

KOREAN COMMUNITIES
IN LONDON



THINK LONDON

CONNECTING BUSINESS TO LONDON

KOREAN COMMUNITIES IN LONDON

Global companies and international communities are an essential part of London's social and business fabric. Locating in London is about more than realising business opportunities. It's about discovering a whole new way of life. Through our knowledge of London's communities, we make you feel at home the moment you arrive.



London's Korean population

Following the relaxation of immigration laws in 1989 there has been a strong flow of Koreans into Britain. London is home to the largest Korean population of any European city, now thought to number over 20,000 people.

The Korean community has formed a well-developed social and business infrastructure in New Malden and the surrounding suburbs of Surbiton, Kingston and Merton, in south London. It is thought that the area is now home to over 8,000 Koreans. A smaller community has developed in north-west London, predominantly in the boroughs of Harrow and Camden. This originally arose as a consequence of the presence of multinational corporations such as Daewoo Cars in Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire. Unlike many other communities, a significant number of Koreans are in London on three-year company placements.

Samsung Design Europe World-leading electronics company

"London packs all of world culture, as well as British history, into one small place. It's a shopping mall to the world, so we have to be here."

Harry Choi, Director



London's opportunities for Korean business

The UK is Korea's number one trade and investment partner in Europe, attracting one in four of all Korean companies, according to Ernst & Young's European Investment Monitor. London holds a prominent position in this trade relationship, accounting for 40 per cent of all Korean Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) over the last seven years. Phenomenal growth rates in trade and investment into Europe from neighbouring China, and also India, have had an impact on Korea's overall contribution to FDI, which currently accounts for around 10% of Think London's active work in the Asia-Pacific region.

London's growing overseas business community now consists of over 120 Korean companies, with the large majority of businesses located in south-west London, around the Korean community clusters in the boroughs of Kingston-Upon-Thames and Merton, and also in the key financial City districts.

Korea's world-renowned conglomerates operate in markets as diverse as shipping, electronics and financial services and are all well-represented

among international Korean businesses in the London area. These include Samsung, LG, SK, and Hyundai, all of which are listed on the London Stock Exchange (LSE). Many have established sales & marketing hubs and headquarter offices, using London as a springboard to the rest of Europe.



Korean community in London

Establishing a business in London is about much more than realising business opportunities. It's also about feeling at home and becoming part of London's multi-cultural society. New Malden in south London is home to Europe's largest Korean community, affectionately known as New Malden by local residents. A cohesive offering of tailored business services and strong community support organizations make it easy for Korean nationals to settle into living in London.

Man-Kyu Lim, a Korean government official on an 18-month secondment at Kingston Council explained why he felt happier and more at ease in New Malden: "I came over to the UK for the first time a few years ago... On my second posting, I was based in New Malden, London where I found it much easier to settle down. It was easier to find a house, connect to utilities, and basically easy to do everything as you have Korean companies, who speak the language and who understand Korean culture."

The areas of New Malden, Kingston and Surbiton offer a vast array of locally-owned shops and food outlets, with around a third of the signage on New Malden High Street written in Korean script. Korean community services such as immigration consultants, real estate agents and translation services all form part of a strong community support infrastructure, backed-up by organizations such as the Korean Residents Society (which represents all South Koreans in Britain) the Anglo-Korean Cultural Institute and Korean Interpreters and Translators.

Dedicated Korean business services have also developed to form a comprehensive business support network, ranging from freight forwarders and import-export agents through to bankers, lawyers and insurance brokers.



Korean business support

The Korean business community is well-supported in London through a number of trade and business organisations. The Embassy of the Republic of Korea, based in Westminster, and the Korea Trade Centre (KOTRA) are the principal means of trade and investment support.

The KOTRA London office offers marketing and sales support, market intelligence and also hosts the Association for Korean Businessmen in the UK. The Korea Culture & Content Agency (KOCCA), the National Government Office for the Korean Ministry of Culture & Tourism, recently established an office in London to provide a comprehensive consulting service for the export of Korean cultural content and the promotion of UK cultural materials in Korea.

Established in 1998, the Korea IT Industry Promotion Agency (KIPA) sponsors Korean companies from the IT industry. Through initiatives such as iPark in Hammersmith, west London, it helps companies maximise the opportunities that London, the UK and European markets have to offer.

"Being based in London you not only have the advantage of the English language, but you also have access to a wide range of people from many nationalities who speak a multitude of languages."

