

Baptist Union of Great Britain

Hong Kong Response Project

Newsletter 21 – September 2025

This autumn, the UK Government may start the consultation on its new Immigration White Paper, particularly on whether the 5 year pathway to permanent residence will apply to which immigration routes, with a decision expected at the end of this year. You may have seen news reports or even local protests about refugee and immigration issues. While these protests have not directly targeted Hong Kong migrants, they inevitably shape the wider debate on immigration and could influence future policies.

At present, the Home Office has not yet clarified whether groups such as Hong Kongers on the BNO visa will be affected. Perhaps some of you have already heard the quiet worries of Hong Kong families in your congregations. Some of you even joined us in July and September for prayer meetings, lifting up this issue together before the Lord, or you may be part of our WhatsApp group *“Immigration White Paper Concern”*. We thank you for standing in prayer with us.

If you have not yet had the chance to hear these voices, this newsletter is for you. We invite you to listen to two stories—one from a young family (Edmond and his wife with their young children) and another from Olive, a young professional. Through their words, may the Spirit open our eyes to the challenges, fears, and hopes of Hong Kongers who are navigating this season of uncertainty.

Story 1: Edmond Chan

As a father, husband, and son to elderly parents, leaving Hong Kong was the hardest decision I have ever made. It was not a move for comfort or ambition—it was a step of faith when the future back home seemed uncertain.

After the 2019 social movement in Hong Kong, the UK condemned the breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, it opened the British National (Overseas) visa route in 2021. This was not just an immigration pathway—it was a humanitarian lifeline. Many families, like mine, came seeking freedom and the rule of law, trusting that the UK would keep its word.

Over the past three and a half years, we have been slowly rebuilding our lives. We have made friends, joined communities, and begun to feel that we truly belonged. Yet, recent proposals in the Immigration White Paper have brought fresh uncertainty. If the new measures apply to those already here, it could mean longer waiting times before we are allowed to settle permanently. For families like ours, this feels like living in between two worlds—neither fully secure here, nor able to return to what we left behind.

This weighs heavily on us. My daughter Emma has five more years of secondary school, yet she now wonders whether she will be able to continue her studies here. A close friend, with two children preparing for university, faces tuition costs far beyond what most families can afford without home-fee status.

Let me do a few simple calculations below:

The average household cost of living for a family of four is around £45,000 a year. International tuition and accommodation can add £100,000 a year for two children (For instance, at King's College London, a UK student pays £9,535 per year for Nursing undergraduate, while a BNO holder is charged £31,600 as an international student). Together, this would require a family income of over £145,000 annually—far above what is realistic for most households.

For families who came on humanitarian grounds, these challenges feel overwhelming.

We continue to hope and pray that clarity and fairness will come, so that our children can look to the future with confidence. We are grateful for the welcome we have received, for the friendships formed, and for the support of churches and communities who stand with us. Please keep families like mine, and many others walking the same journey, in your prayers.

Story 2: Olive Lau

I am a young professional originated from Hong Kong who came to the UK in 2020. I would like to share something personal that has been heavy on my heart. The UK government has recently proposed to extend the settlement period from five years to ten. For many of us who came from Hong Kong, this change brings deep concern and uncertainty.

I came to the UK in 2020 to pursue my MSc in Engineering. After graduating, I chose to stay here under the BNO visa route. This country has become a place of new beginnings for me after leaving Hong Kong and after the passing of my late father, who was a BNO passport holder. I now work as an engineer in the rail sector, focusing on safety engineering. My dream is to further my studies by pursuing a PhD in railway safety, a field where I hope to make a meaningful contribution.

The proposed policy change, however, makes this dream feel uncertain. Extending the settlement period means I would remain classified as an international student for many more years, facing tuition fees that are far beyond reach. More than the financial challenge, it leaves me feeling unsettled—as though, no matter how hard I work or how much I contribute, the stability of belonging is always kept at a distance.

Even more than my own struggles, I think of the many families among us who have given up everything to come here. They left behind homes, careers, and savings to start afresh in the UK, carrying their hopes and values with them. Yet now, it feels as if the government has placed all the burden on them, stripping away much of the stability and financial security they brought from Hong Kong. It is painful to see their sacrifices met with heavier uncertainty.

In moments like these, I turn to prayer. I pray for peace in my own heart, but especially for the families who are carrying such heavy loads. I pray that no one will lose hope, and that our community will stand together in support and love. And I pray for those in authority, that God would grant them wisdom and compassion to govern with fairness and humanity.

How You Can Respond

These are not just political issues—they are deeply **pastoral concerns**. Hong Kongers in our communities are brothers and sisters who need our listening ears, our fellowships, and above all, our prayers.

We invite you to:

- **Pray** intentionally for the Immigration White Paper consultations this autumn, and for clarity and fairness in the final decision.
- **Listen** to the concerns of Hong Kong families in your churches and communities. Sometimes the most powerful gift we can give is simply to hear and hold their fears with compassion.
- **Encourage** one another with God's promises. Remind those who feel uncertain that our ultimate security is in Christ, even when earthly systems feel unstable.
- **Action** write to your MPs, either in your church name or individual name, ask for the government to keep its promise on BNO visa scheme and share the stories of Hong Kongers in your congregation.

Please mark your diaries on Weds 12 November 7-8:15 pm to join our bi-monthly prayer meeting.

For more information or need a chat, please contact Sharon or Londy on sshek@baptist.org.uk or lchan@baptist.org.uk