UK Visas and Immigration is part of the Home Office. It is responsible for considering asylum applications as well as applications from visitors to come to, or remain in, the United Kingdom.

We are committed to delivering a service in a way that promotes equality and respects diversity, to provide equality of opportunity and access to our services. We will treat you with respect, dignity and fairness regardless of your age, disability, ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

The following leaflets contain important information about applying for asylum in the United Kingdom (UK) and explains what to expect during the asylum screening process and afterwards. ‘Asylum screening’ is the terminology used to describe the process where we gather a range of information, in order to record your asylum application.

The information is contained in the following five leaflets:

1. Where to make a claim for asylum and what to expect during the asylum screening process.
2. What to expect after claiming asylum.
3. Legal advice, additional help and assistance.
4. Your responsibilities and rights as an asylum applicant.
5. Asylum support.
1. Where to make a claim for asylum and what to expect during the asylum screening process

Is making an asylum claim in the UK, the right course of action in my individual circumstances?

You should only make a claim for asylum (international protection) if you fear return to your country of origin/nationality. To be recognised as a refugee under the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, you must have left your country and be unable to go back because you have a well-founded fear of persecution based on one of the following reasons:

- Race
- Religion
- Nationality
- Political opinion; or
- Membership of a particular social group

If it is decided that you are not a refugee, because your claim is not based on one of the five reasons listed above, but there are substantial grounds for believing that you would face a real risk of suffering serious harm if returned to your country you may qualify for Humanitarian Protection.

If you do not think you have a claim for international protection (asylum or Humanitarian Protection) but would still like to remain in the UK for other reasons you should seek legal advice.

If your claim for international protection is refused it may affect any further applications you may have to stay or to visit the UK.
Where can I make a claim for asylum?

We expect you to claim asylum at the earliest possible opportunity. Failure to do so may be taken into account and affect the credibility of your claim. For most people this should be immediately on arrival to the UK at an airport or seaport.

If you are not detained you should go to the asylum intake unit (AIU) in Croydon (south of London) to make your asylum application. The AIU has an appointment system for those who have somewhere they can stay until their appointment. It also has a non appointment ‘walk-in’ service for people who do not have anywhere to stay or who have exceptional needs. Where possible, you should book an appointment by telephone which will guarantee the date and time you will be seen.

Asylum Intake Unit (AIU)
Lunar House
40 Wellesley Road
Croydon CR9 2BY

Telephone 020 8196 4524 for appointments

If you telephone to make an appointment you will be asked for some basic details about yourself, such as your name, nationality, any health conditions and any special requirements. You will not be asked about the details of your asylum claim on the telephone.

What if I need to change or cancel my appointment or other circumstances change?

If you need to change or cancel your appointment, please telephone 020 8196 4524 to let us know as soon as possible.

Please also tell us immediately if your circumstances change between telephoning for an appointment and attending the AIU. This includes for example if your accommodation needs change.

What do I need to bring when I make my asylum application?

If you are making your claim at the AIU, you should bring the following items, if you have them:

- **Passport(s)** – this includes your passport, and the passports of your spouse and/or any dependants in the UK.
- **Travel documents** – this includes travel tickets and boarding passes, even if they were not issued in the name of the passport or national ID used for travelling.
- **Police Registration Certificates** - if you or your family have them.
- **Any other identification documents** – this includes identity cards, birth/marriage/school certificates, membership cards, etc. This is to help us establish your age, identity and nationality.
- **Medicines** – we will need to know the details of any medical conditions you have and any medicines you are taking, so you should bring these with you.
- **Evidence of your accommodation** - if you are living in the UK please provide documentary evidence of your accommodation, such as a tenancy agreement or recent utility bill for example gas, electricity, etc., showing your full name and UK address. If
you are living in someone else’s house, please bring a letter (no older than three months) from the householder which says you can stay in their house and documentary evidence such as a utility bill showing the householder’s full name and address.

- **Your luggage** - if you require accommodation, you should bring up to a maximum of two pieces of luggage per person with you. (Containing personal belongings and clothing).

- **Any other documents** - Please note that it is your duty to provide us with all available documentation to substantiate your application as soon as possible. You should bring this evidence to your screening appointment or if you aren't able to do this, you should provide this evidence at your full asylum interview. If you are not able to do so, you should provide us with any additional documentation within the timescale which will be given to you at your asylum interview.

If your asylum claim is not being made at the AIU, but instead you are making your asylum claim elsewhere, (e.g. at an airport, seaport, reporting centre, immigration removal centre, or if you have been arrested by the police and an immigration officer has been called) and you do not have with you the documents listed above, you should give them to your asylum casework team as soon as possible.

**How long is the screening process?**

We aim to complete your screening within 4 hours, however there are occasions where it will take longer. If you require accommodation and need transport to take you to Initial Accommodation, your wait is likely to be extended. Whilst in the waiting area, please listen for announcements that will keep you informed of any change to the waiting times during the day.

