How to use this guide

This leaflet is intended to provide Chinese citizens who wish to work abroad with information on the most important aspects of working and living in The UK and give general guidance to help them to make an informed decision by providing reliable sources of information about employment opportunities at abroad and help to better evaluate the actual costs and benefits of working abroad. The leaflet shall help potential migrants from China to better understand the risks involved in labour migration, to know their rights and to be better prepared to protect themselves. It offers an overview about administrative procedures, gives addresses of relevant authorities in China and The UK responsible for migration as well as a list of organisations that can be helpful in the migration process. This leaflet cannot explain every detail of the migration rules and of employment of migrant workers in The UK. It is rather a guide to the basics. The leaflet makes suggestions about where to get more help and information about the various aspects of migration.

I: Decision-making before departure

Many people want to work abroad because they lack income earning opportunities at home and the possibility to earn much higher incomes abroad. However, even if wages may seem very much higher in the UK than in China, one has to keep in mind the much higher living costs in the UK compared to costs of living in China as well as the costs for travel between China and the UK. In the end, there might not be as much money left from the higher income in the UK as expected.

Keep in mind:
- Base the decision to move on a realistic assessment of the costs and benefits of migration for employment.
- Returning migrants often give a very rosy picture of their experience, or are reluctant to publicly display the negative sides of their migration experience or the real nature of their work abroad.
- Be aware of the many hidden costs related, for example, to the conditions of work, the vulnerabilities and risks foreign worker are exposed to working and living in another country, and the impact of migration on the family left behind.
- Financial resources are essential for the migration move, to pay for the recruitment agent’s fees, the passport, transportation and other expenses.

Access to the labour market in the UK

The annual number of work permits approved in 2005 was 129,660. There were 1.505 million foreign migrants working in the UK in 2005, 5.4 per cent of the UK employed population. In 2005, 4,332 work permits were issued to Chinese citizens. The foreign workforce generally is employed in more highly skilled occupations. There has been a shift from the traditional domination of commercial-oriented services to the health and ICT sectors in response to the skills shortages in the UK over the last few years. The three main occupations for foreign workers were nurses and carers (19.9 per cent), software professionals (19.5 per cent) and managers and proprietors in other service sectors (12.8 per cent).

In 2005 the top five industry groups for work permits in the UK:
- health and medical services: 26.1 per cent
- computer services: 18.1 per cent
- administration, business and managerial services: 11.8 per cent
- financial services: 7.6 per cent
- hospitality, hotels and catering: 7.5 per cent.
Many Chinese working in the UK do so on an irregular basis without the required work and residence permit/visa. Working without work and residence permit in the UK is illegal. If authorities discover irregular workers they arrest them and deport them to their home countries. Chinese migrants working illegally in the UK risk to be exploited by their employers due to their insecure status in the UK. Many irregular Chinese migrant workers suffer from physical and psychological violence at the workplace. Some of them are not free to leave the workplace and are paid substandard wages or they receive no money at all due to the debts they have to repay to intermediaries for travel.

Labour market opportunities in the UK
In 2005, the official unemployment rate in the UK was 5.1% according to ILO statistics. The most important regions for the UK economy are London, the South East and the North West.

Key employment sectors in the UK are wholesale and retail trade; manufacturing; health and social work; and real estate, renting and business activities; which together employed over half of the UK workforce. A growing sector in terms of employment is the service sector which share of the total grew from 61 per cent in 1978 to 82 per cent in 2005 whereas employment in manufacturing fell from 28 per cent to 12 per cent. Manufacturing and its workforce have been in decline for many years, as the economy structures away from traditional industries towards service sector activities. Employment in the sector declined by 3.9% on average per annum between 2000 and 2005 and approximately 821,000 jobs in manufacturing were lost. New jobs have been created in the sectors public administration and defence; compulsory social security; education; and health and social work. The industry with the largest number of vacancies in 2005 was distribution, hotels and restaurants. Vacancies were also reported in the sectors of education, health and social work, the basic metals and fabricated metals sector, and the machinery, electrical and optical equipment sector. Positions for heavy goods vehicle and passenger transport drivers and skilled workers in the construction industry were also hard to fill. The largest concentration of vacancies in Great Britain were in the North West.

Unmet labour demand:
- Secondary Education Teaching Professionals
- Social Work Professionals
- Production And Operations Department Managers In Construction
- Car, Taxi And Van Drivers
- Bus and Tram Drivers
- Heavy Truck And Lorry Drivers
- Institution-Based Personal Care Workers
- Home-Based Personal Care Workers
- Other Teaching Associate Professionals
- Technical And Commercial Sales Representatives

Bilateral agreements between China and the UK
There has been no formal agreement on overseas employment between China and UK.

Requested qualifications
Language skills: crucial for daily communications
Detailed information can be obtained from the UK Chamber of Commerce and Industry in China.
II: Finding a job abroad
Recruitment is the engagement of a person in one territory on behalf of an employer in another country. It covers direct engagement by an employer, or his or her representative, as well as operations conducted by intermediaries, including public and private recruitment bodies. It refers to a process of hiring for a definite job or a promise by a recruiter to find a job for a potential migrant worker. Most UK employers who seek staff from outside Europe, including China, will generally do so with the assistance of a specialist recruitment agency.

