



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

地方發展、房屋及社區部

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敬啟者：

香港英國國民（海外）簽證

自香港英國國民（海外）（**BN(O)**）簽證於 2021 年 1 月推出以來，許多香港人透過此入境途徑移民英國。這前所未有的入境途徑，乃因應中國推行《港區國安法》而推出，反映了英國履行其對在 1997 年香港主權移交前透過領有 **BN(O)** 身份與英國維持連繫的香港人，所肩負的歷史和道德承諾。

大部分 **BN(O)** 簽證人已迅速在英國安居和與社會融合。縱然如此，我留意到個別簽證人遇上住屋、就業和開設銀行戶口等問題。這通常源於對他們移民身份的常見誤解，亦可能是部分人未能立即提供必要文件，例如身份證明和／或英國永久家庭住址證明。我希望透過此信函，協助您的企業或組織，加深了解 **BN(O)** 簽證人的地位，以及他們在英國的各項權利和資格。

這封信函涵蓋英格蘭相關資訊。至於蘇格蘭、威爾斯和北愛爾蘭的情況或有所不同，有關三地的服務資訊，請參閱以下網頁：gov.scot、gov.wales 和 northernireland.gov.uk。

背景和地位

BN(O) 簽證人及其合資格家庭成員，皆獲准進入或逗留英國兩年半（可選擇延長逗留時間）或五年。在英國住滿五年後，他們可以申請定居；再居留多 12 個月後，他們可以申請成為英國公民。

任何持有 **BN(O)** 簽證的人士，皆有權在英國居住、就學和工作。

他們的合資格家庭成員（「家屬（dependents）」）也會持有 **BN(O)** 簽證，這可包括伴侶、子女（包括 18 歲以上的子女）、孫子女和其他受養的成年親屬。

身份證明和移民身份證明

BN(O) 簽證人的身分識別方法包括（但不限於）：

- 顯示個人姓名、出生日期和出生地、指紋和全臉照片的「生物辨識晶片居留許可證（Biometric Residence Permit, BRP）」。BRP 同時載有簽證人的移民身份和居留條件（包括在大部分情況下不得領取公共經濟援助，除非該人成功申請豁免）。
- 電子簽證（網上移民身份）：很多 BN(O)簽證人不會收到 BRP，因為他們是透過內政部的手機應用程式申請簽證。他們收到的會是電子簽證（eVisa），這是他們的網上移民身份，類似在歐盟定居計劃下擁有相關身份的歐盟國民。擁有電子簽證的人士，可在 GOV.UK 上透過「View and Prove（查看和證明）」服務，出示他們的身份。
- 「View and Prove」服務讓用家能在網上查閱他們最新的英國移民身份資料（即電子簽證），並與第三方（例如僱主或公共和私人服務提供者）安全地分享與其身份相關的資料。擁有 BRP 但沒有電子簽證的人，可在 GOV.UK 上使用「right to work（工作權）」及「right to rent（租賃權）」服務。
- 用家可透過生成分享代碼（share code），與第三方分享其身份資料，並允許第三方在指定時間內查閱相關數據。用家須向第三方提供用家的出生日期，第三方始能查閱數據。
- 透過「View and Prove」服務向第三方顯示的資料包括：個人姓名、移民身份、任何居留條件，以及簽證有效日期。

居住證明

部分 BN(O)簽證人在到埗初期，或未能提供長居英國的推薦人資料或傳統地址證明文件，例如有效的英國駕駛執照、最近的公用事業（即水電煤）單或市政稅單、租賃協議或信用卡結單，因為他們只在英國居住了很短時間，並可能住在臨時住所。在這種情況下，您可考慮接受其他替代文件，例如海外按揭或信用卡／扣賬卡結單，或顯示付款證明的公用事業（即水電煤）戶口證明。您亦可考慮他們的外地儲蓄戶口證明，和／或在英國的工作錄取通知。

就業

部分 BN(O)簽證人提及他們遇上就業相關問題，例如他們在獲得國民保險號碼（National Insurance number）之前被拒絕聘請，或者面對有關轉換專業資格的問題。

國民保險號碼

我想再次保證，BN(O)簽證人及其家屬在獲得國民保險號碼之前，亦有權在英國工作。稅務海關總署（Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs）已在其「僱主公告（Employer Bulletin）」發佈一系列更新，提醒僱主可以聘請尚未獲得國民保險號碼的人士。請參閱下述網址內文件的第三頁：

