



East Midlands Councils
HKBNO
WELCOME HUB

HKBNO CONNECT

The latest national and regional updates for those who are supporting Hong Kong BNO visa holders in the East Midlands region.



TOP ITEMS THIS MONTH:

- Page 3 – No Recourse to Public Fund training
- Page 6 - Flying Cows TESL Volunteering Programme
- Page 7 – Small Grant Funding updates

Welcome

Welcome to the 2nd edition of HKBNO Connect. We are the East Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership, and we are funded by UK Government (MHCLG) to provide a welcome for Hong Kong BN(O) in the East Midlands. This newsletter is for organisations (statutory and voluntary) who support this community.

We also have a Welcome Hub, Facebook page and an email address for enquiries:



[East Midlands Hong Kong
British National Overseas](#)



[HKBNO Facebook](#)



hkbno@emcouncils.gov.uk



BNO Study

In September 2024, HKB launched Initiative COMPREHEND, a project aimed at enhancing mutual understanding between UK, regional and local governments, and the UK's Hongkonger community. The initiative seeks to improve policymakers' awareness of the experiences, needs, and perspectives of UK Hongkongers, while also helping Hongkongers better understand UK policies relevant to their lives. We recently attended a presentation from Hong Kongers in Britain on their study and the findings and report are available here:

[COMPREHEND: Economic Security & Upward Mobility - Hongkongers in Britain | 英國港僑協會](#)

Immigration White Paper

We understand that the recent publication of this paper will be a cause for concern for Hong Kong BN(O) Visa holders in the UK, and also those considering making an application to come to the UK.

This is currently a Home Office proposal, and there will be a full consultation later in the year giving you the opportunity to have your say. We will share this consultation when it is available, and we will encourage you to respond. The UK Government will be keen to hear how these proposed changes may affect you and your family.

We have no further information on this currently but will advise when we receive an update.

The petition to maintain the 5 year settlement route for BNOs has now reached the threshold for a parliamentary debate, this is scheduled for September 8th, 2025:

[Keep 5-year ILR terms to Hong Kong British National \(Overseas\) visas - Petitions](#)

The government has also promised full consultation on the immigration changes in the autumn, and we will raise awareness of this when it is published:

[Changes to UK visa and settlement rules after the 2025 immigration white paper - House of Commons Library](#)

UK Government Response to Recent Warrants for Hong Kong Activists:

[Joint Foreign Secretary-Home Secretary statement on Hong Kong announcing new arrest warrants for overseas activists - GOV.UK](#)

East Midlands Hub Activity and Support

Grants for VCSE

We are nearing the end of delivery of our Year 4 programme for the East Midlands Welcome Hub. We will be asking for final reports from our partners on their grant funded projects and look forward to hearing about the impact of this funding.

We are pleased to receive government support for Year 5, but the scope of this will be quite different. Our funding for Hong Kong BNO and Ukraine is being combined into one grant, so we will be looking for projects to benefit both communities going forward. We will issue a new small grant programme in the autumn for voluntary organisations to apply for, and we will update via this newsletter.

In addition, we are keen to support organisations to deliver Mid-Autumn Festivals in your communities (this year's festival falls on October 6th). We will reach out soon with details of funding available!

No Recourse to Public Funding (NRPF) Training



No
Recourse
to Public
Funds

Introduction to support options for people with no recourse to public funds and entitlements for Hong Kong BN(O) visa holders

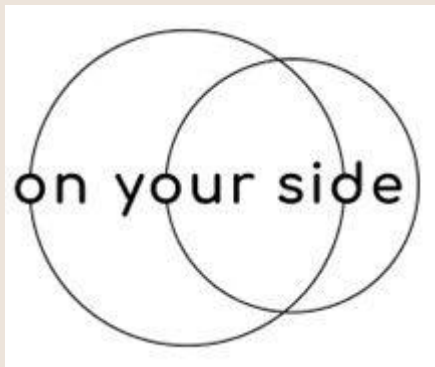
Hong Kong BNO Visa holders need to be self-sufficient on arrival and have 'no recourse to public funding.' This means they cannot access most benefits or social housing. It is important to note that they can apply for this condition to be lifted if they face hardship and destitution though. This course is being funded by East Midlands SMP for organisations or individuals who are supporting BNOS and would like to understand more about this Visa condition.

