

HKBNO CONNECT

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



ISSUE #3 TOP ITEMS:

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Welcome

Welcome to the 3rd edition of HKBNO Connect. We are the East Midlands Councils 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 \(HKBNO\) hub](#)



[HKBNO Facebook](#)



hkbno@emcouncils.gov.uk



World Jewish Relief Employment Programme

World Jewish Relief's STEP programme provides employment support and English language training to refugees and forced migrants across the UK. They have launched a new initiative, in partnership with the British Council, funded by the UK Government, to support 4,000 Ukrainians and Hong Kong BN(O) visa holders on their employment journey through tailored 3- or 6-month courses. It is a free online programme offering personalised employment support and high-quality English classes to Ukrainians and HK BN(O)s in England, with the aim of gaining confidence and finding employment in England.

World Jewish Relief recently ran a very successful programme called STEP Ukraine, where nationally, 14,000 Ukrainians received personalised employment support and intensive English language training.

For further information on the STEP Programme, visit here - [Specialist training and employment programme | World Jewish Relief](#)

Immigration White Paper

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

Barnardo's Helpline – now closed.

The Barnardo's helpline for Hong Kong BN(O), which was funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, has now closed. BN(O)s will continue to be signposted through the online Welcome Pack with information about the support and services they can access in the UK.

[Welcome: a guide for Hong Kong British National \(Overseas\) visa holders in the UK - GOV.UK](#)

On Your Side – Hate Crime Reporting Service

Free Webinar: Know your right - taking action against discrimination and hate.

Over the past few weeks, On Your Side have heard from more people experiencing discrimination, racism, and hate. Many have shared feelings of fear, exclusion, and isolation.

As part of National Hate Crime Awareness Week 2025 (11–18 October), [On Your Side UK](#), an independent UK-wide support and reporting service for East and Southeast Asians affected by racism, discrimination, and any form of hate, invites you to a free online session.

This workshop aims to empower East and Southeast Asian communities to understand, report, respond to, and seek support when facing discrimination, racism, or hate in any form.

This free session will cover:

What is a hate crime or hate incident?
Why reporting matters and where to seek support
Practical steps and real-life examples of how to respond to:

- Workplace discrimination and unfair treatment
- School bullying
- Harassment from neighbours or landlords
- Online hate speech

Introduction to the On Your Side service
What to do if you see others being targeted?

Details of the Session:
Tuesday, 14 October 2025
6:00 – 7:30 pm
English
Online (MS Teams)

on your side

National Hate Crime Awareness Week Webinars

Know your right - taking action against discrimination & hate

What you will learn:

- ✓ What's a hate crime or hate incident?
- ✓ Why reporting matters?
- ✓ Tips & examples for handling:
 - Discrimination at work
 - School bullying
 - Harassment from neighbours/ landlord
 - Online hate speech
- ✓ Ways On Your Side can help
- ✓ What to do if you see others being targeted?

14 OCT 2025, TUE
6:00 - 7:30 PM
ENGLISH SESSION

16 OCT 2025, THU
5:00 - 6:30 PM
CANTONESE SESSION

Logos at the bottom: EASST, East Midlands Councils Strategic Migration Partnership, Hong Kong Hub, South East Migration Partnership, South East Strategic Partnership for Migration, West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership, and The Metropolitan Police.

Registration: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/know-your-right-taking-action-against-discrimination-hate-tickets-1756678987139?aff=oddtcreator>

Derbyshire Hong Kong CIC

Conversation Club

The next round of Hong Kong BNO English conversation club which begins in November.

Please see further details and how to join below:

**2025年度
冬季課程開始招生**

**BNO 實用
B1入籍試準備班**

Conversation Club

11月3日開始
逢星期一及三早上10:00-12:00共5節
26年1月、2月設夜間課程。名額有限，先到先得！

報名及查詢請電郵
derbyshirehongkong@gmail.com
或使用下面連結

Steve 是一名 CELTA 和 CTLLS 合格的英語教師，擁有 20 年
成人 (ESOL) 和大學/大學學生 (IELTS 和 EAP) 教學經驗

[B1 英語入籍試準備班 -
2025 年（冬季課程
Winter term）報名登記表
Enrolment Form](#)

NHS – Mental

Health support HKBNO 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](#)

Community and Family Learning Awards Event

East Midland Councils were pleased to sponsor and present the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) categories at the Community and Family Learning Awards at Nottingham Council House on Tuesday, 16th September.

