

Scotland Welcome Pack for British Nationals (Overseas) from Hong Kong



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Foreword from Angus Robertson, Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture & Shona Robison MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government



On behalf of the Scottish Government, it is my pleasure to welcome you and your family to Scotland.

Scotland has a long history of welcoming people of all nationalities and faiths. And we want to ensure people are treated with dignity and respect as they settle into new lives here.

The Scottish Government's commitment to supporting people arriving is emphasised through the [New Scots Refugee Integration Delivery Project](#) which offers small, medium or large grants to organisations to either widen existing work, or start new initiatives which assist those who have had to flee their own country to escape war and terror.

We are committed to supporting integration of new Scots into our communities and confident that Scotland will benefit from their presence as they share their culture, build businesses, work in our public services, volunteer their skills and form friendships.

We want Scotland to continue to be a diverse country and a confident and responsible global citizen. The Scottish Government will continue to promote a welcoming environment for new Scots and their families.

Whilst I am sure you have and will face many challenges uprooting your family and beginning a new life on the other side of the world, I have no doubt that you are going to feel very much at home here.

I hope this guide provides you with some assistance in building a new life for you and your family in Scotland. This guide contains useful information about accessing that support, such as advice for finding housing, employment and a school for your children.

I hope this information makes your move as successful as it can be for yourself, for your family. We are honoured that you have chosen to make Scotland your home.

Introduction

This welcome pack is for people from Hong Kong who have been granted leave on the [British National \(Overseas\) visa](#). This pack is intended to help you settle into life here, taking you step by step through how you can access the public services that are available to you. From what you will need to do find work here, to registering you and your family with a doctor, or finding a school for your children.

The information in this pack reflects the current position at the time of writing. The pack will be kept under review and any changes will be reflected in an updated version of the pack.

Your status once you have been granted the BN(O) visa

The Hong Kong British National (Overseas) visa route was launched on 31 January 2021 and enables British National (Overseas) citizens ordinarily resident in Hong Kong, [and their immediate family members, to study or work in the UK without needing to meet additional criteria](#).

Your status

If you have been granted the BN(O) visa it means that:

- You and your eligible family members will be able to come to the UK to live, study and work in virtually any capacity, on a pathway to citizenship. After five years in the UK, you and your family members will be able to apply for settlement, followed by citizenship after a further twelve months.
- You can access public services e.g. healthcare and schools
- You can work
- You will have “[No Recourse to Public Funds](#)” but can apply to change this in exceptional circumstances

Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

Once you have been granted the BN(O) visa, depending on how you applied you will either be able to view immigration status information online or receive a sticker (called a ‘vignette’) that goes in your passport.

If you have a vignette, you have to collect a [biometric residence permit \(BRP\)](#) after you arrive. You must do this before the vignette sticker expires or within 10 days of arriving in the UK, whichever is later. You will choose where to collect your BRP from during your application.

Your BRP will include:

- your name, date and place of birth
- your fingerprints and a photo of your face (this is your [biometric information](#))
- your immigration status and any conditions of your stay
- whether you can access public funds, for example benefits and health services

Please keep your BRP safe as it is evidence of your legal status in the UK and shows how long you may stay in the UK for.

Digital immigration status

If you applied for the BN(O) visa online using the ‘UK Immigration: ID Check’ app to scan your BNO, HKSAR or EEA passport, you will not receive a vignette and you will not need to collect a BRP. Instead, you will be able to view your immigration status information online.

You can also use the online service to share your immigration status information with others, for example employers or universities. Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/view-prove-immigration-status>.

Your online status will show:

- your name, date and place of birth
- your immigration status and any conditions of your stay
- the dates your visa is valid (start date and end date)

As BN(O) status holders you are entitled to live where you want in the UK.

Life in Scotland

Scotland is a progressive nation built on dynamism, creativity and the tremendous warmth of its people. We have a population of around 5.4 million mostly concentrated in the central belt, which is an area stretching across the middle of Scotland’s landmass. Our major cities include Edinburgh, the capital, with its iconic hill-top castle, and Glasgow, famed for its vibrant cultural scene.

Language

Scotland’s official languages are English, Gaelic, and Scots. Around 87,000 people speak Gaelic and more than a million people speak Scots. There are six standalone Gaelic schools including in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and Gaelic is taught in over 50 other schools across Scotland. For [more information on Gaelic and Scots culture](#).

