

Hong Kong BN(0) visa: UK government to honour historic commitment

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.

The visa reflects the UK's historic and moral commitment to the people of Hong Kong who have had their rights and freedoms restricted.

Those with BN(0) status and their eligible family members will be able to come to the UK to live, study and work. As with other visas, after five years in the UK, they will be able to apply for settlement, followed by British citizenship after a further 12 months.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

I am immensely proud that we have brought in this new route for Hong Kong BN(0)s to live, work and make their home in our country.

In doing so we have honoured our profound ties of history and friendship with the people of Hong Kong, and we have stood up for freedom and autonomy – values both the UK and Hong Kong hold dear.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Global Britain will always stand up for what is right and uphold our commitments. This new visa delivers on our promise to the people of Hong Kong, honouring our strong historic relationship and upholding their freedoms.

I look forward to welcoming people wanting to put down roots and build a new life with their family in the UK.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

We have been clear we won't look the other way when it comes to Hong Kong. We will live up to our historic responsibility to its people.

China's imposition of the National Security Law in Hong Kong constitutes a clear and serious breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration contrary to international law.

With the launch of this new visa route, BN(0) citizens will now have a choice to come and live, work and study in the UK.

Applicants for the visa with certain biometric passports will also be able to apply from home using a smartphone app to scan their passport rather than having to visit a visa application centre.

From 23 February, BN(0) status holders and their eligible family members who hold a biometric BN(0), Hong Kong Special Administrative Region or European Economic Area (EEA) passport can scan their passport on the app and complete their application from home. They will be the first non-EEA citizens to be able to do so.

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.

From 15 July 2020 to 13 January 2021, approximately 7,000 BN(0) status holders and their dependants have been granted Leave Outside the Rules at the border. BN(0) status holders will not need to apply for the new route straight away. We have made the decision to extend the Leave Outside the Rules at the border scheme until after the route becomes fully digital.

In addition to the Immigration Health Surcharge, the visa fee payable to stay for five years will be £250 per person or applicants will also be able to apply to stay for 30 months which will cost £180 per person. This is lower than many other visas.

The UK government is working with civil society groups and others to welcome BN(0) status holders to all parts of the UK and help them integrate.