



Home Office

Asylum Policy Instruction

Asylum Interviews

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Instruction

This guidance explains how caseworkers should conduct asylum interviews and obtain information which establishes, as far as possible, whether or not the claimant meets the threshold for an asylum or human rights claim to succeed.

It provides specific guidance on:

- ▶ Interview arrangements and formalities;
- ▶ Preparing for an asylum interview – preparation is the key to ensuring relevant evidence is obtained;
- ▶ How to investigate an asylum claim, including key principles, questioning techniques and factors that may affect an individual's ability to provide evidence.

In every interview caseworkers, as representatives of the Home Office, are expected to maintain high professional standards and treat claimants with respect and sensitivity throughout. For example, overly casual or inappropriate clothing is not acceptable.

This instruction must be read in conjunction with the main asylum policy instructions, in particular, [Assessing credibility and refugee status](#), [Gender issues in the asylum claim](#), and [Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

1.2 Background

The asylum interview is the main opportunity for the claimant to provide evidence about why they need international protection. It is important for claimants to disclose all relevant information at this stage and for caseworkers to investigate the key issues through a focused and sensitive approach to questioning, particularly as some evidence may relate to instances of persecution or serious harm, including sexual violence. Obtaining sufficient information to determine an asylum claim and being able to subject it to sensitive but rigorous enquiry is crucial to ensuring that asylum claims are properly considered, so that protection is granted to those who genuinely need it and refused to those who do not.

1.3 Policy intention in conducting asylum interviews

The policy objective when conducting an interview is to gather enough evidence to be able to properly consider and determine the claim by:

- ▶ providing a positive and secure environment in which asylum claimants feel able to disclose sensitive information to support their claim;
- ▶ ensuring that all asylum claimants are treated with respect and humanity, dignity and fairness regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, sexual identity, religion or belief;
- ▶ asking appropriate and focused questions to encourage full disclosure and gather relevant evidence on key aspects of the claim, allowing the interviewer to test the

credibility of the claimant's statements and providing an opportunity for the claimant to explain anything that appears to be implausible or inconsistent; and

- ▶ enabling potentially vulnerable claimants to be signposted to appropriate services, for example, where there are concerns over physical and mental health, sexual or domestic violence or child protection concerns.

1.4 Application in respect of children

Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 requires the Home Office to carry out its functions in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK. In dealing with parents and children, caseworkers must see the family both as a unit and as individuals.

Although a child's best interests are not a factor in assessing whether a fear of persecution is well-founded, the way that caseworkers interact with children and their decisions following the determination of refugee status must take account of the section 55 duty.

Officers must comply with the section 55 duty when carrying out the actions set out in this instruction, in respect of children and those with children. The statutory guidance under section 55, [Every Child Matters - Change for Children](#), sets out the key principles to take into account in all activities.

Our statutory duty to children includes the need to demonstrate:

- ▶ Fair treatment which meets the same standard a British child would receive;
- ▶ The child's best interests being made a primary, although not the only consideration;
- ▶ No discrimination of any kind;
- ▶ Asylum applications are dealt with in a timely fashion; and
- ▶ Identification of those who might be at risk from harm.

This duty must be borne in mind throughout the process and specific guidance is available in sections [3.2 on Children and families](#) and [3.3 on the care of children during asylum interviews](#).

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Section 2: Relevant legislation

2.1 The 1951 Refugee Convention

The [Refugee Convention](#) is the primary source of the framework of international refugee protection. It has since been supplemented in the European Union ('the EU') and other regions by a subsidiary protection regime, as well as via the progressive development of international human rights law.

2.1 European legislation

The United Kingdom is bound by the European Council [Procedures Directive 2005/85/EC](#) which sets out the minimum standards on procedures in EU Member States for granting and withdrawing refugee status. Articles 12 to 14 specifically refer to asylum interviews and the requirements before a decision is taken on an asylum claim, including circumstances in which an interview can be omitted. These provisions are reflected in the Immigration Rules.

2.2 The Immigration Rules

[Paragraphs 339NA to 339ND](#) of the Immigration Rules set out the basic provisions for asylum interviews and reflect our international obligations under the Directive. The Rules set out provisions for an asylum interview, the circumstances when an interview can be omitted, a requirement for appropriate confidentiality and provision of an interpreter during the interview.

[Paragraph 333C](#) provides for a claim to be treated as withdrawn if the claimant fails to attend the interview without reasonable explanation ([see section 3.5 on Illness](#)).

[Paragraphs 339HA to 339N](#) are also relevant to the asylum interview because these provide the legal framework for considering the asylum claim, including the need to take into account all the evidence provided by the claimant, including oral evidence at interview.

2.3 Other legislation

Section 8 of the [Asylum and Immigration \(Treatment of Claimants, etc.\) Act 2004](#) is relevant to the asylum interview because this requires caseworkers to take into account certain behaviours when assessing general credibility. It is essential to provide the claimant with an opportunity to explain the reasons for such behaviour during the interview.

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Section 3: Interview arrangements

3.1 Invitation to interview

Claimants are invited to attend an interview using the template at [Annex A](#), adapted for the office concerned. The invitation must be copied to the legal representative, if there is one on record (see also [section 7.1](#) on attendance by the legal representative).

3.2 Children and families

The Asylum Instruction on [Processing Family Cases](#) provides the policy and procedures to be followed when considering an asylum claim from a family with at least one child under 18 years of age. The principal claimant should normally be able to set out protection needs on behalf of their children and this should avoid putting children through an interview process unnecessarily. But caseworkers have discretion to interview the dependent spouse/partner and/or children (subject to age and maturity) where it is appropriate to do so, for example:

- ▶ Where their individual protection needs, as recorded at the screening interview, have highlighted issues which should be explored independently of the principal claimant;
- ▶ Where evidence has been submitted prior to the interview of the principal claimant; which indicates interviewing the dependant will assist in the determination of the claim; or
- ▶ Where evidence arises during the interview of the principal claimant which requires further investigation to make an informed decision.

Substantive interviews with claimants who are under eighteen must be conducted by trained caseworkers who are qualified to interview children in accordance with the standards and procedures set out in section 13 of [Processing an asylum application by a child](#).

Even if a separate interview is not considered necessary, it is important not to lose sight of the child as an individual, as well as part of a family, to be vigilant and responsive to their protection and welfare needs and to consider how this could impact on the needs of the family as a whole.

