



## Settlement on the British National (Overseas) (BNO) route: Frequently Asked Questions

This document sets out answers to frequently asked questions regarding settlement under the BN(O) visa route and signposts to relevant Home Office guidance to support applicants in understanding the requirements.

### Application process

#### General

#### **Q. How do I apply for settlement on the BN(O) visa route?**

Applications for settlement are made online at [British National \(Overseas\) visa: Settle in the UK - GOV.UK](#):

- You will be asked to provide personal information, details of your residence in the UK and any absences, evidence that you have passed the 'life in the UK' test and meet the English language requirement, and information about your BN(O) status holder sponsor if relevant to your application. You will be required to upload digital copies of the required documents as part of your application.
- You must pay the application fee.
- You must then verify your identity. How you do this will depend on the passport you hold. See 'identity verification' section for more information.

**Q. Do I need to be in the UK when I submit my settlement application?**

Yes, you must not travel outside of the UK, Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man until you get a decision. Your application will be withdrawn if you do.

**Q. When is the earliest I can apply for a BN(O) settlement visa?**

You can apply for settlement up to 28 days before your current visa expires. This is to make sure you have lived in the UK for 5 years continuously when you apply to settle.

**Fees**

**Q: How much does a settlement application cost?**

From 8 April 2026, the fee for a settlement application will be £3,226 per person.

**Q. Is a fee waiver available for settlement applications?**

There is currently no fee waiver for applications for settlement on the BNO route. An individual can instead make a further application for permission to stay on the BN(O) route.

**Q: Do I need to pay the immigration health surcharge at settlement?**

No. You do not need to pay the immigration health surcharge when applying for settlement.

**Proving identity**

**Q. How can I prove my identity in a BN(O) settlement application?**

How you prove your identity when applying for settlement depends on what type of passport you have

- If you have a BN(O) or a Hong Kong Special Administrative Region you can use the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app to scan your passport - you will need sign into your UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) account to do this.
- If you hold any other type of passport you will need to attend a [UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services \(UKVCAS\)](#) service point to provide your biometrics in person. See guidance for information

on how to book an appointment: [UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services - GOV.UK](#).

**Q. Can I use an expired ID to apply for settlement under the BN(O) route?**

- If you apply for settlement using the UK Immigration ID check app, you can use an BN(O) or Hong Kong Special Administrative Region passport that has expired and is within five years of its expiration date at the date of application.
- If you attend a UKVCAS service point to have your biometric information taken, you can provide an expired passport or an alternative identity document such as a birth certificate which satisfactorily establishes your identity and nationality.

**Q. Is the UK Immigration: ID App compatible with all mobile phones?**

No. You can check if your phone is compatible, by visiting the guidance, which is available here: [Using the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app - GOV.UK](#)

**Q. I use a Westernised or anglicised version of my name – what should I do?**

If you use more than one version of your name, please include all versions in the “Other names you have used” section of the application form. This helps us complete identity checks accurately and helps prevent delays in processing your application.

**Processing time and services**

**Q. How long will it take to get a decision on my settlement application?**

You will usually get a decision within 6 months of submitting your application. UKVI will contact you if your application may take longer to process or if they need further information from you.

**Q. Why are some applications processed more faster than others?**

Applications to the BN(O) visa route are assessed in date order.

You may wait longer for a decision if the Home Office needs further information from you. If additional information is required, you will be told

how and when to provide it. Once that information has been received, your application will then be prioritised.

To avoid any delays in receiving a decision, ensure that you provide all the information requested in the application form. You can contact the Home Office if you are unsure what information to provide: [Contact UK Visas and Immigration for help - GOV.UK](#)

## **Settlement- eligibility requirements**

### **Continuous residence**

#### **Q. What are the permitted absences for those applying for settlement on the BN(O) route?**

You must not have been outside the UK for more than 180 days in any 12-month period.

#### **Q. When does my continuous residence period start?**

Continuous residence is calculated from the date your BN(O) visa was first granted and not when you enter the UK. This means that the time between the date your visa was first granted and the date you first entered the UK will count towards the total of absences.

Further information about continuous residence and permitted absences in the UK is available here: [Continuous residence guidance \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK](#)

#### **Q. How do you calculate my continuous residence period?**

The qualifying period for continuous residence will be calculated by counting back from whichever of the following dates is the most beneficial to you in meeting the qualifying period:

- a) the date of application; or
- b) any date up to 28 days after the date of application; or
- c) the date of decision

#### **Q. How do I prove the date I entered the UK if there is no stamp in my passport?**

You can show your date of arrival into the UK in a number of ways including, but not limited to, the following:

- A copy of your travel ticket or boarding pass showing your date of arrival
- Bank statements which will help you to identify a pattern of payments where transactions take place to show you were in the UK
- Independent evidence of activity following entry, such as a letter from an employer stating when you started your employment in the UK.

