

## Rise in UK Investor visa applications from China

The number of high net worth individuals utilising the Tier 1 (Investor) visa category to relocate to the United Kingdom has increased by 78 per cent over the past year, according to [Richmond Chambers Immigration Barristers](#).

Data published by the [Office for National Statistics](#) reveals that while 235 investor visas were issued in 2011, this increased to 419 in the year from 2011 to 2012.

Representing a “fast track” route to British citizenship for wealthy foreigners – and, importantly, their children – the UK investor visa category was first introduced in 2008. It is open to foreign nationals who have at least £1 million (equivalent to CNY 10 million/HKD 12.5 million) available to invest in the UK economy and has attracted applicants from all over the globe.

In the year 2011 to 2012, the number of Tier 1 (Investor) applications from Chinese nationals rose substantially to account for 23 per cent of all successful applications. In October 2012 alone, 24 entry clearance applications were made in China for the Tier 1 categories. The most popular cities for the Tier 1 (Investor) and Tier 1 (Entrepreneur) categories were Beijing, Guangzhou and Shenyang respectively.

Commenting specifically on the increase in applications from Chinese investors, Paul Richmond, head of Richmond Chambers Immigration Barristers, said: “The UK has always been an attractive destination for those seeking a cosmopolitan lifestyle, world-class education opportunities, clean air and a favourable tax regime. Many Chinese nationals are keen to educate their children in the UK, while the prestige of owning London property and a burgeoning Chinese expat community mean that London is an increasingly popular destination for wealthy Chinese emigrants. Continued uncertainties over the independence of the judiciary in China also mean that it is important for many Chinese businessmen and women to have second homes in London.”

With the Home Secretary’s [recent announcement](#) confirming the importance of China as a priority growth market for business visitors and a package of further enhancements to the UK visa service for Chinese nationals, the rise in UK investor visa applications from China looks set to continue.