Government

The Scottish Parliament deals with devolved issues. Devolution is a system of government which allows decisions to be made at a more local level. In the UK there are several examples of devolved government including: the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Parliament, and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The Scottish Parliament, informally referred to as “Holyrood”, is a democratically elected body comprising 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs). Members are elected for five-year terms under the mixed member proportional representation system.

The Scottish Government is led by the First Minister and is responsible for implementing laws and policy in Scotland which are not explicitly reserved to the United Kingdom Government (such as defence and foreign policy). These devolved matters include health and social care, education, justice and policing, rural affairs, economic development and transport.

Local government is organised through 32 unitary authorities designated as councils which consist of councillors elected every five years by registered voters in each of the council areas. You can find the [contact details for your local authority](#)

Elections and Scottish Parliament

You can find out who your local MSP, MP and Councillor is by entering your postcode at [Write to Them](#).

You can find out more information about how you can register to vote in Scotland at [Who can register to vote](#).

Scots Law

Scots law is the legal system in Scotland, and although elements in the Scottish legal system are similar to those in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, there are important differences between Scots law, English law and Northern Irish law. You can find out more about Scots law on the Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service (Scotland's prosecution service) website at [Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service](#).

In Scotland, the criminal law can be different to that of the rest of the UK. For example, the Scottish Parliament passed legislation in 2019 that made all forms of physical punishment of a child unlawful. [Children \(Equal Protection from Assault\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#).

Legal Rights and Responsibilities

Every person in Scotland has the same basic human rights and freedoms, which are protected in law. These underpin how people live in the UK. For example:

- Every person has a right to liberty.
- Every person has freedom of thought and the right to practice their religion. However it is illegal if, as part of this, you take part in activities which break laws legislated within the UK and Scottish Parliaments. It is against the law to discriminate against or persecute someone because of their beliefs.

Based on the rights and freedoms protected in law, everyone living in or visiting the UK is expected to adhere to a set of shared values and responsibilities:

- Respect and obey the law
- Respect the rights of others, including their right to their own opinions
- Treat others with fairness

In the UK it is illegal to treat anyone differently because of their gender, race, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation.

Scotland is also in the process of consolidating, modernising and extending its [hate crime legislation](#).

Racism is unacceptable in the UK. It is a serious offence to injure, harass or verbally abuse someone because of their race or to damage their property for that reason. It is also against the law to stir up racial hatred. It is unacceptable to discriminate against another person because of their race, ethnicity or where they came from.

You should not be treated any differently because of your race when applying for a job, looking for somewhere to live, using the National Health Service (NHS) or just buying something in a shop.

You should not experience racial harassment at work, school or in public (where other people make comments about your race or where you come from that are offensive or make you uncomfortable).

If you or someone you know is the victim of racism do tell the Police about it. Do not try to deal with racism or racist attackers on your own.

The police and their duties

The police exist to protect the public, their rights and the law. The police are there to help and assist you and you should not be afraid to approach them if you are the victim of a crime, see a crime happening, or for general assistance for example if you are lost.

If you need the police because of a crime, then you should call **999**. This is the number to call if you have an emergency, for example if you are the victim of an assault or see a crime taking place. When you call, say you need 'police', as this is also the number to call an ambulance or if there is a fire.

If you are not satisfied with the service you have received from the police, you can complain directly to the police unit or office in question or the [Police Investigations & Review Commissioner](#) (PIRC) in Scotland, whose role is to impartially, and independent of the police, investigate conduct and behaviour.

Money

The currency in the UK is the Pound Sterling (£). £1 (one pound) = 100p (100 pennies, or pence). Cash is accepted in most places but increasingly people use debit/credit cards to pay for goods and services.

Opening a bank account

There are a range of banks and you can choose one that suits you best. There are also online-only providers which you can use.

To open a bank account, you will usually need to show a form of identification such as your passport or a driver's licence or a recognised identity card as well as proof of your address, such as your tenancy agreement or a gas, electric or phone bill. You should ask about any charges when you open a bank account.

Once you open your account, you will usually be issued with a debit card. Many cards are contactless - some shops accept contactless payment as will some transport providers,

You can also arrange for bills to be paid directly from your account using 'direct debit'.