The legal representative must be informed in advance about any proposed interviews of other family members. Copies of interview records will be returned to the individual family members or to the legal representative once the related interviews have all been completed. This will also apply to interviews of close family members simultaneously claiming asylum in their own right (see also [section 5.16](#)).

3.3 The care of children during asylum interviews

Parents must not be expected to give an account of past persecution in front of their children, in their own interests and those of the child in particular, bearing in mind the statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

For those who are unable to arrange childcare on the date their interview has been booked, offices should be as accommodating as possible, either by rescheduling the interview for a day when the claimant is able to arrange childcare, if that is their preference, or by the provision of

childcare at or near Home Office premises, if this is available at the office concerned. Information must be provided in the invitation letter.

3.4 Non-suspensive appeal (NSA) cases

Substantive interviews with claimants entitled to reside in the countries listed in section 94(4) of the [Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act \(NIA\) Act 2002](#) ('the 2002 Act') may be conducted by all trained asylum caseworkers in accordance with the guidance on [NSA cases and certification under section 94 of the 2002 Act](#). Only caseworkers and senior caseworkers who have received NSA training can authorise decisions on applications from those countries.

3.5 Illness and non-attendance

All asylum and human rights claimants will normally be required to attend an interview, except in the situations where it may be omitted in accordance with [paragraph 339NA of the Immigration Rules](#). If the claimant is unable to attend or proceed with an interview due to illness or a medical condition, the claimant or legal representative must provide a letter/certificate from a GP or hospital, either beforehand or within five working days after the date of the interview. The interview can then be rebooked.

If the claimant does not attend, no explanation is received, contact is lost, and the legal representative is unable to assist, the claim may be treated as withdrawn and consideration discontinued, in accordance with [paragraph 333C of the Rules](#). Further guidance is available in the asylum instruction on [Withdrawing Asylum claims](#).

If a GP's or Consultant's letter says that the claimant is mentally (or physically) unable, for the foreseeable future, to cope with an interview, this may be omitted following consultation with a senior caseworker and written evidence taken in accordance with [paragraph 339NA\(vii\) of the Rules](#). See also [section 5.11 on mental illness](#).

3.6 Choice of language

A claimant may have been screened in one language but expressed a preference for the substantive interview to be conducted in their first language. However, if an interpreter cannot be found in their preferred language the interviewer should explain this to the claimant and conduct the interview in the language used at the screening interview, provided the claimant's command is sufficient for the asylum interview ([see also section 8.2](#)).

3.7 Requests for a male or female interviewer

Claimants are asked at the screening interview if they would like a male or female interviewer and they may also make such a request subsequently. This should normally be met and if it cannot be met on the scheduled day, the interview should normally be re-arranged. This policy applies to the interpreter also, and every effort should be made to meet the request. The caseworker must be aware of gender related issues, since this may affect how the claimant responds during interview. See Asylum Instructions on [Gender issues in the asylum claim](#), [Gender identity](#), and [Sexual identity](#).

3.8 Pregnancy

Expectant mothers may be asked to attend an interview until around six weeks before the due date for the birth, unless advised not to on medical grounds (a doctor's note should be provided). For those who have given birth, interviews should not be arranged until at least six weeks afterwards. If there are health concerns for the mother or baby, the interview should be postponed until they are well enough.

3.9 Friends or companions

For reasons of confidentiality, a claimant will normally be interviewed alone or in the presence of a legal representative or regulated adviser. Exceptionally, however, and with advance notice, a friend or other companion may be admitted to provide emotional or medical support. These persons should not be family members, or seeking asylum themselves, or have any obvious personal interest in the outcome. Companions are admitted on condition that they are there solely to provide medical or emotional support, must not intervene during the interview, and must observe complete confidentiality afterwards. Caseworkers must explain this to the claimant and the companion so they know what is expected.

3.10 Religious festivals

Staff will be sensitive and respectful of religious beliefs. However, asylum is an important matter and claimants will normally be expected to attend an interview even if the date coincides with a religious festival or a period of fasting. For reference purposes, the [Religion and Ethics pages on the BBC website](#) provide a helpful guide. Some dates may vary because they are determined by the lunar calendar.

3.11 Health & Safety/risk assessment

Caseworkers must check the file, database notes and any special conditions, in advance, in case of any known risk factors relating to the interviewee, such as previous verbal abuse, criminal convictions, etc. Security and management must be informed if there is reason to believe a claimant could be a danger to the safety of themselves, interpreters, other claimants or staff, so that steps can be taken to deal with the risk.

3.12 Interviewing claimants in prison

Contact should be made with the prison to arrange a time and date for the interview and, once arranged, to serve notice of the interview on the claimant. A Police National Computer (PNC) check should be carried out before the interview is conducted. The PNC results may be used to determine the appropriate caseworker to conduct the interview, e.g. it may be appropriate to allocate a male caseworker and interpreter to a male sex offender. Staff conducting interviews in prison must have completed level 1 and 2 personal safety training (PST). The arrangements for the recording of interviews in detention are set out in [Section 6](#).

If the claimant is an EEA national and the subject of extradition proceedings, and if an interview is needed, the European Arrest Warrant should be requested by email from the National Crime Agency before the interview date, so that it is received in time for the decision.

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Section 4: Preparation and interview formalities

4.1 Preparation

Interviewers must read the reasons for making the asylum claim in the screening form, other relevant information in the case file, such as information about the claimant's visa application records, and [relevant country of origin information \(COI\) or country guidance](#) (including case law); and

- ▶ Prepare broad lines of enquiry, to focus the interview on key issues and avoid wasting time on irrelevant questions.
- ▶ Take into account any evidence already available and the brief information provided at screening about the individual and family (especially the situation of any children present in the UK), their ethnic origin, religion, education, employment and social status, as well as age and gender.

It is important that interviews start on time. If delay is unavoidable, it is a courtesy for the claimant to be informed.

4.2 Formal introductions

It is important to take time, before the formal interview begins, to help the claimant feel at ease and ensure that they understand the purpose and significance of the interview in the asylum process. When opening the interview, caseworkers must first:

- ▶ Introduce themselves and anybody else in the room not known to the claimant.
- ▶ Be satisfied that the claimant at the interview is the subject of the case file who has been requested to attend, and that the address provided is already registered.
- ▶ Explain that all information will be dealt with in confidence and that no asylum information will be disclosed to the authorities of the claimant's country of nationality or (if stateless) the country of former habitual residence.
- ▶ Explain that information may be disclosed to other government departments or organisations to help them in their functions but nothing will be shared that would put the claimant at risk of persecution or serious harm.
- ▶ Confirm that the claimant understands the interpreter (see also [section 8.2](#)).
- ▶ Confirm that the claimant is ready to be interviewed and provide reassurance of the caseworker's assistance in obtaining and assessing all the available information relevant to the claim.