You need to be prepared for this and for example, bring any medications you need with you, as well as something to eat and drink. Also, if you are diabetic or have any other health condition you should tell us. We also recommend that if you come with children, you bring enough food, drink, milk and nappies. You can buy a limited range of drinks and snacks at the AIU; a coffee shop is available on the third floor offering refreshments for purchase.

**What if I am disabled or have other special needs or requirements?**

Please tell us as soon as possible about any special needs or requirements for the screening interview. This may be when you are booking an appointment or as soon as possible afterwards by calling us back. Examples of such needs may be that you have mobility difficulties or you would prefer to be interviewed by a male or female screening officer. You should also inform us of any special needs on the day that you are making your asylum claim. Where feasible, we will try to accommodate any requirements you tell us about.

**What happens if I have dependants, or I am a dependant of someone else claiming asylum?**

If you are applying for asylum at the AIU and you want any of your dependants (such as a spouse or children under 18 years old) to be part of your asylum application, you must bring them with you.
You have the right to apply for asylum as a dependant, but you may also submit your own individual claim for asylum if you have separate information you wish to be taken into account. If you are applying for asylum as part of someone else’s application (for example, you are applying as a dependant of your husband), you will also be asked in private, by a screening officer, whether you would like to apply for asylum in your own right.

What happens about my asylum claim and that of my dependants, if I have made an asylum application somewhere other than the asylum intake unit?

You will have a screening interview and should follow any requests to provide additional information about yourself or your dependants. If you are unclear about anything you may ask questions. Dependents can be added to your application after a claim is made, but not once a decision has been made.

I am a child (under 18 years old). How will UK Visas and Immigration treat my application?

Applications from those under 18 years of age are considered under a different process from adult applications due to the specific needs and requirements of children. We will, when considering applications from children, take into account the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK. We will contact your local authority’s Children’s Services Department on your behalf if you are not already known to them. They will also be responsible for looking after you and giving you accommodation if you are not accompanied by an adult.

If you are an unaccompanied child, we will also give your details to an organisation independent from the Home Office, called the Children’s Panel, who will advise and assist you in your contact with the Home Office and local government agencies.

What if I don’t have evidence to prove my age?

If you claim to be under 18 years of age and we have reason not to believe you, you will need to provide credible documentary evidence of your age. If you do not have any evidence to prove your age and your physical appearance and/or demeanour very strongly suggest you are significantly over 18 years old, we will consider your asylum claim under adult procedures, until there is credible documentary or other persuasive evidence to demonstrate your age.

If you disagree with our decision to treat you as an adult, you may approach your local authority’s Children’s Services Department with a view to them undertaking their own assessment of your age. All other applicants will be afforded the benefit of the doubt and treated as children until a professional age assessment has been completed.

What can I expect when I make my asylum application?

You can expect to be treated with respect, dignity and fairness regardless of your age, disability, nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

We recognise that the asylum process may be unfamiliar to you and that you may have been through traumatic experiences, and that you may find it difficult to reveal sensitive information about yourself. However in order for your particular circumstances to be taken into account in fully considering your asylum claim, we want you to feel
safe in telling us about any sensitive information, for example, about rape, torture, any ill-treatment, or your sexuality, where relevant to your asylum claim.

We will ask, whether you would prefer to be interviewed about your asylum claim, by a man or a woman. (Given that you may find it easier to talk with a man or with a woman about your experiences). We will accommodate requests where possible. We will also ask you if you are happy to speak to us in English or if you need an interpreter.

The asylum screening process is divided into several parts:

- Gathering your biometric information (this is taking your fingerprints and photographs to maintain a record of asylum claims, to confirm your identity, and to check against other databases to ensure the UK is the right place to decide your asylum application).
- Carrying out identity and security checks (checking if you are already known to the UK authorities or by other counties).
- Confirming whether or not you require accommodation and gathering information to assist with making a decision on where in the UK you will be accommodated.
- Completing a screening interview where we will ask you:
  - Basic questions about your identity and details of your family.
  - How you travelled to the United Kingdom.
  - Whether you have any medical conditions.
  - Why you fled your country (giving just a brief explanation).
  - Questions relating to any criminal offences and national security.
  - If you booked an appointment you will be asked to confirm your personal details, family details, any medical conditions and other information gathered during the telephone booking.

We will ask you to sign a declaration to confirm that the information you have given is correct and that any necessary corrections or changes have been made.

If you are unable to provide reliable evidence of your country or place of origin, or we have reason to doubt your claimed nationality, we may ask you to undergo language analysis testing. If you agree to this, you will be interviewed by a language expert over the telephone to help establish your country or region of origin, who will produce a report to help us establish your country of nationality.

You should be open and truthful with us about your circumstances and answer all the questions we ask you as accurately as you can. If you are not truthful during the screening process it may harm your asylum application.

Additionally if you are not truthful you may be committing an offence which may result in prosecution (legal action taken in the British courts). Offences can include attempting to gain leave by deception (this means being dishonest to get permission to be in the UK).
If you are granted status (permission) to remain in the UK you will be issued with a biometric residence permit (BRP). When you apply for asylum it is a legal requirement that you also apply for a BRP. At this stage in the process you will only need to sign a form. Later in the asylum process you may be invited to attend a Post Office to enrol your biometric information (fingerprints and facial image).