This was an opportunity to give recognition to the hard work of providers, tutors, and students in supporting lifelong learning across Nottingham.

Our gratitude goes to Nottingham City Council colleagues for the opportunity to attend the ceremonies and support the evening, and our congratulations go to all nominees and award winners.



Small Grant Funding for Mid-Autumn Festival

We recognise the importance of cultural traditions for those arriving from Hong Kong, and we have recently awarded funding to a number of voluntary organisations to host 'Mid-Autumn Festival' events in their communities.

Beeston Rylands Community Association worked with the Local Hong Kong community to present a celebration event for the Mid-Autumn festival 2025 on the 4th October 3-7pm. The festival featured stalls, crafts, games, and lanterns. We look forward to sharing photos of the event in the next edition.

Christ Church, Worksop, were also awarded funding to support their Mid-Autumn and Harvest Festival, which was held on 5 October from 3pm – 4:45. They had lantern crafts, quizzes, festive food and drinks for attendees, and encouraged people to bring a tin to donate to the local food bank. We look forward to sharing photos of the event in the next edition.

Hong Kong Notts, Stapleford Parish Council and UKWR will be hosting a Moon Festival and Fayre with exhibitions, performances, and stalls at St Helen's Church on Saturday 11 October from 11am – 4pm. This was an extremely popular event last year with over 400 attendees!

Open Arms CIC, a non-profit dedicated to bridging social gaps, promoting social inclusiveness, and building stronger communities through food, culture, and shared experiences, has also been awarded funding to host a Cultural Sharing Event in celebration of the Mid-Autumn Festival.

Career Coaching

East Midlands SMP has completed its employment support programme, which has delivered in-person workshops and 1-2-1 coaching for Hong Kong BN(O). This employment support has increased confidence in finding jobs which align with BN(O)'s previous experience and qualifications.

Resources are now available: [Employment - East Midlands Councils SMP](#)

A new partner to support the ongoing coordination of ESOL in the region.

East Midlands Councils are delighted to partner with Migrant English Support Hub (MESH) until Spring 2026 with the aim of maximising English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) capacity and access, particularly in under-served areas.

Migration Statistics

On the BN(O) route, since its introduction on 31 January 2021, to the end of June 2025, 166,300 people have arrived in the UK (rounded), with 15,700 in the year ending June 2025. During the first year, visa grants peaked at 75,579. Numbers have fallen every year since.

[How many people come to the UK via safe and legal \(humanitarian\) routes? - GOV.UK](#)

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 BNOs 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.

As of 1st August 2025, the UK government's Adult Skills Fund rules have changed, meaning that Hong Kong BN(O) visa holders are now able to access mainstream ESOL courses from the first day of arrival in the UK. Because of this, the additional ESOL funding for BN(O) visa holders will be removed from 1st April 2026.

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

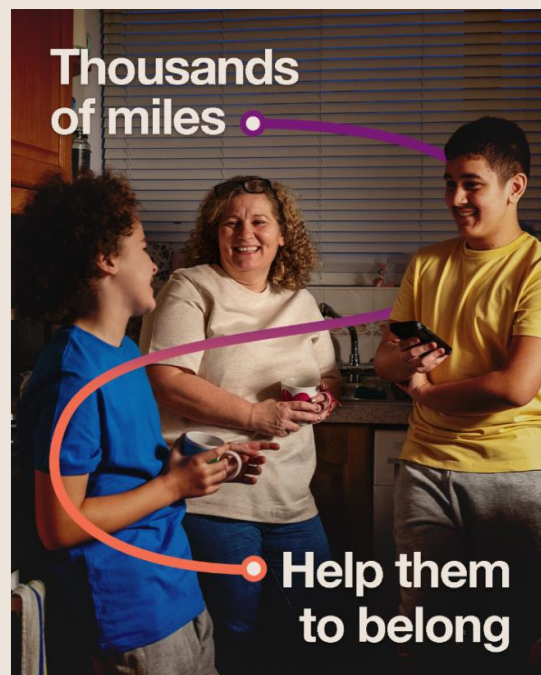
Contact BEGIN to register & find out more: [Visit the BEGIN Website.](#)

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/>