4.3 Written statements

If a written statement or other evidence has been submitted before the interview, the interviewer must ask who wrote and submitted the evidence. The claimant must be asked if they have read and understood the content of the evidence and if they agree with it.

Any contradictions between the written statements or other evidence (including documentary evidence submitted in support of the claim), and statements at interview must be addressed, as should any evidence that the claimant does not understand what has been written on their behalf.

4.4 Submission of documents and other evidence at interview

Documents submitted at interview must be listed on the interview record. The claimant must be asked when and how the document was obtained and its relevance. Accepting the submission of an 'original' document does not imply acceptance of its authenticity. When considering the weight to attach to any overseas documents, for example, official certificates or arrest warrants, it is for claimants to show that those documents can be relied on. See [Tanveer Ahmed \[2002\] UKIAT 000439](#).

If the claimant's (and any dependants') passports or other forms of identification (birth certificates, identity card etc) are submitted, these must be retained by the interviewer, as they may be required for documentation purposes at a later stage.

Claimants who submit a document in a foreign language must be asked what it is and what relevance it has. If the document is or could be useful, the claimant should be given at least five working days to submit a translation.

See also [section 5.14 – submission of further evidence](#).

4.5 The claimant's declaration

If these were not previously obtained at the screening stage, the bio-data section of the interview record must be completed in full. The claimant should be asked to check and sign at the bottom of each page where the bio-data are recorded (pages 2-4). The claimant is not being asked to confirm the accuracy of the subsequent interview but if this is explained and they are nevertheless reluctant to sign, the interviewer should note the record that the request has been declined.

4.6 The NINo application

Details should be completed before the start of the interview if this has not already been done during the screening interview.

4.7 The Biometric Residence Permit

If this has not already happened at the screening stage, it should be explained that if granted leave as a result of the asylum claim, a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) will be issued. In order to receive a BRP, principal claimants (and their dependants) will need to enrol their biometrics at a Front Office Service (FOS) location - Post Offices across the UK.

4.8 The Emergency Travel Document (ETD) application

If necessary, in order to provide return documentation in the event that the claim is rejected and if appeals rights are exhausted, the application for an ETD should be completed, subject to the available documentation guidance on Horizon.

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Section 5: Investigating the asylum claim

5.1 Key principles and standards

The asylum interview is central to the process of gathering and assessing information, before deciding if international protection is needed. It is not the only means of gathering information, but a fair assessment of credibility is usually dependent on the quality of the interview. The following are the key principles and standards:

Shared responsibility:

Whilst a claimant must substantiate their claim, the interview is a cooperative process in which caseworkers should assist the claimant by:

- ▶ ascertaining the relevant aspects of the claim;
- ▶ encouraging disclosure of all relevant information; and
- ▶ obtaining, exploring and assessing the relevant information.

Individual assessment:

The interview must be conducted on an individual basis taking into account the background and circumstances of the claimant and any individual factors which may affect how a claimant responds ([see section 5.2](#)).

Objective and impartial assessment:

Caseworkers must not prejudice the claim or approach the interview with scepticism. They should be aware that their own values, beliefs, prejudices and views, can affect the objectivity of their assessments and should avoid them influencing the conduct of interviews. Issues of credibility will be explored as the interview progresses, but it will not be possible to make a balanced assessment of credibility until all the evidence is considered in the round, as explained in section 5 of the guidance on [Assessing credibility and refugee status](#).

Focus on the material facts:

The interview must focus on facts which can be identified as key issues in the asylum claim in light of available [country of origin information \(COI\) and case law](#). Although claimants are required to establish their claim to be in need of protection, both the credibility of the account and the likelihood of future persecution will be assessed to a relatively low standard of proof. Caseworkers should therefore avoid unnecessarily detailed, prolonged, and exhausting interviews.

The investigation should examine the claimant's personal experiences and verifiable details such as published facts about key events or incidents. It must establish the background to the way in which the individual lived and worked in the country of origin, as well as (for example) their involvement in one political party over others, or the reasons for and the circumstances of their conversion to a particular religion, and so on.

Putting potentially significant adverse credibility findings to the claimant:

Claimants must be asked to explain contradictions which become apparent in their answers or any significant inconsistency with information previously provided in writing or at the screening

interview. Similarly, if statements appear to be inconsistent with known COI, appear to make no sense, or seem implausible, the claimant must be given an opportunity to clarify them.

If the claimant is not asked to explain and the application is subsequently refused on credibility grounds because significant elements in the account are considered untrue or implausible, there is a real risk that the decision will be flawed.

Similarly, a significant lack of information or gap in the account must be explored. Not every detail should be exhaustively sought, but the credibility of an account cannot be dismissed on grounds of a lack of detail if the questioning did not attempt to elicit those details.

5.2 Individual factors

Caseworkers must be aware of the factors which can affect the task of obtaining information at interview:

- ▶ Past treatment by authority figures in the country of origin or former habitual residence;
- ▶ The level of education or literacy levels of the claimant;
- ▶ Language barriers to communication and the necessity of using an interpreter; an assessment of credibility depends on the ability of the interpreter to present an accurate expression of the claimant's responses; and
- ▶ The social and cultural position of certain members of society; for example, some women may not be used to being heard and may find it difficult to disclose issues;

Understanding the claimant's statements must also take into account individual factors unique to the claimant, including:

- ▶ age, gender, sexual identity and/or gender identity;
- ▶ culture, social and economic status;
- ▶ education, religion, beliefs, values;
- ▶ state of mental and physical health;
- ▶ personal experiences in the country of origin (or habitual residence) and in the journey to the UK;
- ▶ the effect of traumatic events, including torture or other ill-treatment; and
- ▶ The working of the human memory; its fallibility and its strengths.

5.3 Interviewing techniques

5.3.1 Open and closed questions

Once the outline of the claim has been established, it will usually be appropriate to ask further questions to gather more detail about the events e.g. "Tell me more about..."; "When and where did it happen?"; "How many people attended the demonstration?"; "Who led it?"; "Was it legal?"; "Was it reported in the media – which?"