A recruitment agency acts untrustworthy if it:
- Advertises without job order
- Forgés documents
- Provides incorrect/false information about jobs and destination countries
- Uses contract substitution
- Exacts illegal fees
- Practises without an official licence or approval

Workers who want to file a complaint about their recruitment agency’s conduct can contact the Inspectorate which carries inspections of agencies:
Inspectorates enquiry line: 0845 955 5105 (Monday - Friday 9:30 - 16:30)

Keep in mind:
- It is against the law to work in the UK without a work permit and it is very hard to enforce any legal rights for people working illegally.
- Using irregular channels for migration makes migrant workers more vulnerable to traffickers and puts them at greater risk of being abused and exploited during the journey and in the destination country.
- Untrustworthy recruitment agents and traffickers provide misleading information about job offers, conditions of work, the nature and type of the jobs, wages and benefits. Do not believe people who promise you an easy way to employment abroad.
- Only use the services of approved agencies.
- Employers who offer jobs to workers without a work permit break the law. If they are breaking this law, it is very likely they will break other employment laws as well, especially those that protect workers.
National employment services
In China:


In the UK:

Services provided by **Jobcentre Plus** and the **Department for Employment and Learning** are primarily for the benefit of UK citizens. Chinese citizens in the UK who have been granted leave to remain and have permission to seek work, along with Chinese students studying in the UK, may also use Jobcentre Plus services to find work. The jobs on the database are not intended for non-EEA citizens however, in practice, non-EEA nationals can consult the job vacancies on the Jobcentre Plus website. However, in order to gain permission to work, the employer would need to apply for a work permit on the Chinese citizen's behalf.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Jobcentre Plus</strong></th>
<th><strong>For jobs in Northern Ireland: Department for Employment and Learning</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Post address: Correspondence Manager, Jobcentre Plus Secretariat, Level 1, Steel City House, West Street, Sheffield, S1 2GQ  
Tel: +44 (0) 845 6060 234  
[Contact-Us@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Contact-Us@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk)  

Jobcentre Plus is the public employment service in Great Britain, responsible for a network of over 1,000 offices throughout England, Wales and Scotland.

Private employment agencies and other information sources for job vacancies

One way of finding work in the UK is through a temporary work agency, either based in China or in the UK. Temporary work agencies provide workers to ‘user companies’. The agency recruits the workers, pays their wages and may provide accommodation and transport. The actual work, however, is done for the user company and that company decides how the work is carried out. So if you enter into a contract with a temporary agency it will pay your wages making any necessary deductions for tax and National Insurance. Meanwhile the agency has entered into a contract with a company to supply temporary workers to it. You will work for that company, and be subject to its control and direction.10

In China:


List of agencies in three targeted provinces:

In the UK:

Employment agencies are an important source of jobs in the UK. Some UK employment agencies dealing with work abroad are registered with the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC). REC is a trade association of recruitment agencies and therefore may be in a position to recommend an agency to help you find work. If you write to REC outlining the type of employment you are looking
for, they may be able provide you with a list of agencies that are licensed by the Department for Work and Pensions. You may be charged a small administration fee for this service.\[11\]

The Recruitment and Employment Federation (REC) provides a list of all private employment agencies in the UK who have adhered to the Code of Good Recruitment Practice that has been developed to ensure reliable recruitment standards for jobseekers and employers. The list of agencies can be accessed under: [http://rec3.netxtra.net/directory/default.asp?dir=1](http://rec3.netxtra.net/directory/default.asp?dir=1)

**Keep in mind:**
- **An employment agency in the UK cannot charge you a fee simply for finding you work or putting you on their books.**
- **An employment agency in the UK cannot insist that you buy other products or services such as CV writing, training, or personal protective equipment as a condition of using the work-finding services of the agency.**
- **Employment agencies in the UK are meant to make their money from employers who need workers, not from those seeking work.**

Pre-departure training offered by local employment offices and recruitment agencies
Pre-departure programmes can be an important means of better protecting migrant workers from discrimination, exploitation and abuse in the destination country. Pre-departure trainings should:
- Present the entire process of becoming a migrant worker;
- Inform migrant workers of their rights and obligations and enable them to uphold and fulfil them;
- Give migrant workers knowledge and skills in handling crisis situations.

**Legal requirements**

**1. Contract of employment**

A contract of employment is an agreement entered into by an employer and an employee under which they have certain mutual obligations. Contracts of employment may be oral or written. They may be of indefinite duration, or for fixed terms. They may be for training, apprenticeship or other purposes. In law, employees have a contract of employment as soon as they start work even where the written statement of employment particulars required by the legislation has not been given to the employee. If no contract of employment exists beforehand, one will come into existence as soon as an employee starts work and, by doing so, demonstrates that he or she accepts the job on the terms offered by the employer. The contract need not be in writing, unless it is a contract of apprenticeship (employers should note however that a contract of apprenticeship may be found by the courts to be implied even if it is not in writing). Its terms can be written, oral, implied or a mixture of all three. Implied terms might include those that are too obvious to be expressly agreed - for example, a term that the employee must accept reasonable instructions from the employer - those that are necessary to make the contract workable and those that are established by custom and practice in the particular organisation or industry concerned.\[12\] **However, Chinese citizens who want to work in the UK and apply for a visa to enter the UK for this purpose, will need a written contract of employment of their UK employer to present the British visa application centre.**

