

# Settling in Wales – Life for Hong Kong BN(O) migrants since arrival



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# Executive Summary

## Overview

This follow-up survey, commissioned by the Welsh Local Government Association and delivered by Swansea University, examines the lives, needs, and integration experiences of Hong Kong BN(O) migrants living in Wales, three years after the opening of the BN(O) visa route. The study complements the 2022 “Welcome Survey,” offering updated evidence on demographic changes, settlement patterns, labour-market outcomes, wellbeing, and public-service access. A total of 186 respondents (primary and secondary) participated between August and October 2025.

While not statistically representative (due to community-based recruitment), the survey captures the experiences of a substantial segment of Hong Kong migrants, particularly those active in community networks, and provides robust indications of their evolving challenges and contributions to Wales.

## Key Findings:

### 1. Demographics

Slightly over half of the respondents were women (56%), largely middle-aged and highly educated. 49% were aged 45–64, with only 6.5% under 24.

83% identified as “Hongkonger,” with growing dual identification: 32% British and 16% Welsh.

65% were married, and nearly half of parents had two children.

Nearly half stated they have a religion

### 2. Housing & Settlement Patterns

57% were homeowners (43% owning outright), high for a newly arrived migrant group.

reflecting financial preparedness and pre-migration assets.

40% rented privately, often without access to social housing due to No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF).

Cardiff dominates as the primary destination, accounting for 80% of first UK locations and 87% of current residence.

### 3. Education & Employment

60% held a degree or postgraduate qualification—twice the UK-born rate.

Yet underemployment remains substantial:

14% unemployment among economically active respondents—triple the Welsh average.

Only 23% employed in professional or managerial roles despite high qualifications

Barriers reported include:

- English proficiency (especially telephone use).
- Lack of UK work experience and networks.
- Non-recognition of qualifications.
- Perceived ethnic, language, or nationality-based discrimination.
- Nearly half of employed respondents were actively seeking new work, signalling dissatisfaction and skills mismatch.

### 4. Language Skills

Most respondents function well in everyday English, yet 19% report difficulties, especially in formal or telephone communication.

Only 14% have attended English classes; many rely on online tools.

Welsh learning remains limited: 55% took no steps to learn Welsh, citing low perceived need, competing priorities, or limited awareness of classes.

### 5. Health & Emotional Wellbeing

Most rate their general health as good or fair, with only 7% reporting poor health.

However, younger adults show the highest emotional strain, with elevated levels of anxiety, low mood, and reduced daily functioning—mirroring evidence of trauma associated with Hong Kong’s political events.

17% report long-standing illness/disability—below UK averages, aligning with the “healthy migrant effect”

## 6. Life Satisfaction & Access to Services

Life satisfaction is generally positive:

- 10% completely satisfied, 36% mostly satisfied, 30% somewhat satisfied.
- Unemployment is strongly associated with lower wellbeing.

Service access is reasonably high:

- 68% have used a GP, 45% a hospital, 47% a dentist. Only 7% used no public services.
- Main barriers: appointment difficulties, unreliable transport, and limited English in formal contexts.

## 7. Safety & Fear of Crime

Most feel fairly or very safe (70%) walking alone after dark, though gendered patterns are clear: women are more likely to avoid going out after dark.

Worry about crime is moderate overall but strongest among:

- Women
- Younger adults
- Highly educated migrants
- Economically active individuals

## 8. Migration Motivations & Settlement Intentions

Top reasons for migration:

- 55% political reasons
- 32% family-related reasons
- 25% children’s education
- Wales was chosen for being welcoming, safe, and affordable relative to other UK regions.

\* 75% plan to stay long-term in the UK, with only 5% expecting to return permanently to Hong Kong.

## Policy Implications

### 1. Employment & Economic Integration

- Strengthen recognition pathways for overseas qualifications.
- Expand advanced, employment-focused ESOL provision.
- Improve access to public-sector and regulated professions through mentoring, bridging programmes, and transparent recruitment pathways.
- Address discrimination through Fair Work Wales and employer-engagement initiatives.

### 2. Housing

- Enhance access to reliable housing advice, mortgage guidance, and rental standards.
- Monitor NRPf impacts and potential vulnerability to housing instability as savings deplete.

### 3. Language Provision

- Increase local ESOL availability, especially advanced and sector-specific programmes.
- Provide practical support for everyday tasks (telephone English, form-filling).
- Expand culturally sensitive pathways for learning Welsh, aligning with the Nation of Sanctuary ethos.

### 4. Health & Wellbeing

- Prioritise mental-health support for young adults and the less educated.
- Increase early-intervention and trauma-aware services in community and FE/HE settings.
- Strengthen culturally responsive and multilingual health information.

### 5. Service Access & Community Integration

- Improve transport connectivity and appointment systems.
- Expand digital navigational support for public services.
- Provide clear information on local safety, crime reporting, and community policing.

## 1 Introduction

Further to the Welcome Survey of Hong Kong BN(O) migrants in 2022, the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership had commissioned Swansea University to conduct a second survey to follow-up on the lives of these new migrants in Wales. The aim was to collect socio-demographic data on Hong Kongers in Wales and to offer insights into their needs and issues faced living in Wales. The findings will inform future service provision with the aim of removing barriers to integration into British and Welsh society and ensuring equitable access to services.

## 2 Background and Context

Hong Kong migration to the UK has a long history, dating back to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and post-WWII period. While early migration waves were shaped by colonial ties and economic hardship, more recent migration was largely driven by political unrest in the 1960s and uncertainty before the former colony was returned to China in 1997. The Anti-Extradition Law protests of 2019 and China's enactment of the National Security Law in 2020 led to widespread concerns about civil liberties, rule of law and personal safety for politically active or democratic leaning residents in Hong Kong, triggering a surge of emigration. In 2021, the UK government launched the British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) visa, a special visa as a humanitarian route offering Hong Kong BN(O) status holders and their families the right to work and study in the UK, up to 5 years' residency and a clear pathway to citizenship.

Since the visa scheme opened on 31 January 2021, almost 180,000 BN(O) visas have been granted, and 163,400 Hong Kong migrants have arrived in the UK through this scheme (Home Office, March 2025). Once in the UK, there are no official statistics indicating where Hong Kong BN(O) migrants settle, nor how many have moved to Wales. Despite arriving on humanitarian grounds, Hong Kong BN(O) migrants have no Recourse to Public Fund. The 2022 Welcome Survey in Wales was designed to explore their initial experiences of integration. Its findings were published in the report "Building a New Life in Wales" ((Cheung and Foster, 2023), which provided an overview of the historical development of the BN(O) status, outlined eligibility requirements, and mapped the geographical distribution of the first arrivals in 2021. While additional studies were conducted at the UK level, no follow-up research has been undertaken specifically in Wales. Three years on, little is known about how the experiences of Hong Kongers in Wales have changed. The findings of this new survey aim to address this gap by offering fresh insights into their lives, challenges and settlement trajectories since arrival.

### 3 Methods and Results

The online questionnaire was adapted from the panel survey of Hong Kong BN(O) Migrants<sup>1</sup> conducted by the University College of London, with additional items incorporated to capture features specific to the Wales context. The survey was available in Traditional Chinese, English and Welsh, ensuring accessibility for respondents with different levels of English language proficiency. A pilot survey involving 22 Hong Kongers was conducted during the summer of 2025, enabling the refinement of question wording and structure. The full survey was launched on 22 August 2025 and remained open until mid-October to maximise participation.

According to the Census 2021, there were 3,715 Hong Kong-born usual residents in Wales (StatsWales 2022). The current size of Hong Kong BN(O) migrant population in Wales is unknown, as the Home Office records only initial entry into the UK and does not track subsequent internal migration or settlement patterns. In the absence of a complete sampling and accurate frame, the survey adopted a community-based, non-probability recruitment strategy. The online questionnaire was disseminated through Hong Kong BN(O) social media groups and established community networks. Extensive outreach and engagement activities were undertaken at the Cardiff Hong Kongers CIC (Community Interest Company) Drop-In Centre, as well as in Hong Kong cafes and shops, Chinese churches and community events across Cardiff and Swansea where many Hong Kongers in Wales regularly gather.

The primary survey generated 232 responses. 73 of which were partial (respondents had started but not completed the questionnaire). The remaining 160 responses were from participants who viewed all pages of the survey and selected 'submit' at the end. However, submission did not necessarily indicate that every question had been answered. Partial responses were retained if the participant had provided consent and answered more than two questions. Twenty-seven partial responses were deleted. A further 30 complete responses were removed because the participant did not provide consent; was a pilot participant who completed the survey more than once, or had submitted a duplicate entry (identified through matching IP addresses and where available email addresses). In total, 57 entries were excluded from the primary respondent dataset.

For households with more than one occupant, primary respondents were asked to forward the survey to other members of their household to generate secondary responses. However, this yielded only 21 secondary responses, including two partial responses. These two partial responses were deleted as no questions were answered. An additional eight completed responses were removed because they were duplicates from the pilot phase, test submissions from the project team or no consent was granted. In total, ten entries were deleted from the secondary respondent dataset.

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<sup>1</sup> [Hong Kong BN\(O\) Migrants Panel Survey | UCL Institute of Education](#)

The final sample comprised 175 primary respondents and 11 secondary respondents, giving a total of 186 participants. Respondents were able to select “Prefer not to say”, and such responses are included in the report. Not all questions were applicable to all participants, and some respondents chose not to answer certain items. Missing responses were treated as missing data and excluded from the analyses; therefore, the number of cases varies across variables. Full details on missing data are available upon request.

Since the survey relied on voluntary participation and community-based rather than random sampling, the final sample is non-probabilistic and may not be representative of the wider Hong Kong population in Wales. The findings must be interpreted with caution. Non-probability volunteer, and network-based sampling approaches are useful where no sampling frame exists but introduce risks of self-selection bias (Blaikie 2010). Individuals who are more socially connected, more active in Hong Konger community spaces, or more engaged in online BN(O) networks were more likely to be reached and to participate, resulting in being over-represented (Etikan et al 2016). Online surveys may also systematically exclude less digitally engaged or harder-to-reach subgroups (Couper 2002). As a result, findings are not generalisable to all Hong Kong BN(O) migrants in Wales. Estimates of demographic characteristics and experiences should be interpreted as indicative rather than statistically representative (de Vaus 2014, Babbie 2021). Patterns identified may reflect the characteristics of those who were more reachable through community networks rather than the entire population. Despite these limitations, the survey provides valuable insights into the experiences and settlement trajectories of a substantial number of Hong Kong migrants in Wales, especially those engaged in community networks, and offers an important evidence base for understanding emerging needs within this population.

## 4 Survey Findings

### 4.1 Demographics

Among the 186 responses, 114 (61%) completed the survey in Traditional Chinese, 71 (38%) in English and 1 in Welsh. In comparison, the 2022 Welcome Survey recorded a 70% Chinese and 30% English split, suggesting that a growing proportion of Hong Kong migrants in Wales now feel more confident using English.

Among the primary respondents, 57% were female and 38% were male, with a further 5% chose “prefer not to say”. When combined with secondary respondents, 39% were male and 56% were female.

Figure 4.1.1: Sex of respondents

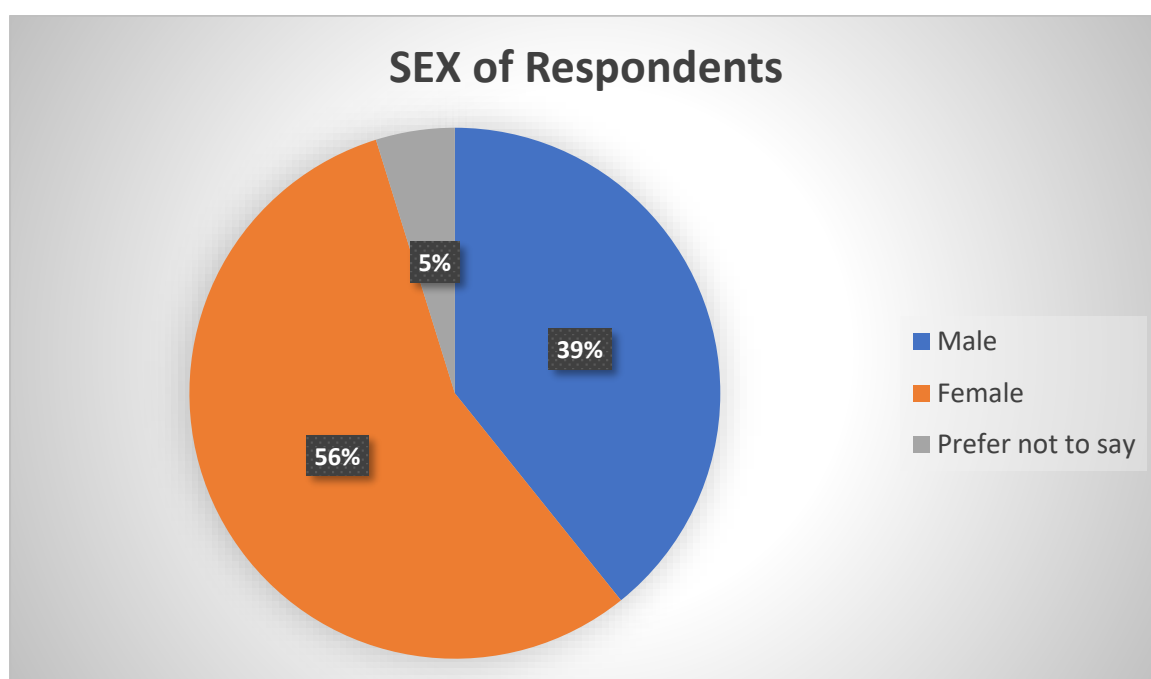


Table 4.1.1: Sex of respondents

	Primary Respondent	Secondary Respondent	Total	%
Male	67	6	73	39.2
Female	99	5	104	55.9
Prefer not to say	9	0	9	4.8
Total	175	11	186	100

### AGE

Approximately half (49%) of the primary respondents were aged 45-64 and 40% were aged 25-44. When combined with secondary respondents, the age profile changes very

little with the majority of respondents aged 45-64. Only 6.5% of all respondents were under 24 years of age and a further 5% were aged 65 or above.

*Table 4.1.2: Age of respondents*

	<b>Primary Respondent</b>	<b>Secondary Respondent</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
16-24	10	2	12	6.5
25-44	70	3	73	38.9
45-64	85	5	90	49.2
65+	9	1	10	5.4
Total	174	11	185	100

## **Religion**

Nearly half (48%) of the primary respondents said they have a religion and 43% said No to this question. Research has found that religion can play a positive role in migrant integration as it often provides migrants with crucial psychological, spiritual and social resources, helping them cope with the upheaval of migration, uncertainty of transit and challenges of settling in a new country (Eppsteiner and Hagan 2016). Religious can also be a bonding and bridging social capital where religious participation may enhance integration by offering migrants social networks, mutual support systems, and employment opportunities and interaction with wider civil society. The 2022 Welcome Survey also finds that churches and faith groups had provided an important social source of support for Hong Kongers when they first arrived.

*Table 4.1.3: Religion of respondents*

<b>Religion</b>		<b>%</b>
Yes	78	48.1
No	70	43.2
Prefer not to say	14	8.6
Total	162	100

## **National Identity**

When asked to describe their national identity, an overwhelming majority (83%) identified themselves as Hong Kongers. As multiple responses were permitted, 32% also identified as British, and 16% as Welsh, reflecting new attachments formed after migration. In contrast, only 7% identified as Chinese, a pattern that aligns with long-standing research on Hong Kong identity formation. Scholars have shown that colonial governance fostered a distinct local civic identity rather than a Chinese national one (Lin 2025; Kam 2020). Since the 2000s, heightened political integration pressures from Beijing have generated

a perceived threat to Hong Kong’s distinctiveness, prompting many residents to assert a stronger “Hongkonger” identity (Yew and Kwong 2014).

*Table 4.1.4: National Identity of respondents*

	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Hong Konger</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>82.8</b>
Chinese	13	7.0
English	6	3.2
<b>Welsh</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>15.6</b>
Scottish	2	1.1
<b>British</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>31.7</b>
Northern Irish	0	0
Irish	0	0
Other	2	1.1
Prefer not to say	5	2.7

## 4.2 Marital/Partnership status and family structure

*Table 4.2.1: Marital status of respondents*

<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Single never married or in civil partnership	52	31.0
Married	109	64.9
In a registered civil partnership	2	1.2
Separated but legally married / separated from civil partnership	2	1.2
Divorced / a former civil partner, the civil partnership legally dissolved	1	0.6
Widowed / A surviving civil partner	2	1.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>100</b>

65% of the primary respondents were married and 31% were single never married.