Questions are best asked one at a time and addressed to the claimant directly, not to the interpreter. Interviewers should simplify a question if the response indicates that it was not fully understood.

Open or closed questions both have a value in the interview, and will require follow-up questions to probe further exactly what happened and what the claimant thought or did:

- ▶ Closed questions elicit a statement of fact that is strictly limited, for example, “when and where did the demonstration take place”? or “did you take part in that demonstration?”
- ▶ Open questions give the claimant the opportunity to give a full and open answer, and generally begin with “what,” “why,” and “how,” and should elicit either descriptive/factual information, such as a factual account of a situation or event, or an opinion. The questions “What happened next?” and “Did anything else happen?” should be used regularly.

Interviewers should be prepared to ask questions which may go to the heart of the credibility of the claimant’s claimed fear, for example, by asking why the claimant delayed leaving the country despite an apparently imminent danger to their life or liberty, or what arrangements were made, if any, for the safety of their family. But such questions should not be phrased as implying scepticism about the reality of the danger, neither should they suggest criticism of the claimant’s conduct in leaving the country without their family.

5.3.2 Summarising and signposting

It is good practice to summarise. It enables caseworkers to check that they have obtained the correct details e.g. “So you were mainly involved in distributing leaflets?” “Your sister was a member of the group – is this correct?” Summarising also reassures a claimant that the caseworker is listening and the information is being properly recorded.

‘Signposting’ can be a useful way for caseworkers to inform the claimant what they are going to ask questions about, especially if it is about a completely different part of the claim e.g. “I’d now like to talk to you about your other/second arrest” or “You said earlier that your daughter was attacked, I am now going to ask you more about that incident.”

Signposting can increase a claimant’s sense of security about being interviewed, reduce the likelihood of confusion over which incident is being discussed, and allows the caseworker to draw to a close a section of the interview where no further questions are needed.

5.3.3 Listening out for the unspoken

Interviewers should listen out for pauses, phrases or euphemisms (e.g. “he hurt me”, possibly meaning “he raped me”) suggesting that there may be information difficult to divulge.

Interviewers should ask appropriate questions if there are indications of gender-based persecution or where COI shows that such harm is common in certain conditions (e.g. rape in detention). For example: “I understand it may be difficult to talk about, but can you help me understand what else happened to you in detention?”

5.4 Levels of detail

Subject to their individual backgrounds and abilities, claimants should be expected to provide information to a level of detail which someone who has witnessed or experienced (to take

some examples) a given incident, the realisation of a particular sexual identity, conversion to a different faith, or undertaken particular political activities, should reasonably be able to recall and describe. This will vary from person to person.

At the same time, the substance of what happened during a particular event of key significance is potentially more important than precise dates (which may not always be consistent throughout an account). It is, for example, more important to obtain details of a prison's organisation and regime whilst in detention, the prison's whereabouts and so on, than to focus narrowly on the precise dates of detention which are unlikely to be verifiable.

Interviews are recorded verbatim and clarity is crucial, especially names, places, or organisations. These must be fully recorded in their original language (or English language version if that is their normal title), translated if necessary, and printed. If, despite pre-interview preparation, a place, political party, or event of significance is unfamiliar to the caseworker, further details must be obtained to help verify it if possible. Without further questioning, it would be wrong to find that place or event is unverified and not credible. It may be appropriate to take a short break during the interview to check COI for further details.

Interviewers should recognise that some claimants, such as those affected by ill-treatment including gender-based persecution (see separate guidance on [Gender issues in the asylum claim](#)), are unlikely to have documentary evidence of this harm. It is important that allegations of torture or trafficking (see separate guidance on victims of trafficking) or other forms of ill-treatment are investigated with appropriate sensitivity and awareness of the effects of trauma on memory, which may lead to gaps in details, inconsistencies or delayed disclosure. ([See section 5.7 on victims of torture or other trauma](#) and [section 5.9 on victims of trafficking](#)).

5.5 Flexible approach to interviews

Different approaches may be needed depending on the reasons for seeking asylum; for example: religion, sexual identity, and claims which depend on another's actions or circumstances. These issues are further explored in the next sections.

5.5.1 Religion

In cases where religious conversion, for example, from Islam to Christianity, forms the basis of the asylum claim, the interview should explore the credibility of the claimant's personal experiences and the path taken to a new faith, whether this began in the country of origin or in the UK. Although the assessment of credibility should not depend upon a test of religious knowledge, it is reasonable to expect some appreciation of the basics of the faith, and questions about the claimant's understanding will be appropriate, although always at the level which may reasonably be expected in the light of the claimant's circumstances.

The interviewer should be satisfied that the interpreter is capable of translating the concepts and terminology of religious groups in the country of origin and should ask questions in a way that encourages the claimant to elaborate on their personal journey.

The interviewer must try to establish whether the claimant has genuinely moved towards a firm decision to leave the faith of their upbringing or culture in favour of another faith. To be credible, something so potentially life-changing should not be perfunctory, vague, or ill-thought out. In the case of Christianity, it is likely to include being baptised using water (a fundamental

rite of initiation common to most Christian traditions), or being instructed and prepared for baptism. It should also include attending worship, association with fellow-believers, and being known to the local church's leadership (normally the ordained ministers).

At interview, the claimant should be able to describe the encounters or contacts with their new faith. This may include the people whose words or example inspired them, or the readings which struck a chord, and which contributed to the decision to accept and follow it, and how far this occurred in the home country or in the UK. The claimant should be asked to describe their church experiences, for example, whether this has been within small house groups or in congregational worship, including the languages in use at those groups or services. This will help frame questions about their experience of the Bible and church services. Alternatively, someone who has seen films and/or heard the Christian message at house groups, for example, rather than from the Bible, should be able to describe their feelings and reactions to what they have seen and heard, as well as the attraction of what they have learned.

All these issues should feed into a discussion of the risks their personal experiences and practice of their faith expose them to in their home country. This should always include a consideration of the principles set out by the Supreme Court in [HJ \(Iran\) and HT \(Cameroon\)](#) and [RT \(Zimbabwe\)](#). Under both international and European human rights law, the right to freedom of thought, opinion and expression extends to the freedom not to hold and not to express opinions. Refugee law does not require a person to express false support for an oppressive regime or require an agnostic to pretend to be a religious believer to avoid persecution.

5.5.2 Sexual identity or gender identity

Where sexual identity or gender identity is at issue, the interview should focus on the claimant's experiences and relationships in family and society in the country of origin and in the UK, if appropriate. Interviewers must be familiar with the guidance on [Sexual identity](#) and [Gender identity](#).