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/926890/8155_Employer_Bulletin_86_v6_Accessible.pdf

於 2022 年 4 月 6 日之前，持有有效 BRP 的人士，可繼續向僱主出示 BRP，以證明他們具有在英國工作的權利；他們亦可透過內政部的網上服務，以電子形式證明他們的工作權利：

<https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work>

由2022年4月6日起，實體 BRP 將不再是可接受的工作權利證明。屆時求職者須透過 BRP，到訪上述內政部網上服務網址，以電子形式證明他們的工作權利。他們仍可透過 BRP 作為其他用途的移民身份證明，例如開設銀行戶口。

專業資格

對來自香港的 BN(O)簽證人而言，找到合適工作是成功融合英國社會的關鍵，而專業資格認可，對確保符合英國標準的專業人員能夠在英國從事受監管的行業，尤其重要。2021年6月17日，時任房屋、社區及地方政府大臣，和商業、能源及工業策略大臣，致函英國所有監管機構和專業機構的行政總裁，提高他們對 BN(O)簽證的認識。該信函闡述了承認符合英國標準的香港專業資格的重要性，以及他們在接受香港認可資格時可考慮的一些步驟。

對於尋求專業資格認可的 BN(O)簽證人，英國專業資格中心（UK Centre for Professional Qualifications，網址：<http://cpq.ecctis.com>）可以提供建議和指導，幫助他們取得英國認可的專業資格。

住屋

BN(O)簽證人有權在英國租屋。在英格蘭，於2022年4月6日前，簽證人可透過出示 BRP，或透過內政部的網上服務，以電子形式證明他們的租屋權狀態：<https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-rent>

由2022年4月6日起，租屋權制度將有所改變，實體 BRP 將不再是可接受的租屋權證明。屆時租屋者須透過 BRP，到訪上述內政部網上服務網址，以電子形式證明他們在英格蘭的租屋權利。

在英格蘭，內政部為業主提供租屋權查核指南（A Landlord's guide to right to rent checks），詳情可瀏覽：<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/landlords-immigration-right-to-rent-checks>

我們鼓勵業主和地產代理為有權在英國租屋的人士，提供彈性，例如考慮到 BN(O)簽證人的特殊情況，接受其他類型的推薦人。於2021年5月，時任房屋、社區及地方政府大臣致函所有業主代表和地產代理代表，進一步釐清 BN(O)簽證人的法律地位。相關信函請見於：<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/welcome-a-guide-for-hong-kong-british-national-overseas-visa-holders-in-the-uk>

我謹代表政府感謝您對移英 BN(O)社群的合作和支持。

此致，



Greenhalgh 勳爵



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Lord Greenhalgh
Minister of State

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February 2022

To whom it may concern,

Hong Kong British National (Overseas) Visa

Many Hong Kongers have chosen to emigrate to the UK through the British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) immigration route launched in January 2021. This route is an unprecedented offer following China's passing of the National Security Law, and reflects the UK's historic and moral commitment to those people of Hong Kong who chose to retain their ties to the UK by taking up BN(O) status at the point of Hong Kong's handover to China in 1997.

The majority of those on the BN(O) route have quickly settled and integrated within the UK. However, it has been brought to my attention that a minority have reported issues in areas such as housing, employment and opening a bank account. This is often a result of common misunderstandings about their immigration status, and may in part be due to individuals being temporarily unable to produce the necessary documentation, such as proof of identity and/or evidence of permanent home address in the UK. It is my aim that this letter helps your business or organisation to better understand the status of those on the BN(O) route, and their rights and entitlements in the UK.

This letter covers England, and the circumstances may be different in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. For information about services there please refer to their relevant webpages at gov.scot, gov.wales, and northernireland.gov.uk.

Background and status

Those on the BN(O) route and their eligible family members are granted permission to enter or to stay in the UK for a period of either two years and six months (with the option to extend their stay); or five years. After five years in the UK, they may apply for settlement, and they may apply for British citizenship after a further twelve months.

Anyone with a BN(O) visa has the right to live, study and work in the UK.

Eligible family members ('dependants') will also have a BN(O) visa, and can include partners, children (including children aged over 18), grandchildren, and other dependent adult relatives.