### Parents with natural son/daughter

*Table 4.2.2: Number of children*

<b>No. of children</b>		<b>%</b>
1	36	48.0
2	37	49.3
3	2	2.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

75 respondents reported having a natural son or daughter. No participants reported having foster children, stepchildren or adopted children.

Among all primary respondents, 63% of married primary respondents reported having children. 43% of male primary respondents and 46% of their female counterparts reported having children, whereas only 6% who were single, never married/civil partnership reported having children.

### 4.3 Housing and Accommodation

*Table 4.3.1: Housing tenure of respondents*

<b>Housing Tenure</b>		<b>%</b>
Owned outright	<b>68</b>	<b>43.0</b>
Owned with mortgage	22	13.9
Shared ownership (part-owned, part-rented)	2	1.3
Rented	<b>62</b>	<b>39.2</b>
Rent free	1	0.6
Other (please specify)	3	1.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>100</b>

43% of the primary respondents owned their homes outright and a further 14% were also owner occupiers with a mortgage. The second largest group (40%) were renting.

#### **Number of people per household**

*Table 4.3.2: Number of people per household*

<b>No of person</b>		<b>%</b>
1	21	12.2
2	<b>57</b>	<b>32.9</b>
3	<b>42</b>	<b>24.3</b>
4	<b>43</b>	<b>24.9</b>
5	7	4.0
6-9	3	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority (82%) of primary respondents lived in small households with total number of people not exceeding 4. Two-person household remains the most common pattern. Two respondents entered 0 but they were coded as 1 because they were asked to include themselves when answering this question.

### 4.4 Education and Employment

Respondents were asked to indicate their highest level of qualification. Consistent with the UCL longitudinal survey of Hong Kong BN(O) migrants, the Hong Kong community in Wales is highly qualified, with 60% of the respondents hold a first degree or postgraduate qualification. In contrast, Census 2021 data show that only 31% of UK-born residents hold a Level 4+ qualification, the standard benchmark for degree-level attainment in the UK. This indicates that Hong Kong migrants in Wales as nearly twice as likely as UK-born residents, who are predominantly White, to possess higher

education qualifications., reflecting the well-documented trend of migrants arriving with higher educational attainment than the UK-born population.

*Table 4.4.1: Highest educational qualification held by respondents*

<b>Highest educational qualification</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>University Higher Degree (e.g. MSc, PhD).</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>29.6</b>
<b>First degree level qualification, including foundation degrees, graduate membership of a professional Institute, PGCE / Associate degree</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>30.1</b>
Diploma in higher education / higher diploma	26	14.0
Nursing or other medical qualification not yet mentioned	2	1.1
Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination / A Level / Welsh Baccalaureate / International Baccalaureate / Higher Grade / Advanced Higher (Scotland)	5	2.7
Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination / AS Level / Certificate of sixth year studies / Diploma of Foundation Studies	10	5.4
Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination, Diploma Yi Jin / GCSE O Level/Diploma of Foundation Studies	8	4.3
CSE	11	5.9
Standard / Ordinary (O) Grade / Lower (Scotland)	1	0.5
Other school (including school leaving exam certification or matriculation)	3	1.6
None of the above	9	4.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>100</b>

## **Job Status**

*Table 4.4.2: Job status of respondents*

	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Self-employed	21	11.4
In paid employment (full or part-time)	87	47.0
<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9.7</b>
Retired	25	13.5
Looking after family or home	20	10.8
Full-time student	9	4.9
On government training scheme	1	0.5
Doing something else	4	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>100</b>

Despite the high levels of educational attainment among Hong Kong BN(O) migrants in Wales, unemployment within this group is strikingly high compared to the national and regional averages. Among the 126 economically active respondents, 14% (N=18)

reported being unemployed. This rate is almost three times higher than the UK national unemployment rate of 4.7% in 2025 (ONS, 2025) and well above the Welsh average of 4.1% in August 2025 (StatsWales, 2025). The majority of respondents were in paid work, with 47% employed full-time or part-time and 11.4% self-employed, meaning that 58.4% engaged in remunerated work overall. The next largest categories were retirees (14%) and those “looking after family or home” (11%), indicating a diverse set of economic activities across the sample.

### **Social Class – Occupational attainment and initial profile**

Respondents were asked to provide detailed information about their main job. Their job titles were coded using the official National Statistics Socio-Economic Groups (NS-SEC). The eight-class version (NS-SEC8) includes both the unemployed and the economically inactive, while the five-class version (NS-SEC5) offers broader social class groupings but is restricted to individuals in employment.

Despite the high educational profile of Hong Kong BN(O) migrants in this survey, 60% held a university degree or postgraduate qualification, only 23% were employed in managerial and professional occupations. This disparity indicates a marked incongruence between educational attainment and labour market outcome among this group.

*Table 4.4.3: Social class of respondents*

<b>NS-SEC8</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Hi managerial or professional</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>14.0</b>
<b>Low managerial or professional</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8.6</b>
Intermediate – clerical, sales, services	8	4.3
Small employers, own account workers	18	9.7
Lower supervisory, technical	5	2.7
Semi-routine occupation	7	3.8
Routine occupation	9	4.8
Unemployed, never worked	75	40.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>164</b>	

### **Employed-only profile (NS-SEC5)**

When respondents who were unemployed or economically inactive are excluded, the NS-SEC5 classification provides a clearer indication of the social class profile among those in paid employment. Among participants who were employed and supplied sufficient detail about their main job, 47% were in managerial or professional occupations, with an additional 20% identified as self-employed (own account workers). This distribution suggests a somewhat more favourable labour market position for those actively engaged in work, though still indicative of notable variation within the employed cohort.

### **Skills and occupation mismatch**

A more comprehensive perspective emerges when the analysis is extended to all 98 respondents with information on highest qualification and employment status. Within the degree- and higher degree-holding subgroup, 32% were either unemployed or economically inactive. Among this highly educated group, only 36% were in managerial or professional occupations, with a further 13% engaged in self-employment. Taken together, these results underscore a pronounced mismatch between educational attainment and labour market outcomes, consistent with comparative evidence that highly educated migrants often experience an initial period of occupational downgrading before trajectories stabilise (Friedberg 2000, Dustmann, Glitz and Vogel 2010, Chiswick and Miller 2009).

*Table 4.4.4: Social class of employed respondents*

<b>NS-SEC5</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Managerial or professional	42	47.2
Intermediate – clerical, sales, services	8	9.0
Small employers, own account workers	18	20.2
Lower supervisory, technical	5	5.6
Semi-routine and routine occupation	16	18.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	

## **Sectoral distribution and its implications**

*Table 4.4.5: Industrial sector of work of respondents*

	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Manufacturing	4	4.2
Construction	3	3.2
Wholesale, Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles, Motorcycles	6	6.3
Transportation and Storage	6	6.3
<b>Accommodation and Food Service Activities</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9.5</b>
Information and Communications	4	4.2
Financial and Insurance Activities	2	2.1
Real Estate Activities	2	2.1
<b>Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9.5</b>
Administrative and Support Service Activities	8	8.4
Public Administration, Defence, Compulsory Social Security	5	5.3
<b>Education/Higher Education institute</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13.7</b>
Human Health and Social Work Activities	4	4.2
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	5	5.3
None of the above	8	8.4
Prefer not to say	7	7.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The concentration of working Hong Kong migrants in the Education sector (14%), followed by employment in Accommodation and Food Service sector, and professional,

scientific and technical activities (each at 10%), has several important implications for understanding their labour market incorporation.

The strong presence in Education may indicate that many Hong Kongers are attempting to capitalise on their existing human capital and professional experience, reflecting both high levels of qualification and the partial transferability of pedagogical skills to the UK context (Freidberg 2000). However, these positions may not correspond to previous occupational status, as many migrants frequently enter through lower-grade or paraprofessional roles, suggesting initial occupational downward mobility and underemployment despite sectoral alignment (Dustmann, Glitz and Vogel 2010).

By contrast, the sizeable share working in Accommodation and Food Services highlights a more pronounced pattern of skill underutilisation. Employment in this sector is typically characterised by lower wages, limited career progression, and greater precarity, patterns well-documented among newly arrived migrant groups facing barriers such as non-recognition of qualifications, restricted professional licensing, and discriminatory recruitment practices (Heath and Cheung 2007, OECD 2020). The representation of a highly education cohort in this sector thus points to structural constraints that inhibit full utilisation of their skills.

Meanwhile, the modest proportion employed in Professional, Scientific and Technical activities, despite the high rates of degree holders in the sample, reinforces the persistence of occupational mismatch, a phenomenon widely observed in the early stages of migrant settlement (Chiswick and Miller 2009, Green Atfield and Purcell 2015). Given the knowledge-intensive nature of these industries, the relatively low proportion of Hong Kong migrants securing positions within them suggests that barriers to entry, such as UK-specific work experience requirements or employers' preference for local credentials, continue to shape early labour market outcomes.

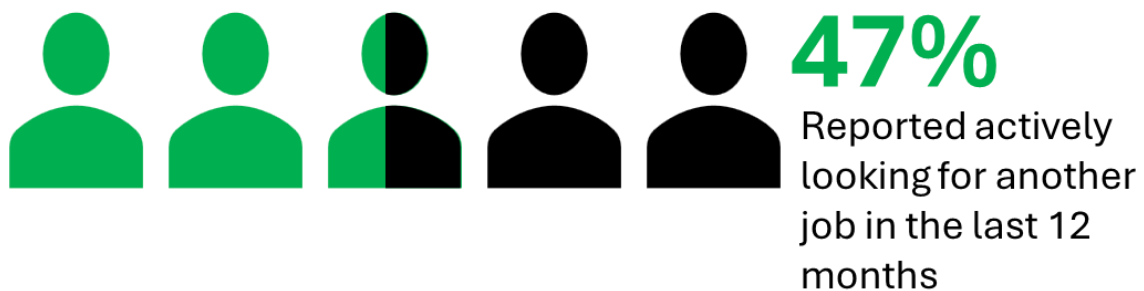
Taken together, these patterns suggest a bifurcated trajectory of labour market incorporation: one pathway facilitating entry into occupations broadly aligned with their qualifications and prior experience, and another directing migrants towards lower-skilled service sectors jobs that contribute to underemployment and downward mobility. Such segmentation is consistent with international evidence on migrant occupational trajectories and underscores the challenges Hong Kong BN(O) migrants face in translating educational capital into commensurate labour market returns (Engzell and Ichou 2020, Heath and Li 2008).

### **Job search, dissatisfaction and constrained mobility**

Despite being currently employed 47% of participants reported active job search within the previous 12 months, and 45% indicated difficulties getting a job commensurate with their skills and prior experience. Such continued job search among the employed is a classic marker of underemployment and perceived mismatch. It aligns with evidence that credential portability, non-recognition of qualifications, and the limited transferability of professional experience can constrain early mobility and depress returns to education for migrants (Friedberg, 2000; Chiswick & Miller, 2009). The findings

thus suggest that, while the BN(O) route facilitates lawful entry and residence, it does not automatically translate into commensurate occupational placement; rather, many respondents appear to navigate a transitional period marked by over-qualification and efforts to re-align employment with their human capital (Dustmann, Glitz & Vogel, 2010; Green, Atfield & Purcell, 2015).

Figure 4.4.1: Respondents actively looking for another job



### Barriers to Employment

Barriers to securing suitable employment were widespread. Among those who had actively sought new work in the previous 12 months, despite already being employed, 10% (n = 19) reported being turned down for a job following an interview or assessment. Respondents attributed these unsuccessful applications to perceived discrimination based on ethnicity (n = 6), language or accent (n = 5), nationality (n = 4), age (n = 3), and health or disability (n = 1). Such reported experiences echo well-established findings on ethnic penalties and employer bias affecting minority and migrant applicants in the UK labour market (Heath & Cheung, 2007; Heath & Li, 2008). Linguistic or accent-based discrimination is also consistent with sociolinguistic research demonstrating the role of raciolinguistic ideologies in shaping employer perceptions of competence and “fit” (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Zimman, 2020).

Respondents also reported structural barriers related to labour-market integration. English-language difficulties were identified by 20% (n = 38), aligning with evidence that linguistic proficiency significantly affects access to skilled employment and wage returns (Dustmann & Fabbri, 2003; Chiswick & Miller, 2009). Lack of local knowledge around “how things work” in the UK was cited by 18% (n = 33), while 16% (n = 30) noted an absence of local professional networks—factors shown to limit job-matching efficiency and constrain migrant mobility (Lancee, 2010; Ryan et al., 2008). Additionally, 14% (n = 26) felt that employers failed to recognise or understand their foreign qualifications. This aligns with research demonstrating that human capital acquired abroad often suffers from limited transferability, leading to underemployment among highly skilled migrants (Friedberg, 2000). Collectively, these barriers reflect the interplay of discrimination, credential non-recognition, language constraints, and weakened social capital, common

features of early migrant settlement (Engzell & Ichou, 2020; Green, Atfield & Purcell, 2015).

Figure 4.4.2: Reasons for not getting job to fit skills and experience



### Employment in the Public and Third Sectors

Table 4.4.6: Type of non-private organisation

	Total	%
A public company	1	2.8
A nationalised industry / state corporation	1	2.8
<b>Central government or civil service</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16.7</b>
<b>Local government or council (police, fire service, local authority schools / colleges)</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>19.4</b>
<b>A university of other grant funded education establishment (including opt-out schools)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13.9</b>
<b>A health authority or NHS trust</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>19.4</b>
A charity, voluntary organisation or trust	3	8.3
Some other kind of organisation	6	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Among the 108 primary respondents who were self-employed or working as full- or part-time employees, only 36 reported working for non-private organisations. Those employed outside the private sector appeared to hold comparatively advantageous positions: 19% were working in local government, councils or health authorities; 17% in central government or the civil service; and 14% in universities. Such roles are typically characterised as “good jobs”, offering greater employment stability, clearer promotion pathways, and stronger workplace protections. Public-sector and university recruitment processes also tend to be more regulated and transparent, potentially reducing exposure to discriminatory gatekeeping (Heath & Cheung, 2007). However, the relatively small proportion accessing these sectors reinforces earlier evidence of constrained mobility and the challenges Hong Kong BN(O) migrants face entering credential-sensitive or regulated occupations, where UK-recognised qualifications and local experience are particularly important (Friedberg, 2000; Chiswick & Miller, 2009).

Across all indicators, Hong Kong BN(O) migrants exhibit clear patterns of underemployment and occupational mismatch despite high educational attainment. Sectoral sorting, substantial proportions of degree-holders outside employment, continued job search among those already employed, and widespread perceptions of discrimination all point to structural constraints on labour-market mobility. These findings align closely with international research demonstrating that early settlement stages are marked by limited returns to foreign-acquired human capital, barriers to credential recognition, and the need to accumulate host-country experience and networks before achieving occupational alignment (Engzell & Ichou, 2020; Green, Atfield & Purcell, 2015). Together, the results underscore the importance of institutional recognition, targeted support, and inclusive labour-market practices to enable skilled migrants to realise their full potential within the UK economy.

#### 4.5 Language Skills and Classes

Just over 80% of participants reported no difficulty speaking English during everyday activities such as shopping or using public transport. The remaining 19% did experience difficulties: 35% found speaking English ‘a little difficult’, 38% ‘fairly difficult’, 17% ‘very difficult’ and 10% reported being unable to speak English at all.

Participants who reported difficulties speaking English in daily interactions were subsequently asked about using English on the telephone. All reported having difficulty in this context. Among them, 42% found telephone communication ‘fairly difficult’, 46% ‘very difficult’, and 12% ‘a little difficult’.

Over 75% of the sample reported no difficulty reading formal letters or documents in English. Among the 23% who did experience difficulties, 3 people (9%) stated that they could not read English at all, 29% found it ‘very difficult’, 14% ‘fairly difficult’ and 49% ‘a little difficult’. Those with difficulties reading formal documents were asked whether they struggled with completing official forms in English. Two-thirds (66%) reported difficulty with this task: almost a quarter found it ‘very difficult’, while 38% found it ‘a little difficult’ and a further 38% ‘fairly difficult’.