**Q: Can I count time on other immigration routes towards my 5 years?**

- Time spent on another immigration route which is a pathway to settlement counts towards the 5-year period. However, your most recent grant of permission must be on the BN(O) route.
- Short-term routes such as the Student route (previously called Tier 4) or the Youth Mobility Scheme (Tier 5) are not routes to settlement and do not count towards the 5 years.

**Life in the UK test**

**Q. Am I required to complete a knowledge of life in the UK test to qualify for settlement?**

If you are aged 18 or over, and under 65 on the date of application, you must meet the knowledge of life in the UK requirement.

You can book your test here: [Life in the UK Test: Book the Life in the UK Test - GOV.UK](#)

You need to pass the test before you apply for settlement.

**Q. Am I required to take the Life in the UK test if I arrived in the UK before I was 18, and turned 18 within the 5-year qualifying period for settlement?**

If you are aged 18 or over, and under 65 on the date of application, you must pass the Knowledge of Life in the UK test.

**English Language**

**Q. Am I required to meet an English language requirement to qualify for settlement?**

Unless an exemption applies, you must show you meet the English language requirement as specified in Appendix English Language, which is available here: [Prove your knowledge of English for citizenship and settling: Overview - GOV.UK](#)

**Q. What evidence is required to prove the English language requirement is met at settlement?**

Information on what documents you need to provide in order to show you meet the English Language requirement for settlement, is available here: [Prove your knowledge of English for citizenship and settling: Proving your knowledge of English with a test - GOV.UK](#)

**Q. Is a GCSE or A level in English sufficient to prove the English-language requirement for settlement?**

Yes. You will meet the English language requirement if you have a GCSE, International GCSE, A level, Scottish National Qualification at level 4 or 5, or Scottish Higher/Advanced Higher in English Language or English Literature, provided it meets the requirements of Appendix English Language. GCSEs or A levels in any other subject are not acceptable, as Appendix English Language requires the qualification to be specifically in English (language or literature). Further information is available here: [Immigration Rules - Immigration Rules Appendix English Language - Guidance - GOV.UK](#).

**Family Members**

**Q. How do I apply as a family member under the BN(O) route?**

Each family member needs to make their own application. How a family member applies depends on their age and if they are dependent on the BN(O) status holder. More information can be found by visiting the guidance which is available here: [British National \(Overseas\) visa: Settle in the UK - GOV.UK](#)

**Q. When applying for settlement on the BN(O) route, can one application that names all family members be accepted?**

No, each family member needs to make their own application for settlement.

If you're the first person in your family to apply, you can get a 'family linking code' to connect your applications together. Your family members can enter the same code when they apply. This code helps us to link

your applications together. We can then see that you are all part of the same family when we look at each of your applications.

Further information about applying with family members is available here: [British National \(Overseas\) visa: Your family members - GOV.UK](#).

**Q. Do children born in the UK to parents with a BN(O) visa need to apply for settlement with them?**

If a child is born in the UK to parents with a BN(O) visa, they will usually need to have an application made on their behalf for a BN(O) visa. However, the child does not need a visa if one or both of their parents are already settled in the UK when the child is born. Instead, the child will automatically acquire British citizenship. Further information can be found here: [Automatic acquisition \(accessible\) - GOV.UK](#).

If the parents are applying for settlement and the child is not yet a British citizen, the child will need to apply for settlement once they have completed 5 years continuous residence.

**Q. Do children under 18 have to apply with both BN(O) parents for settlement?**

Children under 18 must apply for settlement at the same time as both of their parents, unless one or both of their parents are already settled or have British citizenship.

There are exceptions where a child may apply with one parent, such as:

- that parent is the only surviving parent; or
- that parent has sole responsibility for their upbringing; or
- the decision maker is satisfied that there are serious and compelling reasons to grant the applicant settlement.

Each child will need a separate settlement application which they can link to their parents' applications.

**Q. Are dependants who are due to turn 18 before they apply for settlement required to apply with the main applicant?**

Individuals who are aged 18 or over when they apply for settlement can make an application in their own right without needing to apply at the same time as their parents.

**Citizenship**

## **Q. When can I apply for British citizenship?**

You can usually apply for British citizenship 12 months after you have obtained settlement.

For British citizenship, further information can be found at: [British National \(Overseas\) visa: Becoming a British citizen - GOV.UK](#)

## **Contacting UKVI**

### **Q. How do I ask a question about my BN(O) settlement application?**

You can contact UKVI from inside or outside the UK by the Visa and Immigration link under the topic 'What you need to do' and then 'To manage your application' – please choose 'Contact UK Visas and Immigration for help on the Further Guidance Page. Further information on contacting UKVI is available here: [Contact UK Visas and Immigration for help - GOV.UK](#)