



Welcome

A guide for new refugees



The purpose of this guide





This guide is for adults who have recently been granted refugee or Humanitarian Protection status after claiming asylum. This guide is relevant to new refugees living in England. Refugees in Scotland can find information at www.gov.scot/publications/new-scots-refugee-integration-strategy-2018-2022/ and refugees in Wales can find information at www.gov.wales/sanctuary.

The Government published an Integrated Communities Strategy action plan in February 2019. This recognised that integration is a two-way process and everyone has a part to play in upholding our shared values, both people already here and those looking to make the UK their home. Information about life in the UK is important in helping refugees and other new migrants to take advantage of the opportunities that the UK offers, and to understand the responsibilities we all have to other groups in our society.

We hope this guide will help you find your way more easily. It contains useful information about how to make contact with the services that can help you after you have been granted refugee or Humanitarian Protection status. This information is intended as a helpful starting point. More detailed information about specific services in your local area will be available through local authorities and charities.



In this booklet you will find sections on:

| | |
|---|---|
| A general introduction to the UK including things you may find helpful such as what money is used, how transport works and what the weather is like |  |
| Relevant information once you've been recognised as a refugee |  |
| Preparing you for the move on period: what you should do and how to access support, employment and housing |  |
| Employment: how to find a job and apply for support while you search |  |
| Finding accommodation |  |
| Accessing education |  |
| What rights and responsibilities you have, what is legal and illegal, and how to get help from the police |  |
| How to see a doctor and other healthcare needs |  |

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the UK

In this chapter you will learn about:

- ✓ The people, language and culture in the UK
- ✓ The political system

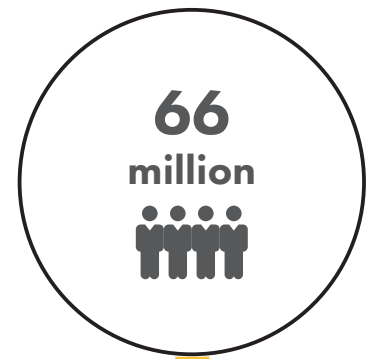
Population, culture and religion

Around 66 million people live in the UK. 55 million people live in England, while around 5.4 million people live in Scotland, 3 million in Wales and 1.9 million in Northern Ireland.

The UK is ethnically diverse with a multi-cultural and multi-faith society. Some areas of the UK are more diverse than others, especially larger cities. In 2011, over 14% of the population identified themselves as being part of an ethnic group other than white. This includes mixed ethnic groups, Asian, African and Arab people. The largest religion in the UK is Christianity, with 33.2 million people (59% of the population). The second largest religion is Islam, with 2.7 million people (5% of the population). Around a quarter of the UK population practise no religion.



UK population



England



Scotland



5.4 million

Wales



3 million

Northern Ireland



1.9 million

Cultural and religious differences, tolerance and fairness are important values. People are allowed to practise or celebrate their beliefs or identity, provided they respect the belief or identity of others and are not in conflict with UK laws.

You are free to practise your religion. You can find churches, mosques, synagogues or other places of worship in many towns and cities, though there are fewer in rural areas. Christianity is the official religion and festivals such as Christmas and Easter are widely celebrated.

People must respect each other's views, religion and dress, even if it is different from what they are used to. It is illegal to treat people in a bad or different way because of where they come from, their gender, sexuality, religion, political views, age, disability or other characteristics.

Languages

The main language in the UK is English. The UK uses British spelling, which differs slightly to American English. There are many different regional accents across the UK.

Welsh is also widely used and taught in Wales and there are other recognised regional languages such as Scots Gaelic, Scots, Irish/Gaelic and Cornish.



**Main language:
English**



Regional dialects

People must respect each other's views, religion and dress, even if it is different from what they are used to. It is illegal to treat people in a bad or different way because of where they come from, their gender, sexuality, religion, political views, age, disability or other characteristics.



Political system and law

The UK is a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary democracy. This means that the monarch is the head of state, but power rests in the democratically elected parliament.

The Prime Minister leads the government. The government is usually formed by the largest political party who are elected through free and fair elections.

The power to make laws rests in the two Houses of Parliament: the House of Commons and House of Lords. The House of Commons is made up of 650 representatives (Members of Parliament or MPs) from geographical constituencies, elected every five years by the general public. The House of Lords is made up of appointed members.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland also each have their own government, and while their responsibilities differ, typically they have responsibility for issues such as healthcare and education. Scotland and Northern Ireland also have responsibility for policing. Local councils (also called local authorities) are elected by the local population and are responsible for local services such as social services, libraries and sports centres, rubbish collection, roads and other local issues.

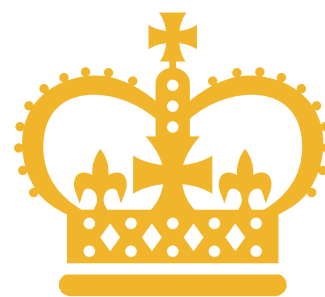
The legal system is independent of the government and parliament. See Chapter 7 – Rights and Responsibilities for more details.

The law is enforced by the police, who treat everyone fairly and ensure the safety of all citizens. If you are the victim of a crime or suspect a crime, you should contact the police immediately. The police are required to perform their duties in line with standards of professional behaviour for police officers. If you are not satisfied with the service you have received from the police, you can complain.



Queen Elizabeth II and the Monarchy

The UK has a royal family and Queen Elizabeth II has been the head of state since 1952, which makes her the longest-reigning monarch in the history of the UK. She is married to Prince Philip, who is also known as the Duke of Edinburgh.



Her son Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, is next in line to the throne, followed by Prince William, the son of Prince Charles. Prince William and his wife Catherine hold the title of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.



Other important information

Money

The currency in the UK is the Pound Sterling (£).
£1 (one pound) = 100p (100 pennies, or pence).