Figure 4.5.1: English language skills of respondents

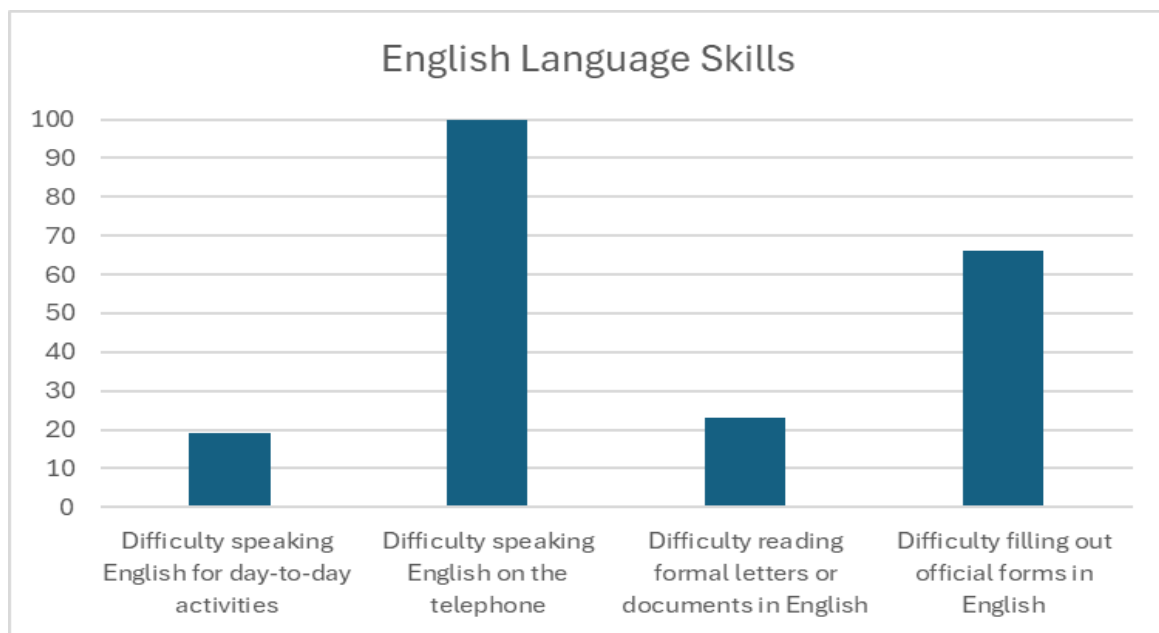
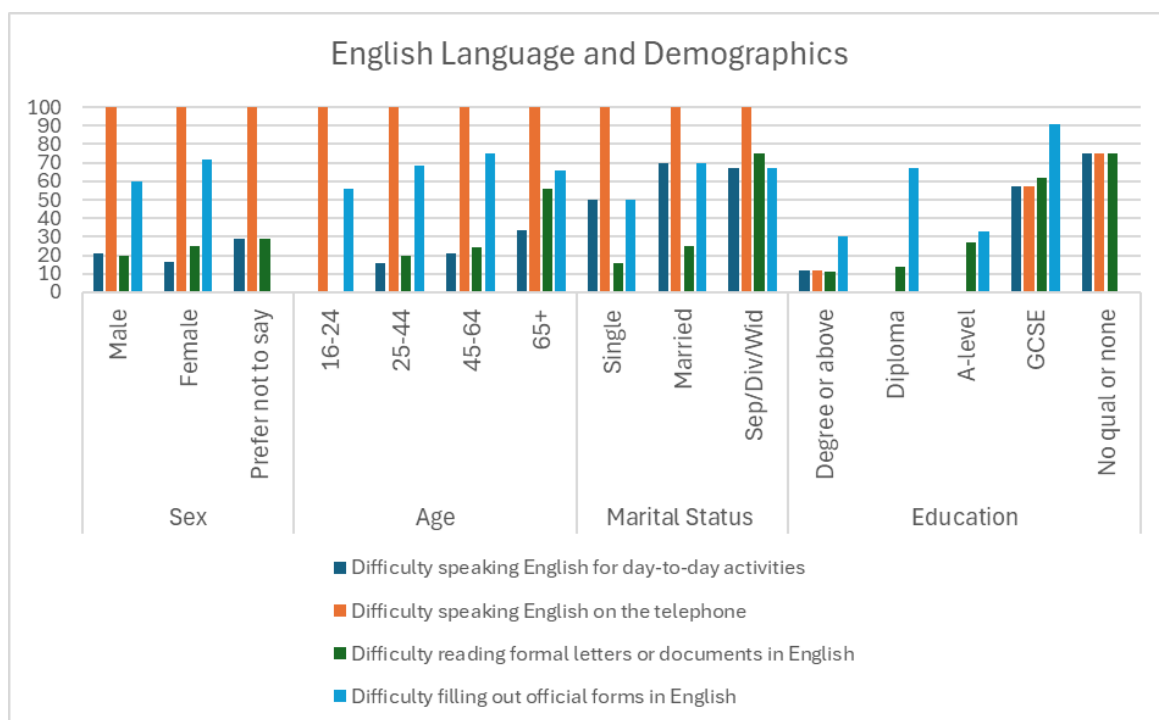


Figure 4.5.2: English language skills with demographics

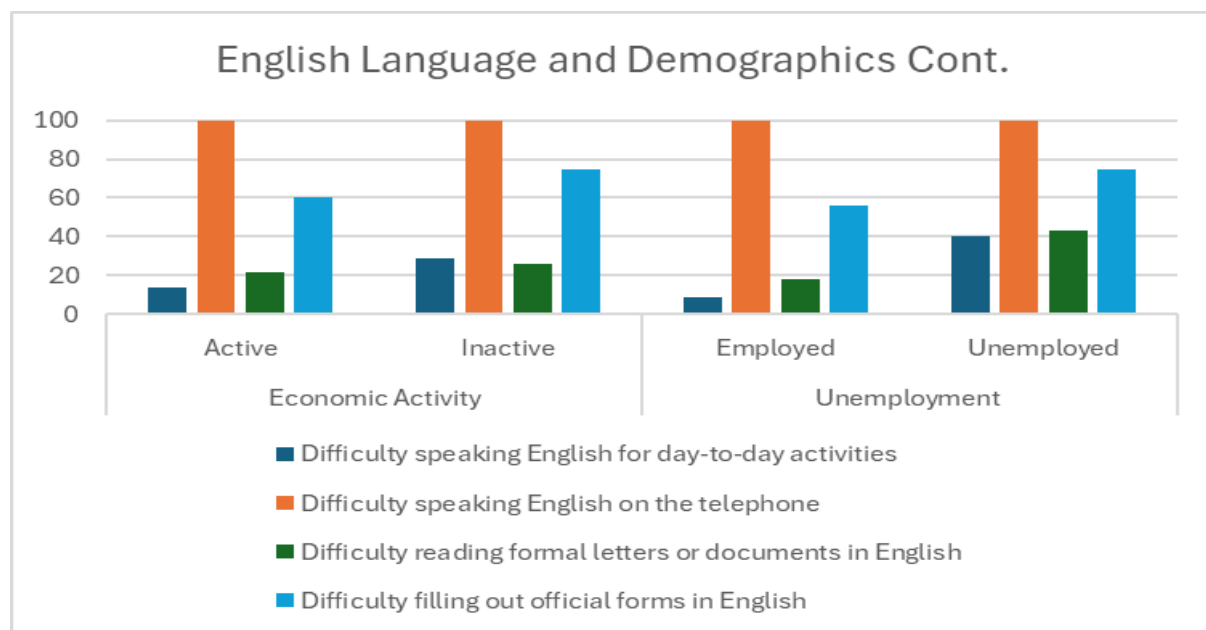


Once disaggregated by demographics, men were slightly more likely than women to report difficulty speaking English in daily interactions (21% vs. 17%), while women more likely to report difficulty with reading formal documents or letters in (25% vs. 20%). Generally, younger respondents reported fewer challenges: none of those aged 16-24 experienced difficulties speaking English or reading formal letters or documents.

Compared with 33% and 56% respectively among respondents aged 65 and over. Higher qualifications were associated with fewer reported language difficulties across tasks.

All participants who had difficulty speaking English for everyday interactions also reported difficulty speaking on the telephone, regardless of sex, age, or marital status. Meanwhile, those with no qualifications were the most likely to report telephone-based difficulties (75%). Among participants who experienced difficulty reading formal letters or documents, 66% also found completing official forms challenging. Women were slightly more likely than men to report difficulties completing forms (71% vs. 60%). Reported difficulty was lowest the 16-24 age group (56%) and highest among those aged 45-64 (75%). Single respondents were least likely to report difficulty (50%) compared with those who were married or in a civil partnership (70%) and those separated, divorced or widowed (67%). Educational differences were substantial: 91% of those with no qualifications reported difficulty completing official forms compared with only 30% of respondents with a degree or higher.

Figure 4.5.3: English language skills with demographics continued



In terms of economic activity, economically active participants reported fewer English language difficulties across all scenarios, and those in employment were similarly less likely to experience problems using English. Among participants who reported difficulty speaking English in day-to-day situations, all also reported difficulty speaking English on the telephone, regardless of economic or employment status. Participants who had difficulty reading formal letters or documents were asked if they struggled filling out official forms. Difficulties were more common among economically inactive respondents (75% vs. 60%), and similarly among those who were unemployed (75% vs. 56%).

Respondents who experienced any form of English language difficulty, whether speaking in daily interactions, speaking on the telephone, reading formal letters or documents, or completing official forms, were asked what steps were taken to improve their English

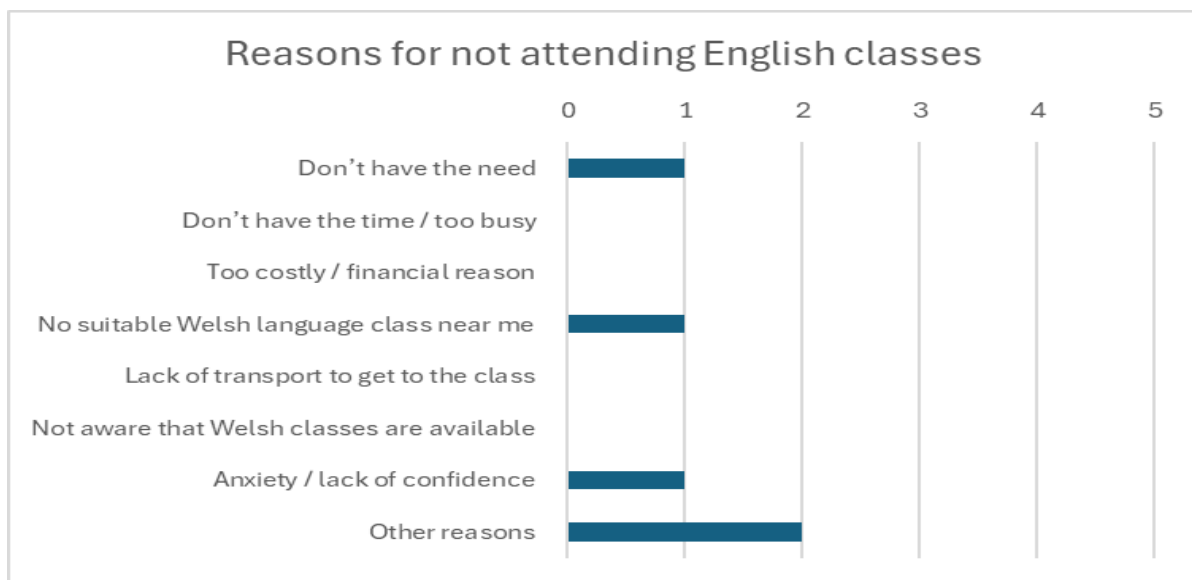
since arriving in the UK. Multiple responses were allowed. Twenty-six participants reported attending an English class or course, either in-person or online. A similar number (22) reported using online resources such as apps, videos, and only nine had attended an informal conversation group.

Table 4.5.1: What respondents have done to try to improve their English

	Total	%
<b>Yes – attended a class or course (in person or online)</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>14</b>
Yes – attended informal group or chat session	9	4.8
<b>Yes – used an app, video or other online resource</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>11.8</b>
No	4	2.2

Four participants reported that they had not taken any steps to improve their English since arriving in the UK. The reasons given included *not feeling the need to improve* (1), *lack of suitable English class nearby* (1), and *anxiety or lack of confidence* (1). Two additional participants selected *Other reasons* for not attending an English class.

Figure 4.5.4: Reasons for not attending English classes



### Welsh Language Skills and Classes

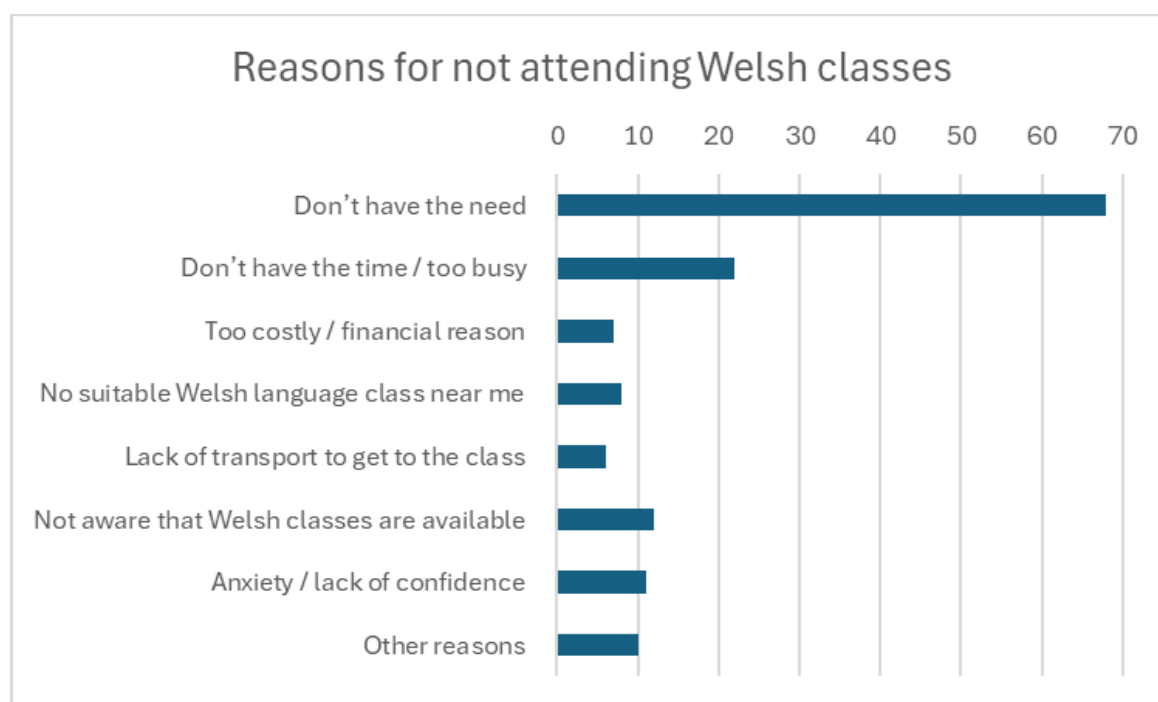
Fewer than 2% of respondents reported that Welsh as their first language, with almost all others responding “No” to this question. Just over half of the sample (55%) said that they had not taken any steps to improve their Welsh since arriving in the UK. Although most were not actively learning Welsh, almost a quarter reported using an app, video or other online resources to do so.

Table 4.5.2: What respondents have done to try to improve their Welsh

	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes – attended a class or course (in person or online)	15	8.1
Yes – attended informal group or chat session	4	2.2
<b>Yes – used an app, video or other online resource</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>23.7</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>55.4</b>

Participants could select multiple reasons for not trying to improve their Welsh. The most common reason, cited by 68 respondents, was not having a need to learn the language. Other reasons included being too busy (22), unaware of available Welsh classes (12), lack of confidence (11), no suitable classes nearby (8), financial barriers (7), lack of transport (6). Two participants selected “Other”.

Figure 4.5.5: Reasons for not attending Welsh classes



While Welsh is not a commonly spoken language among Hong Kong migrants, it could still play a meaningful role in the wider integration landscape in Wales. The Welsh Government’s *Migrant Integration Framework* emphasises integration as a two-way process, highlighting that both English and Welsh can support fuller participation in social and civic life (Welsh Government 2024). Research further notes that the Welsh language is increasingly viewed as a resource for inclusion, helping to foster belonging and a welcoming environment for newcomers when introduced through supportive and culturally sensitive approaches (Lewis et al. 2023). The findings that many migrants perceive limited practical need to learn Welsh is consistent with existing research in that

uptake of minority language depends on migrants' awareness of opportunities, perceived usefulness, and accessibility of learning pathways.

## 4.6 Health Status and Concerns

When asked to describe their health in general, the majority (37%) reported fair (Table 4.6.1). 32% described their health being good and 23% of the respondents said their health were excellent or very good. Only 7% of respondents considered their general health to be poor.