Further information on how to open a bank account is available at:

[Getting a bank account - Citizens Advice Scotland](#)

Weekends & public holidays

The weekend, in Scotland and across the UK falls on Saturday and Sunday when most offices close. Banks and post offices are usually open Monday-Friday and on Saturday morning, but close on Saturday afternoon and Sunday. However, most shops and restaurants remain open on Saturday and for much of Sunday.

There are a number of public holidays throughout the year. Most businesses close, but shops, restaurants and leisure facilities usually remain open.

Taxes in Scotland

There are three different types of tax in Scotland:

- local taxes, administered by local authorities
- devolved taxes, administered by Revenue Scotland and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC); and
- taxes reserved to the UK, administered solely by HMRC.

The Scottish Parliament has the power to set the rates and bands of Income Tax for Scottish taxpayers on their earnings from employment, self-employment, property and pensions. HMRC collects Income Tax on behalf of the Scottish Government - through the same systems that are in place across the rest of the UK. If you meet the definition of a Scottish taxpayer, HMRC will issue you with a specific Scottish tax code that identifies you as a Scottish taxpayer.

Income Tax makes up around 30% of the Scottish Budget, which means that people living in Scotland are contributing directly to their local communities and services.

The revenue raised from taxation in Scotland supports the most comprehensive range of free to access public services available in the UK.

You can find out more about [Scottish Income Tax policy](#).

Housing

Renting a Home

You may wish to rent a property from a private landlord or apply for housing from a social landlord, either a local council or housing association.

If you want to rent a home privately there are steps you should follow. For example, before you move into a property, you should sign a tenancy agreement which sets out the terms of your tenancy. You'll usually pay the first month's rent and the deposit in advance, before you move into the property - your deposit must then be lodged in a tenancy deposit scheme. This means that when you leave the property your deposit will be returned in full if the property is left in good condition and all rent and bills have been paid.

Many organisations provide homes for mid-market rent. These homes are aimed at helping people on low to modest incomes to access affordable, private rented accommodation. There are several ways of finding where these homes are, but the best is probably to look at what housing associations operate in your area or to check your local council's website.

Comprehensive information for tenants about private renting in Scotland can be found in the '[Private residential tenancies: tenant's guide](#)'.

Housing associations and many local councils provide homes for social rent. When you apply for a social rented home, your housing needs will be checked and your application will be held on a housing list. Social landlords decide who is offered housing based on an applicant's housing need and in line with the landlord's allocation policy. You can find information about how to apply for social housing from local councils. Alternatively, you can apply directly to a housing association - the Scottish Housing Regulator maintains the public register of all Registered Social Landlords in Scotland.

It should be noted that the UK Government's Right to Rent policy does not apply in Scotland.

For more information about renting a home in Scotland visit;

- Private Rented Sector housing: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/private-renting/>
- Social Rented Sector housing: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/social-housing/>

Buying a Home

If you wish to buy a home but cannot afford the total cost there are a number of schemes that might be able to help you.

The Scottish Government operates shared equity schemes which can help you to buy a home that is for sale on the open market, or to buy a new build home from a housing association or local council. Support is also offered through the Help to Buy (Scotland) Scheme to purchase a new build property from a participating builder.

Funding for these schemes is provided by the Scottish Government, and you can find out more about them at [Homeowners](#).

Shared ownership is also available in Scotland. You should be aware however that shared ownership is very different from shared equity. With shared equity you own the home outright, but with shared ownership a housing association still owns part of the home and charges you a fee to live in it. More information is available at [Getting help to buy your home](#).

Land and Buildings Transaction Tax

If you purchase property over a certain value in Scotland you will pay Land and Buildings Transaction Tax (LBTT). The tax is payable at different rates on each portion of the purchase price within specified tax bands, though there are some reliefs in place such as for first-time buyers.

If you already own a property in Scotland, you should also be aware of the LBTT Additional Dwelling Supplement (ADS), which is payable on the total purchase price of an additional dwelling of £40,000 or more. It applies where a buyer purchases a dwelling in Scotland and at the end of the effective date of that transaction the buyer owns more than one dwelling (which can be anywhere in the world) and they are not replacing their only or main residence. The ADS can subsequently be reclaimed where a previous main residence is disposed of, however there are particular timelines and rules in place. LBTT is administered by Revenue Scotland, you will find more information and detailed examples on their website at [Land and Buildings Transaction Tax](#).