Cash is accepted in most places but increasingly people use debit/credit cards to pay for goods and services.



Public transport

There is an extensive train and bus network across the country.

To use public transport, you usually have to buy a ticket before travelling. For national trains or buses, tickets are usually much cheaper if bought in advance. Times and ticket prices vary across the UK; you can find out more information on the national rail website:

www.nationalrail.co.uk or in your local train or bus station.



Timezone and daylight saving

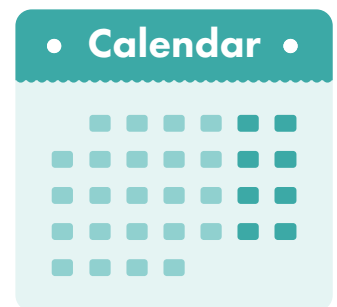
The UK time zone is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) during winter months and GMT +1 (also called British Summer Time or BST) during the summer. In order to make the most of sunlight hours, the UK (along with the rest of Europe) moves its clocks forward by one hour in late March, and then moves them back in late October.



Weekends and bank holidays

The UK weekend falls on Saturday and Sunday, when most offices close. Banks and post offices are usually open Monday-Friday and on Saturday morning, but close on Saturday afternoon and Sunday. However, most shops and restaurants remain open on Saturday and for much of Sunday.

There are a number of public holidays throughout the year. Some apply across the entire UK and some are specific to England and Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland. Most businesses close, but shops, restaurants and leisure facilities usually remain open.



Summary

The UK is a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary democracy



English is the main language in the UK



The UK is multi-cultural and multi-faith. You must respect other people's views and beliefs and abide by UK law



Chapter 2

Once you have been recognised as a refugee

In this chapter, you will learn about:

- ✓ Your immigration status and if your family can join you in the UK
- ✓ Your biometric residence permit and travelling outside the UK
- ✓ Opening a bank account
- ✓ Learning English

Your status

If you have refugee or Humanitarian Protection status in the UK, it means that:

- You may legally remain in the UK for five years from the date you are recognised as a refugee or in need of Humanitarian Protection
- You can access public services e.g. healthcare and schools
- You can apply to stay permanently in the UK (known as 'indefinite leave to remain') after five years
- You may work
- You may apply for social-welfare benefits to support you to live and find work

People granted Humanitarian Protection or refugee status have a number of the same entitlements. However, refugee status has some differences to Humanitarian Protection, for example in relation to university applications and education support (see further information on page 118) and travelling to other countries (see further information on page 34).



You may work



**You may apply
for benefits until you
are able to work**

Family links

Where possible, the aim is for refugees to be resettled as a family group but sometimes families can become separated. Opportunities for other family members to join you in the UK may be very limited and there is no guarantee that they will be able to join you. These opportunities may include family reunion under the immigration rules, Family Migration routes and resettlement.

If you have family based in one of the UK's resettlement host countries and they wish to join you in the UK, this may be possible but there is no guarantee. Resettlement is only available to a very small number of refugees and places are therefore reserved for the most vulnerable cases only.

You should advise them:

- To register with UNHCR in one of the UK's resettlement host countries
- To tell UNHCR that they wish to be reunited with you in the UK, providing your UNHCR reference number if you know this
- UNHCR may assess if resettlement is the appropriate solution for your family and whether they can be prioritised for resettlement based on their needs
- Even if UNHCR refer your family members to the UK under the resettlement scheme, the UK might reject the application or not be able to find suitable accommodation
- If the UK accepts them, we will try our best to locate families close to each other, but this is not always possible and they may be resettled in a different area of the UK



**Register with
UNHCR**



UNHCR will decide



**Family may be
resettled in a
different area**

If you are married or have a partner and/or children under the age of 18, the leave you have been granted entitles your spouse or partner and minor children to join you in the UK, providing they were part of your family unit before you left your country of origin to seek asylum. They will need to meet certain conditions which are set out in the Home Office policy on Family Reunion and the Immigration Rules. You can find the policy on GOV.UK at: <http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/asylum-decision-making-guidance-asylum-instructions>

Family Reunion visas are free of charge. Your family must apply online at www.gov.uk/settlement-refugee-or-humanitarian-protection/family-reunion and make an appointment at a UK Visa Application Centre overseas to enrol their biometrics. The visa will be issued if the Visa Officer is satisfied, from the evidence presented, that the applicant is related as claimed to the person they are applying to join in the UK. This may lead to a review of your entitlement to refugee or Humanitarian Protection status in the UK.

If your spouse or partner and minor children are not in the UK and want to apply for family reunion, they will need to make an application for entry clearance to the UK before they travel. Details on how to apply are available on GOV.UK at: <http://www.gov.uk/settlement-refugee-or-humanitarian-protection/family-reunion>

If your family members wish to visit you in the UK for a shorter period of time, they may be able to apply for a visit visa although this may not be successful. More information can be found on GOV.UK