Some lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) people may originate from countries in which they are made to feel ashamed, humiliated and/or stigmatised by their sexual or gender identification. Discussing matters such as sexual identity with may be unfamiliar to them and having to do so in an official context may be daunting. The interview should be a sensitive enquiry into the development and exploration of the claimant's sexual identity, and must never be an enquiry into explicit sexual activity. Interviewers must therefore also avoid asking questions about sexual preferences or physical attractiveness.

The claimant is not required to 'prove' their sexual identity, simply to establish it to a reasonable degree of likelihood. For the purposes of the interview, self-identification as lesbian, gay or bisexual will be the normal starting point as an indication of a person's sexual identity, subject to proper assessment of the facts and circumstances when all the evidence is considered in the round.

While all other evidence must be explored, a claimant must never be asked to supply documentary, video or photographic evidence of sexually intimate acts. Any such evidence is not in and of itself evidence of sexual identity and has no evidential value. In December 2014, in the linked cases of [C-148/13](#), [C-149/13](#) and [C-150/13](#), the Court of Justice of the European

Union ruled that sexually explicit material must not be accepted, even if voluntarily provided by the claimant. [See also section 5.14.](#)

In summary, the CJEU ruled that:

- ▶ questions based solely on stereotypical behaviour cannot be relied on in order to assess evidence put forward by a claimant;
- ▶ detailed questioning in regard to sexual practices must not be asked;
- ▶ sexually explicit evidence, even if provided voluntarily by the claimant, must not in any circumstances be accepted; and
- ▶ an adverse credibility finding cannot be made, merely because a claimant did not raise issues of sexual identity on the first occasion that they claimed asylum.

If a claimant enquires about the submission of audio-visual material or recordings, the interviewer must tell the claimant that any evidence must not contain sexually explicit material. Any submission of material or images must be accompanied with an explanation of

- ▶ precisely where, when, and by whom the material was recorded;
- ▶ who and what is being depicted;
- ▶ how it is relevant to the asylum claim; and
- ▶ confirmation that it does not contain sexually explicit material.

Audio-visual material submitted in these cases without this explanation, or if it is apparent that the material contains images of a sexually explicit nature, must be returned to the claimant or their legal representative and must not be viewed.

5.5.3 Another person's actions or circumstances

Some claims depend on the actions of another individual (for example, a family member or close associate) and the risk is engendered by that person's activities. There could be limits to the claimant's knowledge for cultural or other reasons. But it will be important to obtain as much information about that person as the claimant is able to give and to explore why, in the country concerned, the connection is dangerous. Where a claimant indicates that other family members, who are dependent on the claim, would be able to provide evidence on a key issue, caseworkers should consider interviewing them before reaching credibility findings about that issue.

5.6 Evidence of war crimes, other serious international crimes, or extremist behaviour in the UK

Any evidence or claim to have committed or assisted in the commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity, or other serious crimes, including terrorism, or to have been involved with a group which has committed such crimes must be investigated. Section 3 of [the guidance on exclusion under Article 1F of the Convention](#) provides further guidance on the issues to be covered. Information about the referral of Article 1F exclusion cases to the unit responsible for

their consideration is set out in the process guidance on Horizon. Where there is any evidence of extremist behaviour in the UK or abroad the case must also be referred.

5.7 Victims of torture or other trauma

Victims of torture or other forms of violence may have difficulties in recounting the details because of the sensitive nature of those experiences and/or because of the effect of traumatic events on their memory. Nevertheless, where a claimant claims to have been tortured or subjected to serious harm, they should be asked when, where, how, and by whom the torture was inflicted, taking care not to cause undue distress. This is particularly important, since claimants are not required to 'prove' that they were tortured, simply to establish it to a reasonable degree of likelihood. Medical reports of torture will only be available in a minority of cases and its absence does not undermine the credibility of an account which is detailed, coherent, and plausible, allowing for underlying personal factors.

The following issues are suggested as a guide. In order to avoid unnecessary distress to the victim, not all questions need be asked, once it seems likely that the abuse has taken place:

- ▶ the method of torture used;
- ▶ any equipment employed;
- ▶ the place where the torture took place;
- ▶ the duration of the ill-treatment;
- ▶ the frequency of abuse;
- ▶ the purpose of the torture or abuse, if known;
- ▶ the number and sex of the individuals involved;
- ▶ which agency of the state (if known) carried out the torture;
- ▶ the immediate effects of the torture on the individual;
- ▶ what physical scars there are, if any (see 5.8 below); and
- ▶ any ongoing physical or mental effects of torture.

The claimant should also be asked if they received medical or NGO assistance in the country of origin at any point following the torture or other forms of violence, and about any continuing treatment in the UK for the physical and/or psychological effects. How far such assistance will have been available or accessible will depend upon conditions in the country of origin.

Claimants are not compelled to submit medical evidence (and may not need to if the caseworker accepts the oral evidence on this point, taking other evidence into account), but they should be informed that it is open to them to consult a medical professional for treatment and, if they wish, to submit expert medical evidence (for example, from [Freedom from Torture](#) or the [Helen Bamber Foundation](#)).

For victims of rape or other forms of sexual violence, obtaining details of the act itself would be inappropriate, but it is important that information is obtained regarding the events leading up to, and after the act, together with the surrounding circumstances at the time it took place, as well as the motivation of the perpetrator, if known.

5.8 Claimants with scars

The claimant should be asked how scars or bruising occurred and this account must then be given due weight in the totality of the evidence available. The interviewer may accept an offer to see scars only if they are on a visible part of the body, for example the lower arms or legs. If the interviewer sees the scars, the interview record must be noted as to where they are on the body and the approximate shape/size. If the interviewer does not consider that it would be appropriate to look at the scars, this must be recorded.

Caseworkers are not qualified to form their own opinion as to how the scars were obtained and whether they are consistent with the claimed causes but it may be that the claimant's own evidence can be accepted, taken as a whole with other available evidence, bearing in mind the relatively low standard of proof required.

5.9 Victims of trafficking

Interviewing for the purposes of the asylum claim

Those whose accounts include details of human trafficking should be interviewed in the same way as other asylum claimants, in terms of establishing the material facts of the asylum and trafficking claim and testing their credibility. People in these situations may well have had traumatic experiences and questions about what happened must always be put with sensitivity, respect, cultural and gender awareness. As with victims of sexual violence in other circumstances, obtaining precise details of such abuses will not be appropriate.