Ms Hyun-Jeon Oh, Regional Manager



Schools

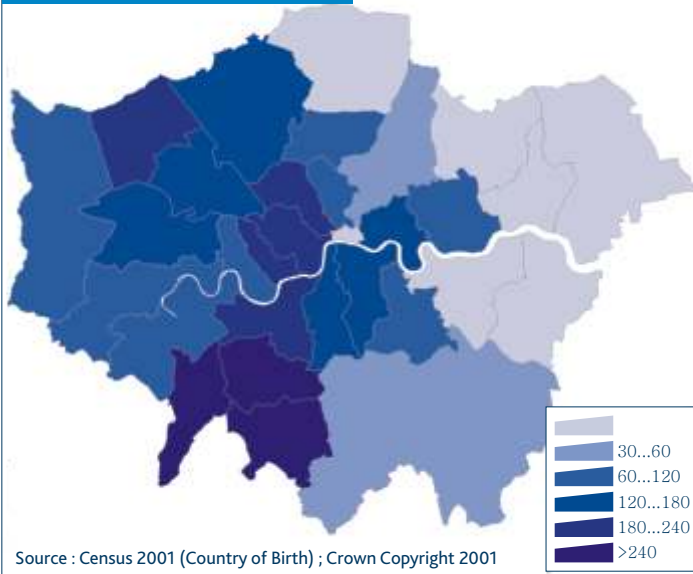
The Korean community is fully integrated into the British education system, with a preference for privately-run schools. There are nearly 20 Korean supplementary schools and nurseries in London, including Saturday schools such as the London Korean School in Chessington, the Korean School in New Malden, and the North London Korean School in Finchley. Many Koreans who are seconded to the UK leave their children to study in London once their posting has come to an end.

Universities

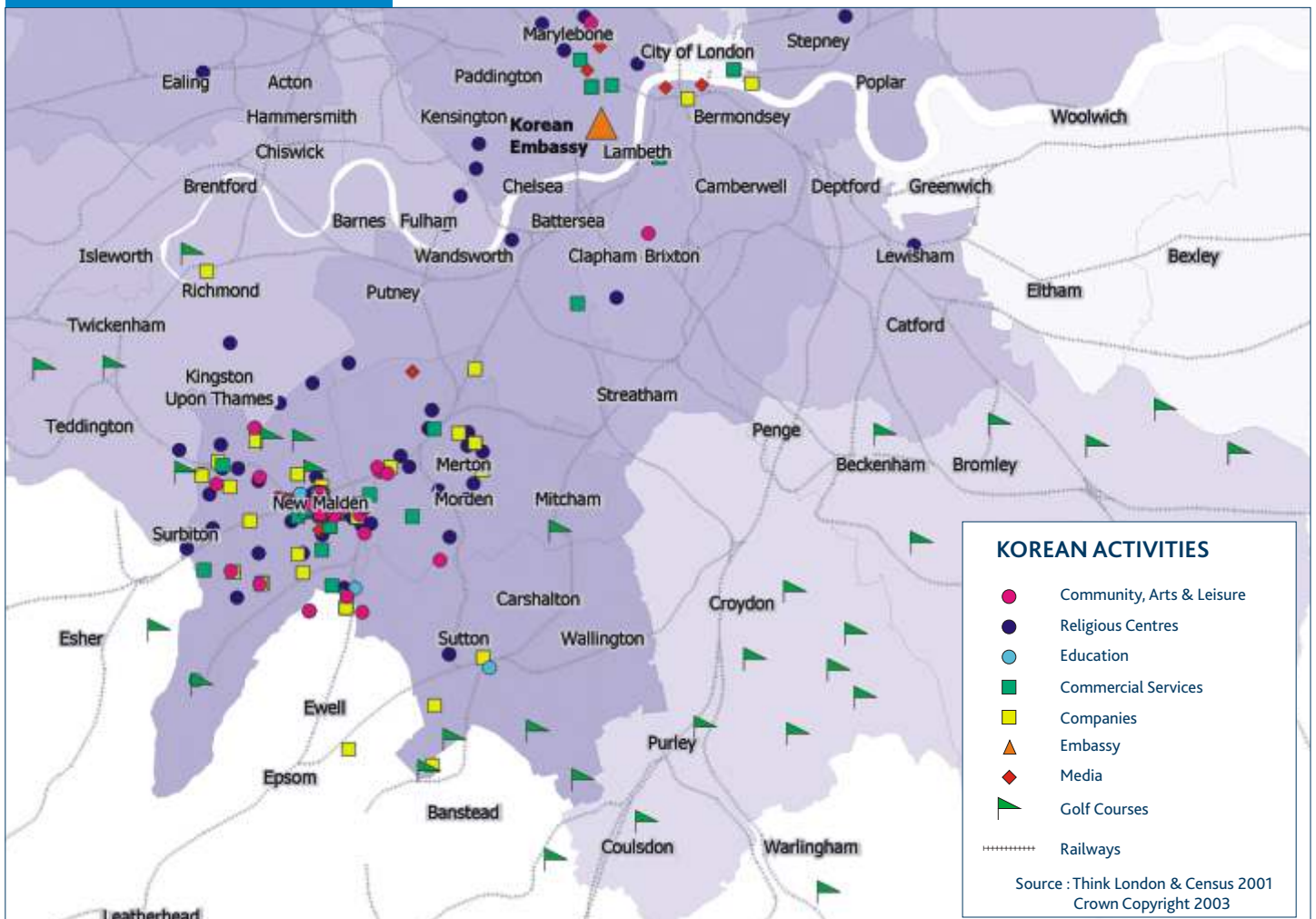
South Korea is currently the fourth most important international student market to London's higher education sector, but is predicted to rise to third position by 2007/8. The trend for a London-based education amongst South Koreans seems to be growing, with nearly an 80% increase in student numbers from South Korea over the last seven years. The current number of Koreans studying in the capital is 1,300 – nearly 40% of the UK total – and over 400 graduated in 2002/3. The British Council Korea is instrumental in encouraging UK university education, funding approximately 90 students every year to carry out postgraduate studies in the UK through a programme known as the Chevening Scheme.