Overview

Develop your knowledge to identify correct signposting options and referral routes for a person who is at risk of homelessness when they are unable to access benefits and housing due to their immigration status, with a focus on entitlements for Hong Kong BN(O) visa holders.

For further information and to register your interest please contact Anna Anderson at hkbno@emcouncils.gov.uk

On Your Side – Hate Crime Reporting Service



On Your Side is a new, UK-wide support and reporting service for anyone in the UK who identifies as East and Southeast Asian who has experienced racism or any forms of hate.

On Your Side is for anyone in the UK who identifies as East and Southeast Asian, including people with mixed heritage. It is also for anyone who is perceived by others to be East and Southeast Asian and witnesses of hate towards East and Southeast Asians from any background.

Find out more: <https://www.onyoursideuk.org/about/>

Barnardo's Wellbeing Support

Barnardo's continues to provide mental health and wellbeing support for Hongkongers in the UK, building on the offer delivered in Years 1–4 of the Hong Kong BN(O) Programme.



Support includes access to Cantonese-speaking advisors via a helpline and email, remote therapeutic counselling for adults, children and couples, and dedicated youth spaces for young people. Families can also benefit from the Virtual Family Space resource in Cantonese, alongside monthly wellbeing webinars, peer support networks, and volunteering opportunities.

Referrals are welcome from individuals and professionals via phone, email, or the online referral form.

Visit the Barnardo's website here: [Support for Hong Kong BN\(O\) | Barnardo's Helplines](#)



☀️ Join Us for Our Peer Support Group for Hong Kongers in England!!

Topic: UK TV entertainments

Do you watch UK TV?

What programmes do you like to watch?

What programmes are most popular?

Let's share ideas about what to watch in the UK.

Barnado's Peer Group Support Webinars

The journey of immigration is filled with challenges that go beyond adjusting to a new environment—it involves redefining one's identity, building new emotional connections, and setting fresh expectations for the future.

🌸 Join us to uplift one another through compassionate listening, shared experiences, and mutual encouragement, we are not alone!

📅 Date: 5 Aug 2025 (Tue)

📅 Date: 12 Aug 2025 (Tue)

🕒 Time: 8pm-9pm

💻 Venue: Microsoft Teams

Let's Join and Grow together!

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1450141685819?aff=oddttdtcreator>

Hong Kong BNO

pay the Immigration Health Surcharge,
and have full access to healthcare in the
UK including mental health services
from the NHS:



[Mental health - NHS](#)



**Nottinghamshire
Talking Therapies
provides help with
mild to moderate
mental health
conditions and can
provide Cantonese
interpreters on
request**

[Nottinghamshire Talking Therapies](#)

The Talking Therapies service is also available in other areas:
[Find NHS talking therapies for anxiety and depression - NHS](#)

Welcome Hub Updates

Update on Career Coaching for HKBNO in the East Midlands

Welcome Hub priorities for Year 4 are Employment and Wellbeing for Hong Kong BNO in our region. We are using Hub funding to deliver an employment support and coaching project, led by our experienced HR team.

Last month we successfully ran a group session in Bingham that was very well attended and have continued to help several participants who have accessed our 1-1 coaching support.

We were also pleased to attend Transform's Employment session, where we spoke with many Hongkongers about their career ambitions and signposted them to our 1-1 support.

SMALL GRANT FUNDING UPDATES

We are proud to support the following community-led initiatives through the East Midlands Hong Kong BN(O) Welcome Grant Scheme. Each project is working to enhance the well-being, confidence, and integration of Hong Kong BN(O) individuals and families as they build their lives in the UK.

