

First ballot of the 2022 Youth Mobility Scheme for Hong Kong SAR passport holders

The UK/Hong Kong YMS allows young people aged between 18 and 30 to live, work or study in the United Kingdom for up to 2 years.

As before, there are a total of 1,000 places available to Hong Kong SAR passport holders for 2022.

The majority of places will be allocated in this first ballot in January, while the remaining places will be made available in a second ballot in July 2022. If your application is successful you will be able to live, work and study in the UK for up to 2 years.

How to apply for the ballot

If you would like to be in with the chance to apply for the scheme you should send one email per applicant to: hongkong.yms2022@fcdo.gov.uk between midday (12pm) on Monday 17 January 2022 to midday on Wednesday 19 January 2022 (Hong Kong time).

The header or subject line of your email must contain your name, date of birth (DD/MM/YYYY) and passport number as shown in your passport. This must be written in English only. For example: WONG Janet – 31/03/2000 – Passport123456789.

The main body of your email should include the following information, written in English:

- Name
- Date of birth
- Passport Number
- Mobile phone number

The email account will only be open for 48 hours and all emails received within this timeframe will be sent an automated reply confirming receipt.

Once the ballot closes applicants will be chosen at random by UKVI. If you have been successful a second email will be sent to you by 28 January to confirm acceptance and provide further instructions on how to make an appointment, along with documentary evidence required to apply for your entry clearance.

Please note successful applicants must prepare online applications and online credit card payments no later than 28 February 2022. Failure to submit your payment online by this date will automatically remove your name from the list and your allocation will be retracted. After you have paid online you have 90

days to book your appointment at the Visa Application Centre (VAC) and submit your paperwork for consideration.

If you are a Hong Kong SAR passport holders living overseas you can also apply following the instructions above, and if you are chosen to apply you will be able to do so in your country/territory of residence. Applications cannot be submitted for the Youth Mobility Scheme in the UK.

If you are unsuccessful you will receive an email within two weeks of the ballot closing and no further action is required. You'll be able to re-apply for the ballot when it reopens in July 2022, if you meet the eligibility requirements. Further information about the scheme can be found on gov.uk and any enquiries relating to the application process, online application forms and questions in general should be directed to the UKVI International Enquiry Line.

Additional information

British National (Overseas) passport holders are already eligible to apply for a visa under the Youth Mobility Scheme to the UK and are not subject to any quota or sponsorship requirements.

One year anniversary of UK approving Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine

- Vaccination programme has been a phenomenal success, saving countless lives and reducing pressure on NHS
- 2.5 billion doses of the at-cost and UK-made vaccine have been administered across the world

The UK became the first country in the world to approve the Oxford University/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine a year ago today [Thursday December 30].

Early investment in the Oxford team, in their technology since 2016 and their COVID-19 vaccines since March 2020, paved the way for approval by the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), driven forward by the National Institute for Health Research's (NIHR) world leading research. The NIHR helped recruit thousands of volunteers from across the UK for Phase 3 trials and supported the researchers.

Almost 50 million AstraZeneca vaccines have been administered in the UK, saving countless lives, keeping people out of hospital and reducing the pressure on the NHS.

Following the government investing more than £88 million to help research,

develop and manufacture the vaccine, around 2.5 billion doses have been distributed at-cost to more than 170 countries. Almost two-thirds of these have gone to low and lower-middle-income countries, including more than 30 million doses donated by the UK through COVAX or bilaterally. The UK will donate a further 20 million AstraZeneca doses to countries in need next year as part of the government's commitment to donate 100 million doses overall.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Our fight against COVID-19 in the UK and around the world would not have been possible without the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine.

Developed by brilliant scientists at Oxford and delivered on a not-for-profit basis thanks to AstraZeneca, this vaccine has provided 50 million doses to the British public and over 2.5 billion to more than 170 other countries.

We can all be incredibly proud of – and grateful for – a job that has saved many millions of lives.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Today marks one year since the UK made history by being the first country in the world to approve the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine – a UK-made and government-funded vaccine which has been absolutely pivotal in helping to save millions of lives around the world.

I'm incredibly proud of the role the UK has played in developing, researching and manufacturing ground-breaking vaccines and treatments during the pandemic.

Vaccines are the best way to protect people from COVID-19 and I'm urging everybody to play their part in this national mission – roll up your sleeves and get your jabs.

Vaccines Minister Maggie Throup said:

One year on, the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine has played a crucial part in our fight against COVID-19, saving the lives of the most vulnerable and helping to reduce the spread of the virus.

It's a remarkable example of British innovation and scientific excellence – please take advantage and get your vaccines as soon as you can to protect yourself this winter.

