



Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP  
Secretary of State for Education  
Department of Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
20 Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

Dear Secretary of State,

We, the undersigned, are writing to request a meeting in person between you and members of the Hong Kong community to express our requests for BNO visa holding students: a) follow the example of the Scottish government in reducing the residency requirement for Home Fee status from 5 to 3 years for BNO visa holders; b) as a reserve alternative, grant BNO visa holders access to student finance options.

These requests were published in a briefing paper by civil society organisation Hong Kong Watch, entitled *Tuition Fees for BNO visa holders: the case for home fee status*, accessible online.

BNO Hong Konger families currently face paying exceedingly high international fees to allow their children to attend UK universities, at the same time as resetting their careers in a new country. It is simply unaffordable and unfair for most to pay up to £50,000 per year for tuition fees, especially when almost all residents from British overseas territories have been eligible for Home fee status since 2007. Without Home Fee status, a generation of bright young Hong Kongers will continue to be priced out of their dreams of studying medicine, computer science and engineering – the skills that we desperately need.

The situation of BNO Hong Kongers is not comparable to the typical international student. These are families who, fleeing political repression in Hong Kong, have chosen to make the UK their home. We should not senselessly punish their children by making them wait up to five years to attend university and start their lives.

By adopting this policy, many BNO children will be able to access higher education and start contributing, economically and otherwise, to UK society. This policy change would stand as a clear demonstration that Labour is genuinely committed to supporting all children to achieve and thrive in their education goals.

We hope that you will be willing to meet with affected members of the Hong Kong community, as well as the Hong Kong Watch team, to discuss this issue and the policy changes listed above.

This letter has also received the endorsement of the MPs and Peers listed below.

Yours sincerely,

[980 signatories - names redacted]

**MPs and Peers endorsing:**

Sarah Champion, Labour MP for Rotherham  
Will Forster, Liberal Democrat MP for Woking  
James Naish, Labour MP for Rushcliffe  
Charlotte Nichols, Labour MP for Warrington North  
Zoë Franklin, Liberal Democrat MP for Guildford  
Sir Iain Duncan Smith, Conservative MP for Chingford  
Nadia Whittome, Labour MP for Nottingham East

The Lord Alton of Liverpool, Crossbench Peer  
The Lord Patten of Barnes, Conservative Peer and the last Governor of Hong Kong