

# Information for Hong Kong Nurses about working in England

Produced in conjunction with the International Recruitment Programme, NHS England and NHS Improvement

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# Introduction

- This resource pack is for nursing professionals in Hong Kong who wish to take up employment in the National Health Service (NHS) in England.
- Either you are a registered nurse, a registered midwife, or a non-NHS worker.
- You are eligible to apply for an appropriate visa that allows you to work in the UK.
- The aims of this pack are to support you and your understanding of various routes or pathways to secure employment with an NHS Trust in England and to provide access to various resources that will help you make an informed choice of NHS providers.
- In each region, the NHS regional international recruitment team is working in conjunction with local Strategic Migration Partnership (SMP) Hong Kong Welcome Hub colleagues, to help with welcoming and supporting new arrivals from Hong Kong who are seeking employment in their area.
- This resource pack is complemented by a Welcome Hub website for each region (ref: page 15).

# Benefits of working in the NHS

Source: DHSC, 2021

- A generous UK visa system, allowing immediate family (spouse and any children under 18) to move to the UK with you.
- Depending on your visa type, if you work in the NHS, you and your dependants will either be exempt from the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS), or eligible for a refund on a pro rata basis for every 6 months worked.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-health-surcharge-applying-for-a-refund/immigration-health-surcharge-guidance-for-reimbursement-2020>
- Relatively high starting salary for newly qualified band 5 nurses, with an opportunity to increase year on year (in 2021/22 starting salary for a newly registered nurse is £25,655 rising a minimum of £27,780 by the fourth year). (ref: page 13)
- Flexible working hours and 27 days of paid holiday a year, plus 8 public holiday days, giving you plenty of time to explore your new home.
- A range of additional benefits including access to the generous NHS pension scheme with many trusts offering additional health and wellbeing programmes, childcare vouchers and cycle-to-work schemes.
- Trusts offer a range of pastoral care and induction packages.
- NHS reputation is of a world-renowned organisation and our investment in international healthcare professionals will enable you to build your career here in England.
- The NHS has a relatively high proportion of international staff and thus has a community of previous international recruits already, with many organisations setting up a 'buddy' system in order to ensure that the joiner is supported.