It is not common practice in the UK to have a formal contractual agreement between employer and employee. However, the employer must, within two months of the date you started, supply a written statement outlining the following details of your employment:
- Names of employer and worker
- Starting date of the employment
- Pay rate and frequency of pay
- Hours of work
- Holiday and sick pay entitlements
- Details of pension arrangements
- Notice period
- Job title or a brief job description
- Any collective agreements that directly affect the terms and conditions of the job

If you are being sent to work in the UK by your company or organisation following information have to be in the work contract:
- Duration of employment
- Currency of the payment
- Any benefits to which you are entitled while working abroad
- The procedure for the return to the home country

2. Work permit

Work permits are issued by Work Permits (UK), part of the Home Office's Immigration and Nationality Directorate. A work permit relates to a specific person and a specific job. The work permit scheme lets UK employers recruit or transfer people from outside the European Economic Area (EEA), while still protecting the interests of resident workers in the UK. Work permits also allow overseas nationals to come to the UK for training or work experience.

Types of work permits in the UK:

1. **Business and commercial**: These allow UK employers to recruit people from outside the EEA who will fill a vacancy that the employer has not been able to fill with a resident worker.

2. **Sportspeople and entertainers**: These allow UK employers to employ established sportspeople, entertainers, cultural artists and some technical and support people from outside the EEA.

3. **GATS (Global Agreement on Trade in Services)**: This allows employees of companies that are based outside the European Union to work in the UK on a service contract awarded to their employer by a UK-based organisation.

4. **Training and Work Experience Scheme (TWES)**: This scheme allows people from outside the EEA to carry out work-based training for a professional or specialist qualification, or a short period of work experience as an extra member of staff. To qualify for TWES, you must: hold a valid TWES work permit and be able to carry out the training or work experience it applies to; intend to leave the UK after the training or work experience; be aged between 16 and 65; not intend to take employment except as set out on the permit, and be able to support yourself and your dependants, and live without needing any help from public funds.

5. **Multiple-entry work permits (MEWPs)**: The MEWP is designed for employees travelling regularly for short periods of work permit employment with the same employer in the UK (other than Northern Ireland). It is not valid for the Training and Work Experience Scheme (TWES). The MEWP is valid for between six months and two years for individual work permit holders. For sportspeople and groups of entertainers the maximum period is 12 months. MEWP holders do not qualify for indefinite leave to remain in the UK (in other words they cannot apply for permission to stay in the UK with no time limit). MEWP holders must support themselves and live without taking other employment or needing any help from public funds.

**Procedures for work permits**: The foreign worker cannot apply directly for a work permit. Applications for work permits can only be made by UK-based employers on behalf of the person they wish to employ. There is no provision within the current arrangements for individuals to apply on their own behalf. Employers should contact Work Permits (UK). The employer has to send the filled-in application form at least eight weeks before the date he/she needs the foreign worker to start work.

3. Visa

A visa is a certificate that is put into the passport or travel document of the foreigner who wants to enter the UK by an Entry Clearance Officer at a British mission overseas. The visa gives the permission to enter the UK. Applicants in China have to make their applications through the visa application centres. To work in the UK, Chinese citizens will need to possess a valid work permit that the prospective employer should have arranged with Work Permits UK.
Step by step process of the visa application:

1. See the UK Visa Application Centre website at www.ukvac.cn or contact the UK Visa Application Centre by telephone or e-mail for application forms and details of how to apply (for contact details see list of visa application centres below).
2. Submit application form, passport, documents and fee to the nearest UK Visa Application Centre.
3. The UK Visa Application Centre will inform you when your passport should be ready for collection.
4. Pick up your passport.

Documents required for the visa application related to a work permit:

- Completed and signed visa application form
- Passport
- Correct fee
- 2 recent passport photos (on white background)
- Original Work Permit
- Employment offer letter from UK
- UK contract of employment
- Current employment/income letter
- Current educational/professional qualifications
- Evidence of English ability
- Evidence of funds and their history
- From 1st July every deposit slip must be accompanied by a deposit certificate.
- Family book
- Any other appropriate documents

Attention: You should bring translations of all documents and the originals of the documents.

Applicants will receive a reference number for their application with to check the status of their application online at the UK Visa Application Centre’s website www.ukvac.cn or they can call the UK Visa Application Centre two or three days after the application has been submitted. Visa applications for work permit applications may need to be referred to the UK or other Commonwealth countries and will take longer to process.

The visa application form for the holder of a work permit can be downloaded here: http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/VAF1Oct06,1.pdf

Further information can be accessed on the U.K. Visa Application Centre homepage:

Costs for travel and fees
Airplane ticket China – UK – China (estimate/average price): please consult major licensed travel agencies
Visa for a work permit: 1275 RMB + administrative fee of 220 RMB; the fee is payable in Chinese Yuan (RMB), cash only
Recruitment fees: please consult overseas employment agencies licensed by MOLSS

Keep in mind:
- Always store copies of your documents (passport, visa, work contract) at a secure place and leave a set of these documents with your family and/or trusted friends;
- Memorize your employer’s name, address and telephone number;
- Get and read a copy of travel advisories and handbooks published by government agencies;
- Get and read books on the country of your destination;
- Try to learn some basic words in the language of the country of destination and some basic behaviours expected in the culture;
- Secure addresses of fellow migrant workers leaving with you.