The COVID-19 vaccination programme is the largest in British history and was established at unprecedented speed, with thousands of vaccine centres set up rapidly in England, meaning around 98% of people live within 10 miles of a

vaccination clinic.

The government's Vaccine Taskforce secured early access to almost 340 million doses of the most promising vaccine candidates in advance for the entire UK, Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories, enabling a rapid deployment once approved by the medicines regulator.

The UK led the world in vaccine research, providing results for three of the successful vaccine candidates through huge Phase 3 trials for Oxford AstraZeneca, Janssen and Novavax vaccines. The Novavax trial is the largest ever double blind placebo controlled trial in the UK, recruiting 15,000 participants from 35 research sites in just over two months.

Tom Keith-Roach, President of AstraZeneca UK, said:

I am quietly humbled and hugely proud of the work we have done together to get 50 million doses into people's arms here in the UK and over 2.5 billion doses to people in over 170 countries globally in less than 12 months.

This has only been possible thanks to the tireless efforts and is to the huge credit of so many colleagues, partners, healthcare workers, volunteers and members of the public who have stepped forward to support this unprecedented national effort.

There remain huge challenges ahead, much vital work is still to be done, but in 2021 we achieved remarkable things and this should give us confidence and renewed hope for 2022.

An extra £60 million for adult social care over January 2022

Press release

The government is providing an additional £60 million to local authorities to support the adult social care response to COVID-19 in January



- Government announces £60 million top-up to local authorities to support adult social care sector in the new year
- This is on top of £388 million already being provided to prevent infections and provide testing
- It comes as Omicron cases increase rapidly across the country

The government will provide an extra £60 million to local authorities to support the adult social care response to COVID-19 in January, Minister for Care Gillian Keegan has announced today.

The Adult Social Care – Omicron Support Fund is on top of the £388 million infection control and testing fund announced earlier in the year to prevent infections and provide testing in the care sector.

As cases of Omicron rise rapidly around the country, the additional £60 million will help protect both those who receive care, the family and friends who support them, as well as the adult social care workforce. Local authorities can use the funding to support the sector and protect people from COVID-19 infection. This includes investing in improved ventilation, increasing the use of Direct Payments – which are offered to people with eligible social care needs so they have choice and control over their care and support arrangements – or paying for COVID-19 sickness and self-isolation pay for staff.

Minister for Care Gillian Keegan said:

Protecting care staff and people who use social care services continues to be a priority, especially as cases surge and Omicron spreads rapidly around the country.

Today's extra funding will ensure that we continue to support adult social care to keep people safe and prevent outbreaks. A huge thank you goes out to care workers for all they are doing to care for people and keep themselves and others safe this winter.

I urge anyone who has yet to get a booster to come forward – vaccines are our best defence against this virus so Get Boosted Now.

The government has taken action throughout the pandemic to protect social

care, including:

- Continuing to provide free PPE to protect against COVID-19 to the adult social care sector;
- Providing regular asymptomatic COVID-19 testing; and
- Continuing to support care providers to make best use of technology to help remote monitoring including making pulse oximeters available to care homes that have less than the recommended number of devices.

Care home guidance was changed recently to protect residents further by allowing each resident to have three listed visitors as well as an essential care giver, either a family member or friend, who may visit the home to offer companionship or help with care needs. People living in care homes are typically more vulnerable to severe illnesses as a result of COVID-19, and measures are in place to facilitate visiting while keeping care home staff and residents safe. Visitors should receive a negative lateral flow test result and report it on the day of their visit.

Published 29 December 2021

[2,828 'elf Assessments filed on Christmas Day](#)

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has revealed that 2,828 customers filed their Self Assessment tax return on Christmas Day, compared to 2,700 in 2020.

For thousands of customers, filing their tax return on 25 December has become part of their Christmas tradition, with 227 choosing to complete their Self Assessment between 12:00 and 12:59.

In total, more than 31,000 customers submitted their 2020 to 2021 tax return between Christmas Eve and Boxing Day – getting it in early ahead of the deadline on 31 January 2022, and most festive filers completed their return on 24 December:

- Christmas Eve: 19,802 tax returns were filed. The peak time for filing was 11:00 to 11:59 when 2,914 returns were received
- Christmas Day: 2,828 tax returns were filed. The peak time for filing was 12:00 to 12:59 when 227 returns were received
- Boxing Day: 8,641 tax returns were filed. The peak time for filing 12:00 to 12:59 when 821 returns were received

Myrtle Lloyd, HMRC's Director General for Customer Services, said:

Filing in a tax return won't have been on many people's to-do

lists for Christmas, but please don't leave it until the end of January either. We have videos, guidance and helpsheets to support you – just search 'Self Assessment' on GOV.UK to find out more.