*Table 4.6.1: Self-reported general health status*

	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Excellent	6	4.3
Very good	26	18.7
<b>Good</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>32.4</b>
<b>Fair</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>36.7</b>
Poor	9	6.5
Prefer not to say	2	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>100</b>

When broken down by demographics (Figure 4.6.1), there is a significant gender difference. While 11% of men reported excellent health, no women said their health was excellent. 51% of women reported fair to poor health as opposed to 32% of men. In terms of age difference, as expected, younger respondents tend to be more likely to report very good health compared to older age groups. While general health status does not appear to vary much between single and married respondents, a higher proportion of those who were divorced, separated or widowed reported fair and poor health. See Table A1 in the Appendix for detailed percentages. A higher proportion of respondents with a degree or above qualification also reported very good health compared to those who were less qualified. By contrast, economic inactivity or unemployment does not appear to be associated with general health status.

Figure 4.6.1: General health status by demographics

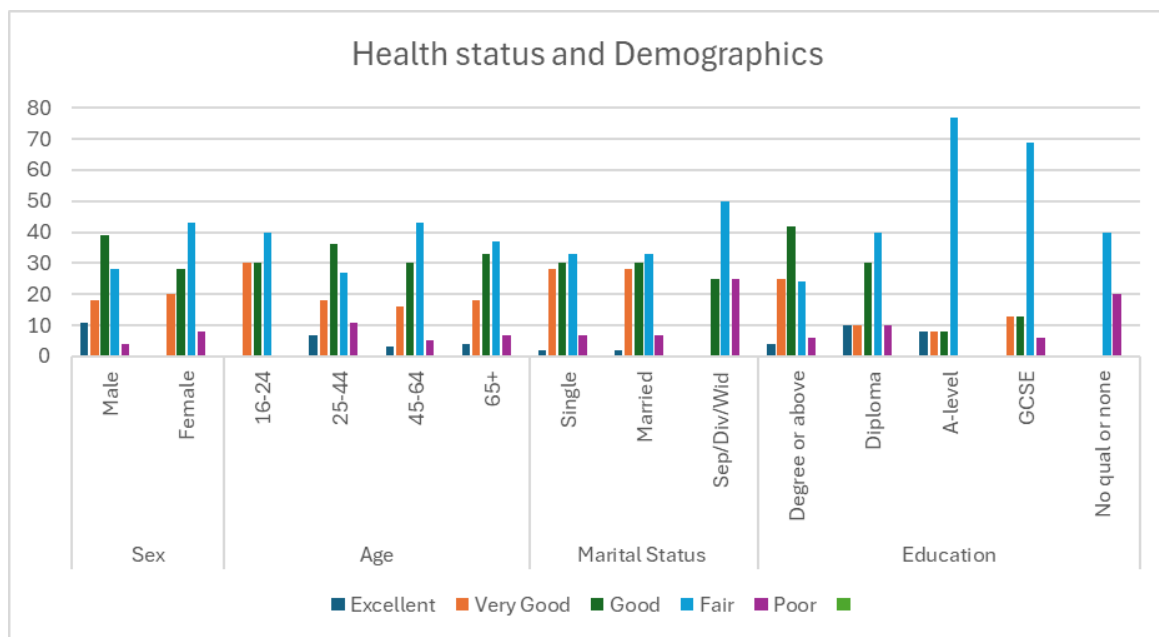
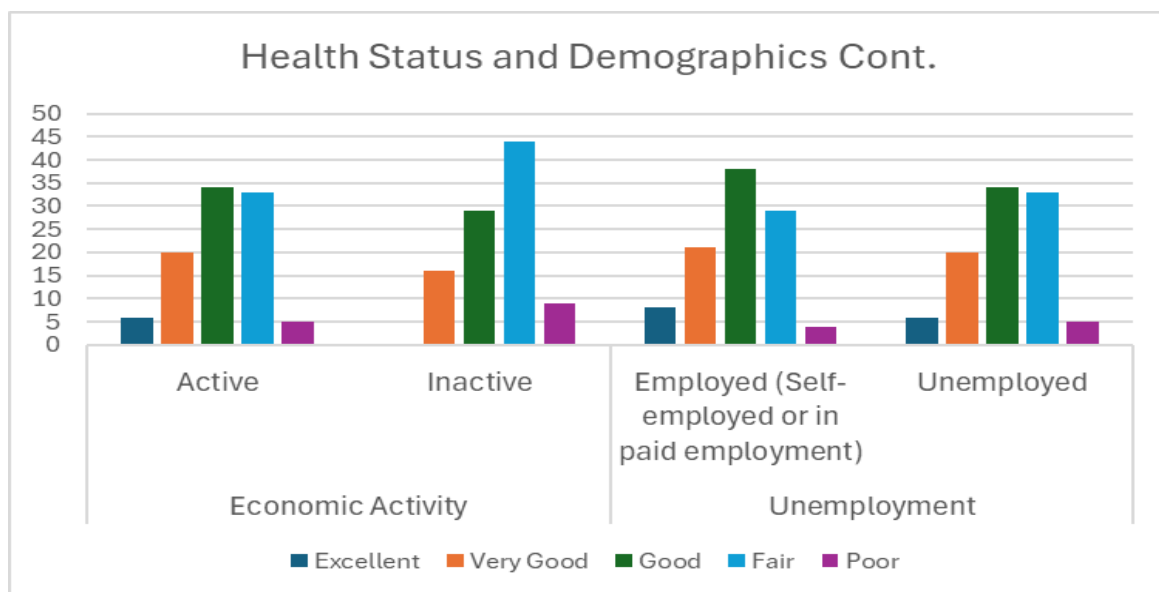


Figure 4.6.2: General health status by economic activity and employment



When asked if they had limiting health conditions for moderate activities (e.g. moving a table, pushing vacuum cleaners, bowling or golf), 77% reported not limited at all and 81% said the same for climbing several flights of stairs. As for physical health and daily activities, only 15% reported they accomplished less “some of the time” in the past 4 weeks because of their physical health.

*Table 4.6.2: Limiting health conditions for moderate activities*

	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes, limited a lot	5	3.6
Yes, limited a little	22	15.9
No, not limited at all	106	76.8
Prefer not to say	5	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100</b>

*Table 4.6.3: Limiting health conditions for climbing several flights of stairs*

	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes, limited a lot	3	2.2
Yes, limited a little	19	14.2
No, not limited at all	109	81.3
Prefer not to say	3	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>100</b>

*Table 4.6.4: Physical health and daily activities*

	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
All of the time	2	1.4
Most of the time	6	4.3
Some of the time	20	14.5
A little of the time	51	37.0
None of the time	56	40.6
Prefer not to say	3	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure 4.6.3: Accomplished less because of physical health and demographics

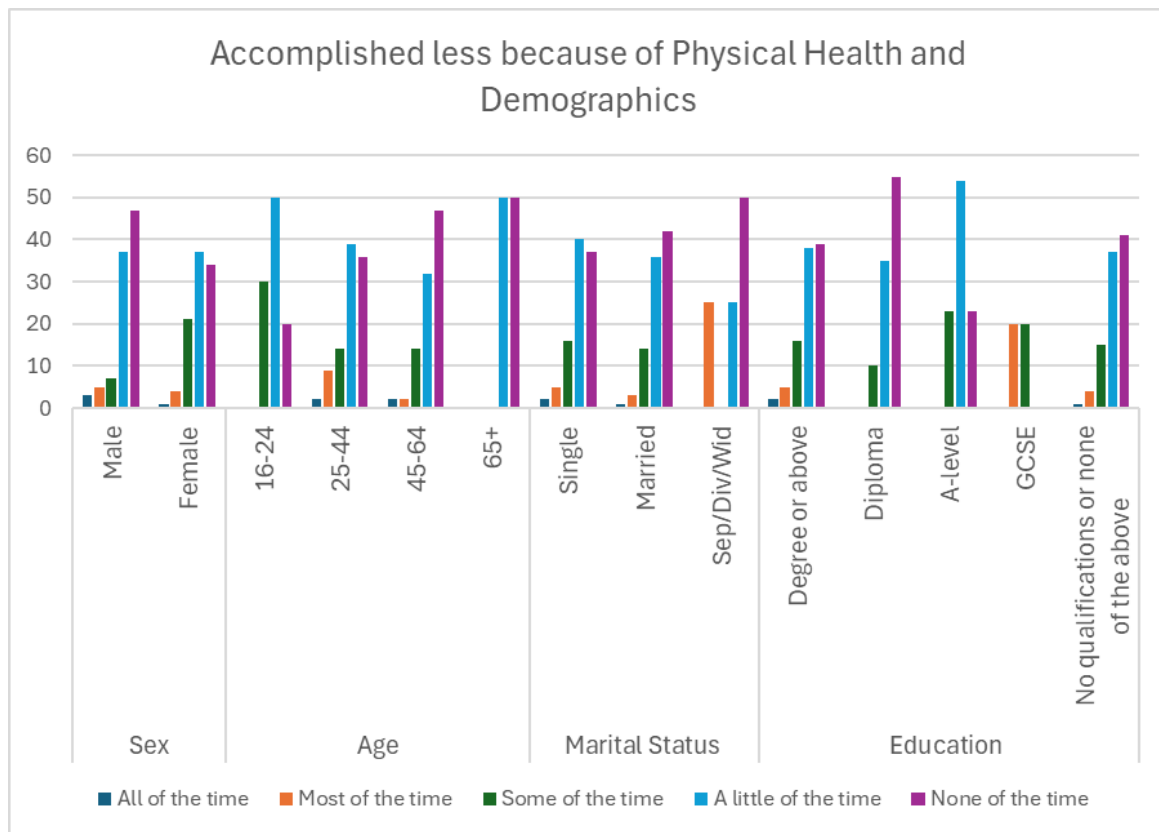
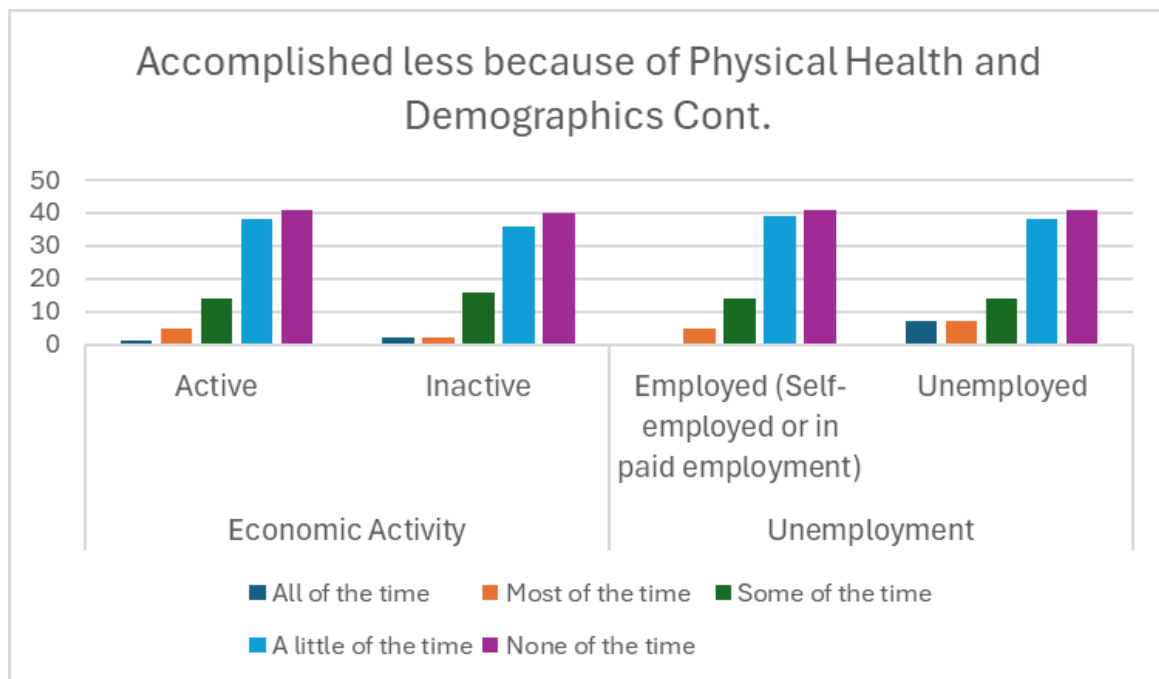


Figure 4.6.4: Accomplished less because of physical health with economic status and employment



When asked about emotional problems and daily activities, 20% of respondents reported they accomplished less “some of the time” during the past 4 weeks because of emotional problems such as feeling depressed or anxious.

Table 4.6.5: Emotional problems and daily activities

	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
All of the time	2	1.4
Most of the time	9	6.5
Some of the time	28	20.3
A little of the time	46	33.3
None of the time	51	37.0
Prefer not to say	2	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100</b>

When broken down by demographics, there is no discernible gender variation, nor the results differ by economic activity and employment status. By contrast, a significantly age difference can be seen (Figure 4.6.5 and Table A3). 20% of the younger age group (16-24) reported emotional problems “most of the time” and a further 40% said “some of the time”. The fact that younger Hong Kongers reported higher levels of emotional or mental health issues is perhaps not surprising. A growing body of evidence indicates that the 2019 crackdown of pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong generated a population-level mental-health burden, with sharp rises in symptoms of post-traumatic stress and depression across adults, and especially among Gen Z (18-27) who experience the highest levels of stress, anxiety and PTSD, despite having fewer lifetime traumatic events compared to older generations (HKSJU 2025). A large prospective cohort study in *The Lancet* (Ni *et al.* 2020) also found that the 2019–2020 unrest produced population-wide increases in PTSD and depression, with younger groups among those most affected. It is plausible that a portion of Hong Kong BN(O) arrivals in Wales, particularly younger adults, may carry trauma-related symptoms post-migration, shaping their health, service use and overall integration.

Respondents with no qualifications also reported higher frequencies of experiencing emotional problems, a pattern that aligns with broader evidence linking low educational attainment to poor mental health. Research from Hong Kong (Sharif and Wenjin 2024) shows that individuals with lower education levels face significantly greater barriers to help-seeking, higher-levels of anxiety and depression, and reduced ability to navigate mental health systems, making them more vulnerable to persistent emotional distress.