Addresses of British consulates in China

### Visa application centres in the Guangzhou region (South China)
(for residents of Guangdong, Guangxi, Hunan, Fujian and Hainan)

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<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Opening hours</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fuzhou</td>
<td>Shanhai Mansion 8th Floor, 192 Guping Road</td>
<td>Monday to Friday from 08.00 to 15.00</td>
<td>86 20 3879 8623</td>
<td><a href="mailto:infocan@ukvac.cn">infocan@ukvac.cn</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guangzhou District Fuzhou 350003 Fujian Province</td>
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<td><strong>Shenzhen</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International Chamber of Commerce Building</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Building A, Rm 06 &amp; 07, 2nd Floor No. 1 Fuhua Road, Futian District Shenzhen 518048</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Guangzhou</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chengjian Mansion Rm 219, 189 Tiyu Rd. (West)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tianhe District Guangzhou 510620</td>
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<td>Opening hours: Monday to Friday from 08.00 to 15.00</td>
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### Visa application centres for the Shanghai region
(for residents of Shanghai, Zhejiang, Anhui and Jiangsu)

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<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Opening hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>1/F, Guangdong Development Bank Tower, 555, Xujiahui Road, Luwan District, Shanghai 200023</td>
<td>Monday to Friday from 08.00 to 15.00</td>
<td>(021) 6390 1288</td>
<td><a href="mailto:infocan@ukvac.cn">infocan@ukvac.cn</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hangzhou</td>
<td>Room 503, Tongfang Fortune Building, 334#, FengQi Road Xiachecheng District, Hangzhou 310003</td>
<td>Monday to Friday from 08.00 to 15.00</td>
<td>(021) 6390 1288</td>
<td><a href="mailto:infocan@ukvac.cn">infocan@ukvac.cn</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanjing</td>
<td>Room C4, 11 Floor, Nanjing International Trade Center, No.18 East Zhongshan Road, Nanjing 210005</td>
<td>Monday to Friday from 08.00 to 15.00</td>
<td>(021) 6390 1288</td>
<td><a href="mailto:infocan@ukvac.cn">infocan@ukvac.cn</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Visa application centres for the Chongqing region
(for residents of Chongqing Municipality, and the provinces of Sichuan, Guizhou, and Yunnan)

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<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Opening hours</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chongqing</td>
<td>3U-7, J.W Marriot Hotel International Trade Centre Office, 77 Qing Nian Road, Yu Zhong District, Chongqing 400010</td>
<td>Monday to Friday from 08.00 to 15.00</td>
<td>023 6370 4519</td>
<td><a href="mailto:infockg@ukvac.cn">infockg@ukvac.cn</a></td>
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<td><strong>Chengdu</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C-2, 16th Floor, Guan Cheng Plaza, 308 Shun Cheng Street, Qing Yang District, Chengdu 610017</td>
<td>Monday to Friday from 08.00 to 15.00</td>
<td>023 6370 4519</td>
<td><a href="mailto:infockg@ukvac.cn">infockg@ukvac.cn</a></td>
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### Visa applications in the Beijing region
(for residents of Beijing and Northern, Central and Western China)

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<th>City</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Opening hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beijing</td>
<td>D/E 2nd floor Building B East Gate Plaza, No 29 Dongzhong Jie Dongcheng,Beijing 100027</td>
<td>Monday to Friday from 07.30 to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shenyang</td>
<td>1/F,Xingguang Building, No.94, Heping North Avenue, Heping District, Shenyang, Liaoning Province, P.R.China 110001</td>
<td>Monday to Friday from 08.00 to 15.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinan</td>
<td>Room C10-01B, Qilu International Mansion, No 180 QuanCheng Road, Jinan 250011</td>
<td>Monday to Friday from 08.00 to 15.00</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wuhan</td>
<td>No1502 Building A Triumphal Arch Plaza XuDong Lu Wuhan 430063</td>
<td>Monday to Friday from 08.00 to 15.00</td>
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III. Conditions of employment/legislation: What are my rights and duties?

http://www.dti.gov.uk/employment/employment-agencies/index.html

Terms of employment

Employers can only make deductions from your wages if you have agreed in writing beforehand to the deductions being made or if the law or your contract with your employer allows or requests the deductions. Matters in respect of which you can expect your employer to make deductions include:

1. Tax and National Insurance.

In almost all cases it will be a requirement that your employer deducts money from your wages and National Insurance contributions.

2. Accommodation.

Where your employer provides accommodation, the value of the accommodation can be offset against pay. However, the maximum amount that can be counted against your pay is £3.90 for each day that accommodation is provided. The limit is likely to be increased in October 2006.

