



# 華人資料及諮詢中心

## Chinese Information and Advice Centre

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Social Enterprise 社會企業

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### Immigration

#### Reforms to Tier 2 Skilled Worker Visa

The government has recently announced reforms to the skilled worker visa to protect job opportunities for UK residents and reduce UK businesses' reliance on foreign workers.

The changes to the Tier 2 visa are designed to stop businesses using foreign workers to undercut wages, while continuing to support growth and productivity in the UK economy.

The government believes the reforms will generate further investment in the UK skills base and encourage leading graduates to stay and work in this country once they have finished their studies.

The reforms include:

- An increase in the minimum salary threshold for experienced workers using Tier 2, to £25,000 in autumn 2016 and £30,000 in April 2017. However selected occupations such as nurses, paramedics and some teachers will be exempt from this rise until July 2019.
- The introduction of an immigration skills charge for each non-EEA worker an employer wants to bring to the UK.
- New measures that will allow companies to hire more graduate trainees.
- Simplification of Intra Company Transfers visas to ensure that international companies only transfer leading senior managers and specialists to the UK.

The government wants to ensure that employers look first to the UK resident labour market before recruiting from overseas.

#### Registered Traveller Service Expanded to Hong Kong and Taiwan

The scheme, which currently has 40,000 members, is now open to Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and the US. Members who frequently travel to the UK can benefit from an improved travelling experience.

Potential members must apply online via gov.uk and once the UK Border Force officers have undertaken security checks, individuals are then provisionally accepted onto the scheme. Membership is completed the next time they visit the UK.

Once they become a Registered Traveller member, individuals are then eligible to use the passport eGates and the UK/EU controls at

- Heathrow and other participating airports including Birmingham, East Midlands, Edinburgh, Gatwick, Glasgow, London City, Luton, Manchester and Stansted airports; and
- Eurostar terminals at Paris, Brussels and Lille

without having to fill in a landing card.

You must also have a visa or have visited the UK 4 times or more in the last 24 months.

It costs £70 to apply to use the service for 1 year. You'll get £50 back if your application is unsuccessful.

If you're already a member and you get a new passport, you'll need to pay £20 to update your passport details. Updating your visa information is free.

"Organisation" category Winner of the Westminster Volunteer Awards 2011 by Volunteer Centre Westminster



MAYOR OF LONDON  
OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME



## Benefits

### Benefit Cap Reduced

At the moment, there is a benefit cap established in England. This restricts the amount of benefits a working age household can obtain and will be determined by your income.

The cap will be reduced from £26,000 to £23,000 for households living in London; however, it will be reduced to £20,000 for those outside London from Autumn 2016. The amount of reduction in the benefit cap will be determined by where you live.

The government believes that the enforcement of this regulation will bring people back within the limits, which will be an average of £20,000 this autumn due to this new policy. Also, this will ensure that benefits are distributed evenly across the UK.

### Tax Credit Income Disregard Cuts

Household incomes which increase by up to £5,000 during the tax year will be ignored during the summarisation and calculations for your entitlement that year. From April 2016, your household income will be reduced so that any increase in income of more than £2,500 will be accounted.

The Treasury recently estimated that up to 800,000 people will see a reduction in their rights to tax credits. They believe people should expect to see an average reduction of £200-£300 per year due to this cut.

According to an impact assessment, they believe the treasury will gain up to £935 million from the cut by 2020. This means more money will be readily available for developing the country and more money for pensions. It will also enhance the UK economy.

### Personal Tax Allowance Increased

The personal tax allowance will increase from £10,600 to £11,000 from April 2016 and will increase again in 2020 to £12,500.

### Universal Credit Changes

The work payment in universal credit will be reducing from April 2016. For disabled people and people with children, it will be reduced to £192 per month, only if you have housing costs. If you do not have housing costs, you will only receive £397 per month.

Currently, 70% of your registered childcare costs are paid for with a monthly limit of £532 for one child and £912 for two children. This will be increased on April 11<sup>th</sup> 2016; this means you will be able to claim up to 85% of all childcare expenses, up to a maximum monthly value of £646 for one child and £1108 for two children.

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### Housing Benefits

This May, there is a slight alteration to the housing benefit policies. The chancellor has recently announced that the family premium will be removed.

Housing benefits backdating will also be reduced so that new claims from working age claimants will be backdated for a maximum of 1 month. If you are currently at the working age, this means your housing benefit can be backdated to six months maximum.

### Pensions

A new state pension is being introduced. This will be replacing the basic state pension and second state pension. These changes will simplify our current system.

If you are reaching the pension age and for these changes to apply to you, you will need to have 35 qualifying years of national insurance contributions to be awarded the full pension. If, however, you do not have the minimum number of qualifying years, a pro rata amount will then be given, and you will not qualify for the single tier pension. If you qualify for the full amount you will receive £155.65 a week.

### National Minimum Wage Increased

The national minimum wage will be renamed as The National Living Wage and will be increased to £7.20 per hour for those 25 and over from April 2016. This change ensures that people will have enough money to live with; this rule may also prevent strikes for pay rises. It will rise to £9.00 per hour by 2020.

### Rent Changes for Social Tenants

This regulation will take effect from April 2016, this regulation will result in social housing rents being reduced by 1%, and in some cases, it may be frozen for four years.

### Home Office Walk-in Surgery



Every first Tuesday of the month from 2pm to 3pm at the CIAC office, friendly officers from the Home Office host a Walk-in Surgery to meet the local community and provide information regarding immigration applications and voluntary return. The Home Office assures there will be no immigration enforcement during the surgery.