Korean Community by borough



Korean community in South London





Restaurants and food shops

For an authentic experience of Korean cuisine at its best look no further than New Malden. From the upmarket elegance of New Malden's oldest Korean restaurant, The Asadal, to the homely café-style atmosphere of Yeon-Ji, You-Me or Jee's, wonderful food can be found for every occasion. There are also a number of Korean restaurants outside of New Malden, notably the formal and stylish Kaya based in Mayfair and Han Kang on Tottenham Court Road, central London.

The presence of Korean restaurants in New Malden has given rise to an entire range of food shops and eight specialist supermarkets, catering for the demands of the Korean community and Korean restaurant owners alike. These include Song's Supermarket, Songane Super, Seoul Plaza and Jinmi Super.



Travel between Korea and London

London is the most internationally accessible city in the world, attracting 89,000 South Korean visitors in 2003. Every week there are 10 direct scheduled flights between Seoul and London Heathrow, with flight numbers rising by one quarter since 1998.



Leisure and sports

A wide range of specialist leisure activities are available in south London to suit individuals and families alike. With over 43 golf courses to choose from it's a top choice for golf enthusiasts. From its base in New Malden, the Korean Sports Council in the UK supports a wide range of sporting activities across the country and Hampton Court Palace, Kew Gardens, Richmond Park with its Royal deer and Chessington World of Adventures all make for exciting family days out in south London.



Bookshops, libraries and media

Korean books, magazines and newspapers can be found in a number of London shops and libraries, particularly in the areas with a strong Korean community such as New Malden. The local library in New Malden offers a growing collection of Korean fiction and non-fiction books, and local free Korean newspapers, including The Korean Weekly, The Hanin Herald, Haninnews, The UK Life and Eurojournal.

Other popular newspapers available in London include Euro Times, a magazine almost entirely in Korean, The Korea Times and Korea Focus. In addition, Channel Sun, a Korean language television service, is available in the UK through cable television.

DECEMBER 2005



Arts and culture

The Korean Anglican Community Centre provides a range of innovative and exciting activities for the Korean community, ranging from a bi-monthly cultural seminar by visiting lecturers, to Korean language classes for British people. The borough of Kingston-Upon-Thames, south London, is home to an annual Korean festival, which celebrates traditional Korean food, costumes and music.

The community also participates in many other events such as Malden Fortnight, Surbiton Festival, and May Merrie. A variety of Korean films are shown at the Kingston Odeon and there is also a Kingston Asian Arts Forum which promotes the arts across the community's boroughs.



Places of worship

The Christian Korean population is well-served by churches in London, with many dedicated to the Korean community, such as the London Korean Church (Presbyterian) in Kingston, the Galilee Korean Church in New Malden and the Wimbledon Korean Presbyterian Church. The Buddhist-Korean Society is located in the very heart of the Korean community in Kingston-Upon-Thames, where Buddhists can worship at the Lotus Temple.

How we can help

Think London's free advisory service has assisted over 200 companies from Asia-Pacific in setting up, developing and expanding their businesses in London. From South Korea we have worked with both large multi-national enterprises and smaller/medium-sized companies – making sure their businesses succeed in London. Companies we have assisted include Samsung Design Europe and KOCCA (Korea Culture & Contents Agency).

Find out how we can help connect your business to London by contacting us at

WWW.THINKLONDON.COM
or email Yung-ho Seo, yhseo@thinklondon.com

Our principal funding partners are the London Development Agency and London's business community - through London First. Other key partners are the corporation of London, which also provides funding, and UK Trade & Investment.

We work with our partners to develop and promote London as a global business city.

