



The BNO Visa

A guide for arrivals from Hong Kong

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More freedom, more opportunities

Twenty four years after the UK returned Hong Kong to China, the vibrant Asian city remains one of the strongest financial hubs in the world. However, in the last few years, some controversial political reforms have created uncertainty among its citizens.

As a result, many Hong Kong residents seek ways to retain the life standards and freedoms they have enjoyed until now. If you are a Hong Kong resident, the UK government's British National Overseas Visa (BNO) scheme allows you and your family to move, live and work in the UK.



What is the British National Overseas Visa?

British National Overseas (BNO) citizenship is a type of British nationality created in 1985 that people in Hong Kong could apply for before the 1997 handover to China.

The new BNO visa system, in place from January 31st 2021, allows BNO citizens and their close family to apply for two periods of 5 years to live and work in the UK. The UK authorities estimate that 5.4 million Hong Kong residents are eligible for the BNO Visa scheme.

Once the first 5-year period has been completed, individuals can choose to apply for an Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) Visa. After one year of this status, individuals are able to apply for British citizenship.



The benefits of being a BNO Visa holder

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

How much does a BNO Visa cost?

Currently, the UK government fees for a BNO visa, valid for 5 years, are as follows:

- The Home Office Spouse Visa Government fee equal to £250 per applicant
- The Biometric Fee equal to £19.20 per applicant
- The NHS Surcharge equal to £1,560 per adult applicant and £1,175 per child (under 18 years old)





Living in the UK

Financial Transactions & Bank Accounts

The currency in the UK is the Pound Sterling (£). Opening a bank account in the UK is one of the first things you would have to do when you move there. The documents that you need to have to open a UK bank account are detailed below:

- Form of identification such as your passport or a driver's licence or a recognised identity card.
- Proof of address, such as tenancy agreement or a gas, electric or phone bill.

Once you open your account, you will usually be issued a debit card. Bills can also be paid directly from your account using “direct debit.”

Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

If you have obtained a BNO Visa, you will be able to view your immigration status online or receive a sticker called “vignette” in your passport.

If you have a vignette, you have to collect a biometric residence permit (BRP) after you arrive in the UK. For more details regarding the BRP, please click on the link: www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits

If you have applied for the BNO visa online using the “UK Immigration: ID Check” app, you won’t need to collect a BRP. Details regarding immigration status can be found online and can be shared on-demand with institutions such as universities or even employers.

Taxation in the UK

The UK government collects tax on labour and assets through Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

The foreign income of UK residents is taxed as United Kingdom income, but to prevent double taxation the UK has agreements with many countries to allow offset against UK tax what is deemed paid abroad.

You have a responsibility to pay the right amount of income tax which 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.

To ensure you structure your finances to be as tax efficient as possible, should you decide to move to the UK, contact one of our experienced advisers for a free consultation: www.holbornassets.com/our-services/other-services/bno-visa

Working in the UK

As a BNO Visa holder, you have the right to work in the UK. Once you have identified a job you want to apply for, applications are usually made through an application form, or a CV and a covering letter. You can also get careers advice and support from the National Careers Service. For more information, please head over to the website: www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/

The National Insurance number helps you make sure that your National Insurance contributions and tax are recorded against your name. The National Insurance number never changes. If you would like to apply for a National Insurance number you would have to provide a copy of your passport and proof that you have the right to work in the UK. For more information, please visit the website: www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number

Healthcare in the UK

BNO Visa holders are entitled to access the NHS (www.nhs.uk) services free of charge after having paid the Immigration Health Surcharge. However, you might have to pay for some services such as prescriptions and dental care.

People who have obtained the BNO Visa can access the following services free of charge: General Practitioners (GPs), hospitals, and maternity services.

One of the first steps you would have to take is to register with a GP. You can find out more on that here: www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/how-to-register-with-a-gp-surgery/

Holborn and the BNO Visa

Are you planning to move to the UK taking advantage of the BNO Visa benefits? Holborn's experienced and fully qualified advisers can walk you through the application process and make it easier and stress-free for you and your family.

Get in touch with our team today: www.holbornassets.com/our-services/how-else-can-we-help/bno-visa/





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