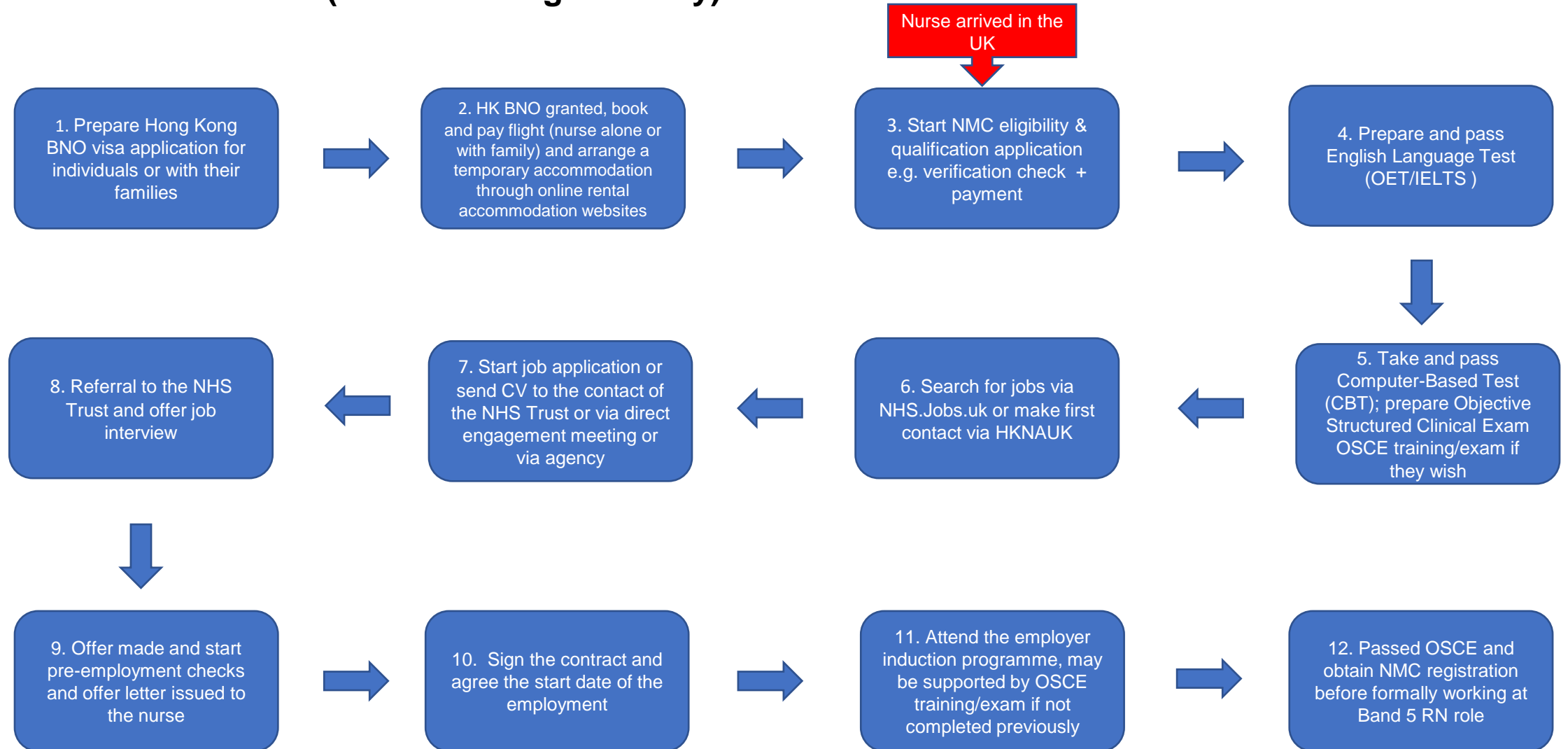
# How to apply to become an NHS nurse

Source:  
[The application process | Health Careers](#)