Derbyshire Hongkong CIC

Derbyshire Hongkong CIC has continued to deliver practical and engaging English language support for the Hong Kong BN(O) community. Over the past month, they have run two tailored courses:

B1 Exam Preparation: Five groups of students attended structured classes to build their skills and confidence ahead of the Trinity B1 Speaking & Listening test. Each course included four theory-based lessons and one practical session, with the added benefit of a one-to-one mock exam for each participant. This allowed learners to simulate the test environment and receive individualised feedback.

Daily Conversation Skills: A separate group took part in a five-lesson course focused on real-world English communication. Topics included how to follow fast-paced conversations, common idioms and slang, small talk strategies, and vocabulary for different everyday situations. The sessions were highly interactive, with lots of one-on-one speaking opportunities.

Feedback from participants has been very positive, with many expressing a desire for longer courses and more opportunities to learn practical English.



Transform Training – Fusion Welcome Project

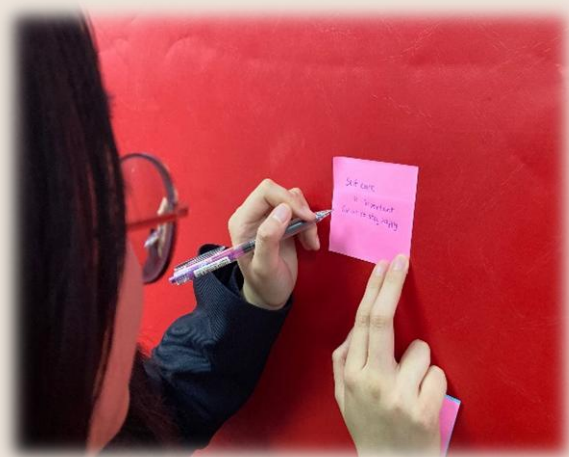
Transform Fusion has been running regular sessions through the Fusion Youth Club, creating a welcoming and engaging space for young Hongkongers to connect, reflect, and explore their identity.

Recent highlights:

- Eight Youth sessions held between 1 June–24 July
- Cultural trip to Matlock inspired creative reflections like “outcome creatures.”
- Young people created personal guidebooks using Padlet and word clouds.
- Emphasis on social connection during exam season



Parents also shared their appreciation for the safe and supportive environment the club provides, and the chance for their children to make friends and build confidence.



Looking ahead, Transform Fusion is planning a day trip to Skegness in early September. Details will be confirmed soon, but any young people interested in joining can contact Lorrie at Lorrie.l@transformtraining.org.uk or 07383 549913.

Congratulations!



Flying Cows – TESL Volunteering programme

We are delighted to congratulate the nine Hongkongers who successfully completed the Flying Cows TESL Volunteer Programme, which we were proud to support.



Through a combination of formal study, including a Level 1 Award in Volunteering and a Certificate in TESOL, and hands-on experience as ESOL classroom assistants, participants built valuable skills, gained qualifications, and gave back to their communities.

to everyone involved and
thank you for the
meaningful contribution you
are making to your
communities!

Many are already putting their learning into practice by supporting library conversation groups, running social clubs, and volunteering in community centres across the region.

Transform Employability Masterclass

The HKBNO Welcome Hub was pleased to take part in a fantastic Employability Masterclass event at the Plessey Centre in Beeston, aimed at supporting Hongkongers and others looking to build their confidence and skills for the UK job market.

We were there to raise awareness of our free 1:1 Career Coaching support and enjoyed speaking with many attendees about how we can help them set goals, build their CV, and prepare for interviews.

A huge thank you to Transform Training for organising the event and to everyone who came along and spoke with us.



Transform are looking for a Youth Engagement Worker to work directly with young people in helping them access their programmes, stay involved, and feel supported every step of the way.

