide. The admission authority will either be contactable via the school's website or, in the case of community or voluntary controlled schools, you can contact the local authority.

In some local authority areas, the local authority will continue to handle all in year applications for places. You will need to speak to your local authority about which system applies in your area.

One difference you will notice is that, even where local authorities co-ordinate in-year applications for schools, if you want to apply for a school outside your own local authority area, you will have to apply directly to the neighbouring local authority, or the school, depending upon what system is in operation in that area to allocate in-year places.

### **How are places allocated?**

Each school has a finite number of places available. Its admission authority sets this out in its admission policy. If there are more applicants than places available, the school must apply its published admission arrangements in order to determine who is admitted. [Here](#) and [here](#) are a couple of examples of an admission policy.

### **What admission authorities may request before offering a place.**

School admission authorities may ask for evidence of your address with your application. This is important because some schools operate catchment areas (prioritising children for admission who live close to the school) and distance from home to school is also often used as a first tie-break to determine who is offered a place if two children are tied for the last place a school can offer.

Schools with a religious designation may prioritise children from their religion for admission. Admission authorities for these schools may ask you to complete a supplementary application form to ascertain whether you are a practitioner or member of the relevant faith group in order to apply their faith criteria. Common measures of faith membership and practice are baptism into the faith (commonly used in RC schools) or attendance at church, temple, mosque or synagogue - depending on the faith designation of schools.



An admission authority cannot ask you for personal information about your child or family, during the admissions process, such as the child's school record. The only exceptions to this rule are where the child is looked after by a local authority<sup>3</sup>, or has previously been looked after - these children receive top priority for admission to a school - whether the family practises a relevant religion or is a member of a relevant religious group, for admission to a school with a religious designation or whether the child is eligible for the pupil premium<sup>4</sup>, if the school prioritises such children for admission.

Schools may ask for evidence of your child's date of birth once a place is offered.

### **What to do if you do not get the school you want**

You might not be offered a place at your chosen school.

If you are refused a place you can ask the admission authority for the school to place your child on the school's waiting list if it has a waiting list at that time. Waiting lists are ordered in accordance with the school's published admission arrangements rather than date order. This means that your child can move up or down the waiting list over time.

You can also appeal against any refusal to offer your child a place. Whenever you are refused a place, the admission authority for the school must offer an appeal. The appeal panel is independent of the school. Guidance for parents on the appeals process is set out [here](#). You can ask someone to represent you at the appeal or you can present your own case. The appeal will consider whether the admission authority was right to refuse your child a place and whether your reasons for needing that place outweighs the admission authority's reasons for refusing.

Different processes for appeals are in place during the COVID 19 pandemic. Broadly speaking, appeals can be held virtually rather than in person. Advice is set out [here](#).

### **Choosing a school**

There are a number of resources which parents can use to help them choose a school.

You can search for schools near your home by searching on 'Get information about schools'. You can filter your search by distance from your address and type of school.

Each local authority also publishes an admissions guide on its website listing all local schools. [Here](#) and [here](#) are a couple of examples.

You may find it useful to compare the performance of the schools you are considering by looking on the [compare school performance website](#). The progress 8

---

<sup>3</sup> In England the term 'looked after children' is defined in law under the Children Act 1989. A child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority.

<sup>4</sup> Certain disadvantaged children attract the pupil premium and some schools choose to give them a high priority for admission. You can see which children are eligible on this website, by scrolling down the page: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium/pupil-premium>

score measures how far children progress across 8 subjects between entering and leaving a secondary school. The progress score in reading, writing and maths is a similar measure for primary schools.

If you want to look at this in more detail, all but the very newest schools will have an Ofsted inspection report, and you can search for these on [this website](#).

### **Applying for a sixth form place**

Sixth form study is normally undertaken by young people aged 16 and over.

Such post-16 study will be offered by:

- some schools,
- sixth form colleges; or
- colleges of further education.

The National Careers Service maintains a [website](#) which sets out which post-16 courses are offered by individual schools and colleges.

Local authorities rarely take a direct role in allocating sixth form places (e.g. places for young people aged 16 but under 19) for schools. Some local authorities will, however, advise parents about schools with vacancies in their sixth forms. You can therefore contact your local authority to discuss where vacancies might exist.

The '[Get information about schools](#)' website will show you which local schools provide for young people aged 16-18. You should then search on their websites for how to apply and for any deadlines for applications.

Most places will be allocated before the start of the school year. The same will normally apply to sixth form colleges but local colleges of further education are likely to offer places throughout the year, depending on course availability.

### **Types of state funded school**

There are a wide range of state-funded schools in England. What they all have in common is that they will deliver a broad and balanced education for your children, although the small number of UTCs and Studio Schools will offer a more vocationally-oriented education, mainly for children aged 14 and over.

The 163 grammar schools will offer an education targeted towards the most academically able children. Your children will need to pass a selection test to be considered for admission. These are administered by the admission authority for the individual school, or the local authority. Not every area has a grammar school.

The most common form of secondary school (nearly 3,200) are comprehensive. They educate children of all abilities. Every one of the (just under 17,000) primary schools educate children of all abilities.

Some schools can also have a religious designation and may prioritise children of their faith above other children for admission. You will need to check their websites.

### **School Admission Authorities.**

Whilst applications for reception and year 7 made by the closing dates set out above are made to the local authority, in-year applications in most areas should be made directly to the admission authority. These are:

Type	Admission authority
Community School (over 6,000 schools)	Local authority, contact details on their website.
Foundation School (over 700 schools)	The governing body, contact details on the school's website
Voluntary Controlled School (over 1,700 schools)	Local authority, contact details on their website.
Voluntary Aided School (nearly 3,000 schools)	The governing body, contact details on the school's website
Academy School (over 8,000 schools)	The academy trust, contact details on the school's website
Free School (over 400 schools)	The academy trust, contact details on the school's website
Studio School (over 20 schools)	The academy trust, contact details on the school's website
UTC (nearly 50 schools)	The academy trust, contact details on the school's website