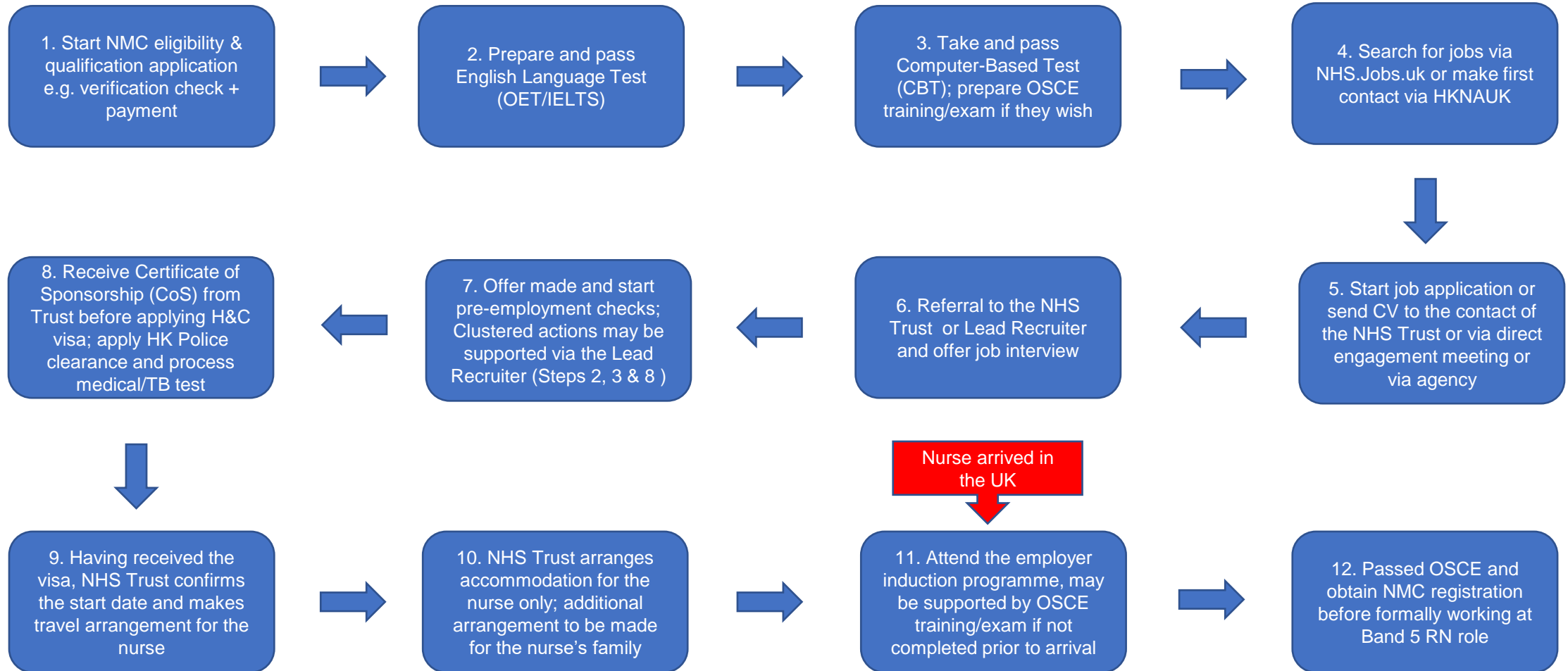
1. Identify your preferred visa route (BNO, or Health and Care Worker, or other visa) and check whether you need a job offer to qualify.
2. Check you're eligible to work as a registered nurse in England by starting the [Nursing and Midwifery Council \(NMC\) application process](#) and [completing their self-assessment](#).
3. Complete your English Language (EL) Test – OET: C+ in Writing and B in Reading, Listening and Speaking or IELTS Academic: 6.5 Writing & 7.0 Reading, Listening and Speaking
4. Complete Computer-Based Test (CBT).
5. Choose your application route, whether it's via NHS Jobs <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/> or through an NHS-approved agency based in England [Recruitment agency list | NHS Employers](#) or an agency local to you.
6. Have your interview and receive a job offer – you'll be interviewed and directly employed by an NHS trust.
7. Once you have applied for your visa and it has been granted, book your flights and find somewhere to stay once you've arrived in England (your trust or agency will be able to support you with this).
8. Complete your Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE): your employer may fund this for you; you'll need to take your first test within 12 weeks of starting your new job.

For use as a guide only.

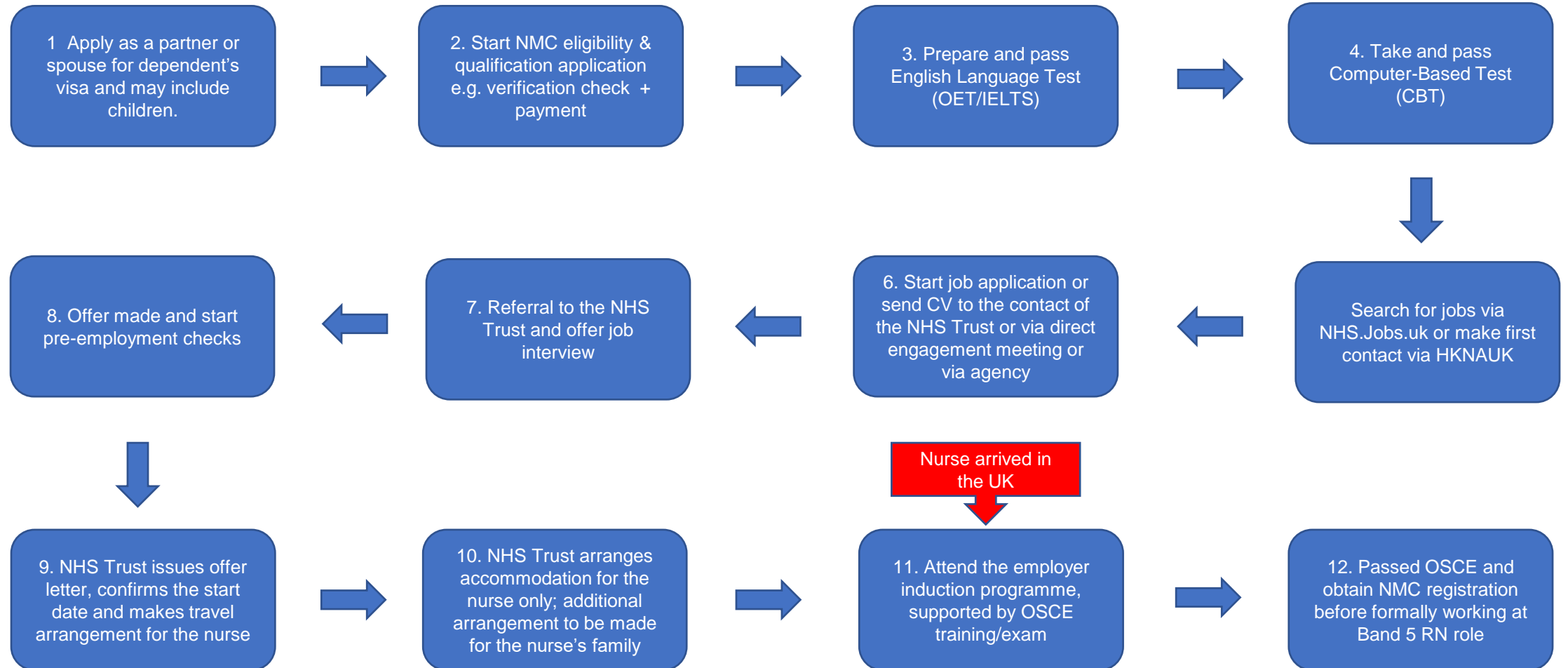
# Road map for nurses arriving with Hong Kong BNO visa route (For use as a guide only)