You will find more general information regarding living in Scotland at [AboutScotland](#).

Council Tax

You will usually have to pay council tax, payable to your local council, if you're 18 or over and own or rent a home. If you rent, check your rental agreement to see who is responsible for council tax payments.

Your council tax band determines how much council tax you pay. You can find out the council tax band of your home by looking the property online via the [Scottish Assessors website](#).

For more information on council tax and to learn about council tax in your local authority you can visit [What is council tax?](#)

Education

Education is a devolved matter. This means that issues relating to education and children's social care is the responsibility of the devolved nations, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland, the [Scottish Government](#) is responsible for a wide range of education matters.

Scotland's education settings are welcoming places where we want all children and young people to achieve their potential. Education in Scotland is organised differently to the rest of the UK. This section will help you understand you and your children's education entitlements in Scotland.

You can find further information regarding education in Scotland on our [Parentzone](#) and [Parent Club](#) websites.

Early Learning and Childcare

The Scottish Government and Local Authorities (the regional level of government) fund early learning and childcare. This means that it is free of charge for eligible children.

Currently, if your child is three or four years old, you can get up to 600 hours of funded early learning and childcare a year. This is equivalent to 16 hours a week if taken in term time or around 12 hours a week if taken all year round.

The Scottish Government is increasing the number of hours of funded early learning and childcare to 1,140 hours a year from August 2021. That's about 30 hours a week if taken over school term time or around 22 hours a week if taken all year round. In some areas, the extra hours might already be available so it's best to check with the local authority where you live.

You can access your child's funded early learning and childcare hours through different types of registered providers, such as a nursery (local authority or privately run), childminder or playgroup. You will need to contact your local authority to find out more about the sessions and providers available to you and to find out how to apply.

Your child may be able to access funded early learning and childcare earlier than 3 but this is more limited and depends more on local rules. Please speak to your local authority to discuss you and your child's circumstances to see if there is anything available before the universal offer locally.

You can find out more information on early learning and childcare at [Parent Club](#).

School Age and Stages

Scotland provides free school education for all children from the age of around four and a half years old, up to the age of 18. Depending on when their birthday falls, some children can start before they are four and a half. Scotland has different enrolment and school entry dates than other parts of the UK. Children usually start school between the ages of 4 ½ and 5 ½ and can either apply for a place in a school in their local catchment area or at another school. A comprehensive guide to how to apply for a school place is available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

Children start in Primary 1 and move up to the next class each year through to Primary 7. All children in Primaries 1-3 receive free school meals.

Children move up to secondary school automatically after primary school (aged 11 or 12 depending on when they started school).

Your local council is responsible for providing school education in the area you live. You can find full information on applying for all school places and placing requests in '[Choosing a school - a guide for parents](#)'.

All parents have a legal responsibility to educate their children which they can fulfil either by sending them to school or by home educating them – further information about the choices available can be found on the [Scottish Government's website](#).

Term Time

Term dates will vary depending on your local authority area. You can find term dates at [School term and holiday dates](#).

What Will My Child Learn?

Education is provided by early learning and childcare settings, primary schools (generally ages 5 – 11) and secondary schools (generally ages 12 – 18).

Scotland's curriculum covers the ages 3-18 and includes two broad stages.

- The first stage is age 3-15 and is called the “broad general education”. This stage covers the early years (nursery and early learning and childcare), primary school (primary 1 to 7) and the first three years of secondary school (“S1-S3”).
- The second stage is called the senior phase and covers the final three years of secondary school (S4-S6) when students can study for a range of awards and qualifications.

All children aged 3 to 18 learn through the Curriculum for Excellence, [Scotland's Curriculum](#). The curriculum places learners at the heart of education so that they achieve their potential through being successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

The curriculum is designed to provide a variety of pathways for learners to develop and demonstrate their skills and knowledge, preparing them for continuing on to further education, higher education or employment.

Further information about the curriculum in Scotland is available from Education Scotland's [Parent Zone website](#).