## Women Support / Social Benefits

### Ending Violence against Women and Girls - Domestic Violence

The government will be setting up a new strategy that will commence in 2016 and end in 2020. The aim of this project is to end all forms of degradation and abuse against women, including domestic violence. They aspire to give women the courage to break the silence.

This strategy will be used to educate and inform women about healthy relationships in order to avoid any abuse they may face. Furthermore, they hope that this strategy can increase the number of referrals and increase prosecutions. This will ensure all women who have experienced domestic violence can have the confidence and ascendancy to prevent and tackle the situation without the victimisation of women who have been abused.

Apart from that, the interim assessment has also enforced a new regulation. They have extended the time limit to report domestic violence from two years to five years. This will ensure that women will have more time to carry out prosecutions.

Additionally, the government has also increased the committed funding to £80 million to protect women and girls from violence. This is part of a new violence against women and girls strategy and will ensure that domestic violence is dealt with efficiently and properly without the victimisation of women.

### Finance Bill 2016 Reduces Some Taxes

The government has published Finance Bill 2016 which:

- reduces tax for over 31 million individuals by increasing the personal allowance to £11,500 and the higher rate threshold to £45,000
- introduces a new personal savings allowance so that 95% of taxpayers will pay no tax on the first £1,000 of savings income if they are a basic rate taxpayer
- cuts corporation tax to 17% in 2020 to help over a million companies
- takes radical action on the oil and gas tax regime to safeguard jobs and encourage investment
- introduces a new tax relief for orchestras at a rate of 25% on qualifying expenditure



We team up with "Giveacar" to raise funds through your kind donation of a car whether it is out of use or still working. Just call [0207 736 4242](tel:02077364242) for FREE collection nationwide or visit this link and tell them you are donating the proceeds to CIAC.

### New Funding to Help Councils Tackle Rogue Landlords

The government has announced a £5 million fund for councils to stop rogue landlords and tackle 'beds in sheds'. The worse offenders will be targeted and 3,000 landlords now face further enforcement action or prosecution.

The new funding will help up to 65 councils tackle rogue landlords who let out substandard homes and make tenants' lives a misery, Communities Secretary Greg Clark has announced.

The worst affected councils which have a large proportion of private rented stock in their areas and significant problems will be able to bid for a share of the fund to tackle irresponsible landlords who provide unsafe living conditions, exploit innocent tenants and blight communities.

The fund will also target 'beds in sheds' which are often rented to vulnerable migrants by ruthless landlords who charge them extortionate rents to live in cramped conditions.

Councils can use the money to:

- increase inspections of property
- carry out more raids
- initiate more enforcement action and prosecutions
- demolish sheds and buildings that are prohibited

There are more than 4.4 million households renting privately in the UK. Since 2013 nearly 40,000 inspections have taken place in properties.

Additional measures include:

- seeking banning orders for the most prolific and serious offenders
- issuing penalty notices of up to £5,000 for breaches
- a new process for abandoned tenancies, which would allow a landlord to recover the home without the need to go to court
- creating a database of rogue landlords and letting agents
- applying a more stringent 'fit and proper' person test for landlords to help ensure that they have the skills to manage properties and a contact readily available to tenants
- extending Rent Repayment Orders to cover situations where a tenant has been illegally evicted or the landlord has failed to rectify a serious health and safety hazard in the property, and allowing local authorities to retain that money for housing purposes where the rent was paid through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit



Join CIAC to promote environmental friendly workspace by putting the old batteries in the recycling bin outside our office.

**Kick-it!**

**Free “Stop Smoking Support”**

CIAC is running the “Stop Smoking Support” project in partnership with Kick-it.

The project is commissioned by the council in partnership with the NHS and is provided to Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham residents.

The free “Stop Smoking Support” includes free medications worth up to £100\*, and six weeks one-to-one confidential support sessions to help boost motivation and strategies to stay smoke-free.

With our support, you are 4 times more likely to quit for good.

Support is available in Mandarin, Cantonese and English.

Email [info@ciac.co.uk](mailto:info@ciac.co.uk) or call 0300 201 1868 for more information.

\* may subject to prescription charge



**Nutrition & Healthy Living Workshop Series**

The 6 workshops (free of charge) aim to bring awareness to nutrition and healthy living by familiarizing the attendees with a variety of carefully chosen subjects in relation to food and health, and encouraging them to make healthier food choices so as to eliminate body mind stress or ailments and achieve a more wholesome wellness.

The workshop is led by nutritional therapist Nicole Song (DipCNM, BANT), who is a member of the British Association of Nutritional Therapy, the national governing body of applied nutritional science. In her clinical practice, she combines her many years of training and working experience in the therapeutic industry and use a variety of effective healing approaches to help her clients to achieve their optimal health goals. (for more information, visit: [www.nicolesong.co.uk](http://www.nicolesong.co.uk))

During the workshops, we will discuss: How and what we eat, how we live and what we think, our relationship with foods and ourselves, the type of dietary and life style choices that impact our lives.



Bromley

Dates: 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th May & 8th, 15th June (Wednesdays)

Time: 3.00 – 4.00 p.m.

Venue: Cotmandene Community Resource Centre, Cotmandene Cres, Orpington BR5 2RG

Westminster

Dates: 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th May & 8th, 15th June (Wednesdays)

Time: 10.00 – 11.00 a.m.

Venue: Soho Family Centre Nursery, St. James’ Residences, 23 Brewer St, London W1F 0RN

**Met Police Walk-in Surgery**

The next surgery is on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016 from 12.00 – 1.30 pm at CIAC office.

Come and speak to a Chinese speaking police officer to know more about your rights. This surgery is open to all and no appointment needed.



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CITY OF WESTMINSTER 西敏市

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Basement, 2 Gerrard Place,  
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