If indicators of trafficking first come to light during the asylum interview the caseworker, as the First Responder, must complete a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referral form, providing the potential victim consents to being entered into the NRM process. Minors do not need to give consent. The completed referral form should be emailed to the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) for allocation to a Competent Authority.

Interviewing for the purposes of a decision under the NRM

Guidance is available on Horizon to Home Office Competent Authority decision makers who are responsible for deciding whether someone referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a victim of trafficking under the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. They will gather all available information before taking a decision under the NRM and may authorise an interviewer to ask questions on their behalf within the asylum interview or in a standalone NRM interview.

Where an asylum unit is requested to carry out an NRM only interview they must use a modified version of Annex A at the end of this instruction so that there are no references to asylum in the invitation to interview letter.

If the asylum or NRM-only interview is carried out after a positive Reasonable Grounds (RG) decision has been made, the interviewing officer will be able to look at the RG Annex to see any specific areas of concern already identified by the NRM decision maker. Although the interviewer may use the Annex to guide the interview questions, it must not be quoted from directly as the information cannot be put into the public domain. Additionally, the interviewer

can contact the Competent Authority to ask for guidance on a specific case at any time before or during the interview.

5.10 Breaks in the interview

An asylum interview is likely to be demanding on the claimant, interpreter, and interviewer, and a break may on occasion be needed at the discretion of the interviewer, or at the request of the claimant, or if the interviewer needs to check a statement against country of origin information before the claimant leaves the office.

Caseworkers must be mindful of the effects of asking questions about traumatic events and, offer breaks where appropriate, for example, after the interviewee has been recalling painful memories and wishes to pause and collect thoughts. Details of the duration and reason for the break must be clearly recorded, as should the offer of any break which is not accepted, perhaps because the claimant prefers to complete the giving of evidence on this point.

If the claimant is taken ill, security should be called to request medical help. The interview should be suspended and the reasons briefly recorded on the interview transcript. A copy of the record should not be provided until the interview has been rebooked and finally concluded.

If the interviewer is taken ill, and it is impractical for another member of staff to take over, the interview should be suspended and rebooked. If the interpreter becomes unwell, a break should first be called in order to find another interpreter to continue, if at all possible.

5.11 Mental illness

Claimants may state during an asylum interview (or show by the manner of their replies) that they are, or have been, affected by mental illness. There may also be evidence on the case file to suggest that the claimant has been affected by mental illness and has sought medical advice or treatment.

If the claimant appears unaware of their condition, the interviewer should not suggest seeking medical advice, but should enquire in general terms about how the claimant has engaged with medical services. If the claimant is legally represented, the matter is best discussed with the representative before or after the interview. In the interests of fairness to all claimants, interviews should not be cancelled or suspended on the grounds of past or present mental illness unless the claimant is clearly unable to cope with an interview and where the validity of the replies could be called into question.

If a GP's or Consultant's letter is received confirming that the person is unable, for the foreseeable future, to cope with an interview, the personal interview should be omitted and written evidence taken in accordance with paragraph 339NA of the Rules. This should be discussed with the legal representative if possible.

5.12 Threats of self-harm or suicide

The safety of the claimant, interviewer and any other participants is paramount, and security must be called immediately if a claimant threatens to self-harm in the interview room. Health and safety issues at interviews are of course primarily the responsibility of the interviewer and of office management. Threats of suicide in the event that an application is refused should be

noted in the record and reported to management after the interview, and any further action taken which is considered necessary in the circumstances of the case, should also be recorded. Guidance on cases where threats of suicide are made is on Horizon and on the external website.

5.13 Aggressive or threatening behaviour

Interviewers should maintain control of the situation in the interview room. They should remain calm if provoked and maintain a friendly but firm manner but are not expected to continue an interview in the face of abuse or aggression. If the interviewer feels at risk of physical harm, security must be notified immediately and the interview terminated. An interviewer must never try to restrain or detain anyone. See 'Reducing the risk of violence at work – guidance for staff'.

All incidents of threat and abuse must be reported to the interviewer's line manager. The line manager must then complete the accident report form as soon as possible after the incident has been reported. It is a legal requirement that accident, injuries, assault, near miss, verbal abuse and threatening behaviour are reported and investigated. See 'Reducing the risk of violence at work – guidance for managers'.

5.14 The submission of further evidence

There is no automatic period after an interview for the submission of further evidence (N.B. in interviews of children, caseworkers must always give a minimum of 5 working days after the interview for any further representations). But if interviewers decide to ask for further evidence or if the claimant requests additional time in which to submit information of relevance to the claim, the claimant should be given a reasonable time in which to provide it - normally 5 working days (this is not applicable within the detained fast track process). More time can be offered where it is appropriate to do so.

Interviewers should consider inviting the submission of supporting evidence if this would significantly inform the decision, for example, a letter from the claimant's minister of religion in the UK in cases of religious conversion, or internet evidence which a journalist claimant could reasonably be expected to be able to obtain. This should be submitted within a specified and agreed timescale which is recorded on the interview record.

However, interviewers should bear in mind the low standard of proof required and should not put claimants under pressure to produce further 'evidence' which they are unlikely to be able to obtain, or which could place themselves or other family members at risk.

If a claimant inquires about the submission of audio-visual material or recordings (see [section 5.5.2](#)), the interviewer must, when appropriate, tell the claimant that sexually explicit content has no evidential value, will not be accepted and must not be submitted as evidence. See also the guidance on [Sexual Identity Issues in the Asylum Claim](#).

5.15 Concluding the interview

At the end of the interview, the claimant must be asked the following questions:

- ▶ Is there anything you would like to add to what you have told me today?
- ▶ Are there any other reasons not previously mentioned why you wish to remain in the UK? This can include personal circumstances that you would like to be taken into consideration.
- ▶ Have you understood the questions and is there anything we have discussed today which you would like clarified?
- ▶ Will you submit the further evidence as agreed within a defined timescale?

If the claimant states that they did not understand certain questions, the interviewer should record this and rephrase (or divide into simpler questions) any which were not understood.

If present, the legal representative should be asked if they have any comments (see also [section 7.3](#)). The caseworker should then conclude the interview by briefly explaining the next steps in the process in the event of a positive or negative decision.