Figure 4.6.5: Accomplished less because of emotional problems by demographics

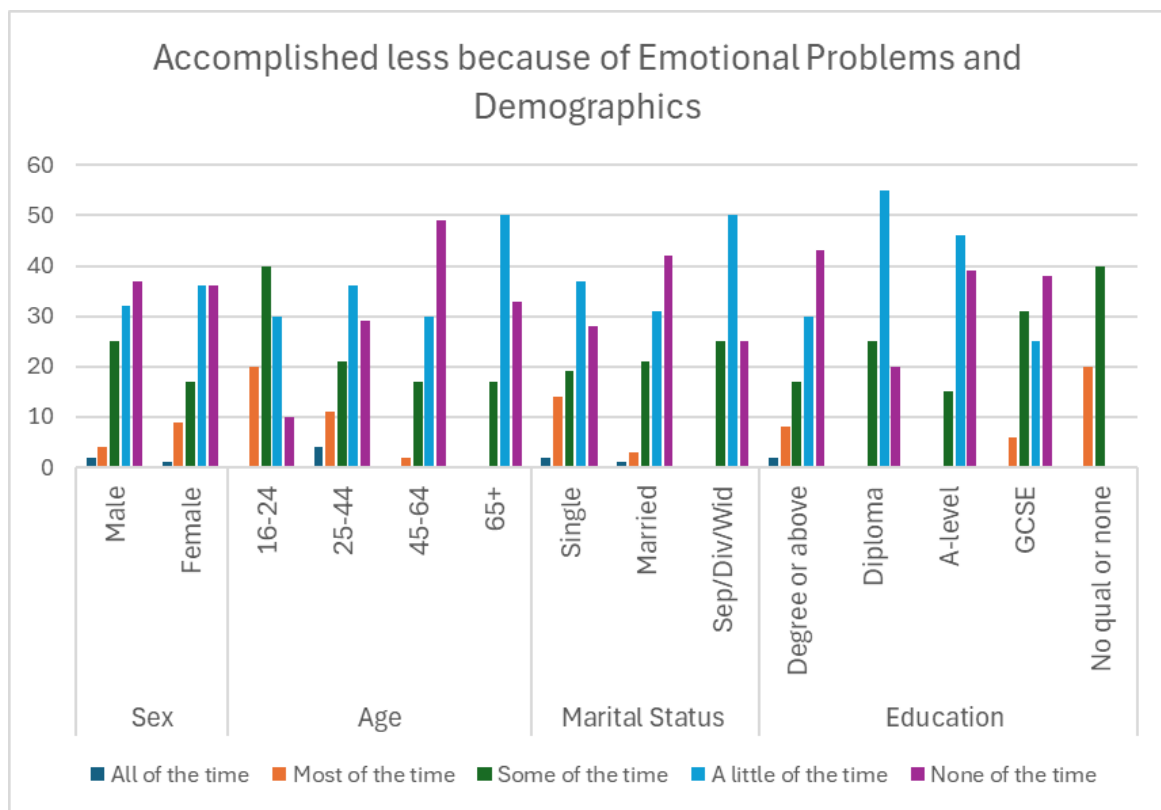
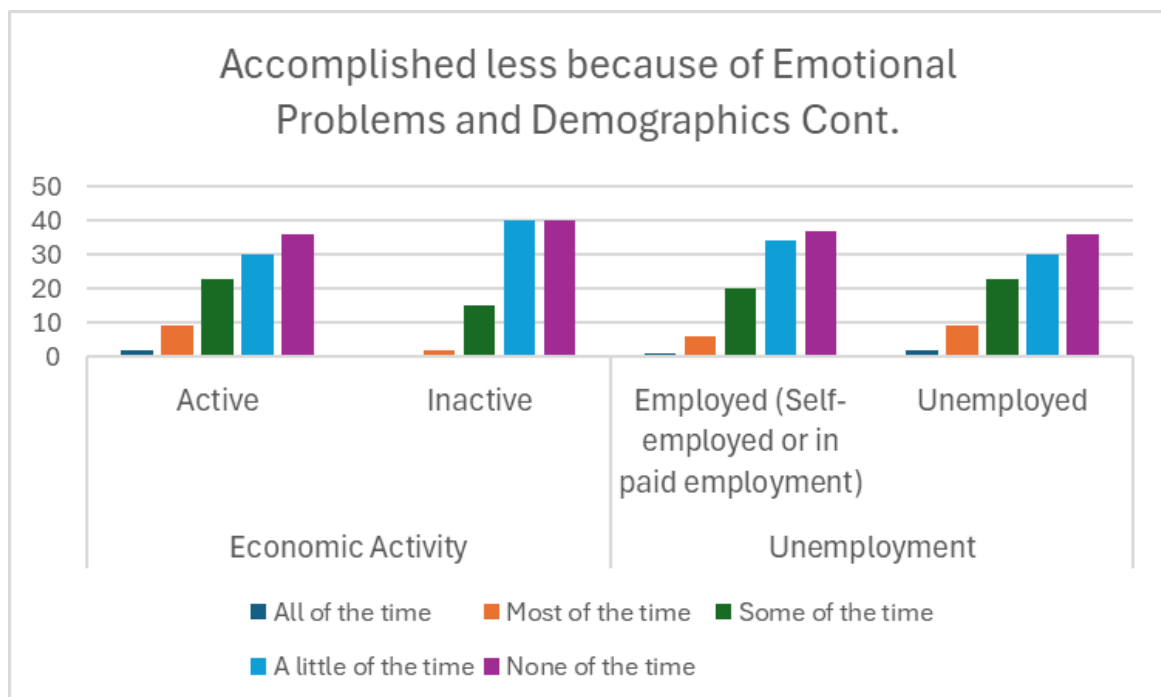


Figure 4.6.6: Accomplished less because of emotional problems by economic activity and employment



*Table 4.6.6: Feeling downhearted and depressed*

	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
All of the time	4	2.9
Most of the time	9	6.6
Some of the time	37	27.0
A little of the time	53	38.7
None of the time	31	22.6
Prefer not to say	3	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100</b>

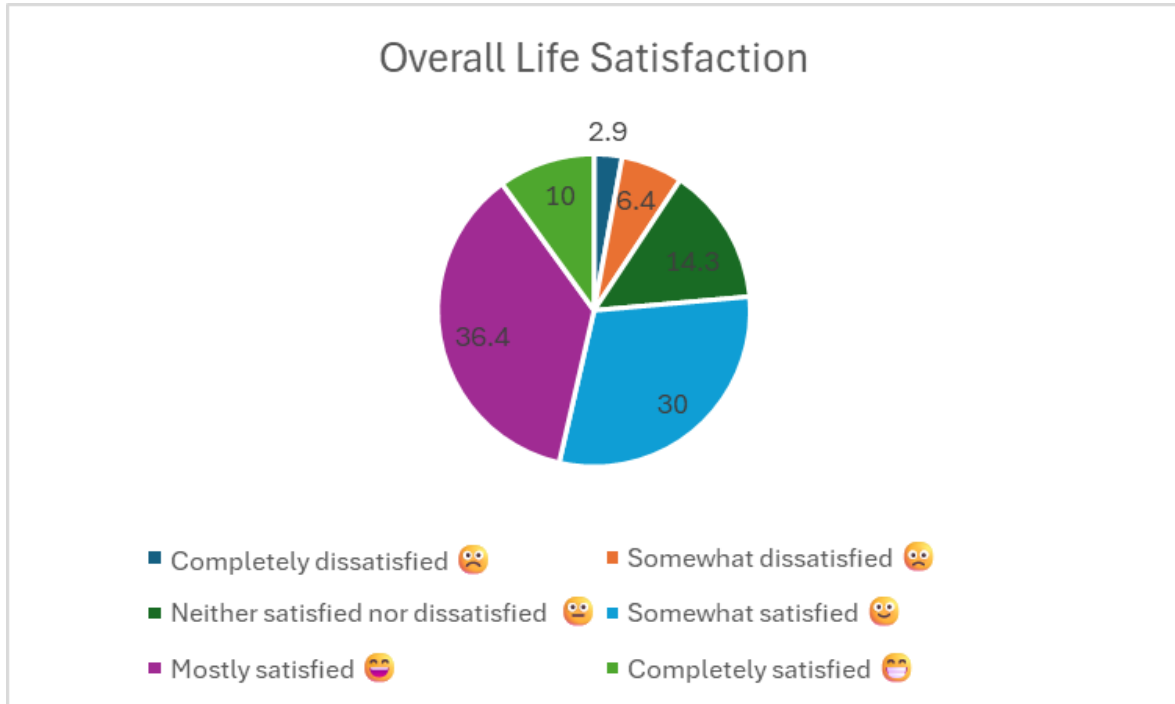
For long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness or disability, 17% of respondents reported such as condition over a period of 12 months. This is notably lower than the average in Wales (21%) or the UK (25%) (House of Commons Library 2025, ONS 2023). This finding aligns with what is known as the “healthy migrant effect”. UK migrants are substantially less likely to report long-term health problems compared to the UK born population (Migration Observatory 2020, Garrington 2025). Besides, BN(O) migrants are considerably more highly educated than UK-born and other migrant groups (Chan 2025). Higher educated is consistently associated with better long-term health outcomes and lower disability prevalence across epidemiological studies. Additionally, migration scholarship shows that international migrants are a self-selected population, skewed toward those with better underlying health, financial resources, and the physical capacity to relocate (Ferrara et al., 2025). These selection processes are consistent with the BN(O) visa route, which requires migrants to be self-sufficient without access to state benefits (i.e. No Recourse to Public Fund).

*Table 4.6.7: Long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness or disability*

	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	24	17.4
No	110	79.7
Prefer not to say	4	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100</b>

## 4.7 Life Satisfaction and Access to Services

Figure 4.7.1: Overall life satisfaction of respondents



When asked about their overall life satisfaction, 36% of participants reported being mostly satisfied, 30% were somewhat satisfied and 10% were completely satisfied. Fewer than 10% reported being dissatisfied, with 3% completely and 6% somewhat dissatisfied, while 14% felt neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Mean life satisfaction scores were also calculated across demographic groups, with higher scores indicating greater satisfaction. Men reported slightly higher life satisfaction than women, and older participants tended to report higher satisfaction levels than younger respondents. This pattern is consistent with research showing that life satisfaction tends to increase with age among migrant populations (Baykara-Krumme and Platt 2016). No clear pattern between educational level and life satisfaction. In terms of economic activity, both economically active and inactive respondents recorded the same mean satisfaction scores (5.2). However, unemployed participants reported lower life satisfaction (4.6) compared to those who were employed (5.2), a finding that mirrors wider evidence linking employment to improved integration outcomes and wellbeing among migrants (Welsh Government 2024; Lewis et al. 2023).

Figure 4.7.2: Mean score of overall life satisfaction with demographics

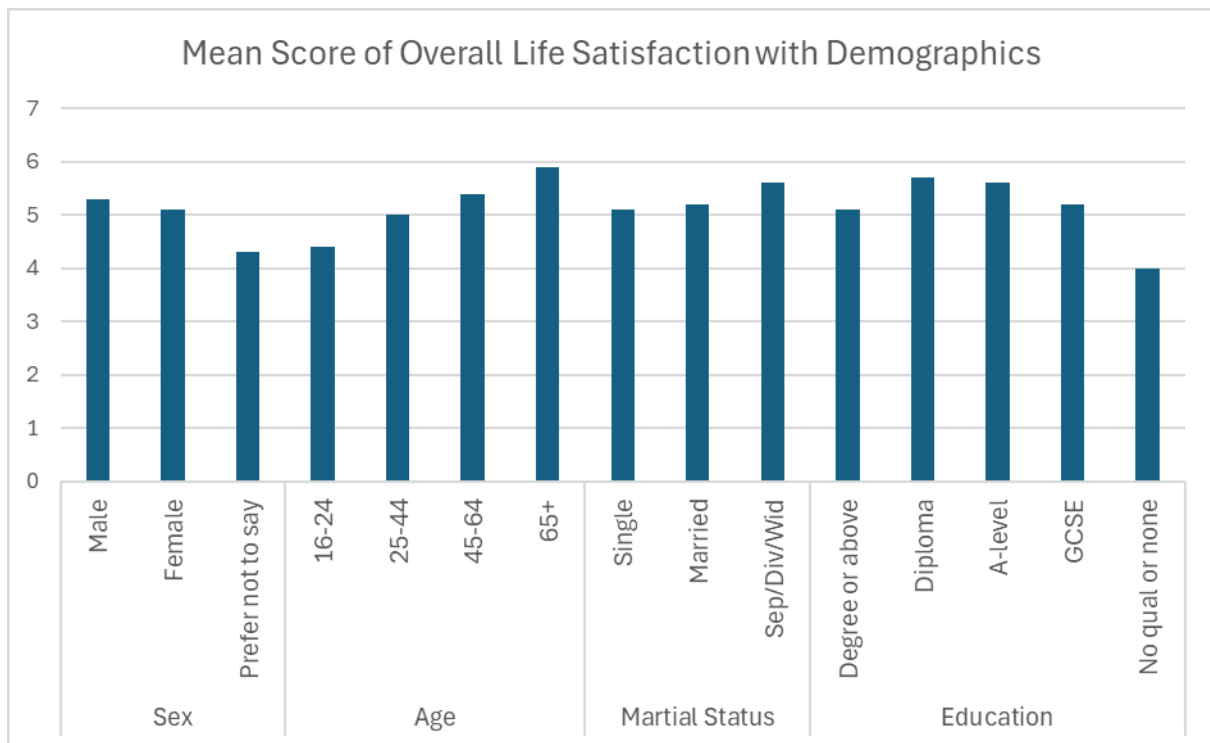
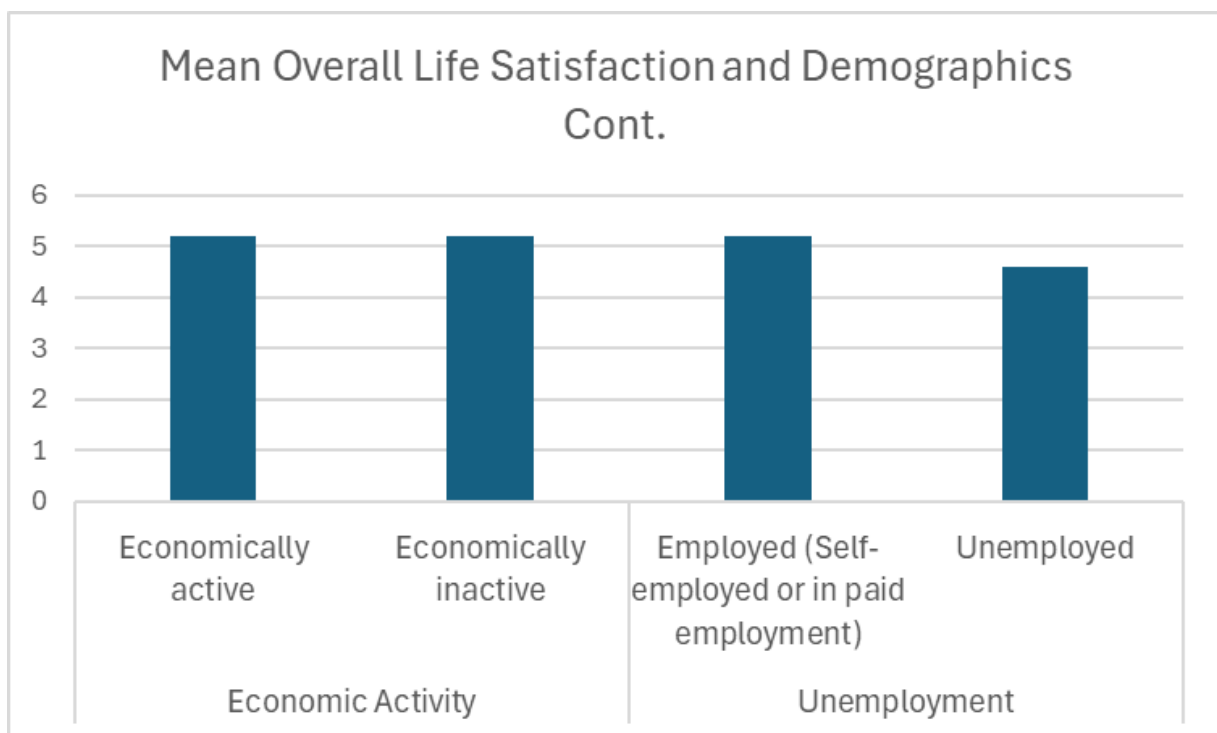


Figure 4.7.3: Mean overall life satisfaction with economic activity and employment

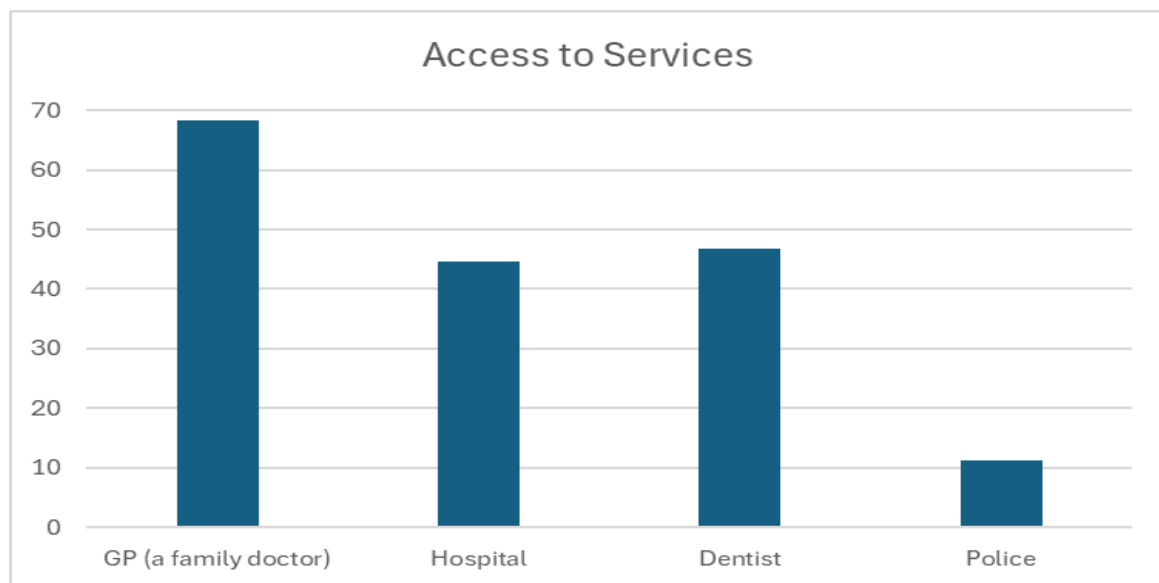


### Access to Services

Access to public services is a key indicator of migrant integration, reflecting the extent which newcomers can engage with essential health, education, safety, and community

support systems. Participants were asked which public services they had used since arriving in the UK, with the option to select multiple answers. The majority, 68% (127) had used a GP (family doctor), reflecting the central role of primary care in supporting newcomers' health needs. Almost half (87) had used the dentist and 45% (83) had attended a hospital, indicating moderate engagement with secondary healthcare. A smaller proportion, just over 10% (21) had used the police as a public service. Notably, 7% (13) had not used any of the listed public services. This pattern of service use aligns with wider evidence showing that healthcare services are typically the first and most frequent point of contact for migrants, while engagement with other services varies depending on need, awareness, and accessibility (Welsh Government 2024).