HMRC has created resources to help customers complete their tax return including a playlist on [YouTube](#), [webinars](#) and [helpsheets and guidance](#) available on GOV.UK.

Some Self Assessment customers may feel worried or anxious about paying any tax owed by the deadline. If they cannot pay in full, customers can set up their own [Time to Pay arrangement](#) online if they:

- have filed their 2020 to 2021 tax return
- owe less than £30,000
- are within 60 days of the payment deadline
- plan to pay their debt off within the next 12 months or less

If customers owe more than £30,000, or need longer to pay, they should call the Self Assessment Payment Helpline on 0300 200 3822.

HMRC urges everyone to be alert if they are contacted out of the blue by someone asking for money or personal information. Customers should always type in the full online address www.gov.uk/hmrc to get the correct link for filing their Self Assessment return online securely and free of charge. HMRC sees high numbers of fraudsters emailing, calling or texting people claiming to be from the department. If in doubt, HMRC advises not to reply directly to anything suspicious, but to contact them straight away and to [search GOV.UK for 'HMRC scams'](#).

The number of customers who filed their 2019 to 2020 tax returns over the festive period:

- 24 December 2020: 20,200 tax returns filed with 2,892 filing between 11:00 to 11:59
- 25 December 2020: 2,700 tax returns filed with 214 filing between 14:00 to 14:59
- 26 December 2020: 8,500 tax returns filed with 858 filing between 15:00 to 15:59

Find out more about [how to declare taxable COVID-19 support in your tax return](#) if you are self-employed, in a partnership or run a business.

If this is your first time completing an online tax return, you may be asked additional questions to prove your identity. To answer these questions, please have as many of the following to hand where relevant, when making your claim:

- your UK passport
- Northern Ireland (DVA – issued) driving licence
- information held on your credit file (such as loans, credit cards or mortgages)
- your Self Assessment tax return (within the last 3 years)

- your tax credit claim
 - your P60
 - one of your 3 most recent payslips
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UK government announces major expansion of heat networks in latest step to power homes with green energy

- £19 million government cash boost announced to supply low carbon heating for thousands of homes and buildings across the country
- government appoints Ofgem as Great Britain heat networks regulator to ensure consumers receive a fair price and reliable supply of heat
- heat networks are an essential technology for cutting carbon emissions in a cost-effective way while reducing bills and tackling fuel poverty, forming a key part of the government's landmark [Heat and Buildings Strategy](#)

UK homes, university residences and public buildings will benefit from cleaner, more affordable heat and energy, thanks to £19 million government funding announced today to further expand Great Britain's network of low carbon heating (Wednesday 29 December).

The £19 million investment will go towards setting up 5 new heat networks, 2 in Bristol, and 3 across Liverpool, London and Worthing, providing households and workplaces with more affordable, reliable heating that offers a low-carbon, more cost-effective alternative to installing individual, energy-intensive, heating solutions such as gas boilers.

Heat networks supply heat from a central source to consumers, such as large rivers and heat from sewers via a network of underground pipes carrying hot water, like a giant central heating system serving many buildings, and supplies it through pipes to homes and businesses.

The £19.1 million funding announced today comes from the government's £320 million Heat Networks Investment Project (HNIP), which supports the development of heat networks across England and Wales. Government-funded heat networks currently being developed include Leeds City County's 16km district heat network, Cardiff Town Heat Network in South Wales, spreading across the Cardiff Bay area, and Newcastle University's District Heat Network within their city centre campus.

As a proven, cost-effective way of providing reliable low carbon heat at a fair price to consumers, and as recommended by the Climate Change Committee, the UK government is working towards growing the heat networks sector, which provides roughly 2% of UK heat demand but could meet around a fifth of heat

demand by 2050.

Minister for Climate Change Lord Callanan said:

Almost a third of all UK carbon emissions come from heating our homes and addressing this is a vital part of tackling pollution, driving down bills and reducing our reliance on costly fossil fuels. Today's announcement builds on our commitments made in the Heat and Buildings Strategy to regulate the UK's heat networks, protect consumers, and create opportunities for green jobs and investment across the country.

This will allow thousands of households and businesses to feel the benefits of projects that are breaking new ground and making our villages, towns and cities cleaner places to live and work.

To support this, Ofgem has today been appointed by the UK government as the heat networks regulator for Great Britain to ensure consumers receive a fair price and reliable supply of heat.

The industry regulator will be responsible for enforcing rules and guidance on pricing and quality of service while facilitating the growth and decarbonisation of the market. Forming part of the government's new Heat Networks Market Framework, Ofgem will also increase investor confidence in the market and play a key part in reducing the carbon footprint from heating homes and workspaces.