**Will I be detained?**

If it is decided that the UK is not obliged to decide your application because another country has responsibility for considering your asylum claim, you may be detained pending removal to that country.

We may detain you if we decide that you are suitable for detention and your application can be considered whilst you are detained.

You will be asked if there are any reasons why you should not be detained. If you are detained, we will explain the detention processes to you in more detail and regularly review your suitability for detention.

If you are not detained we will allocate your case to an asylum decision making team. You will be able to contact this team if you have questions about the asylum process. If there is a change in circumstances we may review at a later date whether you are suitable for detention.

**What is an application registration card, and when will I receive it?**

The application registration card (ARC) is evidence that you have submitted an asylum claim in the UK. It is not an identity card, (it will not be accepted by banks and other organisations as proof of ID), but it will contain your personal details including your name, date of birth and nationality, as well as your photograph and fingerprints. Each of your dependants will have their own card.

If you have applied to us for financial support and we agree to support you, you will need to show your ARC every time you collect your money. You will also need to show your card to immigration officials if they ask for it.

Once your asylum claim has been made we will give you an ARC. If you are detained you will receive your ARC if you are released from detention, before your claim is decided.

**What if I’m not given an application registration card?**

If we are unable to give you an ARC when you first apply for asylum, we will give you a time limited standard acknowledgement letter (SAL), which you can use as a temporary replacement for your ARC. We will write to you within a few days of your application being made informing you of an appointment at which your ARC will be issued.

**Will I be given permission to work in the UK?**

You are generally not allowed to work while your application for asylum is being considered. If you have valid leave and have been
given permission to work in the UK, you should contact the asylum team considering your case to clarify whether you still have the right to work and whether there are any restrictions.

If we have not made a decision on your initial asylum application after one year (and this delay is not attributed to you) you may request permission to work. This right will cease if your application for asylum is finally determined as unsuccessful.

**Will I be able to undertake any voluntary work?**

You may undertake voluntary activity for a registered charity or voluntary organisation. However you should check with the asylum team considering your case before you volunteer, as there are exceptions to this position. Also, the activity must **not** amount to unpaid employment or payment in kind (such as you are being given something other than money in exchange for working, including for example accommodation).

**Can I make an accommodation and asylum support application?**

For information about whether you are entitled to accommodation and support and assistance completing the support form, please see the attached leaflet entitled “**Asylum support**”.

**Where can I get legal advice?**

For information about finding a legal representative please see the attached leaflet entitled “**Legal advice, additional help and assistance**”, which also provides details of where you can get additional help and information.

Depending on where in the UK you are living, a screening officer at the AIU will be able to arrange an appointment for you to see a legal representative, who is independent from the Home Office.
2. What to expect after claiming asylum

How long will it take to make a decision after my asylum claim is made?

A decision will usually be made on your application within 6 months. This is our aim but this is not always possible.

What happens to my asylum claim if I travel abroad?

Your asylum claim will normally be considered as withdrawn if you leave the UK without first seeking our agreement.

How do I keep in contact with the Home Office?

Unless you have already been given permission to be in the UK (for example you were given leave to enter as a student), or are detained, you will be given “temporary admission” (on a form called an IS96). This does not mean that you have the right to remain in the UK or that you can stay permanently. However, it does allow you to stay in the UK whilst your asylum application is being considered.

You will be required to live at a particular address, for example, with a friend/relative, or at the accommodation we provided for you. You will be required to regularly report to a local reporting centre or at a police station. (The date and time you need to report will be stated on your IS96 form, or if you have leave to remain, it will be stated on form IS248, that you will be given at the end of screening process).

We will give you contact numbers to inform us of any problems you may have in attending the reporting centre. We will review how often we ask you to report and we may change how often we ask you to report.
What if I don’t understand the documents the Home Office send me?

We will send you various letters during the asylum process. Most of these will be in English. If you do not understand what a letter says, you should ask your legal representative, without delay, to explain the letter to you.

If you do not have a legal representative you should contact the team that sent you the letter, or a friend/ family member, or use the independent Asylum Helpline (Advice) whose contact details can be found in the attached leaflet entitled “Legal advice, additional help and assistance”.

What can I expect at my asylum interview?

We will send you information about the date of your asylum interview in a letter. Your asylum interview will be conducted in private. If you have asked for either a male or female interviewing officer, we will arrange this where possible.

Your asylum interview is your opportunity to speak to us face to face and to give a full account of why you left your country and why you are afraid of returning home. It is very important that you attend the interview, which we will make as sensitive and reassuring as possible. It is very important that you give a full account of what happened to you and who you are afraid of, if you return to your country of origin. You should give as much detail as possible about all the reasons you left and why you are afraid to go back.

We will interview you in your first language or a language that you are reasonably able to understand. You can ask for the interview to be recorded and for a copy of the recording to take away with you. It is very important that you give us any evidence or information you have to support your account at this time (or earlier if possible). If you have further evidence you wish to submit after your interview, you should do so within the timescale we give you. You should inform us and your legal representative if this will be a problem for you.