Biometric Residence Permit

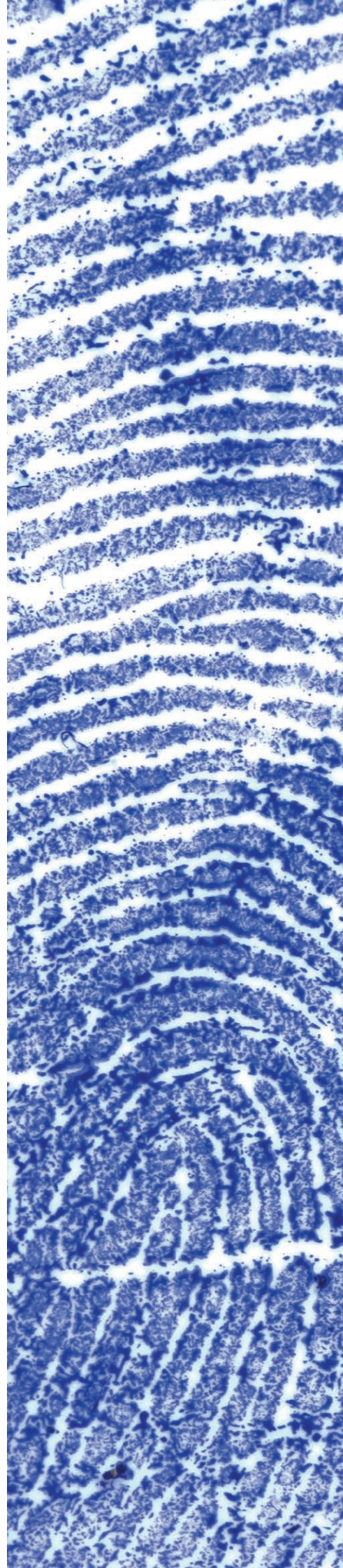
Once you have been recognised as a refugee you will receive a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) in the post which will have your national insurance number on the reverse of the card.

Please keep this important document safe as it is evidence of your legal status in the UK and shows how long you may stay in the UK for.

It will also say that you are allowed to work in the UK. This document is required to access benefits, healthcare, apply for jobs, and so on (see Chapter 4 – Employment and Benefits).

You do not need to pay for the BRP.

This is what your BRP will look like.



Travelling outside the UK

You can travel outside the UK. However, you should not travel to your country of origin and/or the country from which you sought refuge as this could result in the withdrawal of your refugee or Humanitarian Protection status when you return to the UK. The rules relating to travelling outside the UK depend on whether you have Humanitarian Protection or refugee status.

Humanitarian Protection

If you have Humanitarian Protection you:

- Can travel on your national passport if you still hold a valid national passport
- Must take your BRP with you if you travel, as you will need to show this to an immigration officer to demonstrate that you have the right to enter and stay in the UK
- If you don't have a passport you should apply for a Home Office Travel Document (see below)

Refugee Status

If you have refugee status you:

- Cannot travel on your national passport, even if you still hold a valid passport, as this may impact your refugee status
- Will need to apply to the Home Office for a travel document



Applying for travel documents

If you are issued with a Home Office Travel Document, this will not be valid for travel back to your home country.

Details of how to apply and the cost of a Home Office travel document can be found at:

www.gov.uk/apply-home-office-travel-document/overview

You may need a visa to travel to other countries. Please check the visa and other entry requirements of the country you wish to visit via the relevant embassy for that country in London before buying a ticket or attempting to travel.

Opening a bank account

Opening a bank account is important when you are recognised as a refugee: to keep your money safe and to enable you to receive payments. Benefit payments will usually be paid directly into your bank account and it is also the easiest way for employers to pay you when you get a job.

There are a range of banks and you can choose one that suits you best. There are also online-only providers which you can use.

In order to open a bank account you will usually need to show a form of identification such as your passport or BRP as well as proof of your address, such as your tenancy agreement (see Chapter 5 – Housing and Services) or a gas, electric or phone bill. Some banks will accept sight of your Universal Credit account as proof of identification.

You should ask about any charges when you open a bank account. Depending on the terms and conditions of your account, you may be charged if you spend more money than you have or for other services that may be included.

Once you open your account, you will usually be issued with a debit card which can be used to pay for things in most shops. You can also arrange for bills to be paid directly from your account using 'direct debit'.





Learning English






Learning to speak English is very important and will help you to settle into your new life and live independently, enable you to go to the doctor on your own, help your children at school and help you get a job or study further.

You are entitled to free English language tuition if you are unemployed and looking for work. If you are attending appointments at the Jobcentre (see chapter 4 on Employment and Benefits), your work coach may refer you to an English language class.

You can also find information about English classes by contacting the local council where you live. Before you join a class, a teacher will check your level and find out more about you, so that you can join a class with people who are at a similar level as you, and which is suitable for your needs. If you have a baby or young children, you may need to arrange for someone to care for them while you attend classes, or find a class with a creche.

You do not need to know any English to join an English course. Classes can be a lot of fun and are a good place to meet people and make friends.

Summary

| | |
|--|--|
| You can access public services, work and claim benefits |  |
| Family links |  |
| You will receive a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), which allows you to remain in the UK and find work – please keep this safe |  |
| You should open a bank account as soon as possible to help manage your money |  |
| Learning to speak English is very important and you should find out about classes available in your local area as soon as possible |  |

Chapter 3

The First Month

In this chapter you will learn about:

- ✓ Moving from asylum support to other services
- ✓ Migrant Help services
- ✓ Finding accommodation
- ✓ Integration loans

Successful Claims

Once you are recognised as a refugee by the Home Office you should read your decision letter carefully. It contains important information about the support you are entitled to, and what you need to do next.

Home Office support stops

You will receive your Biometric Residence Permit within 5 to 7 working days from when you have been granted refugee or Humanitarian Protection status. If you have been receiving support from the Home Office this will stop 28 days after your BRP has been sent to you. This means that you will need to make an appointment with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) at your local Jobcentre to ask for help in finding employment, and to claim the benefits you are entitled to. You will also need to arrange your own housing.

It is very important that you make an appointment with DWP quickly, so that your benefits can be paid to you as soon as possible



Support from Migrant Help

If you have received asylum support from the Home Office, Migrant Help can provide advice about accessing benefits, housing and other services before the end of the 28 day period when your asylum support will end. They can help you book an appointment at your local Jobcentre to access benefits and receive advice on employment.

The Home Office will notify Migrant Help about the outcome of your asylum claim and Migrant Help will contact you within one working day. They will advise of the support they can provide and if you wish to receive their assistance, they will schedule a follow-on appointment.