Figure 4.7.4: Access to services



When looking at who had accessed these services, the findings showed that similar proportions of male and female respondents reported accessing a GP (family doctor), hospital, dentist and police since arriving in the UK. Older respondents were less likely to report accessing a GP (family doctor), hospital or dentist since arriving in the UK, compared to their younger counterparts. For instance, 83% of those aged 16-24 had accessed a GP (family doctor), compared to 60% of those aged 65 and over. Respondents who were married or in a registered civil partnership were most likely to report accessing services since arriving in the UK, except for the GP (a family doctor) and the police which were accessed with most frequency by those who reported being separated / divorced / widowed and single and never married respectively. Approximately, 80% of those who were separated / divorced / widowed reported using the GP (a family doctor) since arriving in the UK and almost a quarter of those who reported being single and never married or never in a legally recognised civil partnership reported accessing the police since arriving in the UK.

None of the participants who were separated / divorced/ widowed had not accessed the dentist or police since arriving in the UK. No participants with A-level qualifications or equivalent reported using the police service since arriving in the UK. When looking at

economic activity, those participants who were economically active were more likely to have reported accessing the police (13%) since arriving in the UK compared to those who were economically inactive (7% respectively). However, those who were economically inactive reported accessing the GP (a family doctor) with greater frequency (74%) compared to those who were economically active (65%). Access to services since arriving in the UK was similar between those who reported being employed and those who reported being unemployed, although more participants in employment (14%) reported accessing the police since arriving in the UK compared to those who reported being unemployed (7%)

Figure 4.7.5: Access to services with demographics

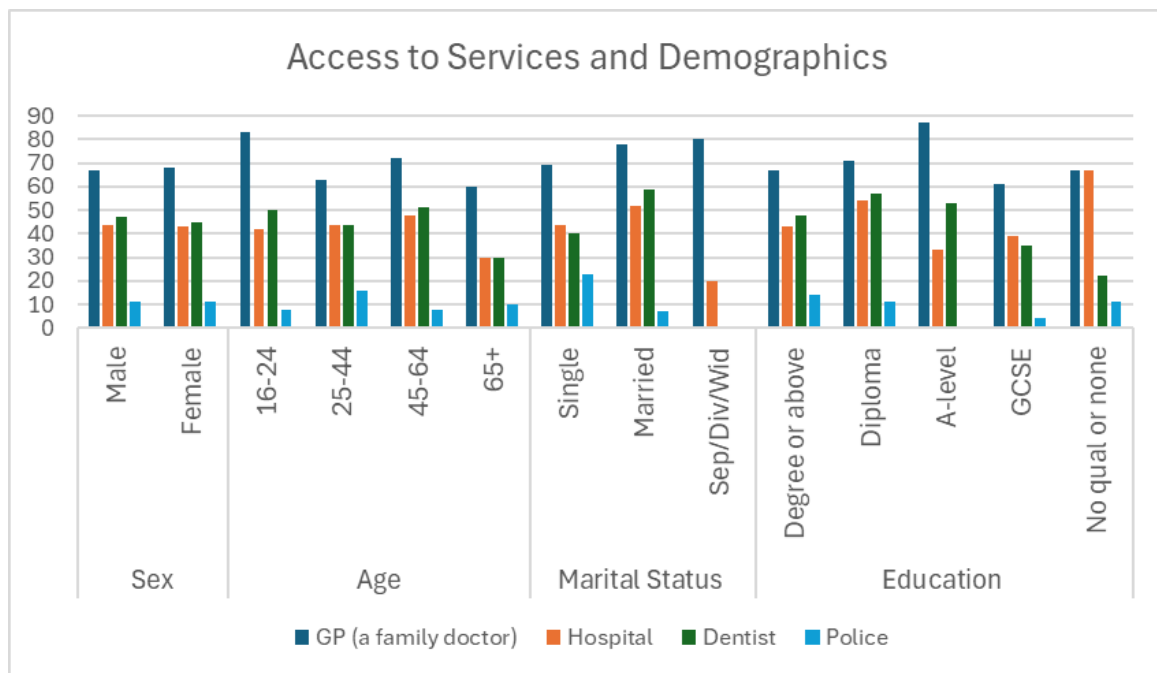
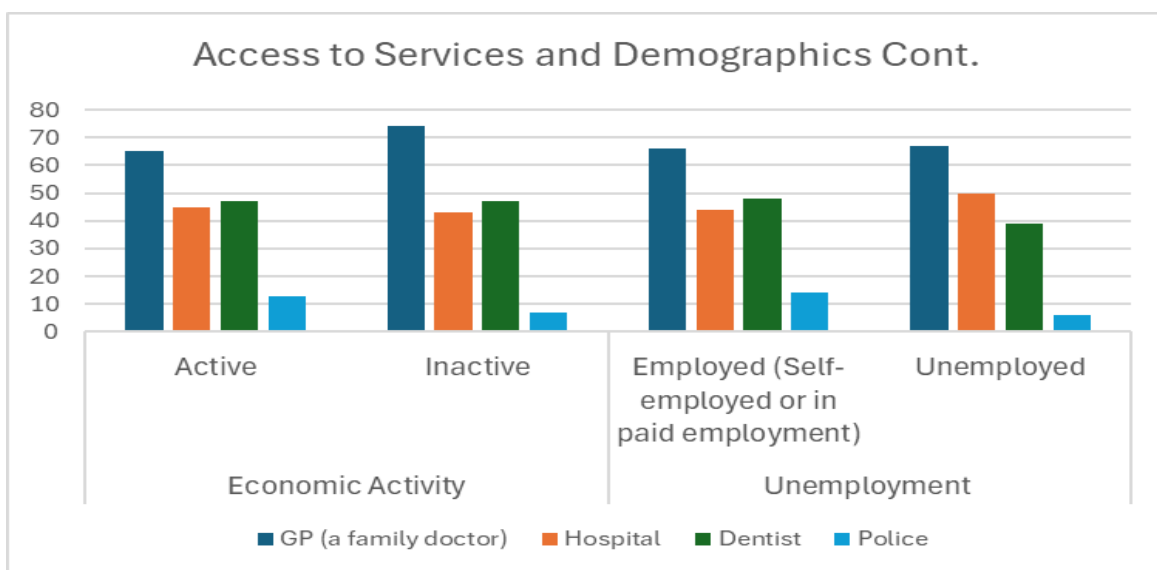
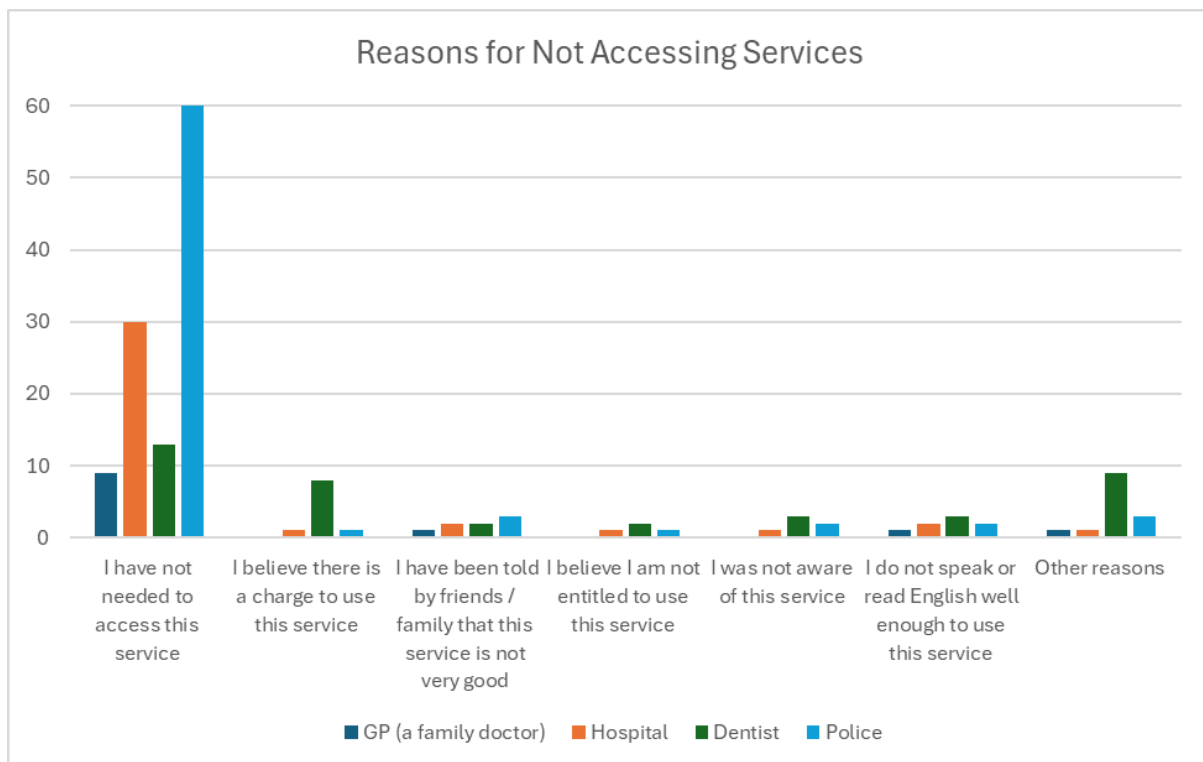


Figure 4.7.6: Access to services with economic status and employment



Of those who had not accessed the GP (a family doctor), most (9%) reported that this was because they did not need to access the service. Likewise, the most common reason for not using the hospital, dentist or police was because participants did not need access to the service. English language skills also seemed to be a barrier to using public services. 1% reported that they do not speak or read English well enough to access the GP, 2% stated this as a reason for not visiting the hospital, 3% for not using the dentist and 2% for not using the police as a public service. The influence of friends/family seemed to determine whether some participants used public services. 2% did not use the hospital as they had been told by friends/family that it was not a very good service, likewise 2% reported not using the dentist for the same reason. 3% did not use the public service as a public service because they had been told by friends/family that it was not a very good service.

Figure 4.7.7: Reasons for not accessing services



Most respondents were able to access all services such as healthcare, food shops or learning facilities which they needed to.

Figure 4.7.8: Able to access services needed

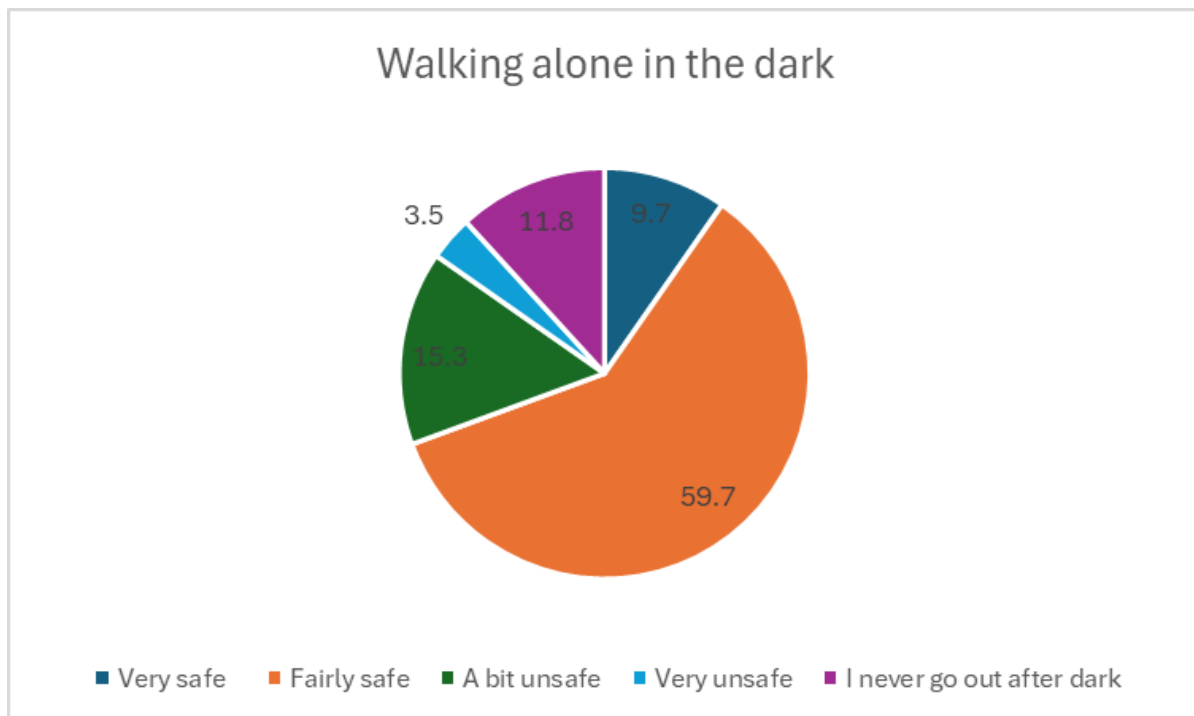


Those participants who did not feel they were able to access all of the services which they needed to, were asked to indicate all of the reasons which prevented them accessing them. 8% (15) cited difficulties getting an appointment, 5% (9) reported that public transport was infrequent or unreliable and 4% (7) said that they did not have access to a car as either a driver or a passenger.

#### 4.8 Fear of Crime

The majority of participants (60%) reported that they feel fairly safe walking alone at night. A further 10% said that they felt very safe. 15% said they felt a bit unsafe walking alone at night, whilst 4% felt very unsafe. 12% reported never going out in the dark.

Figure 4.8.1: Fear of walking alone in the dark



A slightly higher proportion of female participants (13%) reported feeling *very safe* walking alone at night compared with male participants (7%). However, women were also considerably more likely to restrict their movements after dark: 15% reported *never* going

out after dark, and 5% and 18% reported feeling *very unsafe* or *a bit unsafe* respectively, compared with 7%, 2% and 12% of male participants. This pattern aligns with a substantial body of research demonstrating gendered differences in fear of crime and risk perception, with women consistently reporting lower levels of perceived safety in public spaces despite generally lower victimisation rates (Pain, 2001; Hale, 1996).

Age-related patterns also emerged. No respondents aged 16–24 or 65+ reported feeling *very safe* walking alone at night, and only 11% of those aged 25–44 and 45–64 did so. The age group most likely to restrict night-time mobility were those aged 16–24, 20% of whom stated that they never went out after dark. These findings are consistent with studies showing that both younger adults and older individuals often report heightened vulnerability in public settings, albeit for different reasons: young adults due to inexperience and social anxieties, and older adults due to concerns about physical frailty or crime exposure (Moore & Shepherd, 2007; Jackson, 2009).

Patterns by socio-economic status further illustrate the uneven distribution of perceived safety. Among participants without any formal qualifications, 40% reported that they never went out after dark, and none reported feeling *very safe*. This aligns with evidence that socio-economic disadvantage and limited access to resources (such as private transport or safer neighbourhoods) heighten perceived vulnerability and restrict mobility (Farrall, Jackson & Gray 2009). Employment status also shaped perceptions: economically active participants were more likely to feel *very safe* (12%) than those who were economically inactive (4%) and were less likely to report avoiding night-time outings altogether. This echoes previous research demonstrating that employment can foster greater confidence, routine engagement in public space, and social connectedness, factors associated with reduced fear of crime (Killias & Clerici, 2000).

Taken together, these findings reflect well-established social patterns in the literature: perceptions of safety at night are structured by gender, age, socio-economic status, and labour-market position. They also highlight the diversity of experiences within the migrant cohort and the importance of considering intersectional factors when examining feelings of safety in the public realm.