We will take into account any gender-specific information, such as women’s rights in your country of origin. In certain circumstances, we may ask you about gender-based persecution, which is persecution you may have experienced because of your gender for example, domestic violence, forced marriage, ‘honour-based’ violence, female genital mutilation, rape or other forms of sexual violence. You will not be asked for precise details about any sexual assaults. However, you may be asked about the events leading up to and following the assault if this is relevant to your asylum claim.

We recognise that if you are gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or transgender, you may have experienced discrimination and/ or persecution in your home country. You should be assured that we will treat your claim sensitively and will consider your statements against the objective country information (this is information collated from trusted sources).
If you have children, some offices provide partitioned family rooms or can provide childcare so that your children can be looked after while you are being interviewed. To check if this available, contact the casework team handling your case.

**Can I bring anyone with me to my asylum interview for support?**

You can bring your legal representative with you to this interview. If you are receiving free legal advice (legal aid), you should check with your legal representative if they will be able to attend or not. You may also wish to bring a friend or other companion with you for emotional or physical support, particularly if you have suffered traumatic experiences or sexual violence. You should agree this with us before the interview. However, this person will not be able to answer any questions for you.

**What if I can’t attend my interview?**

Interviews can only be postponed for reasons of ill-health or other exceptional reasons. You should inform the asylum team as soon as possible if you think you may have a problem coming to your interview. You are expected to provide medical evidence of any illness from your doctor (GP).

If you do not come to your asylum interview we will write to you to find out why you did not attend. If you do not reply within five working days, explaining why you could not come to your interview, your asylum application may be treated by us as withdrawn. If your application is recorded as withdrawn, we will not consider your asylum application any further and you will be required to leave the UK.

**Non-compliance with the asylum process**

You must make every effort to comply with the asylum process. Failure to attend the asylum interview without a good reason may result in your claim for asylum being treated as withdrawn. In addition if you have an appointment, for example, to be fingerprinted and you fail to attend, your application could be refused on non-compliance grounds. If you have any problems with regards to attendance or compliance with our requests, you should contact the casework team handling your case and inform them at the first opportunity. If your non-compliance with the process is due to illness or exceptional circumstances, evidence should be provided such as a doctor’s letter.

**Who will decide my asylum application?**

A caseworker will make a decision on your asylum application after your asylum interview. We will notify you of this decision in writing. You should note that the person who interviewed you may be different from the person making the decision on your application.

**What are the possible outcomes?**

**Grant of asylum as a refugee**

If you are granted asylum in the UK you are recognised as a refugee under the 1951 Refugee Convention and are allowed to remain in the UK for five years (limited leave). At the end of five years limited leave subject to the outcome of any review and to the policies in place at the time, you will be eligible to seek indefinite leave to remain. You should do this one month before your five years’ limited leave expires.
During your period of limited leave if there is a significant and non-temporary change in country conditions, it may be decided to review grants of refugee status. Your status may also be reviewed if we receive information relating to your actions that may mean you no longer warrant refugee status, such as your refugee status was obtained by a misrepresentation.

**Grant of Humanitarian Protection**

If you do not qualify as a refugee under the 1951 Refugee Convention, but it is accepted that you have a need for international protection, you will be granted Humanitarian Protection and allowed to remain in the UK for five years. If there is a significant change of circumstances in the country you fled from during these five years and you no longer require international protection, or if there is other evidence that shows that Humanitarian Protection is no longer appropriate, we may review your status.

If you have humanitarian protection status, at the end of your five years’ limited leave, you will be eligible (subject to the outcome of any review and to the policies in place at the time), to seek indefinite leave to remain. You should do this one month before your five years’ limited leave expires.

**Grant of Other Leave**

If you are not accepted as being in need of international protection, but it is considered that there are reasons for allowing you to stay on a temporary basis, you will be granted limited leave to remain.

One month before your limited leave expires you should contact the Home Office and make arrangements to leave the UK or apply for additional leave.

**Integration assistance**

If you are recognised as a refugee, granted Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave, you will be entitled to the same social and economic rights as UK citizens and you will be provided with information to help you access your entitlements and assist with your integration into the UK. The independent charity Migrant Help through their Asylum Help service will also be able to provide advice and support. Their contact details are in the attached leaflet entitled “Legal advice, additional help and assistance”.

**Refusal of asylum application**

If you are refused asylum, you will receive the full reasoning for this decision in a letter. If you disagree with the decision and are entitled to appeal, you will also receive information on how to appeal.

**Requirement to leave the UK**

If your asylum claim is withdrawn or we refuse your claim and you are at the end of any appeal process (or if you do not submit an appeal), you will be required to leave the UK. It is expected that you should leave the UK within 21 days. If you do not leave voluntarily, the Home Office will enforce your removal.

If your removal is enforced you will be banned from travelling to the UK for 10 years.
What if I decide that I want to go home?

There is help available at any stage of the asylum process if you decide you want to return home.