# Road map for Hong Kong nurses arriving with health & care visa route (For use as a guide only)



# Road map for Hong Kong nurses arriving with dependent's visa route (For use as a guide only)







## Looking after our colleagues with a supportive care package



### Accommodation

Whether you are looking to rent a room in a shared house, or to rent or buy your own home, there are plenty of possibilities for you to choose from which are close to the hospital sites.

Temporary accommodation can be offered to support you while you are settling into your new location and deciding exactly where you would like to live. Each NHS Trust will be able to help you with this and give you more information on different areas.

### Transport Links

There is an extensive train and bus network across England. To use public transport, you usually have to buy a ticket before travelling. For national trains or buses, tickets are usually much cheaper if bought in advance.

In addition to London Heathrow and Gatwick there are many regional airports with international flights. NHS employees can often get discounts on airport parking and airport lounges to assist with your travel arrangements.

### Education

There is a wide range of independent schools, state schools, colleges and universities within each region. Please refer to the government website regarding school applications (ref: page 12) or your regional Hong Kong Welcome Hub (ref: page 15).

### Support Groups

Please contact your regional Hong Kong Welcome Hub for a list of Hong Kongers/Chinese community groups in the region. NHS Trusts may be able to provide details of the Black, Asian Minority Ethnicity (BAME) Network in the area where the nurses live. Please contact NHS IR Leads (ref: page 14)

Hong Kong Nursing Association UK <https://hknauk.org> (ref: page 11)

Doctors in distress peer support group, please contact [contact@doctors-in-distress.org.uk](mailto:contact@doctors-in-distress.org.uk)

# Trade unions and Staff support networks

Source:  
NHS Support for International Nurses  
bulletin (NHSEI, February 2021)

**Trade unions** for healthcare workers can support you in lots of ways, including providing access to legal services, immigration advice and other professional services. Contact your local union representatives to find more about the benefits of joining a union.

RCN - <https://www.rcn.org.uk>

Unite - <https://www.unitetheunion.org>

UNISON - <https://www.unison.org.uk/>

There may be **networks** in your trust or your local community which provide support around disability, religion (including chaplaincy services), and ethnicity (including BAME staff networks). You should receive this information as part of your induction, or ask your line manager to connect you with these groups. You may also want to connect with other nurses and nursing groups outside your trust.

Twitter and Facebook groups can be a good place to network and share learning.

@teamCNO\_ on Twitter <https://twitter.com/teamCNO> supports and informs nursing, midwifery and care staff.

