

Hong Kong BN(0) visa: UK government launch digital process

News story

App comes as thousands of people apply to the BN(0) visa route.



From today (Tuesday 23 February), applicants for the Hong Kong BN(0) visa with certain biometric passports will be able to apply from a smartphone app to scan their passport.

[Applications can be made](#) within the UK or overseas and will enable BN(0), HKSAR or EEA biometric passport holders to submit their biometrics and validate their identity using the app. The BN(0), HKSAR document holders will be the first non-EEA citizens to be able to use this system.

The launch of the app comes after the UK government delivered on its commitment to open a new visa for Hong Kong BN(0) status holders with the BN(0) visa, which launched on 31 January.

The BN(0) visa is already a success, with thousands of BN(0) status holders and their family members already applying to live, work and study in the UK under this visa.

The commitment was made following the Chinese government's imposition of the national security law in Hong Kong last year, in breach of its commitments under international law.

Future Borders and Immigration Minister Kevin Foster said:

I am pleased we have not only managed to launch this new route, enabling those with BN(0) status and their households to settle in the UK, but have now enhanced it with this new wholly digital application process.

This process marks a major step forward in our move to digitise the UK's Immigration system, with it allowing the first group of non-

EEA nationals to complete the process of applying for a visa from home.

In instances where the chip checker is unable to read a passport, applicants are being urged to try another passport if they hold one.

Those who are unable to scan their passport chip will need to finalise their application through attending an appointment at a Visa Application Centre.

The UK committed to this visa following the imposition of the national security law imposed by the Chinese government in June 2020, in a clear breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The 1984 declaration is a legally binding treaty which commits to ensure the rights and freedoms of the people of Hong Kong and maintain Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy.

Application process

- From February 23, those eligible can apply online and use the "[UK Immigration: ID Check](#)" smartphone app for iPhone or Android to scan their biometric passport instead of attending a visa application centre. The app is due to go live at 9am GMT / 5pm Hong Kong time.
- We are aware through testing that there may be some documents where the app cannot read the chip. Testing suggests that this is mainly an issue with Hong Kong SAR passports issued before Summer 2019. We are continuing to test the technology against these passports.
- If applicants have a valid BN(0) passport we advise them to use this for their application when using the app. Once an application is complete and successful, individuals can travel to the UK using any valid passport – they do not have to use the passport they applied with.
- If applicants do not have a valid BN(0) passport but are BN(0) status holders, they can apply for a BN(0) passport before application. A BN(0) passport application costs £106 and currently takes approximately 4-6 weeks to process.
- If applicants are unable to scan their passport chip, they will need to finalise their application through attending an appointment at a Visa Application Centre if in Hong Kong or at a UKVCAS location if in the UK. It is not possible to switch the passport used to apply mid-application.
- Applicants who attend an appointment at a Visa Application Centre to enrol their biometric fingerprints will receive a visa vignette sticker in their passport. Applicants must travel to the UK within 90 days of the date of the vignette placed in their passport, or if they change their travel plans later they will need to apply for a vignette change

with an associated fee.

- For applicants with a HKSAR passport who are experiencing issues, support is available via our customer guidance: [“UK Immigration: ID Check” smartphone app](#)
- Thousands of BN(0) status holders and their family members have applied for the new visa since it launched on 31 January. This is in addition to the approximately 9,000 BN(0) status holders and their dependants that have been granted Leave Outside the Rules at the border between 15 July to 16 February 2021. Specific numbers on BN(0) visa applications will be published in the quarterly immigration statistics in due course.
- If you are a BN(0) status holder, or a BN(0) family member, and are already in the UK, you do not need to apply straightaway unless your existing visa (e.g. visit visa, study visa) or Leave Outside the Rules is shortly expiring.

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