Figure 4.8.2: Feeling safe going out after dark with demographics

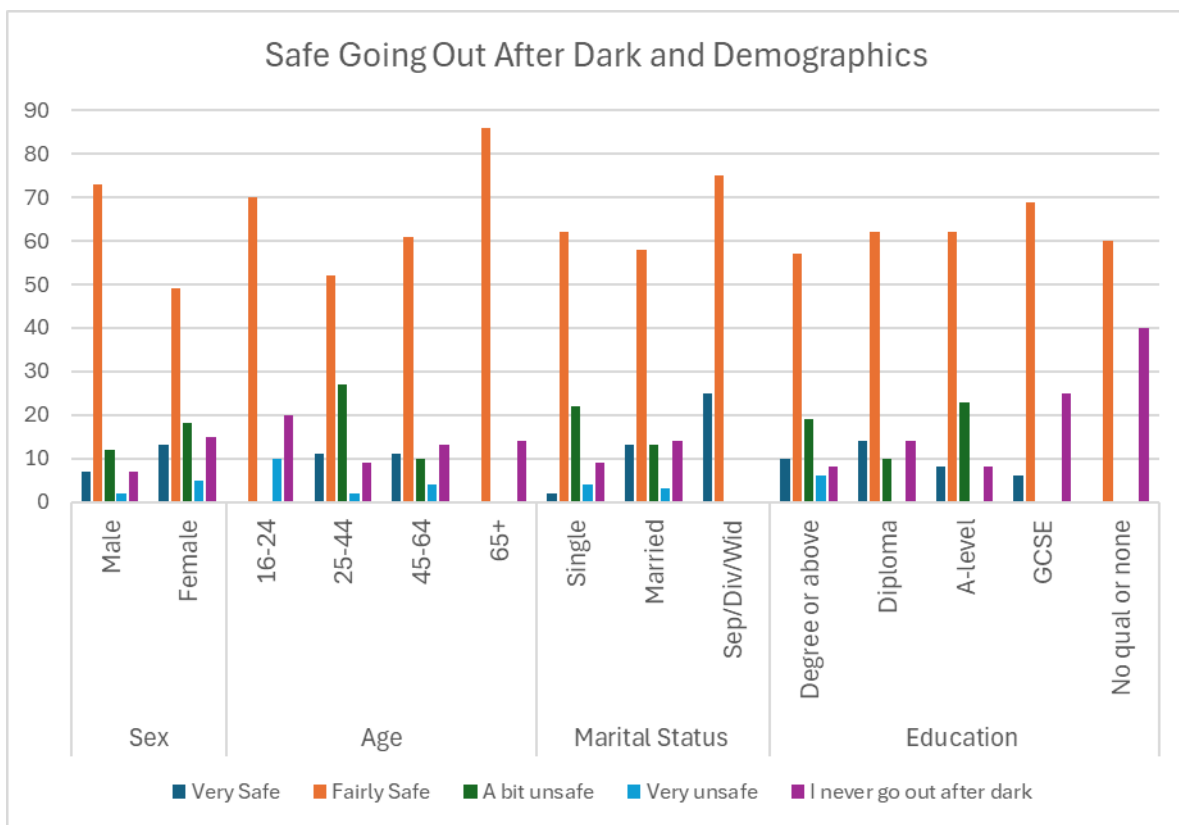
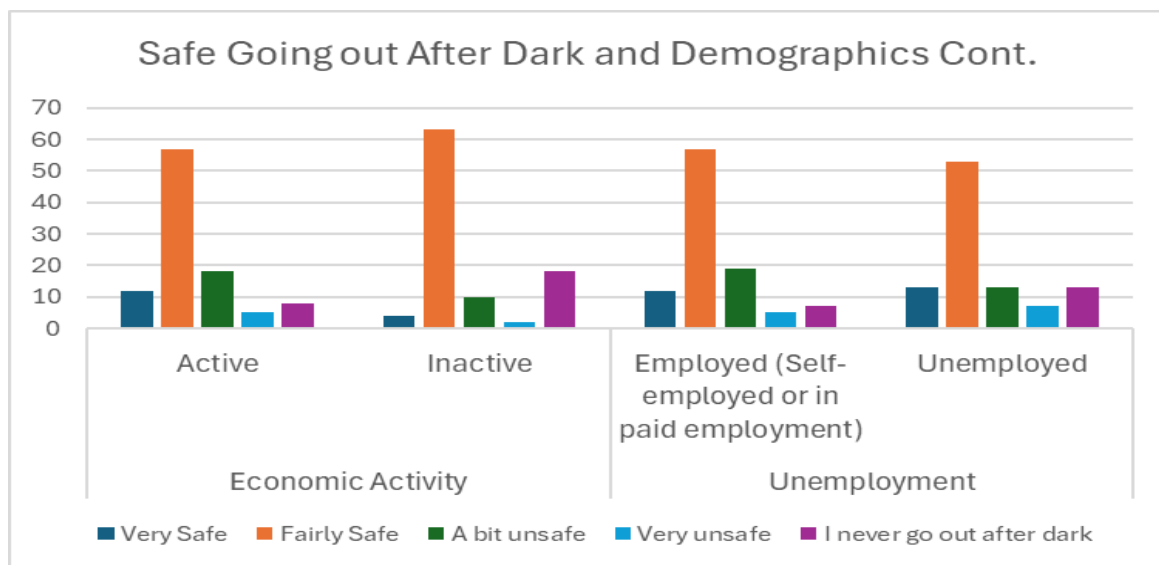


Figure 4.8.3: Feeling safe going out after dark with economic status and employment



**Worry about being a victim of crime**

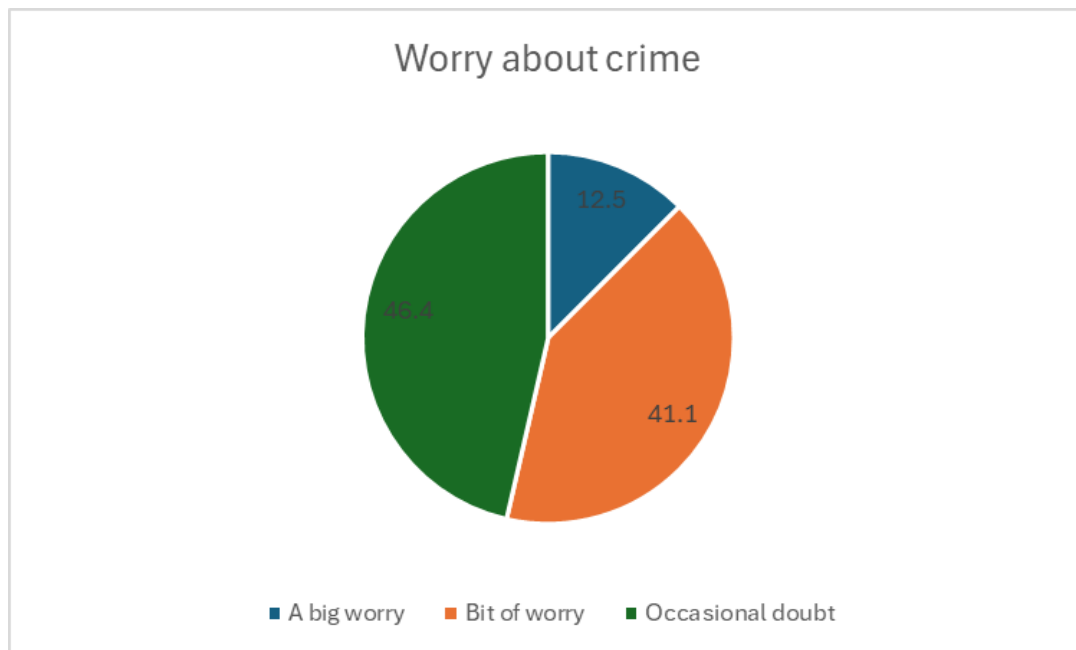
Most participants (61%) reported that they did *not* worry about the possibility of crime affecting themselves or members of their household. Among those who did express

concern, just under half (46%) described this as an occasional doubt, while 41% regarded it as a moderate worry and 13% viewed it as a major concern. These patterns align with research showing that fear of crime is typically distributed along a continuum, with occasional or low-level anxiety being more prevalent than chronic worry (Hale, 1996; Farrall, Jackson & Gray, 2009).

Figure 4.8.4: Worrying about being a victim of crime



Figure 4.8.5: Percentage of respondents who worry about being a victim of crime



Gender differences were evident. Female respondents (44%) were more likely than males (34%) to report worry about victimisation, consistent with longstanding findings that women tend to report higher levels of fear of crime despite generally lower risks of violent victimisation (Pain, 2001; Jackson, 2009). Age patterns followed similarly well-documented trends: participants aged 25–44 had the highest proportion expressing worry (45%), whereas fewer than 15% of those aged 65+ reported concern. Such patterns reflect research indicating that perceptions of vulnerability peak among younger adults

balancing work, family, and urban mobility, while older adults often adopt routines that minimise perceived risk (Moore & Shepherd, 2007).

Marital status also shaped levels of concern. Participants who were married or in a civil partnership (43%) were more likely to report worry than those who were single and never married (33%), while none of those who were separated, divorced, or widowed reported such concerns. Previous studies suggest that individuals responsible for dependants or co-residents may experience heightened anxiety due to a perceived duty to protect others (Hollway & Jefferson, 1997).

Educational and economic status were also strongly associated with worry about crime. Almost half of respondents with a university degree expressed concern, compared with fewer than 15% of those with GCSE-level qualifications. This counterintuitive pattern, where higher educational attainment corresponds with greater worry, has been observed in other studies linking awareness of societal risks and media exposure with heightened perceptions of threat (Lee, 2011). Those who were economically active were more likely to report worry than economically inactive participants, and those who were employed were more likely to report worry than those who were unemployed. Employment, especially in urban or public-facing roles, is associated with greater exposure to local crime narratives, routine activities in public spaces, and a broader awareness of potential risks, all of which can elevate levels of reported worry (Killias & Clerici, 2000; Warr, 2000).

Figure 4.8.6: Worry about being a victim of crime with demographics

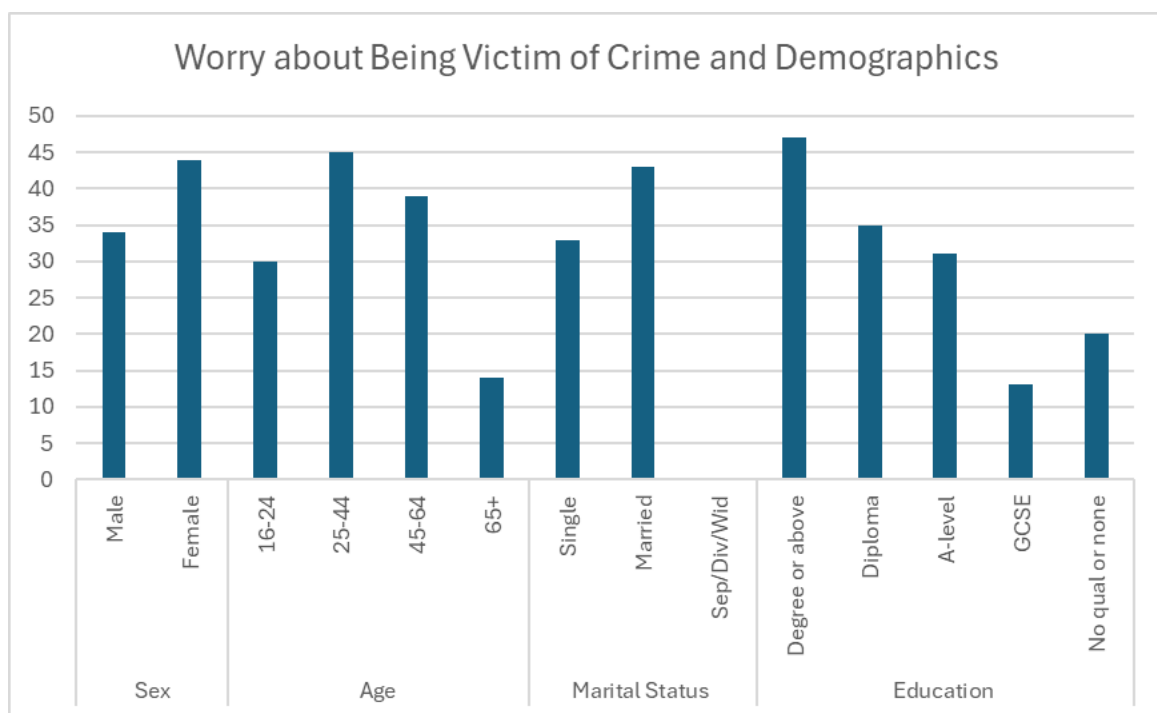
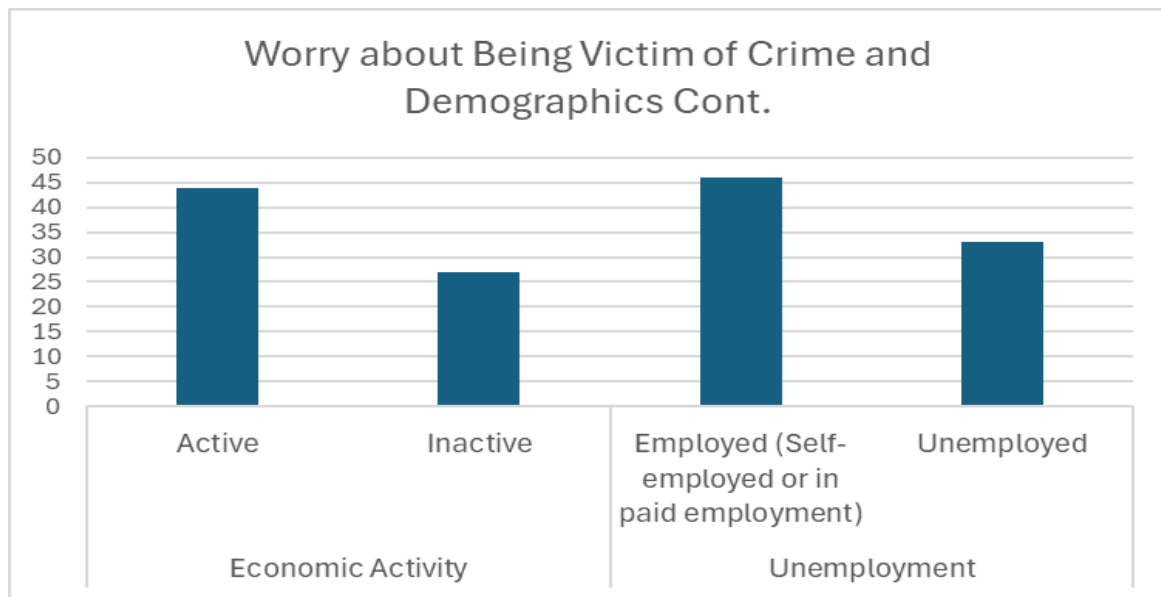


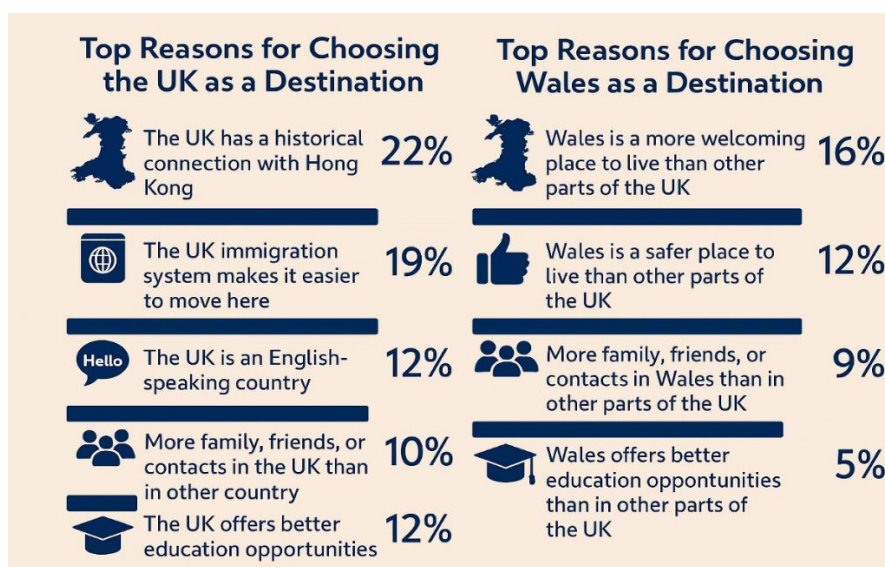
Figure 4.8.7: Worry about being a victim of crime with economic status and employment



Overall, these patterns align closely with established sociological and criminological research showing that perceptions of crime risk are shaped by gender, age, household responsibilities, education, and labour-market position. They also highlight the heterogeneity within the BN(O) migrant population, illustrating how demographic and socio-economic factors intersect to influence feelings of safety and vulnerability as individuals navigate life in a new country.

#### 4.9 Reasons for migration and Intention of Settlement

Respondents were asked why they moved to the UK and Wales and were invited to name as many reasons as applicable. The majority (55%) cited political reasons. The second main reason (32%) was to do with moving together with family and 25% wanted a better education for their children. A further 23% said they simply wanted to live in another country /the UK.