Appointments will be provided either via telephone or face to face:

Tel: 0808 8010 503

Website: <https://www.migranthelpuk.org/contact>



Leaving your accommodation

If you have been in government asylum accommodation while you have been waiting for your asylum decision this support will come to an end. You will need to find somewhere else to live. This could be private rented accommodation, a live-in job, hostel, flat, or house-share. You can also ask your Local Authority's Housing Department for advice and help.

Whichever option you choose, finding a new home once you leave your asylum accommodation is likely to take time. We strongly advise you to think about this as soon as possible, and to contact your Housing Officer who can advise you.

On the day you leave, you must take all your belongings with you, and leave your accommodation in the same condition as it was when you first moved in; clean and tidy.

If you have any problems or questions about your accommodation, you should contact Migrant Help. Your letter from the Home Office tells you the name of your accommodation provider and gives details of your support.

You can also discuss this at your appointment with DWP, who may be able to advise you further.

Integration loans

You are entitled to apply for an integration loan if you are 18 years of age or over. Integration loans have to be paid back but they are interest free. Loan applications can be made for items or activities that will help your integration into society. This could be help with housing, getting a job or education.

Information on the loan and an application form can be found on GOV.UK at

www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-for-an-integration-loan or you can request a form from the contact details provided in the accompanying paperwork with your decision letter.



Receive loans

Don't forget to read the following chapter – Employment & Benefits.

Summary

Jobcentre Plus can help you find employment and access benefits



Home Office support stops



Migrant Help can help you make an appointment at the Jobcentre



If you have been in Government asylum accommodation, you will need to find somewhere else to live and your local authority can help



Chapter 4

Employment and Benefits

In this chapter you will learn about:

- Work in the UK
- How to find a job
- Paying taxes
- Financial support while you are not working or you are on a low income
- Your employment rights and how the law protects you at work

Employment opportunities

Finding a job will not only increase your income but will help you settle into your new life. There are many different kinds of jobs. Major industries in the UK include agriculture, production and services.

Some jobs will require qualifications or skills including speaking English. It may take time to build your skills and gain experience until you find a suitable job.

Many jobs require you to work 'normal working hours', often 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Your normal working hours will be fixed by your employment contract. For some jobs you may be expected to work in the evenings, weekends or at night.

Part-time jobs are also available. Some people may choose to work part-time in order to look after children, support themselves while studying or alongside another part-time job to increase their earnings.

Most people between 18 and 65 years old are expected to find work unless they are studying, caring for children or other family members or unable to work due to health issues. From the age of 16, it is possible to start to work for a few hours alongside studies, or take on an apprenticeship.

16 – 65 years old
Working age



9:00am to 5:00pm
Normal working hours



You have the right to work as soon as you have been granted refugee or Humanitarian Protection status in the UK. However, you will not automatically be given a job.

Getting a job

In order to work in the UK, you will need your National Insurance number (NINO or NI number), which will be printed on your BRP. This is a unique set of letters and numbers for each person. It records the tax and National Insurance contributions you make, which pay for your healthcare and other public services. You cannot work or receive benefits without your NI number.

To get help to find a job, you should:

- Visit your local Jobcentre Plus – the Jobcentre can help you find jobs or direct you to training to help you get a job
- Look in local and national newspapers or recruitment websites where jobs are advertised
- Register with a recruitment agency who can find jobs for you
- Ask friends and relatives if they know of any available jobs where they work
- Visit local companies to enquire about job vacancies



Visit Jobcentre Plus



**Look in newspapers
or recruitment
websites**



**Register with
recruitment agency**



Applying for a job

Once you have identified a job you want to do, you must submit an application. You must carefully read what information the employer has asked for. Usually this is either an application form, or a CV (curriculum vitae) and a covering letter.

A CV is a formal list of your qualifications and experience. A covering letter is a short description that states why you are applying for the job and why you think you meet the requirements in the job description advertised. Your Jobcentre Plus work coach can arrange help for you to prepare these if required.

Once the application is submitted, you may be invited to an interview. The format of interviews can vary. For example, you may be asked a series of questions in a face-to-face meeting or you may be given a trial shift where you do the job for a day or part of a day. You should pay close attention to the instructions for any interview you are offered.

Employers may also ask to see your documentation. It will help if you can bring your original documents such as your BRP which is evidence of your right to work in the UK, college diplomas and any other proof of your qualifications and experience to show to employers. Employers may also ask for references from people who can verify your suitability for employment (such as a former manager, teacher or colleague). You can also go online onto <https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work> which allows you to authorise an employer to access your data to prove that you have the right to work in the UK.



Skills and language

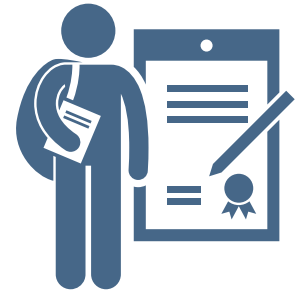
Many newcomers face challenges in finding employment. There are other people in your area also looking for jobs, and you will face competition for jobs you apply for.

Any skills and experience you have will help you to apply for jobs. Restrictions will apply to certain professions such as medicine, law and engineering. You may have to take exams to obtain the required licence to practise. If you are already trained or have qualifications in a profession, you may be able to practise in the UK as long as your qualifications are recognised in the UK.

Diplomas from your country are not automatically recognised in the UK. So you should contact a potential employer or seek advice from your Jobcentre Plus work coach to ask if your qualifications will be accepted.

English is the usual working language in England. Most jobs will need employees to speak a minimum level of English. Learning and improving your English will increase job opportunities for you and will also help you to settle into your new life.

Your Jobcentre Plus work coach can help arrange specific skills training to help you find a job.