You can make your own arrangements to leave the UK at any time. You will need to inform us of your departure details so any documents can be returned to you and your application closed. If you do not have the funds to book your travel, arrangements can be made for you.

The Home Office Voluntary Departure Service can be contacted for help on returning home.

The team can discuss your return, obtain your travel document and send it to the port of departure, help with the cost of your tickets or provide other practical assistance.

Home Office Voluntary Departure Service

Telephone: 0300 004 0202

Monday – Friday between 09.00 and 17.30)

Fax 0870 336 9544

You can also email the teams:

If you are planning a voluntary departure from the UK and need help with your travel document or cost of flight but do not require any special assistance email:

Voluntarydeparture@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

If you are planning a voluntary departure and require special assistance which includes help with your medical needs or reintegration into your home country you should contact the Assisted Voluntary Return team. If you qualify you can get up to £2,000 to help you find somewhere to live, find a job or start a business email:

AssistedVoluntaryReturns@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
Where can I get legal advice?

If you make your application at the asylum intake unit you may be offered an appointment with an independent legal adviser. If you are not offered an appointment with an independent legal adviser when you claim asylum, this can be arranged while you are staying in initial accommodation (the accommodation provided for you if you have nowhere else to live).

You can also ask the asylum team dealing with your case for contact details of independent legal representatives in your area or the independent organisation Asylum Help whose contact details can be found on the next page. They will also be able to provide advice and support.

Alternatively use the following links:

www.gov.uk/legal-advice-immigration-asylum

England and Wales

- Civil Legal Advice (CLA): 0845 345 4345
  www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice

Scotland

- Scottish Legal Aid Board: 0845 122 8686
  www.slab.org.uk

- The Law Society of Scotland: 0131 226 7411
  www.lawscot.org.uk
To ensure that your representative is properly qualified to advise you, they should either be a qualified lawyer who is a member of the Law Society of England and Wales, Law Society of Scotland, Law Society of Northern Ireland, or an adviser who is officially recognised by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) as being able to provide advice for asylum applications.

For further information on who can provide you with legal representation and advice, the OISC (which covers all of the UK) can be contacted by telephoning 0845 000 0046 or alternatively you can visit their website at: www.oisc.gov.uk

**Additional help and Information**

There are independent advice services across the UK that can help you with:

- Housing issues.
- Health issues.
- Agency referrals, for example social services support services for victims of torture, sexual violence or abuse.
- Emotional support.
- Arranging English language classes.
- Queries about asylum support.
- Advice about legal representation.
- Finding school places for your children.
- Integration issues for applicants granted asylum.

Asylum Help is part of the Migrant Help charity. Asylum Help is funded by the Home Office to provide independent advice and guidance to asylum seekers. They have informative information in both audio and written format on the ASYLUM ADVICE UK website. These are available in 15 key languages. [www.asylumhelpuk.org](http://www.asylumhelpuk.org)

If you would like to speak directly to an adviser, please call Asylum Helpline (Advice). If your query is about support see the attached leaflet entitled “Asylum support”. Asylum Help is unable to give any legal advice regarding your claim for asylum.

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<td><strong>English/or language not listed below</strong></td>
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The [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk/asylum-helplines) has contact details, opening times and services offered by the organisations that are funded to offer advice and help with the asylum process.

Other national organisations that provide assistance and advice to asylum seekers include:

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<th>Website</th>
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<td>Scotland</td>
<td>Scottish Refugee Council</td>
<td>0141 248 9799</td>
<td><a href="https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk">www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England and Wales</td>
<td>The Refugee Council</td>
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<td><a href="https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk">www.refugeecouncil.org.uk</a></td>
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<td>Wales</td>
<td>Refugee Action</td>
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<td><a href="https://www.refugee-action.org.uk">www.refugee-action.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>Bryson Intercultural</td>
<td>0289 024 4639</td>
<td><a href="https://www.brysonintercultral.org">www.brysonintercultral.org</a></td>
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### Tracing your family

If you have family that you have lost contact with, the Red Cross can assist you to get a message to them. We can refer you to the Red Cross who will contact you to arrange an appointment. They have offices throughout the UK which can be found at: [http://www.redcross.org.uk](http://www.redcross.org.uk).

### Victims of human trafficking and modern slavery

Human trafficking is the recruitment, movement or receipt of a person by deception or coercion into a situation of exploitation. For example you may have been told you were coming to the UK to work legally but once in the UK you have been forced to work as a domestic servant or as a prostitute, with threats of violence if you refused.

Victims of trafficking are often not aware that they have been trafficked. For a more detailed definition of what trafficking means you can find more information at: [www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/crime-threats/human-trafficking](http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/crime-threats/human-trafficking).

Modern slavery can take many forms including the trafficking of people, forced labour, servitude and slavery. Help is available for victims.

More information on modern slavery and help groups can be found at:
- [modernslavery.co.uk](https://modernslavery.co.uk)
- There is also 24 hour helpline you can contact anonymously 0800 0121 700.
Those who are responsible for human trafficking or modern slavery are committing a serious crime. Those guilty may face imprisonment for life.