3. Transport.

If you work you must still be paid the national/agricultural minimum wage after money has been deducted from your wages to pay for transport. Note: A temporary work agency cannot deduct from your pay or otherwise attempt to charge you for processing your pay or providing safety equipment. The agency may offer to provide you with other services, for example training in additional skills, which you might choose to purchase. However it cannot make the provision of its work finding services conditional on you using those other services.21

No deductions can be made for any meals or other refreshments that are provided. If transport is provided to get you to and from work, a deduction can be made. There is no limit on this and it is a common source of abuse.22

Income

Wage rates vary considerably between industrial sectors. Agriculture has traditionally been a relatively low-paid sector and this is still the case, with 65 per cent of employees on wage rates of less than £6 per hour. The hotel and restaurant sector is also relatively low paid, with 75 per cent earning less than £6 per hour and 34 per cent earning less than £4 per hour. At the other end of the scale, 39 per cent of those in financial intermediation earned more than £12 per hour. Averaged over all industries, 6 per cent of employees earned less than £4 per hour (all figures for 2000).23

The national minimum wage (NMW): The minimum wage rates for 2006 were set at £3.30 per hour for 16 and 17 years old, £4.45 per hour for 18 to 21 year olds and £5.35 per hour for those aged 22 or over, with some exceptions for workers receiving training during the first six months of employment.25 In the agricultural sector, the rates of pay may be higher than the National Minimum Wage. Defra agricultural wages helpline on 0845 0000134 provides the latest information.26 The average weekly wage of full-time employees was £431 in April 2005. However, this figure hides large regional differences. Incomes in London are considerably higher than the national average, while in Wales, Northern Ireland and northeast England they are much lower.27
Working time and holidays
The normal work week in the UK has 40 hours but individuals may opt to work longer. The legal maximum limit (including overtime) is 48 working hours per week. The 48 hour limit can be exceeded by written agreement between individual workers and employers. Where a worker's daily working time is more than 6 hours, she/he is entitled to a rest break. A rest break is an uninterrupted period of not less than 20 minutes.

The minimum annual paid holiday entitlement is 20 days a year including public holidays. Workers with a contract for a year’s work and work five days a week are entitled to 20 days paid holiday. Workers in the agricultural sector are entitled to 22 days paid holiday a year plus public holidays.

The basic rights and protections in regard to working time are:
- a limit of an average of 48 hours a week which a worker can be required to work (though workers can choose to work more if they want to)
- a limit of an average of 8 hours work in 24 which nightworkers can be required to work.
- a right for night workers to receive free health assessments.
- a right to 11 hours rest a day.
- a right to a day off each week.
- a right to an in-work rest break if the working day is longer than 6 hours.
- a right to 4 weeks paid leave per year.

Official public holidays in the UK
- New Year’s Day: 1 January
- Good Friday: March or April (changing date every year)
- Easter Monday: March or April (changing date every year)
- Christmas: December 25
- Boxing Day: 26 December (resp. 28 December)
Additional public holidays in Northern Ireland:
- St. Patrick’s Day: 17 March (resp. 19 March)
- Battle of the Boyne (Orangemen's Day): 12 July (resp. 13 or 14 July)

Insurances/social security and taxes
Every foreign worker who is legally employed requires a National Insurance Number (NINO).

For further information about how to apply for a National Insurance Number visit: http://www.dwp.gov.uk/lifeevent/benefits/ni_number.asp

When living and working in the UK, you will pay tax at the same rate as a UK national. You will be treated as a UK resident for tax purposes if:
- You are in the United Kingdom for 183 days or more in the tax year, or
- You visit the United Kingdom regularly and your visits average 91 days or more a tax year over a period not exceeding 4 years,
- You come to the UK for a purpose that will mean you are in the UK for at least two years.

The tax year runs from 6 April to 5 April. When you arrive in the UK you should ask at your nearest tax office for form P86 and leaflet IR139.

Income tax is deducted directly from your salary through the Pay As You Earn (PAYE) scheme. Income is taxed at the following rates:
- Starting rate 10% £0 - £2150
- Basic rate 22% £2151 - £33000
- Higher rate 40% over £33001
All taxable income must be declared to the HM Revenue & Customs. Tax returns are completed using a self-assessment system whereby you provide all the necessary information and calculate your
earnings etc. The HM Revenue & Customs will then check this information and tell you how much tax you owe.

Social security contributions, or National Insurance (NI) as it is called, are also deducted directly from your salary. There are six different categories of contributions, for example employed people pay class 1 contributions. You are not required to make contributions if you earn less than £97 per week. If you earn more than £84 per week but less than £97, you will be treated as if contributions have been paid and so be eligible for benefits etc., but you will not actually have to make any contributions.

Both you and your employer make contributions. On income above £97 per week (or equivalent monthly or annual figures) up to £645 per week, category 1 NI contributions payable by the employee stand at 11%. Any earnings above £645 per week require contributions of 1%.34

Health Insurance: National Health Service (NHS)
You are generally entitled to free treatment from the UK National Health Service, but certain costs are due from patients for prescribed medicines, dental treatment and some opticians’ fees.35

Safety and Health at Work
Your employer and the employment agency are required by law to ensure a good standard of health and safety for you and to give you any training you need to do your work safely. If you are worried, in the first instance raise the issue with your employer. If no action is taken or you are unhappy with the action taken, you may wish to contact the Health and Safety Executive’s Infoline. Tell the operator which language you wish to speak. The operator will then arrange for an interpreter to be connected into the telephone line within a minute or so, and you will be able to continue your enquiry in your own language.36