Some qualifications may be recognised in the UK



Speak to Jobcentre Plus advisor



Receive English classes or training for specific skills



Learn and improve your English

Benefits – supporting you to find work

When you have been recognised as a refugee, you can apply for benefits. You should do this straightaway, do not delay.

‘Benefits’ are monetary payments from the government to help you and your family live in the UK.

You can contact your local Citizens Advice Centre at <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/search-for-your-local-citizens-advice/> for guidance on how to apply and for a better idea of whether you’re eligible.

Universal Credit

From 1st February 2019, all new claims will be for Universal Credit. Universal Credit is a payment from the UK government to help you and your family live in the UK. Universal Credit is paid monthly, and you apply for it online. You might also need to phone the Universal Credit helpline to book an interview with a work coach at a Jobcentre. You’ll be told if you need to do this after you apply.

To receive Universal Credit, you’ll make an agreement called a ‘Claimant Commitment’ with your Jobcentre work coach. What you do depends on your situation, whether you are looking for work, or whether you have a caring responsibility or a health condition that prevent you from working. You might need to do activities such as: write a CV; look and apply for jobs; or go on training courses.

Your Universal Credit payment is made up of a standard allowance and any extra amounts that apply to you, for example if you: have children; have a disability or health condition which prevents you from working; or need help paying your rent.

Age 18 – 65



Actively looking for work



Approved



Receive support



Receive benefits

Universal Credit can be used to pay for your living expenses such as food, clothing, transport, household bills (See Chapter 5 – Housing and Services) and anything you want to buy.

You will also be eligible to apply for housing benefit (see Chapter 5 – Housing and Services).

Contact the Universal Credit helpline if:

- You cannot use digital services at all, this might be due to disability or your circumstances
- You have a question about your claim and cannot access your online claim

Universal Credit helpline:

Telephone: 0800 328 5644

Welsh language: 0800 328 1744

NGT text relay – if you cannot hear or speak on the phone: 18001 then 0800 328 5644

Textphone: 0800 328 1344

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

Help to Claim

Help to Claim can support you in the early stages of your Universal Credit claim, from the online application, through to support with your application before your first full payment. It's a free, independent, confidential and impartial service provided by trained advisers from Citizens Advice. They can help with things like how to gather evidence for your application or how to prepare for your first Jobcentre appointment.

Pensions

Persons who have reached state pension age

The state pension age is currently 65 years old. The age at which you may become entitled to both State Pension and Pension Credit is determined by your date of birth. You can check the date at which you may qualify at GOV.UK. If you are of state pension age you do not have to look for work. You can contact the Pension Service for information and advice about entitlement to benefits.

Paying tax

If you work you have a responsibility to pay the right amount of income tax. Income tax is a set percentage of your yearly income. If you are employed by someone else, it is often deducted directly from your monthly salary through a system called Pay As You Earn (PAYE).

If you are not employed by a company or another person but earn an income, you have a responsibility to declare that income and pay the right amount of tax.

The amount of tax you pay depends on how much you earn. You can check this at

www.gov.uk/estimate-income-tax

Voluntary work

Voluntary work is working for any organisation without being paid a wage. This could be a charity, voluntary organisation or associated fund-raising body or statutory body.



Voluntary work can be very useful for a person who is looking to develop skills and experience in order to increase their chance of getting a job. It is particularly useful for someone who has not worked in the UK and is looking to build up their confidence and skills at the same time.

Your rights and protection at work

When you go to work, you have the right to be treated fairly and work in a safe environment. You also have the right to be able to work without fear or harassment from your employer, colleagues or customers.

Workers over the age of 18 are usually entitled to three types of break – rest breaks at work, daily rest and weekly rest.

If you work more than six hours in a day, you have the right to one uninterrupted 20 minute rest break during your working day. The break doesn't have to be paid – it depends on your employment contract.

You also have the right to 11 hours rest between working days (e.g. if you finish work at 8pm, you shouldn't start work again until 7am the next day) and the right to either:

- An uninterrupted 24 hours without any work each week
- An uninterrupted 48 hours without any work each fortnight

Almost all workers are legally entitled to 5.6 weeks paid holiday per year (known as statutory leave entitlement or annual leave). An employer can include bank holidays (also known as public holidays) as part of statutory annual leave.



Every employer in the country must pay their employees a minimum amount per hour. How much this is depends on how old you are.

The rates in place until 31 st March 2021 are shown below. After this date, some rates may change. Please check www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates for the most up-to-date information.

| Age | Rate per hour |
|-------------|---------------|
| 25 and over | £8.72 |
| 21 to 24 | £8.20 |
| 18 to 20 | £6.45 |
| Under 18 | £4.55 |
| Apprentice | £4.15 |

The terms and conditions of your work will be outlined in your contract. Make sure you read this carefully, with an interpreter if necessary, before you sign.

You can get further advice about your rights and Employer's responsibilities by contacting ACAS on 0300 123 1100.

Minimum wage:

25 and over



£8.72

21-24



£8.20

18-20



£6.45

Under 18



£4.55

Apprentice



£4.15



Equality and discrimination in the workplace

Organisations and businesses have a legal duty to treat everyone fairly in the workplace and in the way they recruit people for jobs. Men and women have the right to work. Men and Women have equal rights and duties in employment.

You have the right to be safe at work and be free from threat or violence. You should also keep your passport or ID – your employer does not have the right to keep them.

It is illegal to discriminate against anyone applying for a job or in the workplace on the basis of gender, race, religion, being married or in a civil partnership, disability, age, sexual orientation or if they are pregnant.

Employers must therefore respect the needs of an employee as long as it does not interfere with the work they are employed to do. For example, Muslim women will be allowed to wear a hijab and employers must make reasonable adjustments to accommodate disabled people.