Taken together, these announcements demonstrate how government is giving consumers, investors and developers confidence in heat networks by both implementing a market framework, and putting capital investment into local projects to reduce bills, tackle fuel poverty, and support local regeneration.

Jonathan Brearley, chief executive of Ofgem, said:

We welcome the government's announcement that it will appoint Ofgem as the new heat networks regulator. Heat networks can play a key role in reducing carbon emissions from heating and helping to achieve the country's climate goals.

We will work with the government to design a regulatory framework which attracts the investment needed while ensuring heat network consumers, especially those in vulnerable circumstances, receive a fair price and reliable supply of heat for their homes as we make the transition to net zero.

The government's response to the [Heat networks market framework consultation](#), published today, sets out proposals for introducing legislation to regulate the sector, which we are committed to doing within this Parliament. This will

include appointing Ofgem as heat networks regulator and Citizens Advice as the consumer advocacy body.

This legislation will play a critical role in protecting approximately half a million consumers across around 14,000 heat networks in Great Britain, of which approximately 2,000 are district heat networks and 12,000 are communal heat networks.

The £19.1 million funding announced today comes from the government's £320 million Heat Networks Investment Project (HNIP), which supports the development of heat networks across England and Wales.

Today's announcement will help to deliver the commitments made in the [Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan](#) to make the UK's homes, schools and hospitals greener, warmer and more energy efficient, while creating 50,000 jobs by 2030.

They also support the government's new target for all new heating systems installed in UK homes by 2035 to be either using low-carbon technologies, building on more than £3.9 billion of funding announced as part of the Heat and Buildings Strategy to decarbonise heat and buildings. The £3.9 billion investment will fund the next 3 years of investment through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, the Home Upgrade Grant scheme, the £450 million Boiler Upgrade Scheme and the Heat Networks Transformation Programme and reducing carbon emissions from public buildings through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.

Heat Networks Market Framework

- The government response to the [Heat networks market framework consultation](#), published today, sets out government's proposals for introducing legislation to regulate the sector, which we are committed to doing within this Parliament
- Ofgem was chosen after a thorough process of comparing its suitability with other regulatory bodies and structures, which was conducted working closely with industry. This exercise reaffirmed the government's view that Ofgem is the most desirable choice for regulator
- as well as its role of enforcing consumer protection rules, Ofgem will enforce decarbonisation rules in the market and licence heat network developers who wish to use statutory rights and powers to help build out this new industry quickly and cost-effectively
- the government will also appoint Citizens Advice as the consumer advocacy body and intends to appoint the Energy Ombudsman as the independent ombudsman scheme for consumers
- the government has also announced a public consultation on a [proposed approach for recovering the costs of heat networks regulation](#), closing 22 February 2022
- this consultation proposes that Ofgem's costs of regulating the heat networks, gas and electricity markets are spread evenly across heat network, gas, and electricity consumers. This approach would address risks to the competitiveness of the heat networks market and issues of affordability for heat network consumers

Heat Networks Investment Project (HNIP)

- The £19.1 million funding announced today comes from the government's £320 million Heat Networks Investment Project (HNIP), which supports the development of heat networks across England and Wales
- HNIP was launched as a pilot in 2016 with the main scheme being launched in 2018. To date over £250 million has been awarded to heat network projects in England and Wales via HNIP
- BEIS is currently developing the Green Heat Network Fund, which is intended to be the targeted successor to HNIP and is due to open in 2022
- heat network projects are further supported through the Heat Networks Delivery Unit (HNDU)
- the HNIP funded heat network projects being announced today:

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has been awarded over £1.1 million to develop a new zero carbon heat network which will use air source heat pumps to provide heat to 826 existing homes and several public buildings and business units in the Notting Dale area of the borough

Worthing Borough Council has been awarded over £5.3 million toward the replacement of gas boilers in 27 buildings with a heat network that will use a centralised heat pump to take heat from the sewer underneath the town.

Bristol City Council has been awarded a total of over £6.4 million to support the development of 2 new low carbon heat networks in the Temple and Bedminster districts. Combined, these networks are expected to deliver heat to over 6,000 residences through the use of ground and water source heat pumps and waste heat from Bristol University's Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus.

Peel Energy, through its supply company, Mersey Heat, is delivering a district heat network to the Liverpool Waters development and the surrounding areas. The HNIP funding award of £6.2 million will enable the transition to a heat pump solution as the main generation source and connection of a central cluster of existing buildings. When complete, Mersey Heat will provide low carbon heat and hot water to up to 9,000 homes.

- Further details of these projects can be found in the [press notice](#) published today by the HNIP Delivery Partner, Triple Point Heat Networks.