Your Health, your safety: a guide for workers: www.hse.gov.uk/languages

Dismissal
Both employers and employees have the right to a minimum period of notice. The period of notice that an employer is required to give depends on the employee’s length of service. If an employee has been continuously employed for longer than one month, the employer must give at least one week’s notice. For each additional year of continuous employment, an extra week’s notice must be given. In case of an unfair dismissal workers can make a complaint of to an employment tribunal within three months of their leaving employment.37

Trade unions in the UK
In the UK, 30% of all workers are organized in trade unions.38 Legal labour migrants have the right to join a union in the UK. The employer does not need to be informed about trade union membership of a worker. One cannot be discriminated against for being a union member.39

Keep in mind:
- Check your contract and any other documents you are asked to sign and make sure you really understand what you are agreeing to before you sign it. If it’s not clear, ask the agency to explain. Do not sign anything you do not understand.
- It is illegal for employer to keep the workers' passport and money, but he may make copies of them for his records.
- At the workplace, foreign workers are entitled to the same basic rights as national worker.
- Keep a record of the hours you worked.

IV. Problems and difficulties
If you have experienced exploitation and abuse while employed abroad you can file complaints and seek legal redress either while you are still in the UK or upon return to China. NGOs and trade unions can inform you about your rights and about legal services to file compensation claims against exploitative employers or recruitment agencies. It is important to know, that even if you may find yourself in a situation where you reside and work illegally in the UK you have the right to go to an employment tribunal if you have suffered from exploitation at your workplace.

Keep in mind:
It is illegal for anyone to...
- force you to work against your will;
- collect a debt by using threats or forcing you to work to pay the debt;
- force you to work using threats to harm you or your family;
- force or pressure you into prostitution or to do other sexual acts;
- use you for any kind of sex work if you are under 18;
- take away your passport, birth certificate, or identification card to control you or your movements.
If any of these things has happened to you, you might be a victim of trafficking!

Employment tribunals
The Employment Tribunals are judicial bodies established to resolve disputes between employers and employees over employment rights. Complaints to an employment tribunal must normally be made within 3 months of the act complained of. In the first instance, in nearly all types of complaint, an Acas conciliator will try to help the two sides settle their differences. If this fails, the tribunal may go ahead. Proceedings are kept as simple as possible and many people will put their own cases forward. If unfair dismissal is found, the tribunal may order re-instatement of the employee or award financial compensation. If discrimination is found, the tribunal may make a declaration of the rights of those involved and/or award compensation to the employee. Employment tribunals are more informal than courts of law. Sometimes lawyers are involved, but in more straightforward cases people will use a union officer, someone from an advice agency or present their own cases. While some people have represented themselves successfully, we would not advise this. You should contact your union, or if you are not a union member then you should take advice about how to proceed. Even if you find yourself in an irregular situation in the UK e.g. working without a valid work or residence permit) you have the right go to the labour court e.g. to claim compensation for non-payment of wages from your employer. NGOs and trade unions may assist migrant workers in these procedures. The number of the public enquiry line of employment tribunals in the UK is: 0845 795 9775.

Official website of Employment tribunals in the UK:
http://www.employmenttribunals.gov.uk/default.asp

Consular services
The Foreign Ministry of the People’s Republic of China has published a protection guide for Chinese abroad that informs about the consular services in emergency situations. The protection guide can be assessed under: http://www.chinese-embassy.org.uk/chn/lsvw/lshb/default.htm