@WeNurse on Twitter <https://twitter.com/WeNurses> connects nurses to share information, ideas, knowledge and support. Staff support network.

CNO & CMidO BME Strategic Advisory Group Twitter is @CNOBME\_SAG  
[https://twitter.com/CNOBME\\_SAG](https://twitter.com/CNOBME_SAG)

For any racism/hate crime incidents, please report to the local police or your employer or your trust BAME staff network.

[Report hate crime - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

# Hong Kong Nursing Association UK

## 英國香港護士協會

Hong Kong Nursing Association UK (HKNAUK) is the official organisation established by a group of Hong Kong nurses living and working in the UK. The aims are to connect all nurses from Hong Kong, provide information, pastoral care and support for those who are planning to come or who are already in the UK in order to promote integration and retention.

For further details for membership, please email [contact@hknauk.org](mailto:contact@hknauk.org)

For initial nursing job enquiries, please email

[recruitment@hknauk.org](mailto:recruitment@hknauk.org)

<https://www.hknauk.org>



# Resources

| Sources   | Link   |
|---|--|
| UK government – Welcome guide   | <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/welcome-to-the-uk">Welcome: a guide for Hong Kong British National (Overseas) visa holders in the UK - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>                                  |
| UK government – British National (Overseas) visa                            | <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/british-national-overseas-visa">British National (Overseas) visa - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>  |
| UK government – Health and Care Worker visa                                 | <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-care-worker-visa">Health and Care Worker visa - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>  |
| UK government – Family visa as spouse or partner of a British/Irish citizen | <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/family-visas-apply-extend-or-switch-apply-as-a-partner-or-spouse">Family visas: apply, extend or switch: Apply as a partner or spouse - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a> |
| UK government – school admissions   | <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-admissions-applications-for-overseas-children">School admissions: applications for overseas children - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>                           |
| NHS Jobs  | <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/jobs">NHS Jobs - Applying from Overseas</a>  |
| Application process – Health Careers  | <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/health-careers">The application process   Health Careers</a>   |
| Career planning   | <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/health-careers">We are nurses. We are the NHS.   Health Careers</a>  |
| Nursing and Midwifery Council   | <a href="https://www.nmc.org.uk">Joining the register - The Nursing and Midwifery Council (nmc.org.uk)</a>   |
| Royal College of Nursing  | <a href="https://www.rcn.org">RCN - Home   Royal College of Nursing</a>  |

# Resources

| Sources  | Link   |
|--|--|
| NHS Employers  | <a href="#">International nurses during COVID-19   NHS Employers</a><br><a href="#">Recruitment of overseas nurses and midwives   NHS Employers</a>  |
| OSCE   | <a href="#">OSCE Booking &amp; Costs - NMC Competence Test Centre (ulster.ac.uk)</a><br><a href="#">Competence Test Centre   University of Northampton</a><br><a href="#">NMC Competence Test Centre   Northumbria University</a><br><a href="#">NMC Competence Test Centre - Oxford Brookes University</a><br><a href="#">Leeds Competence Test Centre (leedsth.nhs.uk)</a> |
| NHS Pensions   | <a href="#">NHS Pensions   NHSBSA</a>  |
| Capital Nurse recruitment                            | <a href="#">Getting Nursing Right For London - Capital Nurse London - Join Us!</a>   |
| NHS Professionals                                    | <a href="#">International (nhsprofessionals.nhs.uk)</a>  |
| Yeovil District Hospital – International Recruitment | <a href="#">International Nursing Recruitment - Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust : Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (yeovilhospital.co.uk)</a>   |
| NHS Pay Scale  | <a href="#">Agenda for change - pay rates   Health Careers</a>   |
| NHS Discounts  | <a href="#">Health Service Discounts: NHS Discounts, Offers &amp; Codes</a>  |

