

# National welcome for Hong Kong arrivals

- Hong Kong BN(0) status holders and their families who settle in the United Kingdom will receive £43 million dedicated support package
- 12 welcome hubs will help families and individuals access housing, education, and employment to build a life in the UK
- Funding for councils to provide additional help for new arrivals where needed, including support with housing costs and learning English
- Schools to receive dedicated Hong Kong educational resources to teach pupils about historic Hong Kong-British connection

British National (Overseas) families coming to the United Kingdom on the Hong Kong BN(0) route will benefit from a dedicated package of support to help them settle successfully into life in the UK, the Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick announced today (8 April 2021).

Backed by over £43 million, the Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) Integration Programme will help status holders access housing, work and educational support to ensure they are able to quickly integrate and contribute to their newfound communities.

The move delivers on the UK's historic and moral commitment to the people of Hong Kong who chose to retain their ties to the UK by taking up BN(0) status in 1997. It provides them with a pathway to live in the UK should they choose to do so. BN(0) status holders have had their rights and freedoms restricted by the National Security Legislation imposed by the Chinese government and it is right that we change the entitlements in the UK which are attached to their status.

Councils in England, who are already playing a key role to ensure BN(0) status holders are warmly welcomed and supported, will benefit from £30.7 million to provide targeted support for new arrivals, covering additional English language and support with housing costs for those who need it. As the areas of support covered by these funds are both devolved policies, £5.8 million will be provided to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to deliver similar activity.

A further £5 million will be used to establish 12 virtual welcome hubs across every region in England, and in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, to co-ordinate support and give practical advice and assistance in applying for school places, registering with GPs and even setting up businesses.

Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick said:

I want to extend a warm welcome to Hong Kongers arriving in the UK and reaffirm that this government is doing everything in its power to ensure your success and happiness here.

This programme will ensure British National (Overseas) status holders and their families have the very best start as soon as they arrive, and support to help them find a home, schools for their children, opportunity and prosperity.

We are a champion of freedom and democracy and will live up to our responsibilities to the people of Hong Kong, so that these families will come to find the UK a place they can call home.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

We promised to uphold freedom for the people of Hong Kong, which is why I am proud that we have been able to support so many people when they have needed our help.

It's an unprecedented and generous scheme and there is no other visa in the world of this nature. We are working hard to successfully resettle people here and recognise there is nothing more difficult than leaving your home to rebuild a life in a new country.

I know communities up and down our country will welcome new arrivals with open arms and support them to build a new life in the UK.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

This is another important step in our support for BNOs to help them integrate and contribute to UK society.

It reflects our commitment to the people of Hong Kong – and those who have now chosen to start a new life here.

Dr Krish Kandiah, Founder of UKHK.org said:

The arrival of Hong Kongers will enrich the UK immensely and help thousands of people live in freedom.

All of us – neighbours, colleagues, fellow students, businesses – have important roles to play in making Hong Kongers feel welcome and to help their integration into British society. But government support is critical. That's the clear lesson from past migrations. So it is great to see the government follow through on its commitment to help Hong Kongers successfully settle in the UK with an early package of assistance.

Today's package also includes:

- 12 'virtual' welcome hubs for new arrivals with funding for projects like local helplines, community led activities such as buddying up with other families, and English language support if needed, ensuring that people feel at home in their new community.
- A £986,000 national Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) grant scheme will fund national projects that support BN(0) status holders in areas such as employment, mental health and wellbeing to help build community cohesion.
- As a part of the VCSE fund, MHCLG will develop dedicated Hong Kong educational resources for schools so that they can teach young people about our historic connection and commitment to Hong Kong and its people and, celebrate the contribution of the Hong Kong-British and Chinese-British Diaspora to the UK.
- Dedicated advice for BN(0)s and a [comprehensive welcome pack](#) to help BN(0) families navigate the move. This includes information on how to access public services, registering to vote and opening a bank account, pointing to local amenities like libraries and leisure centres and promoting the UK's rich cultural, arts and music events, all translated into Cantonese.

To help drive integration work across government, the Communities Secretary has established an Inter-Ministerial Group that will consider issues such as access to public services, opportunities and safety for new arrivals across all four nations.

The UK's offer of bespoke immigration route BN(0) status holders follows the Chinese government's imposition of the National Security Law in Hong Kong last year.

Today's package shows the UK will not look the other way on Hong Kong, and that this government will deliver on its historic responsibilities to the people of Hong Kong.

Following China's imposition of the National Security Law on the people of Hong Kong in July 2020, the UK government has introduced a new immigration route for Hong Kong British National (Overseas) status holders, providing the opportunity for them and their family members to live, work and study in the UK.

As of 19 March 2021, approximately 27,000 BN(0) status holders and their family members have applied for a visa since January – this number reflects applications rather than visa holders. More information will be released on how many visas have been granted in the next quarterly migration statistics release on 27 May. The number of applications is based on internal Home Office management data.

The government's impact assessment in October estimated that between 123,000 and 153,000 BN(0) status holders and their dependants could take up the route in its first year, with between 258,000 and 322,000 over 5 years – these numbers are estimates and may change.

See [more information on the BN\(0\) Visa route](#).

The 12 welcome hubs will be delivered through the existing Strategic Migration Partnerships, and in England will work with local authorities, voluntary community and social enterprises. The 12 hubs will work with local authorities and VCSE groups to provide face-to-face support where needed.

Resources will be made available to local authorities including [FAQs](#) and lessons learned from other integration programmes to share best practice from across the UK.

£5.8 million will be provided to the devolved administrations through the Barnett formula and MHCLG will work closely with the devolved administrations and with the Strategic Migration Partnerships.

Cross-Ministerial group will be set up to drive integration work across government.

### **Additional quote**

Daniel Korski, Welcoming Committee for Hong Kongers and Vice-President of the Jewish Leadership Council said:

I believe the new arrivals from Hong Kong have so much to offer our nation at this critical time. Our children will thrive studying alongside new Hong Kong classmates. Our businesses will benefit with fresh talent from Hong Kong. And our communities will be enriched by our new Hong Kong neighbours.

The government's generous investment in a National Welcome to Hong Kong new arrivals is a significant and positive commitment. It not only sends a strong message of support to those arriving from Hong Kong, it also encourages the many civil society groups, community associations, churches and other faith communities who have been actively involved in offering practical and emotional support to the new arrivals as they make the UK their home.