If you are a victim of human trafficking or modern slavery specialist help and support is available to you. If you think you are a victim please tell us as soon as possible. If you feel unable to, please speak to your legal representative or the police. You can also contact one of the specialist organisations in the following list for independent advice and support.

- Victim Support - 0808 16 89 111  
  [www.victimsupport.org](http://www.victimsupport.org)
- The Salvation Army – 0300 303 8151  
  [www.salvationarmy.org.uk](http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk)
- Migrant Help – 07766 668781  
  [www.migranthelpline.org.uk](http://www.migranthelpline.org.uk)
- The TARA Project (Scotland) – 0141 276 7724  

**Victims of torture**

If you have been the victim of torture you may need support from specialist organisations that work with torture victims. Freedom from Torture and the Helen Bamber Foundation are two charities, independent of the Home Office, that can provide medical and social care, practical assistance and psychological and physical therapy.

- Freedom From Torture [www.freedomfromtorture.org](http://www.freedomfromtorture.org)
- Helen Bamber Foundation [www.helenbamber.org](http://www.helenbamber.org)

If you feel you are in need of assistance from one of these organisations, your legal representative, your doctor (GP) or voluntary sector organisations can refer you to them. If you feel able to do so, you should also inform the officer who interviews you either at your asylum screening interview or at your full asylum interview.

**Gender based violence**

You may have suffered gender based violence in your home country, in transit to the UK or whilst in the UK. This can include acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion (threats made against you made you feel like you had choice) and other deprivations of liberty.

If you have experienced this type of violence you should disclose such information as soon as possible. We want you to feel safe so that you can tell us about any rape, sexual violence or other harm that you have suffered either in your country of origin or here in the UK. If you feel unable to tell a Home Office official, please speak to your legal representative. If the violence has taken place in the UK you should contact the police. You can also contact one of the specialist organisations below for independent advice and support:

- Rape Crisis(England and Wales) - 0808 802 9999  
  [www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)
- Rape Crisis (Scotland) – 0808 801 0302  
  [www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk)
The Survivors Trust is a national agency for specialist voluntary sector agencies providing support services working with women, men and children who are victims/survivors of rape, sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse.

**Domestic violence**

Domestic violence is covered in more detail in the leaflet entitled: 
*Your responsibilities and rights as an asylum applicant*

The following organisations can also be contacted for help:

- For advice and support for women experiencing domestic violence, please contact:
  
  The National Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 247
  www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk

- For advice and support for men in abusive relationships, please contact:
  
  The Men’s Advice line - 0808 801 0327
  www.mensadvice line.org.uk

- For advice and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic abuse please contact:
  
  Broken Rainbow - 0300 999 5428
  www.broken-rainbow.org.uk

**FGM (Female genital mutilation)**

FGM is the mutilation of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is sometimes known as female circumcision or ‘sunna’. FGM is illegal in the UK. It is also illegal to arrange for a child to be taken abroad for FGM. Offenders face a large fine and a prison sentence of up to 14 years.

**What can you do?**

If you are worried about someone who is at risk of FGM or has had FGM after coming to the UK you must share this information with the police or with social services. It is then their responsibility to investigate and protect any girls or women involved.

If you have been affected by FGM you can contact Forward for information on the services available including one-to-one support.

- Forward (Foundation for Women’s Health Research and Development)
  0208 960 4000
  www.forwarduk.org

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) has a FGM helpline which is free, anonymous, 24-hour
service. You can call the FGM helpline if you're worried a child is at risk of, or has had, FGM.

- FGM helpline – 0800 028 3550
  www.nspcc.org.uk

**Help for children**

ChildLine is a confidential and free service run by the NSPCC for children and young people up to the age of 19. Children and young people can contact a ChildLine counsellor to talk about issues affecting them. This could be about anything affecting their wellbeing; FGM, family relationships, abuse, anxiety, eating problems, school, etc.

The counsellors at ChildLine can be contacted on 0800 1111

For additional information and other methods of contact including online chat and emailing a counsellor see the ChildLine website
www.childline.org.uk

**Lesbian and gay support**

- For advice, information and support if you are a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender please contact.

  UK Lesbian Gay Immigration Group – 0207 922 7811
  www.uklgig.org.uk
4. Your responsibilities and rights as an asylum applicant

Your responsibilities as an asylum applicant

As an asylum applicant we expect you to co-operate with the asylum process and Home Office officials at all times. Any omission or misrepresentation of facts may affect the decision we make on your application. If you use deception to obtain leave to enter or remain in the UK any leave you have been granted may be taken away. It is also a criminal offence and you may be prosecuted.

It is your duty to submit all available documentation to substantiate your application, including your age, your background (including background details of relatives), your identity, your nationality(ies), any country(ies) and place(s) of previous residence, any previous asylum application, your travel routes, your travel documents, any medical evidence and any evidence that may assist in substantiating your asylum claim.