# NHS England and Improvement Regional International Recruitment Team Contact details

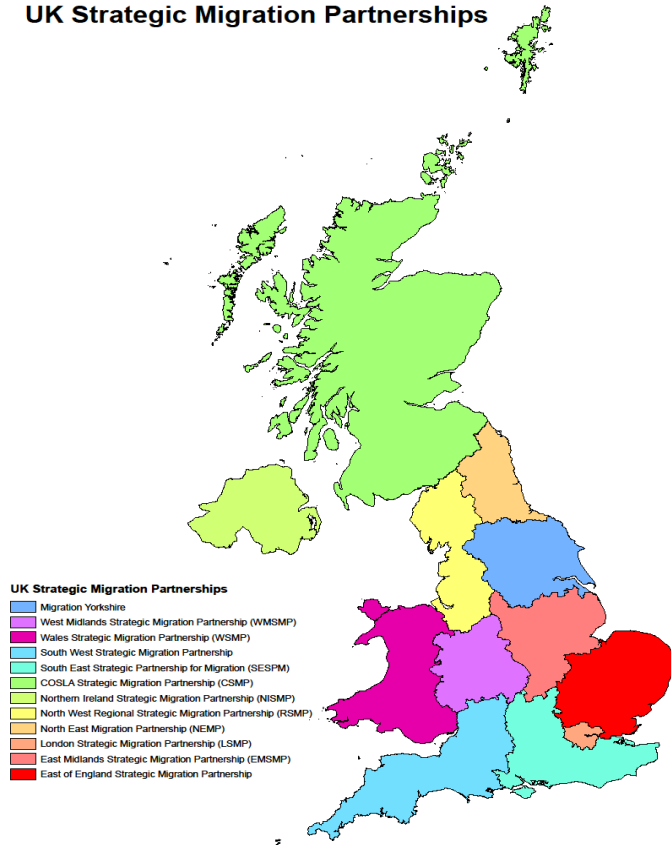
| Name  | Region                   | Contact details  |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| Stefano Pochetti  | South East               | <a href="mailto:england.workforce@nhs.net">england.workforce@nhs.net</a>                               |
| Ed Cox  | South West               | <a href="mailto:england.workforce@nhs.net">england.workforce@nhs.net</a>                               |
| North East and Yorkshire Nursing, Midwifery and AHP Workforce | North East and Yorkshire | <a href="mailto:england.ney.nursingworkforce@nhs.net">england.ney.nursingworkforce@nhs.net</a>         |
| Steven Colfar<br>Jodie Golightly                              | North West               | <a href="mailto:england.workforce@nhs.net">england.workforce@nhs.net</a>                               |
| Gabby Irwin<br>Michelle Stalker                               | East of England          | <a href="mailto:england.workforce@nhs.net">england.workforce@nhs.net</a>                               |
| Midlands Nursing Workforce                                    | Midlands                 | <a href="mailto:england.midlandsnursingworkforce@nhs.net">england.midlandsnursingworkforce@nhs.net</a> |
| Dean Gimblett   | London                   | <a href="mailto:england.workforce@nhs.net">england.workforce@nhs.net</a>                               |