A parent-friendly guide to Curriculum for Excellence has been produced by Scotland's National Parent Forum and can be found at - [CfE in a Nutshell - National Parent Forum of Scotland \(npfs.org.uk\)](#)

Schools, in collaboration with colleges and employers, have the flexibility to offer a range of experiences to meet the needs of all learners. Young people can also study a range of national and vocational qualifications and awards, including Nationals, Highers, Advanced Highers, Foundation Apprenticeships and Skills for Work courses. Further information on Scottish qualifications can be found on the [Scottish Qualifications Authority](#) website. Comparative information of qualifications across the UK and Ireland can be viewed at [Qualifications can Cross Boundaries](#) and [apprenticeships.scot](#).

Scotland's Young Persons Guarantee aim is that, within two years, every person aged between 16 and 24 will have the opportunity to study; take up an apprenticeship, job or work experience; or participate in formal volunteering. Our aim is to support young people, by building on our strong and successful, skills and education system in Scotland ([Young Person's Guarantee](#)).

My Child Needs Extra Support

In the first instance, discuss your child's needs with the school, including any formal support plans (like a HCPC) previously in place. They will be best placed to provide information and support for your child. If you do not know which school your child will attend, you can [check catchments based on your posting](#).

Additional Support for Learning (ASL) in Scotland is different to Special Educational Needs & Disability in England (SEND), but your child will still receive support if they need it.

Additional Support Needs (ASN) are broadly defined, including those which might impact on children from Armed Forces families, such as transitions, interrupted learning and dealing with separation and loss. They can be of short or long-term duration and occur for a variety of reasons. ASN in Scotland includes needs defined as SEND in England.

We also have a Scottish advice service for additional support for learning, where you will find useful information about when your child might be entitled to extra support. This can be found at [Enquire](#).

The Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) also provide support and assistance to families moving schools for a child with additional needs. More information can be found at [Children's Education Advisory Service \(CEAS\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Independent Schools

As well as local authority education, parents may consider enrolling their child in an independent school. All independent schools in Scotland are registered, with their details available online at [Independent schools in Scotland: register](#).

The independent sector includes boarding schools, where children and young people stay at the school, either full-time or perhaps only for part of the week. Where a school provides boarding, it is registered with, and inspected by, the Care Inspectorate. You can find out more about the [Care Inspectorate](#).

Boarding schools in Scotland differ, and may offer the Curriculum for Excellence or another curriculum. However, all independent schools are inspected by Education Scotland in the same way that local authority schools are. If you are considering enrolling your child at an independent boarding school, you are encouraged to make contact with the schools you are interested in, seeking a copy of the school's prospectus in order that you can be better informed about what each school offers.

The Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS) are a useful source for more general information on independent schools. SCIS is a charitable body which represents most of Scotland's independent schools. You can visit [Scottish Council of Independent Schools](#) for more information.

Further Education

Further education includes courses that are below the Higher National Certificate (HNC) level. These courses are taught in either secondary school or colleges and include:

- Academic courses below HNC level.
- Courses that do not lead to formal qualifications e.g. independent living skills.
- Courses on basic skills such as reading, writing and numeracy skills.
- Work-related courses, such as Scottish Vocational Qualifications.

Colleges are responsible for assessing an individual's criteria for funding, you should therefore enquire within your chosen college.

Higher Education

Higher Education in Scotland includes courses of study which are at a HNC level or above. Individuals can take these courses at college or university and there is no age limit. Higher education courses range from:

- HNC
- Higher National Diploma (HND)
- Certificate of Higher Education (Cert HE)
- Diploma of Higher Education (Dip HE)
- Undergraduate Ordinary Degree
- Undergraduate Honours Degree

If individuals are students in Higher Education, they may be entitled to financial support from our [Student Awards Agency Scotland \(SAAS\)](#). You and your family are entitled to support from SAAS if you meet the ordinary residency criteria.

You can find more information on Higher Education funding by calling SAAS direct on: 0300 555 0505.

Community Learning and Development (CLD) and Adult Learning

CLD supports primarily disadvantaged or vulnerable groups and individuals of all ages to engage in learning, with a focus on bringing about change in their lives and communities. Community Learning and Development includes:

- youth work, family learning and other early intervention work with children, young people and families
- community-based adult learning, including adult literacies and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- learning for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in the community, for example, people with disabilities, care leavers or offenders
- community development (building the capacity of communities to meet their own needs, engaging with, and influencing decision-makers)
- volunteer development
- learning support and guidance in the community.