It is also your responsibility to:

- Keep in regular contact with the Home Office.
- Leave the UK if you are not granted leave and any appeal fails.
- **Obey the law. If you are in doubt about what the law is it your responsibility to find out.** For example, the carrying of offensive weapons, such as a knife, may result in a prison sentence. Violence and sexual offences are serious crimes that deeply affect the lives of victims and warrant significant prison sentences. The age of sexual consent in the UK is 16.
**Anti-social behaviour**

Anti-social behaviour is not tolerated in the UK. Action may be taken against you if you are found taking part in, for example:

- Rowdy, nuisance or intimidating behaviour.
- Vandalism or graffiti.
- Begging, fighting, spitting or anti-social drinking.
- Using or selling drugs.
- Carrying illegal weapons.
- Not following road safety laws.
- Dumping rubbish or abandoning cars.

**Smoking ban**

It is illegal to smoke inside public buildings or enclosed public spaces and business premises (this includes restaurants, shops, buses, trams, trains and hospitals). You may be prosecuted and fined for smoking in public places.

**Driving laws**

Driving laws in the UK may be different from those in your home country. If you have access to a vehicle, you **must** have:

- A current and valid driving licence.
- Insurance for the vehicle.
- A current and valid MOT certificate – which means the vehicle, is safe to drive.
- Current and valid road tax.

Driving without **any** of the above is against the law. You could also be prosecuted if you drive a vehicle under the influence of alcohol (where over the legal limit) or drugs, or if you use a mobile phone while driving. As an asylum applicant you are not entitled to apply to the DVLA for a UK driving licence and you should **not** send your application registration card (ARC) to the DVLA to obtain a driving licence. Additionally, access to or ownership of a vehicle may affect your asylum support application or ongoing support payments.

**Your rights as an asylum applicant include:**

- Remaining in the UK throughout the duration of your asylum application.
- Having the opportunity to give full account of your reasons for claiming asylum.
- Having your application considered fairly and accurately.
- To appeal if you are eligible to appeal.
- To be assured of confidentiality concerning your asylum application (the UK will not inform your country of origin that you have made an application for asylum).
- Having access to support and accommodation if you are eligible to receive it.
- Having legal representation - free legal advice depends on your financial circumstances.

**Complaints about the service the Home Office has provided to you**

We take complaints seriously. Our aim is to resolve complaints fairly and quickly; we will take steps to put things right when they have gone wrong, and learn lessons on how to improve our service. If you
have a complaint it will **not** affect your asylum application. The procedure for making a complaint depends on the type of complaint that you want to make. You can make a complaint in person or in writing. You can pick up a leaflet from one of our public offices or visit our website:

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration/about/complaints-procedure

**Healthcare**

Your application for asylum will not be affected by any illness or treatment you are receiving.

You are entitled to see a doctor (GP) and have National Health Service (NHS) provided hospital care without charge. You may also receive free NHS prescriptions, dental and optical care (you should ask about a HC2 certificate). Please note that if you have resources of your own you may have to contribute to your healthcare costs by paying for your prescription medicines (England only). Prescription medicines in Scotland and Wales are free of charge.

If you think that you may have tuberculosis (TB) or any other contagious disease you should seek medical assistance **straight away**.

**Medical emergency**

If you require an ambulance for a medical emergency, that is a serious threat to life, then you should telephone 999 or 112 for the emergency services (ambulance, fire, and police). Calls to

emergency services are free of charge from a landline or mobile telephone. Always call 999 or 112 if someone is seriously ill or injured, and their life is at risk. Where you need medical help in non-emergency situations, you can call 111.

**Disability care needs**

If you have a disability or special care need, you can contact your local social services to request a Community Care Assessment. The local authority may decide to offer you accommodation and support.

**Education**

If any of your dependants are of compulsory school age they must go to school. The compulsory age for a child to start full time education in the UK is the start of the autumn school term after the child’s 5th birthday and continues for most children until they are at least 16 years old. In England young people have to be in school or training until they are 18. Further information can be obtained from your local council authority or the advisory services for asylum seekers.

**Reporting crime**

If you are the victim of, or have witnessed, a crime, it is important that you report it to the police who will provide assistance to you. You can:

- Go to your local police station.
- Telephone 999 or 112 for emergency services and request Police assistance for urgent help.
• Telephone 101 when for non-emergency situations (for example to give the police information about crime in your area).

Calls to emergency services are free of charge from any landline or mobile telephone. Your accommodation provider or the advisory services for asylum seekers can help you locate the nearest police station and arrange an interpreter if you need one.

Harassment

Harassment is any unwelcome or hostile act carried out towards you and includes verbal or physical threats, abuse or violence. If someone threatens you or has harmed you because of your age, a disability, your nationality, race, gender, gender reassignment, religion, belief or sexual orientation, you should report the incident to:

• Your local police station.
• Your accommodation provider (if you are housed by UK Visas and Immigration).
• Your asylum casework team whom can help you contact the police/accommodation provider.
• You should also inform your legal representative and/or the advisory services for asylum seekers.

