

Hong Kong BN(O) visa – new route to British citizenship for Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas)

24 JULY 2020

CATEGORY:
ARTICLE



Hong Kong BN(O)s and their immediate family members will be permitted to apply for a “Hong Kong BN(O) visa” from inside or outside the UK, which will come into effect in January 2021. This route is not limited to Hong Kong BN(O)s with a valid BN(O) passport; meaning those with an expired or lost BN(O) passport are also able to apply.

To be eligible for a Hong Kong BN(O) visa, a Hong Kong BN(O) must evidence the following:

- BN(O) status;
- primary residence in Hong Kong;
- adequate accommodation and financial support in the UK for at least 6 months;
- a commitment to learning English, where appropriate; and
- a tuberculosis (TB) certificate from a Home Office-approved clinic.

Hong Kong BN(O) visa holders will be eligible to apply for “indefinite leave to remain” (settlement) in the UK following 5 years’ continuous residence in the UK, with the option to initially apply for a 2½ year visa and extend for a further 2½ years, or alternatively apply for a 5 year visa at the outset. After 12 months with ILR/settlement status in the UK, Hong Kong BN(O)s will be allowed to apply to naturalise as British citizens.

Hong Kong BN(O)’s are currently permitted to visit the UK for up to 6 months, and are prohibited from working or studying. It may be possible for Hong Kong BN(O)s to be granted with “Leave Outside the Rules” before the Hong Kong BN(O) visa becomes available, however this is granted on a discretionary basis on the basis that certain criteria are met and specific documents have been provided.

Re-locating to the UK and complying with the Immigration Rules takes considerable planning. If you are a Hong Kong BN(O) looking to discuss these recent developments, please contact our Immigration Team who would be happy to advise.

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