# Regional Strategic Migration Partnership

## Hong Kong BNOs visa Welcome programme

### Contact details

UK Strategic Migration Partnerships



| Region                   | Website link  | Contact details  |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| South East               | <a href="https://southeastspm.org.uk">Information for people from Hong Kong – South East Strategic Partnership for Migration (southeastspm.org.uk)</a>  | <a href="mailto:rachaelcoker@secouncils.gov.uk">rachaelcoker@secouncils.gov.uk</a> |
| South West               | <a href="https://swcouncils.gov.uk">Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) Welcome Hub - South West Councils (swcouncils.gov.uk)</a>  | <a href="mailto:HongKongBNO@swcouncils.gov.uk">HongKongBNO@swcouncils.gov.uk</a>   |
| North East               | <a href="https://nemp.org.uk">Hong Kong Welcome Hub - North East Migration Partnership   North East Migration Partnership (nemp.org.uk)</a>   | <a href="mailto:nemp@middlesbrough.gov.uk">nemp@middlesbrough.gov.uk</a>           |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | <a href="https://migrationyorkshire.org.uk">Welcome to Yorkshire and Humber! Information for Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) (migrationyorkshire.org.uk)</a>   | <a href="mailto:hk@migrationyorkshire.org.uk">hk@migrationyorkshire.org.uk</a>     |
| North West               | <a href="https://northwestrsmp.org.uk">Hong Kong BN(O) Welcome Hub – North West Regional Strategic Migration Partnership (northwestrsmp.org.uk)</a>   | <a href="mailto:rsmp@manchester.gov.uk">rsmp@manchester.gov.uk</a>                 |
| East of England          | <a href="https://eelga.gov.uk">HK Hub - EELGA SMP</a>   | <a href="mailto:justin.leung@eelga.gov.uk">justin.leung@eelga.gov.uk</a>           |
| East Midlands            | <a href="https://hkbno.emcouncils.gov.uk">https://hkbno.emcouncils.gov.uk</a>   | <a href="mailto:hkbno@emcouncils.gov.uk">hkbno@emcouncils.gov.uk</a>               |
| West Midlands            | <a href="https://wmsmp.gov.uk">Welcome Hub   WMSMP</a>  | <a href="mailto:wmsmp@wolverhampton.gov.uk">wmsmp@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>         |
| London                   | <a href="https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/communities/migrants-and-refugees/hong-kong-british-nationals-overseas-bno-visa">https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/communities/migrants-and-refugees/hong-kong-british-nationals-overseas-bno-visa</a> | <a href="mailto:HongKongVCSE@london.gov.uk">HongKongVCSE@london.gov.uk</a>         |





FREQUENTLY  
ASKED  
QUESTIONS

| No | Questions and Answers  |
|----|--|
| 1. | <p><i>Do you support nurses coming to the U.K. with a BNO visa?</i></p> <p>Yes, we do. NHS Trusts have been given clear guidance and information on Hong Kong nurses who possess British National (Overseas) status. NHS Trusts welcome any job opportunity enquiries from Hong Kong nurses with BNO status.</p>   |
| 2. | <p><i>Can Registered Nurses (general) in HK work in the mental health trust in the UK? Is there any training opportunity for registered nurses?</i></p> <p>Mental Health patients have a range of acute and mental health needs. Mental Health NHS Trusts do recruit nurses with general training to support the acute needs of their patients.</p> <p>Training opportunities may be offered to registered general nurses to do mental health nursing. For further information, please discuss this with the potential employer.</p> |
| 3. | <p><i>I am a double trained nurse in both general and mental health, how I can apply and work in the UK?</i></p> <p>Dual registration in the UK is not available. At the point of application an individual needs to decide their route – either Adults or Mental Health as their application can only be made once.</p>   |





FREQUENTLY  
ASKED  
QUESTIONS

| No | Questions and Answers  |
|----|--|
| 4. | <p><i>I am a registered nurse in Hong Kong and have passed CBT in Hong Kong. What do I need to do next?</i></p> <p>CBT assures the NMC that the applicant has the right knowledge and skills to practice in the UK. Further assessment, that is, Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) is required as part of the NMC registration process and this is to be completed in the UK. Potential employers will support applicants on arrival to complete the OSCE exam and will offer OSCE training before taking the exam.</p> |
| 5. | <p><i>Is it possible for me to apply for a community nursing post if I have relevant experience in Hong Kong ?</i></p> <p>Yes, it will be helpful to have the community nursing experience on top of your nursing qualification in Hong Kong.</p>  |
| 6. | <p><i>If I don't drive, can I work in the community nursing services (District nurses, community matron roles)?</i></p> <p>This will depend on where you are working, as there are some areas in the UK which cannot be accessed easily by public transport. However, driving licence is not essential for community nursing posts in London. Driving lessons may be offered by the Trust to help the applicant to pass the driving test before working in the community. Please discuss this issue with your potential employer.</p>  |