If you want to find out more about community learning and development activities, contact your local authority. More information on CLD can also be found at [About Community Learning and Development - Community learning and development - Scottish education system - Education Scotland](#)

Parental and learner involvement

As a parent, you are entitled to be involved in the life and work of the school and to be engaged in your child's learning. When your child joins a school in Scotland, you automatically become a member of the school's "[parent forum](#)". As a member of the school's parent forum you can also join the school's [Parent Council](#) which is a way for parents to have a formal role in influencing the life and work of the school.

Schools also have arrangements in place to gather [learners' views](#) from the earlier stages of their education, via pupil councils or other methods.

Further information

You can search for schools across Scotland on Education Scotland's [Parent Zone website](#) which also contains [attainment data](#) for each school.

There is a further dedicated guide to Scottish education and a wide range of matters for [armed service personnel](#).

Healthcare

Healthcare in Scotland is provided by Scotland's public health service, NHS Scotland

NHSScotland consists of 14 regional NHS Boards who are responsible for the protection and improvement of their population's health and for the delivery of frontline healthcare services. You can find more information on NHSScotland at [Scotland's Health on the Web](#).

Access to Healthcare

When settled in a place of residence in Scotland you and your family should register with a local doctor - a General Practitioner (GP). Your GP will be able to care for your health conditions and to provide treatment if you become unwell. Any prescriptions prescribed by your GP are free of charge. You can find more information at [Registering with a GP practice](#).

Registering with a Dentist

You and your family can get care, advice and treatment from NHSScotland to keep your mouth, teeth and gums healthy. Scotland also provides free dental checks.

You can find a dentist near you using the links at [Receiving NHS dental treatment in Scotland](#)

NHS Eye Care

Scotland is the only country in the UK to provide free universal NHS-funded eye examinations. These are available to anyone ordinarily resident in the UK and to eligible overseas visitors. In some cases, the NHS will also give an optical voucher towards the cost of glasses or contact lenses. [Your guide to free NHS eye examinations in Scotland](#).

Connecting Communities

The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland ([The ALLIANCE](#)) is a third sector organisation which helps connect people with local sources of support that will enable them to manage their own health conditions more effectively. See [Connecting you to your community](#).

Mental Health

NHSScotland provides mental health services that offer a range of treatments and self-help advice for those experiencing mild, moderate or more complex mental health problems.

The first point of call for accessing NHS care is usually your GP. You can discuss any issue with your GP who can also arrange referral to more specialist services if that is necessary. You can find [more details regarding support and services](#).

Support and Social Care

The Scottish Government is working in partnership with service users, carers, Local Authorities, NHS Scotland, Integration Authorities, the Care Inspectorate and the voluntary and independent sectors to integrate health and social care services across Scotland. You can find all information in relation to [Scotland's social care](#)

Sexual Health/Family Planning Clinics

NHSScotland provides free sexual health services in Scotland. You can access professional and non-judgmental care on all family planning conception information, relationships and [sexual health advice](#) or you can also visit your local GP.

Parent Club Scotland

Parent Club offers up-to-date guidance from the Scottish Government on your child's health and education. It's full of hints and tips from other parents and carers who've been there before. It also has advice to help you look after your own wellbeing and to point you in the direction of the support available

Scotland's Baby Box

Every baby born and living in Scotland is entitled to a Baby Box. This is an opt-in scheme, and expectant parents register to receive their box via their midwife, at approximately 20 weeks.

Further information on Scotland's Baby Box can be found via the [Scottish Government's Parent Club Website](#) or via your health professional.

In an Emergency

NHS 24 is Scotland's telephone service providing health advice 24 hours a day. The telephone service allows people who feel unwell or those caring for them to obtain health advice if it is not possible to wait until they can visit their GP when the practice is next open. You can call them on 111 if you are ill or need any health services.

Alternatively you can also access their website at [NHS24](#).

The advice line is not intended as a substitute for obtaining an emergency ambulance service. For all life-threatening emergencies you should still call 999.

You will find more information on all health-related topics including dental care, smoking, alcohol, food and nutrition and mental wellbeing on [NHS inform's website](#).

Employment and Training

There are a number of ways to find work in Scotland and below is a list of the support services that we provide to help you in securing employment.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS)

SDS is Scotland's national skills body and provides careers information, advice and guidance, as well as work-based training programmes aimed at building career management skills. They support a wide range of pathways into work, including Modern Apprenticeships (further information below). There are SDS Careers Centres based in each local authority area which you can visit to access support, for [more information on these](#).