Contacts of assistance services, NGOs, national authorities, and consulates

| Embassy of the People's Republic of China / General Consulate of the People’s Republic of China in London | General Consulate of the People’s Republic of China in Manchester |
| **Consular service** | **Address:** Denison House, 49 Denison Road, Rusholme, Manchester M14 5RX  
**Telephone inquiry:** 0161-2248672, 14:00 – 16:00, Monday to Friday  
**Fax:** 0161-2572672  
[http://manchester.chineseconsulate.org](http://manchester.chineseconsulate.org) |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Address:** 31 Portland Place London W1B 1QD  
**Office Hours:** 9:00 - 12:00, Monday to Friday  
**Counsellor:** Lu Yueke  
**Telephone inquiry:** 020-76311430, 14.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday  
**Fax:** 020-76369756 for Consular affairs  
| **General Consulate of the People’s Republic of China in Edinburgh** | **Camden Chinese Community Centre**  
**Address:** 55 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 5QG  
**Telephone inquiry:** 0131-3373220, 14.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday  
**Fax:** 0131-3371790  
[http://edinburgh.chineseconsulate.org/chn](http://edinburgh.chineseconsulate.org/chn) |
| **Address:** 55 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 5QG  
**Telephone inquiry:** 0131-3373220, 14.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday  
**Fax:** 0131-3371790  
[http://edinburgh.chineseconsulate.org/chn](http://edinburgh.chineseconsulate.org/chn) |
| **Chinese Information & Advice Centre** | **Telephone:** 0207 323 1538  
**Legal Advice Helpline:** (020) 7462 1285, Monday to Friday, 10.00 to 13.00 and 14.00 to 17.00  
**Fax:** 020 7436 7108  
[http://www.ciac.co.uk](http://www.ciac.co.uk)  
[http://www.ciac.co.uk/](http://www.ciac.co.uk/) (Homepage only in English)  
**Office Hours:** Monday to Friday: 9.30 to 17.30  
**Nearest tube stations:** Tottenham Court Road, Oxford Circus, Bond Street  
The CIAC offers advice on all aspects of immigration law, in particular in the area of asylum, exceptional leave to remain, student visas, EEC family members, work permits, or family reunion applications. Services can be offered in English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Hakka, Shanghainese, Malay, and Fujian.
| **London Chinatown Community Centre** | **Address:** 2nd Floor, 28-29 Gerrard Street  
**Telephone:** 020 7439 3822  
**Fax:** 020 7734 3572  
[http://www.ccc.org.uk](http://www.ccc.org.uk)  
[http://www.ccc.org.uk/home](http://www.ccc.org.uk/home)  
**Nearest tube stations:** Leicester Square, Piccadilly Circus, or Oxford Circus  
The LCCC provides free and confidential advice and information service in immigration and employment issues. For appointments call: 020 7439 3822. |
| **Address:** 2nd Floor, 28-29 Gerrard Street  
**Telephone:** 020 7439 3822  
**Fax:** 020 7734 3572  
[http://www.ccc.org.uk](http://www.ccc.org.uk)  
[http://www.ccc.org.uk/home](http://www.ccc.org.uk/home)  
**Nearest tube stations:** Leicester Square, Piccadilly Circus, or Oxford Circus  
The LCCC provides free and confidential advice and information service in immigration and employment issues. For appointments call: 020 7439 3822. |
| **Chinese National Healthy Living Centre** | **Employment tribunals**  
www.employmenttribunals.gov.uk  
**Tribunal helpline:** 0845 795 9775  
The helpline can give information on tribunal procedures and publications, but cannot provide legal advice. |
| **Address:** 29-30 Soho Square, London, W1D 3QS  
**Tel:** 020 7534 6546 or 020 7287 0904  
**Nearest tube stations:** Tottenham Court Road and Leicester Square  
**Opening hours:** Monday to Friday from 9.00 – 17.00 and Sunday from 11.00 to 16.00  
[general@cnhlc.org.uk](mailto:general@cnhlc.org.uk)  
[www.cnhlc.org.uk](http://www.cnhlc.org.uk)  
**Multi-lingual helpline:** Health query by per telephone |
| **Nearest tube stations:** Tottenham Court Road and Leicester Square  
**Opening hours:** Monday to Friday from 9.00 – 17.00 and Sunday from 11.00 to 16.00  
[general@cnhlc.org.uk](mailto:general@cnhlc.org.uk)  
[www.cnhlc.org.uk](http://www.cnhlc.org.uk)  
**Multi-lingual helpline:** Health query by per telephone |
helpline under 0845 601 6030; Languages: English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Hakka and other dialects.

**Sunday Chinese Surgery:** Bilingual doctors give advice on health problems for those Chinese people who have difficulties in communicating with their own doctors. The Centre cannot provide prescriptions but can put visitors in touch with the right health professional. Surgery Hours: Sunday from 11.00 to 16.00; no appointment necessary.

**Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)**

The Citizens Advice Bureau Service offers free, confidential, impartial and independent advice and has offices in most towns in the UK. CAB offer advice in issues such as housing, legal matters, employment, and immigration. Advisers can help fill out forms and represent clients at court or tribunal.

For the nearest CAB check: [www.nacab.org.uk](http://www.nacab.org.uk)

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**Trades Union Congress**

Migrant Workers Project  
Congress House  
Great Russell Street  
London WC1B 3LS  
‘Know Your Rights’ hotline: 0870 600 4882  
tup@tuc.org.uk  
http://www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-7982-f0.cfm

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**IV. Living in the UK**

**General information**

The capital of the UK is London.  
The official language is English. Regional languages are Welsh.  
The UK has about 60.2 million inhabitants  
Type of climate: temperate  
Religion: Christian (Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist) 71.6%, Muslim 2.7%, Hindu 1%, other 1.6%, unspecified or none 23.1%.

**Costs of living: Rent, food, public transport**

**Rent:** Accommodation in the UK is expensive. This is particularly true in large towns and cities. The most expensive areas are London and southeast England.  

**Public transport:** The UK has a comprehensive transport network. Most places can be reached by road and rail, and many cities have an airport.

**National emergency number (Ambulance, Police, Fire Department):** 999

**V. Money issues and remittances/money transfer**

Prior to departure, it is helpful to open a bank account in China for two reasons. Firstly, opening a bank account in a financial institution either in the UK or in China is a good way to ensure that a worker’s savings are secure. Secondly, it can ease money transfers from the UK to China as some money transfer operators request a bank account to be able to use their services. Migrants should not
remit their entire earnings home for family spending, but should keep part of their earnings regularly in order to have some savings for the return to China and to fall back on. Government and non-government agencies often provide training services to help returning migrants start a business. It may be helpful to speak to former migrants who successfully started their own business after their return to China.