FREQUENTLY  
ASKED  
QUESTIONS

| No | Questions and Answers  |
|----|--|
| 7. | <p><i>How can we get the mock exam practice for CBT in HK?</i></p> <p>Please contact the Hong Kong Nurses Association UK for any assistance with CBT preparation while you are in Hong Kong. Their contact details via <a href="https://www.hknauk.org">https://www.hknauk.org</a></p>   |
| 8. | <p><i>Is there a conversion course for people holding Enrolled Nurse qualification in Hong Kong?</i></p> <p>Training opportunities may be available for Enrolled nurses from Hong Kong to attend a conversion course for registered nurse status in the UK. NMC is working on OSCE component as part of the nursing associate registration process at present.</p>   |
| 9. | <p><i>Is the role of Enrolled nurse in Hong Kong similar to nursing associate in the UK?</i></p> <p>The role of a nursing associate is similar to an Enrolled nurse in Hong Kong. One difference is case management. The Nursing and Midwifery Council invites nurses outside England to apply for the registration as a nursing associate. Career pathway routes are open for nursing associates in the UK.</p> |



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

| No  | Questions and Answers   |
|-----|---|
| 10. | <p><i>Will my working experience in Hong Kong be considered for salary in the international recruitment programme?</i></p> <p>NHS Agenda for Change Terms and Conditions states ‘Employers have discretion to take into account any period or periods of employment with employers outside the NHS, where these are judged to be relevant to NHS Employment.’ Your potential employer will have a local policy to taking into account prior experience.</p> |
| 11. | <p><i>How can an adult nurse transfer to be a midwife?</i></p> <p>You will apply for a shortened 18 month midwifery programme, some universities may need to take 24 months.</p> <p><a href="#">FAQs about careers in midwifery   Health Careers</a></p> <p><a href="#">Roles in midwifery   Health Careers</a></p>   |
| 12. | <p><i>Does the midwife have to have a car to work in the community?</i></p> <p><i>No, your employer may support you with access to driving lessons and access to a car. Please discuss with your potential employer.</i></p>  |

# Case study 1

A young Hong Kong nurse qualified as a nurse in Hong Kong in 2021. She came to the UK late 2021 using the H&C visa route which was arranged by her current employer. The referral to the Trust, job interview and conditional offer was completed within a week in November 2021.

The nurse arrived in the UK alone. She followed the Covid-19 guidelines and had a short stay with her friend. She then moved into the trust accommodation and officially started her employment. Currently, she is undergoing OSCE training and her OSCE exam is in April.

She is happy with her accommodation and she is making friends with nurses from Philippines and India. She values the new experience and finds the clinical setting interesting and challenging. This is certainly a different working environment compared to her working life in Hong Kong.

She enjoys watching football matches and her recent visit to the Southampton Football Stadium has made her realise that her new life is only a beginning.....

# Case study 2

A 35 year old male nurse currently works in the intensive care unit in a NHS trust in England. He was a registered nurse in Hong Kong since 2009, completing OET and CBT before he arrived in the UK. He completed his OSCE exam in late September in the UK. He started work for the NHS in November 2021.

He finds the most challenging thing is adapting to a new environment and culture. He is glad however that his mentor and all the colleagues in ICU are friendly and helpful. All of them are willing to teach him and help him to adapt to the new environment.

The nurse and his family found it hard to adjust to living in the UK initially but are starting to find it easier now.

The nurse was impressed with the quality of emergency care services in England and the appropriate advice and guidance given by the health care professionals and the person-centred services available.

He is grateful that the UK has given him and his family a chance to start a new life.

# Case study 3

An experienced midwife from Hong Kong came to the UK with Hong Kong BNO visa in June 2021. She has a family with school aged children. The midwife prepared for and passed all the tests/examinations by herself – OET, midwifery CBT and midwifery OSCE.

The midwife found the midwifery position via NHS Jobs website. She attended the job interview and was offered a job. She had all the necessary pre-employment checks and finally started her full time midwifery role in October 2021.

Her experience has been challenging however, working long hours and not really achieving a work/life balance. She wants a happy, caring and supportive working environment so she can be proud of being a midwife in the NHS. She feels improving her English and having a better understanding of British culture will help her do this.

She believes that serving local women with the safe delivery of babies and looking after their wellbeing will lead to improved standards of midwifery in the UK.

# Acknowledgement

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- National International Recruitment Team
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- Regional Strategic Migration Partnership Hong Kong BNOs Leads
- Hong Kong Nursing Association UK
- NHS Employers
- National/regional Hong Kongers/Chinese community groups
- Hong Kong nurses and midwives