There is also an online service, [My World of Work](#), which can assist you through every stage of your working life. Anyone can access information on a wide range of subjects, including choosing a career, learning and training, applying for jobs and making a career change. You will find information on researching careers to building your CV.

They also deliver [Career Information, Advice and Guidance](#) (CIAG) services. The service enables people to adequately prepare for, enter and progress through the labour market, and to fulfil their potential in the workplace.

Working In Your Local Area

You can apply to work for your local council across a wide range of job roles and services. Visit [My Job Scotland](#) to view, search and apply for jobs in your area.

Jobcentre Plus helps people to find and progress in work, including those who are unemployed and claiming benefits. Visit your nearest Jobcentre Plus for help with finding a job and information on any benefits you and your family might be entitled to, or visit the website at [Manage an existing benefit, payment or claim](#).

You can find further information surrounding the support services available at [Working, jobs and careers](#).

Modern Apprenticeships (MAs)

[Modern apprenticeships in Scotland](#) can offer you opportunities to learn on the job, get the experience you need, and work towards a qualification.

Graduate Apprenticeships (GAs)

[Graduate Apprenticeships](#) provide work-based learning opportunities up to Master's degree level for new and existing employees. They have been created in partnership with industry and the further and higher education sector. The apprenticeships combine academic knowledge with skills development to enable participants to become more effective and productive in the workplace.

Your National Insurance Number

You have a National Insurance number to make sure your National Insurance contributions and tax are recorded against your name only. It's made up of letters and numbers and never changes.

You can look for and start work without a National Insurance number if you can prove

you can work in the UK. You can also go online to <https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work> which allows you to authorise an employer to access your data to prove that you have the right to work in the UK.

Employers are required to conduct mandatory Right to Work checks on all prospective employees. Having a National Insurance number is not part of these checks, and the possession of a National Insurance number does not prove that an individual has a right to work.

If you do not have a NI number you can find further information on how to obtain one at: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number>

As part of the application process for a National Insurance number, you may be required to attend a face-to-face appointment where the Department for Work and Pensions can validate and confirm your identity and right to work. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the face to face National Insurance number service is currently suspended.

Qualifications recognition

BN(O) status holders with a non-UK professional qualification may need to have their qualification officially recognised to work in a profession that is regulated in the UK. It will need to be recognised by the appropriate regulator for a particular profession.

Professionals with non-UK qualifications should contact the appropriate UK or Scottish regulator for further information. If professionals are uncertain of the appropriate regulator, they can check the [Regulated Professions Register](#) to find out which regulatory or professional body they should contact for further information on how to get their professional qualification recognised.

If your qualification has already been officially recognised by the relevant UK regulator, make sure you understand the terms of your recognition decision by checking in with that regulator.

Applying for basic disclosure

A basic disclosure is a criminal record check. This is often required by employers when you are applying for a job. You get a certificate showing any ‘unspent’ criminal convictions you may have. Unspent means you need to declare them. You can use this certificate to show to prospective employers or other people that need to know this information. More information can be found at [Apply for a basic disclosure](#).

Accessing money and other help from the state

No recourse to public funds

When you are granted leave on the BN(O) visa, you will have ‘no recourse to public funds’ (NRPF) this means that you will not be entitled to claim state social security or housing provided by local authorities. However, the UK Government has recognised that people might fall on hard times and therefore, those granted leave on the BN(O) visa will be able to apply for a change of conditions to have their NRPF condition lifted in the event that they become destitute or are at imminent risk of destitution.

Who can apply to this?

Applicants can apply for a change of conditions if:

- The applicant's financial circumstances have changed since being given permission to stay in the UK and they are no longer able to provide food or housing for themselves or their family
- The applicant's child is at risk because of their very low income.

Accessing public funds

If you successfully remove your public funds restriction, you can apply to receive social security to cover your basic living and housing costs and for help to find a home, especially if you find yourself homeless. Further information on how to access social security can be found at [Social Security Scotland](#). Further information on how to access help with your housing can be found at [Shelter Scotland](#).

Welcome

We hope that this guide is a useful resource and provides you with some assistance in building a new life for you and your family in Scotland.



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
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