5.16 Interview transcript

The interviewer will normally provide a photocopy of the interview record for the claimant, who should be asked to sign the original copy. This is simply to confirm receipt, not agreement to the contents, and need not be insisted on if signature is declined. The exception to this practice will be where close family members are being interviewed separately. In those instances, transcripts will be returned to the claimants or their legal representative when all have been completed (see also [section 3.2](#)).

Read-overs of all or part of an interview should only be given in very rare and exceptional circumstances bearing in mind that a read-over could be inappropriate for someone with evidence of trauma. If considered necessary, this should be noted on the interview record, together with the reason why. Any amendments or additions to the interview record should be initialled by both the claimant and the interviewer.

5.17 Action after the interview

Subject to a check of the COI or other research, a decision may be taken after the interview, unless the claimant or legal representative says that further information is to be provided and a reasonable time in which to do so is agreed. Legal representatives should notify the Home Office of the availability of further information, and provide all relevant information relevant to their client's case at the earliest opportunity.

Although the interview is the primary opportunity for clarification of unclear statements or inconsistencies within statements or with COI which are material to the claim, caseworkers have the discretion to seek explanations in writing or by telephone after the interview. For example, where COI research finds information which directly contradicts the claimant's statements or appears to do so, it could be advantageous to all concerned to clarify the matter in further correspondence rather than defer the issue to the appeal stage.

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Section 6: Recording interviews

6.1 Recording policy

The Home Office is required to allow claimants, with some exceptions, to have their asylum interviews audio recorded on request. The exceptions are those entitled to publicly funded legal representation at interview, or the resources to fund their own legal representation. Interviews should not normally be recorded where a legal representative is present, or where claimants with self-funded legal representation choose not to have their legal representative present.

The invitation to interview advises eligible claimants to inform the asylum office if they wish the interview to be recorded, and to provide a minimum of 24 hours' notice of their request to avoid a delay on the day. For those in detention, at least three days' notice must be provided.

Interviewers should check files prior to interview to see if a request has been made. If it has not been requested, there is no need to ask again if the claimant wishes the interview to be recorded.

The claimant may be given copies of the recording on receipt of a dated signature of acknowledgement. This may be written in the comments section at the end of the interview record. Interviewers must not agree to any request to play back the recording.

Claimants and their representatives are not permitted to use their own recording equipment during an asylum interview, but there should be no difficulty with a representative using a laptop for the purpose of taking notes providing it does not distract the claimant.

6.2 Action to be taken where the interview is being recorded and a complaint is lodged

If a complaint is made against an interviewer following a recorded interview, the normal complaints procedure must be followed ([see section 9: complaints about an interviewer or interpreter](#)) and the record used, if necessary, to refute or verify a complaint. Recordings must not be taken out of a secure office environment, since this is a breach of confidentiality and is contrary to Home Office policy.

Requests for a second interview so that a recording can be made should only be accepted if there was a failure to action a request received prior to the first interview, or there are serious grounds for complaint about that interview.

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Section 7: Legal representatives

7.1 General policy

An asylum claimant has the right to consult a legal representative at his own expense or at public expense in accordance with provision made by the [Legal Aid Agency, the Scottish Legal Aid Board](#), or the [Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission](#).

Legal representatives from qualified solicitors or advisers regulated by the [Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner](#) are welcome to attend a client's interview. However, the legal aid rules are narrowly framed, and it can be assumed that a representative who is funded to attend the interview will have good reason to do so. If at all possible, their availability should therefore be accommodated when arranging the interview.

7.2 Non-OISC regulated representatives

Access to interviews should be denied to representatives who are not qualified to provide immigration advice and are not exempted from regulation. As part of interview preparation, the OISC can confirm whether or not an adviser is registered. A telephone call may be needed, as their website lists some, but not all the registered advisers.

7.3 Professional conduct

Legal representatives are normally invited to add any comments at the end of the interview rather than during questioning, but this must not be rigidly applied, particularly where interviews with children are concerned. The interview should be conducted in a constructive spirit of cooperation between interviewer, interviewee and representative. Interventions by the legal representative may be justified for a variety of reasons; a legal representative can, for example, assist the interview process by drawing attention to a misunderstanding.

There is however a difference between helpful interventions and unnecessary interruptions. If the interviewer considers that an adviser or legal representative is acting unreasonably by making repeated interruptions that are disrupting the flow of the interview, this should be raised with the legal representative. The difficulties should be resolved by agreement if at all possible but if it cannot be resolved, the conduct of the interview should be discussed with a senior officer and appropriate action taken. In the rare instance of the most serious misconduct, this must be reported to senior management to consider referral to the relevant professional body.

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Section 8: Interpreters

8.1 Conduct and professional standards

The Home Office will provide an interpreter at public expense whenever necessary. Interpreters must conduct themselves in a professional and impartial manner, and respect confidentiality at all times. Interviewers are responsible for the overall conduct of the interview. They must ensure that the interpreter behaves in accordance with, and not ask any interpreter to act outside the professional standards set out in the [Interpreters Code of Conduct](#). The Code may be summarised as follows:

An interpreter must:

- ▶ Treat everything heard or seen as confidential, whilst on an assignment.
- ▶ Ensure that what is stated in another language is accurately and fully interpreted. Attempts by the interpreter to summarise what has been said are not acceptable (and must be questioned by the caseworker).
- ▶ Spell out any foreign name or place said by the interviewee.
- ▶ Inform the interviewer immediately if there is any difficulty in interpreting.
- ▶ Use direct speech when interpreting; for example, the interpreter must say: "I attended a demonstration", and should not say: "he said he attended"
- ▶ Hand to the interviewer any notes taken during the interview.

An interpreter must not:

- ▶ Offer an opinion, comment or declare any personal observations on truthfulness or ethnic origin of the claimant, nor their religious or political beliefs.
- ▶ Allow their personal political, religious, philosophical or other beliefs to influence their professional attitude or the quality provision of translation.
- ▶ Indulge in general conversation with the claimant before (other than to establish both speak the same language and/or dialect), during or after an assignment.
- ▶ Be acquainted with or related to the interviewee or anyone associated with their case.
- ▶ Accept an assignment if previously acting as the interpreter for the legal representative on the same case - it is inappropriate for the same person to interpret in the same case.

8.2 Languages at interview

Interviewers will have already confirmed that the claimant is content to be interviewed in the language/dialect for which the interview has been booked and that they understand the interpreter. If the claimant begins to speak another language or dialect, the interpreter must alert the interviewer immediately.