Find out more about this opportunity and apply:
<https://www.transformtraining.org.uk/work-for-us>

Funded by UK Government

Rushcliffe Borough Council

TRANSFORM YOUR FUTURE

Do you need help finding **work**?

Do you want to explore your **options**?

Would you like to gain a **qualification** that will help you find a job?

Aged 16 or over and not currently working or in education?

The **Transform Your Future** programme can support you with all of that and more – without costing you a penny!

08000 85 85 20
transform@futuresadvice.org
www.futuresadvice.org

Rushcliffe Borough Council Transform Your Future programme can support you with finding work for free.

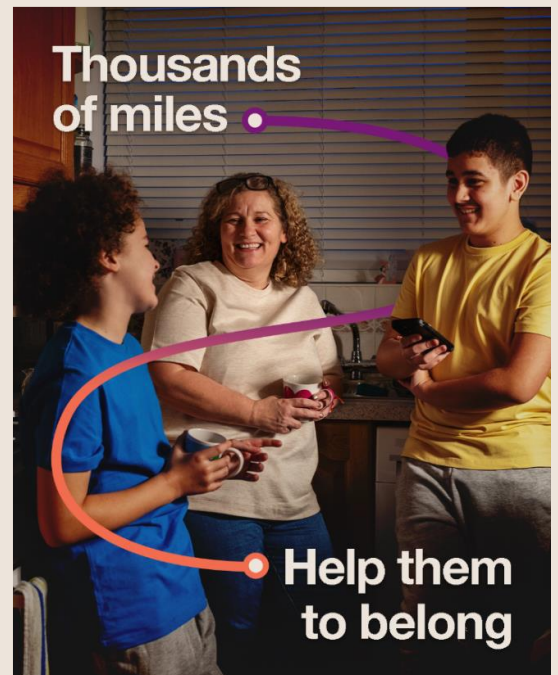
Contact 0800 85 85 20 or email
transform@futuresadvice.org.uk

Could you foster a young person seeking safety in the UK?

East Midlands Councils is working with local authorities across the region to help recruit more foster carers for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC).

These young people arrive in the UK alone, often after fleeing conflict or persecution. They need stability, support, and a safe home where they can begin to rebuild their lives.

If you or someone you know could offer a safe and supportive home to a young person, find out more at: <http://uasc.emcouncils.gov.uk>



No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) Support

When you are granted your BN(O) visa, you will have 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF). You can apply for a 'change of conditions' if you lose your income, are no longer able to provide food and housing for your family and become destitute. You are also entitled to financial support from your local authority while you wait for this change.

If you successfully apply for a change of conditions whilst you have a BNO visa, it will not impact your ability to apply for settlement through the BNO route after 5 years living in the UK.

Please go to our Welcome Hub page for more details and how to apply and access local authority support: <https://hkbno.emcouncils.gov.uk/immigration-and-visa-info/hongkong-bno-visa-when-you-are-struggling-financially/>

English Language Support

There is additional funding available for local authorities to provide extra courses in the first 3 years after arrival for Hong Kong BN(O) and this can include courses to help prepare for employment such as IELTS, GCSE English and the B1 course.

At the end of the 3 years, Hong Kong BNO can access mainstream ESOL education but there may be waiting lists at local colleges. EMC funds 'Begin' to help you find the right course if you live in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire.

If you live in another part of the East Midlands, you will need to contact your local college to access support. If you are having any difficulties finding a course, please contact us directly.

More information can be found on our website:

<https://hkbno.emcouncils.gov.uk/english-language/>

English Language Support in Nottinghamshire

BEGIN offers free, impartial advice for adults aged 16+ who want to access English Language support in Nottinghamshire.

- Courses for all levels – from Beginner to Advanced
- Flexible study options – Morning, afternoon, or evening
- Face-to-face or online sessions available

Contact BEGIN to register & find out more: [Visit the Begin Website.](#)