Domestic violence

Domestic violence is an issue taken seriously in the UK. It is defined as any threatening behaviour, violence or abuse – physical, sexual, emotional or financial – between adults who are, or were, in a relationship together; or between family members, regardless of gender, age or sexuality. If you are the victim of domestic violence, please be aware that it is safe to report it:

• Anything you tell us will not be passed on without your consent.
• Your identity and those of your dependants will be protected.
• You have choices about the types of protection you and your dependants receive.
• We will move you and your dependants into alternative accommodation.

Information can be provided by your accommodation provider (if accommodated by UK Visas and Immigration) and the advisory services for asylum seekers about how to get the support you need.

The following people/organisations will be able to assist you and your dependants to seek help and protection.

• Your local police station.
• Your asylum casework team.
• Your legal representative.
• The national domestic violence 24 hour telephone helpline (0808 2000 247 – calls are free of charge).
Am I entitled to asylum support?

When you claim asylum we will ask you if you need accommodation. If you have nowhere to stay, or insufficient funds to provide for your own accommodation, we will firstly accommodate you in what is called ‘initial accommodation’ (IA).

Asylum Help are part of Migrant Help an independent charity contracted to provide independent advice to asylum seekers by the Home Office. Asylum Help provide two functions Asylum Advice UK provides information and assistance about the asylum process (but not legal advice) and Asylum Support Applications UK who will assist you with support applications and any changes in circumstance, such as applying for subsistence only. See How do I contact Asylum Help below for contact details.

While you are in IA you will need to complete an asylum support application form, which will be assessed to see what support level you need. Asylum Help has offices in all the initial accommodation sites and will assist you in completing the form.

Checks will be made to see if you have your own resources. You will also need to declare your resources that you have in the UK and abroad. A decision will be made to decide whether you should use them to fund your own living expenses.

If we accept that you qualify for housing (and financial support) we will then move you to longer term accommodation in the same region. This will normally happen two to three weeks after you arrive in initial accommodation.
If you need accommodation it is offered on a **no choice** basis. We will not accommodate you in London unless we consider you have a compelling or exceptional need.

**How long will asylum support be provided for?**

Support can only be provided until a decision is made on your asylum application and whilst an in-country appeal is pending. Separate rules apply if you have children.

**Can I apply for support if I only need accommodation or only need financial support?**

If you have accommodation, for example, with a relative or friend who can provide you with a place to stay, you can stay with them and still apply for financial support for your day-to-day needs. If you have, for example, a regular income but not enough money for your day-to-day needs and accommodation, you can apply for accommodation only.

**What if my circumstances change?**

You should advise us immediately if your circumstances change. You can notify us directly, or use the independent asylum help (support applications) service to notify us, see below for contact details. For example, if the relative or friend who you are staying with can no longer provide you with accommodation, you will be able to apply for accommodation and financial support.

**What happens if I delay making my asylum application?**

If you delay making an application for asylum your support application may be refused, so you must make your claim for asylum as soon as possible. If you book an appointment to make your claim at the asylum intake unit and you attend your appointment, the time between booking and the appointment will not count as a delay.

**Am I liable for prosecution if I fail to disclose that I have funds?**

When applying for asylum support you must tell the Home Office about any funds you have, either in the UK or elsewhere. This will be taken into account when we arrange support for you. Failure to disclose this information may result in prosecution. It is an offence to secure support through false or dishonest representations. When you apply for support you will have to agree to a credit check and databases, such as bank databases, will be checked.

**Is there any additional asylum support available?**

If you are pregnant or have children under the age of three and are in receipt of asylum support, you are entitled to receive additional payments for the purchase of supplementary foods.

A one-off payment may be provided to eligible, pregnant women receiving asylum support to help with costs arising from the birth of a baby. Applications must be submitted in writing eight weeks before the baby is due to be born, or within six weeks after the birth.

**What if I have queries about my asylum support?**

If you have any questions about support, or you need assistance with your application form you should contact the independent Asylum
Helpline (support applications) or your legal representative or your asylum team.

**How do I contact Asylum Help for support queries?**

For queries, changes of circumstances that may effect support entitlement and assistance with completing asylum support application forms you should call the Asylum Helpline (Support Applications).

The service can be provided in a language that you understand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English/ or language not listed</td>
<td>0808 8000 631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanian</td>
<td>0808 8000 621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amharic</td>
<td>0808 8000 623</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>0808 8000 625</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>0808 8000 627</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese Mandarin</td>
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<td>Farsi</td>
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<td>French</td>
<td>0808 8000 635</td>
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<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>0808 8000 637</td>
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<td>Pashtu</td>
<td>0808 8000 639</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>0808 8000 641</td>
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<td>Tamil</td>
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<td>Tigrinya</td>
<td>0808 8000 645</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>0808 8000 647</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>0808 8000 649</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

If you want advice that is not support related, you should contact Asylum Help’s Asylum Helpline (Advice) 0808 800 630.

See enclosed leaflet “**Legal advice, additional help and assistance**” for additional information. You can also find information on their website about the asylum process in multiple languages, (In audio and written format).

www.asylumhelpuk.org