Proof of identity and immigration status

Legitimate methods of identification for those on the BN(O) route are likely to include, but are not limited to:

- A Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) that shows the individual's name, date and place of birth, fingerprints and a photo of their face. The permit also includes their immigration status and conditions of stay (including in most cases, 'no access to public funds', except for those who successfully apply for a change of conditions to enable them to access public funds).
- An eVisa (online immigration status): Many of those on the BN(O) route will not receive a BRP as they applied using the Home Office's smartphone app. They will instead receive an eVisa, which is their online immigration status, similar to EU nationals who have status on the EU Settlement Scheme. Those who have eVisas can share their status using the GOV.UK 'View and Prove' service.
- The 'View and Prove' service allows individuals to view their up-to-date UK immigration status information – or eVisa - online and share relevant information about their status securely with third parties, such as employers or public and private service providers. Those with a BRP but not an eVisa can use the 'right to work' and right to rent' services on GOV.UK.
- If individuals wish to share their status information with third parties, they can do so by generating a share code, which they can give to the third party and which will give that party time-limited access to the relevant data. The individual will also need to give the third party their date of birth to enable access to the data.
- The status shown to a third party via the 'View and Prove' service will show: the individual's name, immigration status and any conditions of stay and the dates their visa is valid.

Proof of residence

In some cases, those on the BN(O) route may initially be unable to provide typical UK-based references or conventional proof of address documents, such as a valid UK driving license, recent utility or council tax bill, tenancy agreement, or credit card statement, because they have only lived in the UK for a short time and may be living in temporary accommodation. In this situation, I would be grateful if you could consider accepting alternative documentation such as an overseas mortgage or credit/debit card statements, or proof of utility accounts showing proof of payment. You may also want to take into consideration evidence of foreign savings accounts and/or the offer of employment in the UK.

Employment

Some individuals on the BN(O) route have reported issues accessing employment, such as employers not accepting them until they have a National Insurance number (NINo), or issues with converting professional qualifications.

National Insurance numbers

I would like to provide reassurance that those on the BN(O) route and their family members are entitled to work in the UK before receiving their National Insurance numbers (NINo). Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs issued a series of updates to employers via their Employer Bulletin to remind them that they are able to employ individuals who do not have a NINo. See Page 3 here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/926890/8155_Employer_Bulletin_86_v6_Accessible.pdf

Currently, individuals with a valid BRP can choose to present this to an employer as proof of their right to work in the UK until 6 April, or they can choose to access the Home Office online services to prove their right to work digitally here: <https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work>

From 6 April 2022, a physical BRP will no longer be acceptable evidence of right to work. Individuals will be required to use their BRP to access the Home Office online services to prove their right to work online. They can continue to use their BRP to prove their immigration status for other reasons, such as to open a bank account.

Professional Qualifications

Finding suitable employment in the UK is key to the successful integration of BN(O)s from Hong Kong, and the recognition of an individual's professional qualifications is central to ensuring adequately trained professionals who meet UK standards are able to practise a regulated profession in the UK. On 17 June 2021, the former Secretary of State for Housing, Communities, and Local Government, and the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, wrote to the chief executives of all UK regulators and professional bodies to increase awareness of the BN(O) visa. The letter set out the importance of the recognition of professional qualifications where Hong Kong professionals meet UK standards, and some steps they may wish to consider taking on Hong Kong qualifications.

For BN(O)s seeking the recognition of their professional qualifications, the UK Centre for Professional Qualifications (<http://cpq.ecctis.com>) can provide advice and guidance to help them get their professional qualifications recognised in the UK.

Housing

Those on the BN(O) route have the right to rent in the UK. In England, they can prove their right to rent by either presenting their BRP, until 6 April, or sharing their status digitally via the Home Office online service on GOV.UK at: <https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-rent>.

From 6 April 2022, the system of right to rent is changing and a physical BRP will no longer be acceptable evidence of right to rent in England. Individuals will be required to use their BRP to access the Home Office online services to prove their right to rent in England.

In England, the Home Office 'A Landlord's guide to right to rent checks' can be found on GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/landlords-immigration-right-to-rent-checks>

We encourage landlords and letting agents to exercise discretion for those who have the right to rent in the UK and, for example, to accept alternative forms of reference, in view of the exceptional circumstances in which those on the BN(O) route find themselves. In May 2021, the then-Secretary of State for Housing, Communities, and Local Government wrote to all landlord and letting agent representatives providing further clarification regarding the legal status of those on the BN(O) route. This letter can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/welcome-a-guide-for-hong-kong-british-national-overseas-visa-holders-in-the-uk>.

I would like to thank you, on behalf of the Government, for your cooperation and support I am sure you have already shown to the new BN(O) community arriving in the UK.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sgt John', written in a cursive style.

LORD GREENHALGH