The infographics show that respondents choose the UK primarily for its structural and historical advantages, including the historical connection with Hong Kong (22%), the accessibility of the UK immigration system (19%), and the benefit of an English-speaking environment (12%). In contrast, choices for Wales are shaped more by local living conditions, with respondents emphasising that Wales is more welcoming (16%) and safer (12%) than other parts of the UK. Social networks matter in both contexts (10% for the UK; 9% for Wales), while education plays a stronger role in decisions to move to the UK (12%) than to Wales (5%).

### **Intention of Settlement**

When asked about their settlement intention, three quarters of the respondents said they expect to stay and live in the UK. About 14% said they expect to move between the UK and Hong Kong on a regular basis, probably due to strong family links. Just under 5% reported that they wish to return to Hong Kong. A further 6% intended to move to another country. Among the seven who said they expect to move back to Hong Kong, only one intended to move back in the next 12 months and two in the next three to four years, a further three have no concrete timescale in mind. Likewise, among the nine respondents who said they would move to another country, five of them didn't know exactly when they would do so. When asked which country they intended to move to, three chose Japan. Other countries mentioned were Canada, Australia and Ireland.

As the findings show, the majority of Hong Kong BN(O) migrants intend to settle in the UK. Research shows that they face significant uncertainty as immigration reforms raise concerns about the long-term stability of their settlement pathway. Academic and policy analyses highlight fears that extending the residency requirement for Indefinite Leave to Remain would disrupt expectations formed under the original "5+1" route, undermining trust in the UK's commitments (Shaw, 2025; Rolfe, 2026). Broader studies emphasise gaps in integration support, labour-market barriers, and a need for clear, consistent policy signalling to avoid insecurity among BN(O) households (Wong & Kong, 2025; UCL/ESRC, 2023–2026). They are also concerned about stricter English-language requirements, new minimum salary thresholds, and the possibility that these rules could be applied retroactively, disrupting plans made under the original five-year pathway. Many worry about rising long-term costs, including extended visa fees and NHS surcharges, and feel anxious that the UK is "moving the goalposts" after they uprooted their lives for safety and certainty.

Table 4.9.1: Moving intentions

	Total	%
I expect to stay and live in the UK	<b>111</b>	<b>75.0</b>
I expect to move between the UK and Hong Kong on a regular basis	<b>21</b>	<b>14.2</b>
I live here now but I expect to return to Hong Kong to live there in the future	7	4.7
I live here now but I expect to live in another country in the future	9	6.1
Total	148	100

When asked why they would return to Hong Kong, the desire of being closer to family or friends was the main reason, followed by employment, difficulty integrating and cost of living in the UK, and the weather. Interestingly, the main reason for moving to another country was the weather, followed by employment, housing and cost of living in the UK. Interesting, no one reported political developments in Hong Kong being the reason.

When asked what prevent them from returning to Hong Kong in the next 12 months, five respondents said they would like to wait until they have acquired Indefinite Leave to Remain or citizenship in the UK. Other cited reasons include concerns about finding housing (3), employment (2), cost of living (2) safety (2) in Hong Kong.

### Arrival and Moves within the UK

A total of 134 participants provided information on the number of cities, towns or villages which they had lived in since arriving in the UK. The majority (79%) had only lived in one location during this period. A further 18% had lived in two locations, while 2% and 1% reported living in three and four locations respectively.

Table 4.9.2: Number of places lived in the UK

	Total	%
<b>1</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>79.1</b>
2	24	17.9
3	3	2.2
4	1	0.7
Total	134	100

123 respondents provided data on the postcode of where they first lived in the UK. The majority of respondents (81%) entered a Cardiff postcode. Other Welsh postcodes included Swansea (7%) and Newport (3%). Outside of Wales, respondents indicated that

they had first lived in Bristol (2%), Guildford (2%), London (2%) as well as Aberdeen (1%), Edinburgh (1%), Glasgow (1%), Manchester (1%) and Reading (1%). Just over half of respondents (53%) reported staying at their initial location, while the remaining 47% moved to elsewhere in the UK.

*Table 4.9.3: First destination in the UK*

City	N	%
<b>Cardiff</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>80.5</b>
Swansea	9	7.3
Newport	4	3.3
Bristol	2	1.6
Edinburgh	1	0.8
Aberdeen	1	0.8
Guildford	2	1.6
London	2	1.6
Manchester	1	0.8
Glasgow	1	0.8
Reading	1	0.8
Total	123	100

Although 64 participants stated that they had moved to a second location in the UK, only 24 respondents (39%) provided postcode data for their second address (see Appendix Table A4). Among those who did respond, most reported living in Cardiff (83%), with one respondent each reporting Swansea (4%), Newport (4%), Bristol (4%) and London (4%). Four respondents did not remain in their second UK location: two subsequently moved to Cardiff, one to Newport (having previously lived in Bristol) and one to Edinburgh. The majority of these responses indicated intention to stay (see Appendix Table A5).

*Table 4.9.4: Intended to stay in first destination*

	N	%
Yes	71	53.4
No	62	46.6
Total	133	100

These data on UK locations can be used to infer participants' current postcodes. However, participants who had moved multiple times often provided incomplete postcode information or reported multiple times without supplying the postcode of their most recent address. Where sufficient data were available, it appears that most participants currently live in Cardiff (87%) and a further 6% residing in Newport and 6% in Swansea (see Appendix Table A6).

## 5 Policy Implications

The BN(O) visa scheme launched in 2021 enabled Hong Kong residents with BN(O) status to migrate to the UK. By March 2025, almost 180,000 BN(O) visas had been granted, making it one of the largest single-route migrant inflows to the UK. Many newcomers settled in major cities with strong labour markets and established Hong Kong diaspora networks. Since 2021, Wales has welcomed a significant number of Hong Kong BN(O) migrants as part of this humanitarian response.

Although BN(O) migrants are not refugees or asylum seekers, several features of the Nation of Sanctuary (NoS) policy may have made Wales particularly attractive to them. The NoS aims to support forced migrants to rebuild their lives by providing housing support, English/Welsh language education, employment pathways, healthcare access, and community cohesion programmes. It promotes “integration from day one”, enabling newcomers to settle quickly and participate fully in Welsh society. While hosting a smaller BN(O) population relative to England, Wales has become an attractive destination for families due to its affordable housing, quality of life, and supportive integration environment (Cheung and Foster, 2023).

Early challenges persist, particularly around employment and language, but BN(O) arrivals typically bring high educational attainment, strong motivation to integrate, and a commitment to long-term settlement. Evidence from the Hong Kong BN(O) Migrants Panel Survey, an ESRC-funded study led by UCL, King’s College London, and the University of Oxford, further highlights wide-ranging integration trajectories and evolving needs over time. Qualitative UK Government research similarly shows that integration outcomes are shaped by language proficiency, reasons for migration, and length of residence. Collectively, these characteristics suggest a substantial long-term contribution to Wales, especially in supporting demographic renewal, strengthening labour supply, and enriching local communities.

As Hong Kongers establish long-term roots in Wales, the need for well-informed and responsive public policy becomes increasingly important. This survey offers the critical evidence required to shape target interventions, enabling government and partner organisations to support the well-being and successful integration of Hong Kongers across Wales. The following section summarises the key policy implications derived from the findings.

### **Employment and Economic Integration**

The findings on underemployment indicate several areas where Welsh Government policy could strengthen labour-market integration for Hong Kong BN(O) migrants. First, persistent occupational mismatch suggests a need for clearer sector-specific pathways for recognising foreign qualifications, particularly in regulated professions. Second,

reported English-language and accent-related barriers highlight the value of expanding advanced, employment-focused ESOL provision tailored to priority sectors. Third, the low representation of BN(O) migrants in public-sector roles, despite these being relatively stable and well-regulated, suggests that targeted recruitment, mentorship schemes, and structured work-experience pathways could improve access. Fourth, the concentration of migrants in precarious service-sector jobs reinforces the importance of the *Fair Work Wales* agenda, especially in relation to anti-discrimination and employer standards. Failing to address these barriers risks wasting a valuable pool of under-utilised talent, particularly given existing support structures such as [Working Wales](#) and [Into Work Cardiff](#) for Hong Kongers. Finally, improving labour-market alignment for this highly educated cohort would support broader Welsh Government aims around inclusive economic growth and addressing workforce shortages in key public-service sectors, including health, social care, education and STEM.

### **Housing and Accommodation**

Home ownership (45% owning outright and 14% with a mortgage) is well within the range of national average of 53-65% (Finder UK 2025), and higher than might be expected for a newly arrived migrant group. This could reflect strong pre-migration savings and their demographic profile often being highly qualified middle-aged professionals. However, a further 40% Hong Kong BN(O) households were renting in the private sector. This highlights the need for better support, information and signposting to reliable mortgage advice and high-quality rental guidance including resources from [Rent Smart Wales](#). Hong Kong BN(O) Visa Holders have No Recourse to Public Funds and cannot access social housing unless they apply for and are granted a Change of Conditions. Policymakers and service providers should remain alert to the possibility that some BN(O) households may need to apply for such changes as savings diminish over time, increasing their risk of destitution and homelessness.

### **Language Skill and Classes**

While the majority of Hong Kong BN(O) migrants in Wales reported no difficulty using English for everyday tasks, a significant minority faced challenges across speaking, reading and completing forms, especially among older age groups, the economically inactive and the unemployed. Respondents who struggled with everyday spoken English all reported difficulty speaking on the telephone, highlighting how certain communication contexts such as phone calls, can amplify language barriers. To improve their English, participants primarily relied on formal courses and digital learning tools, while informal conversational groups were used less frequently. A small number reported not taking any steps to improve their English, citing reasons such as lack of need, insufficient local provision or low confidence. These patterns mirror broader evidence on migrant integration in Wales. The Welsh Government's Migrant Integration Framework stress that language skills, particularly English, are foundational for migrants' ability to participate and achieve equality of outcomes (Welsh Government 2024).

At the time of writing, the UK Government is consulting on its Immigration White Paper, which includes a proposal to raise the English-language requirement Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), from level B1 to B2. If implemented, this change would significantly increase the language demands placed on Hong Kong BN(O) migrants, especially those who were older, less qualified and retire. Substantial language-learning support will therefore be needed across the cohort and particularly for those with difficulties speaking English in everyday interactions, reading and speaking. All these highlight a need to improve access to ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) by increasing local provision and lowering barriers linked to class availability, cost and transport, expanding context-specific language support including telephone communication skills and form-filling support, and the development of informal, low-pressure inclusive learning spaces.

While English remains essential for functional integration, the Welsh language offers additional pathways to belonging, identity and community cohesion. Initiatives such as *Pathways to the Welsh language for International Migrants* highlight ongoing efforts to expand awareness and access to Welsh-language education for new arrivals (Higham 2024). Strengthening policy support for both languages (e.g. integrating Welsh into ESOL provision) through accessible, well-publicised and confidence building provision can enhance integration outcomes and ensure migrants are supported within Wales's unique bilingual landscape. Positioning Welsh as a shared cultural asset can also reinforce inclusion and belonging that is consistent with Wales's "Nation of Sanctuary" ethos.

### **Health Status and Concerns**

Hong Kongers not only self-report poorer overall general health than the wider population in England and Wales, but younger cohorts and individuals with no qualification also display heightened emotional vulnerability, including elevated levels of anxiety, depression and PTSD. This pattern may reflect stress and uncertainty associated with migration, challenges of settlement, employment and housing pressures, discontinuity with previous healthcare systems, and above all, the lingering psychological effects of the political events of 2019-2020. These findings highlight the need for age-specific policy design, particularly prioritising youth mental health within integrated services. Such measures could include age-appropriate screening, early-intervention programmes tailored to young adult stressors, clear and stigma-free signposting to NHS mental health support, the expansion of counselling services in FE/HE institutions, and culturally sensitive online or hybrid supports designed for younger migrants.

### **Access to Services**

While the majority of Hong Kong BN(O) migrants reported no difficulties accessing essential services, a notable minority identified specific barriers that limited their ability to obtain the support they required. These range from securing appointments, particularly for public or primary care services, infrequent or unreliable public transport hindered their ability to reach services, and not having access to a car, either as a driver

or passenger, restricting their mobility. Although these proportions are relatively small, they highlight structural accessibility challenges that may disproportionately affect newly settled migrants, especially those living outside major urban centres. These reported difficulties suggest that some BN(O) migrants face mobility and service-access constraints that can hinder early integration. Improving transport reliability, strengthening digital and multilingual routes for booking appointments, and providing clearer orientation on navigating Welsh public services would help ensure more equitable access. Addressing these practical barriers aligns with Wales's wider commitments to inclusion and supports smoother settlement for new arrivals.

### **Fear of Crime**

The results suggest that certain groups, particularly women, younger adults, highly educated respondents, and those who are economically active, experience higher levels of worry about crime. Although these concerns do not necessarily reflect objective victimisation risk, they can affect wellbeing, mobility, community participation and trust in public space. This highlights the value of strengthening community-safety communication, improving visibility of local policing and neighbourhood engagement, and ensuring that new migrants receive clear information about crime levels, reporting mechanisms, and local support services. Because fear of crime can reduce social integration even when crime rates are low, targeted reassurance, accessible community-safety messaging, and engagement with migrant groups can play an important role in fostering confidence, cohesion and a sense of belonging across Welsh communities. Regional Community Cohesion Teams, Community Safety Teams and Neighbourhood Policing Teams can build on links to the community and signpost to support, for example the [Wales Hate Support Centre](#).

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## 7 Appendices

**Table A1 Health in general**

		Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Sex	Male	11	18	39	28	4
	Female	0	20	28	43	8
Age	16-24	0	30	30	40	0
	25-44	7	18	36	27	<b>11</b>
	45-64	3	16	30	43	5
	65+	4	18	33	37	7
Marital Status	Single never married	2	28	30	33	7
	Married or civil partnership	2	28	30	33	7
	Separated/ Divorced / widowed	0	0	25	<b>50</b>	<b>25</b>
Education	Degree or above	4	25	42	24	6
	Diploma teaching / nursing	10	10	30	40	10
	A-level / equivalent	8	8	8	77	0
	GCSE / equivalent	0	13	13	69	6
	No qualifications / none of the above	0	0	0	<b>40</b>	<b>20</b>
Economic Activity	Active	6	20	34	33	5
	Inactive	0	16	29	<b>44</b>	<b>9</b>
Un-employment	In paid work	8	21	38	29	4
	Unemployed	6	20	34	<b>33</b>	<b>5</b>

**Table A2 Accomplished less because of physical health**

		All of the time	Most of the time	Some of the time	A little of the time	None of the time
Sex	Male	3	5	7	37	47
	Female	1	4	21	37	34
Age	16-24	0	0	30	50	20
	25-44	2	9	14	39	36
	45-64	2	2	14	32	47
	65+	0	0	0	50	50
Marital Status	Single never married	2	5	16	40	37
	Married /civil partnership	1	3	14	36	42
	Separated / Divorced / Widowed	0	25	0	25	50
Education	Degree or above	2	5	16	38	39
	Diploma teaching / nursing	0	0	10	35	55
	A-level / equivalent	0	0	23	54	23
	GCSE / equivalent	0	20	20	0	0
	No qualifications / none of the above	1	4	15	37	41
Economic Activity	Active	1	5	14	38	41
	Inactive	2	2	16	36	40
Un- employment	In paid work	0	5	14	39	41
	Unemployed	7	7	14	38	41

**Table A3 Emotional Problems and daily activities by demographics**

		All of the time	Most of the time	Some of the time	A little of the time	None of the time
Sex	Male	2	4	25	32	37
	Female	1	9	17	36	36
Age	16-24	0	20	40	30	10
	25-44	4	11	21	36	29
	45-64	0	2	17	30	49
	65+	0	0	17	50	33
Marital Status	Single	2	14	19	37	28
	Married	1	3	21	31	42
	Sep/Div/Wid	0	0	25	50	25
Education	Degree or above	2	8	17	30	43
	Diploma	0	0	25	55	20
	A-level	0	0	15	46	39
	GCSE	0	6	31	25	38
	No qual or none	0	20	40	0	0
Economic Activity	Active	2	9	23	30	36
	Inactive	0	2	15	40	40
Un-employment	In paid work	1	6	20	34	37
	Unemployed	2	9	23	30	36

**Table A4: Second location in the UK**

City	N	%
<b>Cardiff</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>83.3</b>
Swansea	1	4.2
Newport	1	4.2
Bristol	1	4.2
London	1	4.2
Total	24	

**Table A5: Intended to stay in location 2**

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>85.2</b>
No	4	14.8
Total	27	100

**Table A6 Location 3 in the UK**

Location	N	%
<b>Cardiff</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>86.5</b>
Newport	5	5.6
Swansea	5	5.6
London	1	1.1

Edinburgh	1	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100</b>