If you think you have been unfairly discriminated against you can:

- Complain directly to the person or organisation
- Use someone else to help you sort it out (called mediation or alternative dispute resolution)
- Make a claim in a court or tribunal

You can get further advice and support from the Equality Advisory Service: www.equalityadvisoryservice.com

If you are being forced to work or your employer isn't willing to respect your rights, you can also get advice from the Modern Slavery Helpline by calling **0800 0121 700**.



Summary

Finding a job will raise your income to help support you and your family



You must have a National Insurance number to work



You can visit your Jobcentre Plus for advice and support to find a job, as well as to apply for benefits



Improving your skills, particularly your English, will increase the opportunities available to you



If you are earning a salary, you must make sure you pay any tax you owe



You are protected by law in the workplace – employers have a responsibility towards you, and you should not experience discrimination in the workplace



Chapter 5

Housing and Services

In this chapter you will learn about:

- Types of housing
- Your tenancy agreement
- Paying your rent
- How to access utilities and services
- Your local area

In Chapter 3 you read about having 28 days to secure your own accommodation once you are recognised as a refugee. There are different ways you can do this. Two of the main options are social housing provided by the local authority or privately rented housing. Depending on which path you take different people can help you with this. If you have received asylum support, Migrant Help can direct you to the relevant local authority housing team, in the area in which you live.



Housing in the UK varies greatly depending on where you live – from individual houses for a single family that are more common in rural areas or the outskirts of cities, to large apartment blocks close to the centre of towns and cities.

Types of housing

Private housing

Privately rented housing is an alternative to social housing. You can find it through local lettings agents and on property listings websites. The types of privately rented housing available is different across the country.

When you find a house or flat you will probably need to pay a deposit. You will then need to sign a 'tenancy agreement'. This is a legal contract between you and the landlord.

Your tenancy agreement will state;

- The date you can move in
- How long the contract is for
- How much the rent is
- When you must pay the rent

Social housing

Social housing is provided by local councils and housing associations.

To access social housing you will need to apply to the council (local housing authority) where you wish to live in order to go onto their housing waiting list. You will usually need to fill in an application form, and you may be able to do this online.

Many housing associations let some or all of their properties through the council waiting list. However, in some areas you may also be able to apply to housing associations directly, and the council should be able to inform you if this is the case.



People who have been granted refugee status are eligible to be considered for social housing. However, to get onto the council waiting list, a person must also qualify under rules set by the local council itself. Local councils must have a scheme (their allocation scheme) setting out their policies and procedures for allocating social housing and most councils publish it on line. This should explain who qualifies to go onto the waiting list, and how the council prioritise applicants.

Most councils in England apply a residency test, or wider local connection test, as part of their qualification criteria to go on the waiting list. A 'local connection' may usually be established through living or working in an area, or through have close family living in an area.

Councils can also set their own local priorities which must be set out in their allocation scheme.

Your length of time on the waiting list will depend on the area you wish to live in, the type and size of house you require, as well as any priority you may have. In many areas there is not enough social housing to meet demand. The local council will be able to give you advice on the possible waiting time.

Your tenancy agreement

For private accommodation, there will be a landlord who owns the property – this may be a private individual, the local authority or a housing association. You will need to sign a written agreement in the form of a document known as a tenancy agreement.

The tenancy agreement is a legally binding document which sets out the rights and responsibilities of both landlord and tenant. It is important to read any tenancy agreement carefully – use an interpreter if you have any doubts. You should check:

- The amount you must pay in your deposit and rent, and when this must be paid
- What date your tenancy will run from and to
- Whether you can cancel your tenancy agreement early or change the terms
- A list of repairs and maintenance that are your responsibility, and which are the landlord's responsibility
- Any other rules or restrictions, e.g. having pets or smoking restrictions



You can find out about your responsibilities and rights as a tenant in the Government's 'How to Rent Guide', which is at www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-how-to-guides

In general, a landlord and tenant have the following responsibilities:

| Landlord | Tenant |
|---|---|
| Collecting rent | Paying your rent in full and on time |
| Keeping your building safe and in good condition | Keeping the house clean and not mis-using it or any furniture included |
| Providing everything set out in your tenancy agreement (including furniture if agreed) | Contacting the landlord if there are any repairs needed or any issues with the house |
| Handling or paying for repairs to the house and appliances covered by the tenancy agreement | Allowing the landlord to enter to repair your home or to do an inspection at a time and frequency agreed in the tenancy agreement |

Paying your rent

Your tenancy agreement will set out how much rent needs to be paid and how often – this will usually be monthly. When you are first recognised as a refugee, it is likely you will have no income, so you will be entitled to claim benefits to help pay all or part of your rent and to cover expenses such as food and bills (see Chapter 4 – Employment and Benefits).

The amount of benefits you will receive is dependent on your personal circumstances. You should go to your local Jobcentre Plus to claim benefits (see Chapter 4 – Employment and Benefits). Welfare benefits will usually be paid directly to you and you are responsible for paying your housing and living costs with the money you receive.

Gas, electricity, water and other services

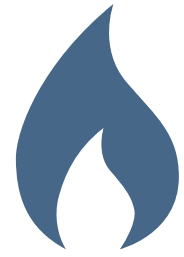
When you move in, your water and electricity should already be working. There won't necessarily be gas in all properties, but where there are gas appliances landlords are required to provide you with a gas safety certificate. If you have a problem you should contact the supplier stated in your tenancy agreement who will make necessary arrangements to set up how you will pay for your energy and water.

Gas and electricity can be expensive, so doing things like turning the heating off when you leave the house or keeping windows closed when you have the heating on can save you money. Make sure that you turn off lights and do not leave electrical appliances on. This also helps to protect the environment, as it creates less waste and pollution.

If you smell gas, this could be a sign of a dangerous gas leak. You should call **0800 111 999** immediately if you suspect there is a gas leak in your building.