If the interpreter has been provided in the correct dialect or language but the interviewee does not understand the interpreter or objects to the interpreter for reasons unrelated to the language in use (for example, on grounds of their view of the interpreter's ethnic origin or religion), the interviewer should find out the nature of the difficulties.

If the claimant is genuinely having difficulty with the language, the interviewer should call the Interpreter Operations Unit (IOU) to see if another interpreter can be found to allow the interview to continue the same day. If however the claimant's objection is to the individual interpreter rather than the language in use, the interviewer should assure the claimant of the interpreter's impartiality and professionalism and continue with the interview.

However, if the interviewer has concerns over the interpreter's conduct or ability, the interviewer should call a break and discuss the concerns with the interpreter outside the interview room. If it is not possible to resolve the problem, the interview should be suspended, discussed with a Team Leader/Workflow Manager and an alternative interpreter arranged.

An Interpreter Monitoring form must be completed and sent to the Central Interpreters Unit (CIU) in all cases where an interview is suspended or cancelled due to language difficulties / interpreter problems.

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Section 9: Complaints

9.1 Complaints made during an interview

If a complaint or other expression of dissatisfaction is made by the claimant or legal representative during the interview:

- ▶ The interviewer should try to resolve the difficulty at the time, consulting a senior officer during a break if advice is needed.
- ▶ All relevant information must be fully recorded in the interview record and in the file minutes. In the event of a formal complaint being lodged the investigating officer should be able to judge what happened at the interview in order to respond to the complaint and it is therefore essential that a full record is kept on file.
- ▶ The interviewer should, if requested, provide the name and address of their line manager, so that any complaint made after the interview can be quickly dealt with. Alternatively, a complaint may be made on line via the UK Visas and Immigration website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration/about/complaints-procedure>.

9.2 Complaints about an interpreter

If during the interview there is a complaint about the interpreter, the interviewer should note this in the interview record and try to resolve it, calling a break if necessary to seek advice from a senior officer. If it is not possible to resolve the complaint satisfactorily, the interview should be suspended while a different interpreter is found. The interviewer should also complete the Interpreter Monitoring form. The form should also be completed if an interpreter has provided an exceptionally good service.

9.3 Complaints of discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 outlaws discrimination in public authority functions on grounds of disability, race, religion or belief, sex, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sexual identity, gender reassignment, or age. The Act also places a general duty on public authorities to work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different groups.

If a claimant states that they have been discriminated against unfairly, the interviewer should ask for full details and record them on the interview record. These should be resolved if at all possible, but if not it can later be considered to identify whether the problem is one of discrimination within the meaning of the Equality Act.

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Section 10: Change Record

Version	Author(s)	Date	Change References
1.0	SL	01/03/07	New web style implemented
2.0	SL/UU	12/11/07	Procedures Directive
3.0	JL/RH	01/05/08	Review 2008
4.0	BG	08/06/11	Review 2010/11
4.5	BG	23/02/12	Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs)
5.0	OPRU	31/03/2014	Reviewed and updated following consultation
6.0	IBPD	04/03/2015	Revision following CJEU judgment in C-148/13, C-149/13 and C-150/13, in December 2014

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Annex A: Invitation to Interview Template

TEXT OF ASL 0062 – Case working teams should adapt the standard template to reflect local arrangements and include a contact number (which can be used to arrange audio recording).

Dear NAME,

We have arranged an interview for you to discuss your claim for asylum, eligibility for Humanitarian Protection and human rights claim in the United Kingdom.

Please attend for interview:

AT (TIME)

ON (DATE)

AT (LOCATION)

The interview will be conducted in [insert language], as agreed. /We will provide a [insert language] interpreter, as requested. [Your request for a female/male interviewer/interpreter has been noted.] You should bring any documents or other evidence which you want to submit. Any foreign language documents must be accompanied by English translations.

I enclose a map showing the location of the office. If you are prevented from attending the interview, you must contact us on the above telephone number at the top of this letter as soon as possible. Your interview will only be re-arranged if there is good reason for non-attendance (for example, illness or severe transport disruption). If you are too ill to attend, a certificate from your doctor must be provided within five working days from the date of your interview. If for any reason you do not attend this interview and you have not told us before the interview or provided an explanation immediately afterwards, your asylum claim may be treated as withdrawn in accordance with paragraph 333C of the Immigration Rules.

Confidentiality

The information you provide is treated in confidence, and the details of your asylum claim will not be disclosed to the authorities of your own country. However, information may be disclosed to other UK government departments, agencies, local authorities, international organisations and other bodies where necessary for Home Office purposes or to enable them to carry out their lawful functions.

Security arrangements

Please show this letter to the duty officer on arrival. Entry into Home Office buildings is subject to security checks. This is to ensure everyone's safety and is standard procedure for all visitors. Any objects which may pose a hazard to our staff and other members of the public must not be brought into the building.

Presence of children

If you have children, we strongly recommend that you do not bring them into your interview, unless you have been specifically asked to do so. It could be distressing for a child to hear

about your experiences, and that could make it difficult for you to be open about your reasons for seeking asylum.

Insert one of the paragraphs below as appropriate:

[Option 1]

We have therefore scheduled your interview on a date when childcare is available at or near our office. This means that a qualified childcare worker will look after your children during your interview. If you prefer to make your own childcare arrangements, then please let us know by calling the number at the head of this letter at least three days before your interview.

[End of Option 1]

[Option 2]

Unfortunately we are unable to provide childcare during your interview. If you need to reschedule your interview so someone can look after your children, then please let us know by calling the number at the top of this letter within three working days.

[End of Option 2]

Presence of legal representatives

If you are legally represented, your legal representative is welcome to attend, or your immigration adviser if qualified to do so. Please note that we will not delay your interview to wait for your legal representative to arrive.

Audio recording your interview

At the end of the interview, you will receive a copy of the interview record. In addition, you can ask in advance for your interview to be audio-recorded if:

- you are not legally represented; **or**
- your legal representative is not eligible for legal aid to attend your interview.

Please call the number at the top of this page. You must give us **at least 24 hours'** advance notice to ensure recording facilities are available.

Asylum support

If you are currently receiving asylum support, you will be given a travel ticket. If you have not received a travel ticket, you or your accommodation provider should contact the office on the number above. You should quote your Home Office and Asylum Support reference numbers, together with details of the interview.

Enquiries

We look forward to meeting you. If you have any enquiries about your interview or you do not understand this letter, please call the telephone number at the top of this letter. A copy has been sent to your legal representative, if there is one on record.

Yours sincerely,