Sending money from the UK to China

General recommendations:
- To make the process as easy as possible it is advisable to carry passport and proof of address when sending money (this may not be necessary for every transaction with every provider)
- Take into account the exchange rate as well as transfer fees; market price for currencies can be checked e.g. at www.xe.com, or www.oanda.com to be able to compare the offers of different banks and money transfer operators
- Keep in touch with the recipient to find out/make sure if money has arrived
- Keep hold of receipt/proof of sending in case of problems


Some examples of money transfer operators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MoneyGram</th>
<th>Western Union</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coverage:</strong> Worldwide money transfer network with over 75,000 agent locations worldwide. has over 1000 outlets, which include branches of Bank of Communications, Industrial &amp; Commercial Bank and Citic Industrial Bank.</td>
<td><strong>Coverage:</strong> The world's largest money transfer network for sending and receiving money with over 170,000 agent locations. The sender and receiver do not need a bank account to use the service of Western Union. The only requirement to use the service is a valid identity card for both the sender and the receiver.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fees:</strong> For sending 100 Pound Sterling the fee is 13 Pound Sterling and for sending 1000 Pound Sterling the fee is 22 Pound Sterling.</td>
<td><strong>Fees:</strong> The fee for</td>
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<tr>
<th>Moneybookers</th>
<th>iKobo</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coverage:</strong> Worldwide online money transfer network that offers with which one can send and receive money via email. The sender and receiver need to be registered and have an account with moneybookers.</td>
<td><strong>Coverage:</strong> Online money transfer service per credit card to a debit card.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fees:</strong> Upload money to the moneybookers account (from a local bank or per cheque): no fee; send money: 1% of the amount.</td>
<td><strong>Fees:</strong> Money transfer fees: $5.00 per transaction + 3% of amount sent; shipping fees for an iKobo Visa Debit Card (has to be paid once): $9.95, costs for iKobo Visa Debit Card: per withdrawal: $1.99, monthly fee $0.99. iKobo’s homepage offers a fee calculator showing also the exchange rate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Web:</strong> <a href="http://www.moneybookers.com">http://www.moneybookers.com</a> (homepage also in Chinese)</td>
<td><strong>Web:</strong> <a href="http://www.ikobo.com">http://www.ikobo.com</a></td>
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VI. Return to China

The employment contract should include a clause regarding provisions for the return following completion of your employment abroad. To ease return and reintegration in China, it is important to maintain constant linkages with the family through frequent correspondence and to keep up with national and local developments in China.

Assistance may be given to people who are not British citizens or EEA nationals and who wish to leave the country for a place where they will take up permanent residence. Assistance can be given to voluntary leavers and to assist individuals to decide whether to become voluntary leavers.

Payments may include:
- Travelling expenses to leave the United Kingdom
- Expenses incurred on or shortly after arrival in the new place of residence,
- Provision of services to settle in the new place of residence,
- Expenses in connection with a journey to prepare for or assess the possibility of becoming a voluntary leaver.\textsuperscript{45}

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is implementing a programme for assisted return open to irregular migrants who are in the UK without legal documentation. This includes people who might have been smuggled or trafficked into the UK or who have overstayed their visas. In these cases IOM helps to get travel documentation, pay for flights home and assist each returnee on the airport upon arrival and departure as well as assist with onward transportation to a returnee’s home town if necessary.\textsuperscript{46}


# Addresses of authorities and organisations offering reintegration programmes and assistance/services to returning migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IOM London / Assisted Voluntary Return for Irregular Migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address: 21 Westminster Palace Gardens, Artillery Row, London, SW1P 1RR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearest tube stations: St James's Park and Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: +44 (0)20 7233 0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: +44 (0)20 7233 3001</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisations in China that can offer support after return</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of public employment agencies:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public agencies in targeted provinces:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1) Zhejiang Employment Service Center:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Free hotline: 0800 783 2332
avrim@iomlondon.org
http://www.iomlondon.org/avrim.php

Website: http://www.zjhr.com/
Address: No 91, Baijingfangxiang, Hangzhou City
Zip: 310003
Tel: 0571—56792506
2) Jilin Employment Service Center
Address: 1/F, Yatai Street, Nanguan District, Changchun
Tel: 0431-8690900
3) Fujian Employment Service Center
Tel: 0591-87677529
Address: 2/F, No. 44, Gudonglu, Fuzhou
Zip: 350001
Website: http://www.fj91.com

1 Millar, Jane; Salt, John (2005): Foreign labour in the United Kingdom: current patterns and trends, Migration Research Unit, University College London; see:
H; see also:
Hhttp://www.workingintheuk.gov.uk
6 Michael McDadd, EURES adviser, Jobcentre Plus, Partnerships Division, International and Public Relations, email on 29.11.2006, for contact details see database)
8 Hhttp://www.dti.gov.uk/employment/employment-agencies/index.html
9 Michael McDadd, EURES adviser, Jobcentre Plus, Partnerships Division, International and Public Relations, email on 29.11.2006, for contact details see database)
10 DTI (2006): Working in the United Kingdom. Know your rights and how to get help and advice, see:
16 Hhttp://www.workingintheuk.gov.uk/working_in_the_uk/en/homepage/work_permits0/work_permit_faqs.html
17 Hhttp://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1018721068127H
18 Http://www.uk.cn/bj/visa_index.asp?Lang=E&menu_id=435&artid=1177
19 Http://www.uk.cn/bj/visa_index.asp?Lang=E&menu_id=430&artid=1229
20 Http://www.uk.cn/bj/visa_index.asp?Lang=E&menu_id=430&artid=1233
25 Http://www.ilo.org/travaildatabase/servlet/minimumwages