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors:

All properties must have working smoke alarms (on every floor used as living accommodation) and a carbon monoxide alarm (in rooms using solid fuels – such as a coal fire or wood burning stove).



Getting a telephone and the internet

You can arrange to have a land line (fixed phone) installed at your home and pay a monthly fee to use it, known as line rental. A land line is usually needed in order to receive internet access. Depending on the deal you choose, the provider will either send you the equipment to set up yourself or somebody will visit to help you install it. There are a wide range of deals, so you should check with a number of providers before buying.

Most people will also have their own personal mobile phone. Mobile phones will vary in cost, but basic mobile phones are available for as little as £10. Smartphones, which can access the internet, are more expensive.

You can get a contract where you pay monthly to use a mobile, or a pay as you go deal where you pay for what you use.

- Pay monthly contracts are where you can make calls on your phone for a fixed number of minutes, send a number of texts and use a certain amount of internet data. You will pay a fixed amount each month unless you exceed the number of minutes, texts or data set out in your contract, in which case you must pay for what you use. These can be very expensive, so it is important to be careful and check that you have not exceeded your allowance. It is necessary to have a bank account and provide proof of address (for example a copy of your tenancy agreement) to take out a contract. Contracts can vary greatly in cost, from as little as £5 per month for a SIM card only to £60+ for contracts with the latest and most expensive phones included.



- You can also buy a pay as you go SIM card which means you pay for the minutes, texts or data you use. This means you can control how much you spend more easily. In some cases, a phone company will offer a deal where if you top-up, or add a minimum amount of money each month, they will give you a certain amount of minutes, texts and data to use. You can top-up whatever amount you want but to get a good deal from a phone company you usually need to top up around £10 each month.



Council Tax

You are liable for paying Council Tax for your property. This is a set amount for the financial year which runs from April to March, and you can pay this monthly. Council Tax is a tax which goes to your local authority for local services such as care, social services, police and local facilities.

If you are on a low income or out of work you may be eligible for financial help towards your Council Tax bill – this is called Council Tax Reduction. Each local authority has its own scheme and you need to apply to your local authority.

Homelessness/Crisis support

If you are concerned that you may become homeless the following services can advise you on what to do:

- Your local authority, you can find this at www.gov.uk/find-local-council
- Shelter Tel: 0808 800 4444
- Crisis Tel: 0800 038 4838
- Refugee Council www.refugeecouncil.org.uk



COUNCIL TAX

Your local neighbourhood

Your local area will likely have a leisure centre where you can play sport or exercise, local parks and libraries where you can borrow books and access the internet if you do not have it at home. Libraries and parks are free to everyone and leisure centres are often cheap to use.

You should also familiarise yourself with the local transport links and bus stops and learn how to use transport to reach places further away. You may not live very close to a doctor, school or Jobcentre Plus and may need to travel to get there.



Places of worship

The UK is a multi-faith society and there are mosques churches, synagogues and other places of worship in larger towns or cities.

Many newcomers to the UK have found that they have had support and help through their place of worship and have also made friends who have helped them to adapt and made them feel welcome.



Summary

You are eligible to receive benefits which can pay for your rent and other essential living costs



If you are renting a house or a flat, you will have a tenancy agreement with your landlord that sets out the rights and responsibilities for both landlord and you, the tenant



You must manage your money with care and ensure you pay for all bills and living expenses – you should open a bank account



Look out for local services and places of worship in your local area



Chapter 6

Education

In this chapter you will learn about:

- The education system
- Types of school
- The subjects that you can study

Overview of education

If you have children, they may already be attending school and you may have some existing knowledge of the education system. This chapter is intended to give a helpful overview of the education system, including adult learning.

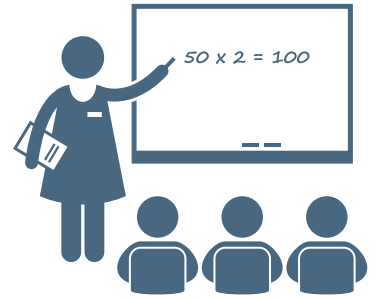
Education is important in the UK and there is a strong culture of lifelong learning. This means that education does not finish at school but continues throughout a person's working life through professional or personal development.

The school system encourages children to question and think for themselves rather than simply learning facts and figures. Parents are expected to take a prominent and supportive role in their children's education, meeting with teachers regularly for a progress report, helping children with their homework and ensuring they arrive at school clothed, fed and ready to learn.

As a parent you are responsible for ensuring that your children of compulsory school age receive a full-time education. Local authorities have powers to enforce school attendance, including the power to prosecute parents who fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. This guidance sets out how schools, local authorities and the police can deal with poor attendance and behaviour in school.

Education for children is free and compulsory. In England, the statutory school age is from 5 years to 16 years and individuals aged 16 to 18 must be in either full-time education or work (with an educational component).

The UK has some of the world's finest and oldest universities and is a world leader in research and innovation.



A young girl with blonde hair, wearing a light blue school polo shirt, is sitting in a classroom. Her right hand is raised high in the air, and she is looking towards the right of the frame with a focused expression. Another child's hand is visible in the foreground, also raised. The background is slightly blurred, showing other children in similar uniforms.

Joining the education system

You should get in touch with your local authority to ensure your children are registered in an age appropriate school. Your local authority will have more information about schools in your area. We recommend you review this GOV.UK webpage (www.gov.uk/schools-admissions) which provides general information for parents about school admissions and how to apply for a school place. If you don't know your local authority, you can find out through this website: www.gov.uk/find-local-council. You should enrol your child at school and familiarise yourself with what support is expected from parents. These include taking an active part in your child's education such as ensuring that they attend school, complete their homework and get enough sleep.

If you have a child of nursery age (under 5 years old) the local authority Family Information Service can help you find a nursery place for them. Once you know your local authority, you can check your Family Information Service here: findyourfis.familyandchildcaretrust.org. Similarly, if your child has additional learning needs, you should liaise with your local authority to ensure that their needs are met.

Your child will be given additional support to meet the requirements of education, such as additional English language support. These opportunities will not only enable them to re-engage with their education as quickly as possible, but also help the whole family to adjust.

Nursery education

Between the ages of 3 and 4, children can get free early education. Some 2-year-olds are also eligible. The local authority Family Information Service will be able to provide advice about local childcare providers and how many hours of free early education you may be entitled to.

At nursery children will learn through play, giving children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the foundation for good future progress through school and life.



Nursery education

Primary education

Primary education is taught at primary schools. These teach the fundamental basics of reading, writing, arithmetic and science. They are attended by children aged 5 to 11 years old.

Primary schools are sometimes separated into infant schools (ages 4 to 6) and junior schools (ages 7 to 11), and you may be told that your child is attending one of these types of school (although some children might start when they're 4 years old).



Primary education

Secondary education



Secondary education

Further education



Further education

Higher education



Higher education



Secondary education

Secondary education is taught at secondary schools. These build on the primary curriculum and teach a more academic curriculum across a range of subjects (such as the sciences, mathematics, English language and literature and foreign languages), alongside practical subjects (such as music, design and technology, physical education and information technology). These schools are attended by children aged 11 to 16.

Secondary schools vary across local authorities and the type of school your child may attend could be a comprehensive school, an academy or a grammar school.

At the age of 16 students in England sit public examinations in all their subjects known as the General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs). These qualifications will be used to apply for jobs, further education and higher education.

School leaving ages

You can leave school on the last Friday in June if you will be 16 by the end of the summer holidays.

You must then do one of the following until you are 18:

- Stay in full-time education e.g. at a college or secondary school
- Start an apprenticeship or traineeship. An apprenticeship is a genuine job, where you spend at least 20% of your time in off the job training. For more information, visit www.apprenticeships.gov.uk
- Volunteer (for 20 hours or more a week) while in part-time education or training

Further education

In England, after taking GCSEs young people normally choose between a practical route or an academic route. Further education for young people aged 16-18 can be provided in schools (often as part of a continuous educational journey from the age of 11 to 18), sixth form or FE colleges, or independent training providers.

The most common academic qualifications are called A-Levels and these are often required to go on to university. Students will typically study three or four subjects at A-Level often related to what they want to study at university.

Technical qualifications come in a number of forms, the most common of which are Business and Technician Education Council qualifications (BTECs) and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). These develop practical skills such as management, hairdressing or carpentry. Often these are taken in conjunction with, or as a precursor to, apprenticeships (see Chapter 4 – Employment and Benefits).

Further Education is also open to adults. Adult provision is funded through a combination of government funds, employer contributions, learner contributions and learner loans, depending on the type/level of course and learner circumstances. To find out what opportunities are available in your local area, and whether you are eligible for government funding, please contact your local authority, college or training provider, or find out more information at www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk



Higher education

Higher education is taught at universities and individuals will usually begin applying between the ages of 17 and 18. Different universities will offer different subjects and requirements needed to confirm a place (usually certain grades at A-Level sometimes in certain subjects).

Students will receive guidance from their school teachers and careers advisers about where to apply and what to apply for. Applications are submitted through an online system.

University education is not free in all parts of the UK, and individual universities set the level of their fees. These are currently capped at up to £9,250 per year in England. You may be able to apply for a student loan to cover the costs of these fees, and an additional loan to contribute to the costs of living as a student. A careers adviser at your school will provide you with more information.

If you have refugee status you are eligible for home fee status for tuition fees and you are eligible to apply for student loans to help with tuition fees and living costs. If you have Humanitarian Protection status, you will need to satisfy a three year ordinary residency requirement to qualify for home fee status and to be eligible to apply for student loans.

For more information on student finance visit:
www.gov.uk/student-finance

Student Loans Company – **www.slc.co.uk**.
Telephone no: 0300 100 0622.



Adult learning

Adult learning is strongly encouraged and many different courses are available. Colleges, adult education services and other educational institutions in your local area may offer full and part-time adult learning opportunities. These could include taught courses, workshops and online learning on a wide range of subjects including job training and courses for personal development such as IT, gardening, arts and crafts, and well-being. Some courses are specifically designed to support parents and their families. These courses are likely to be available in the daytime, evening and weekends. Some courses, including literacy and numeracy, are free of charge and some courses are fee-paying so adults may be asked to contribute fully or partially towards the cost. To find out what opportunities are available in your local area, and whether you are eligible for government funding, then please try:

- Looking at the website or prospectus of your local authority adult education service, further education college and/or Workers' Educational Association (WEA) branch
- Using the National Careers Service website, <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>, which offers advice on choosing courses and a post code search to help you find a suitable class
- Reading notices in local newspapers or on notice boards in schools, children's centres, doctors' surgeries, community centres, libraries or voluntary groups
- Speaking to friends, neighbours and colleagues to find out what's happening locally and what courses are on offer

Summary

Education is important, and all children must attend school from the age of 5 until they turn 16



There are opportunities for adults to undertake further learning



Chapter 7

Legal Rights and Responsibilities

In this chapter you will learn about:

- Your rights and responsibilities
- What is legal and illegal
- Protecting and caring for your children
- Gender-based laws
- Discrimination

Rights and freedoms

Every person in the UK has the same basic human rights and freedoms, which are protected in law. These underpin how people live in the UK. For example:

- Every person has a right to liberty, which means you cannot be unlawfully detained. You also have a right to a fair trial. Everyone must be treated fairly and equally under the law.
- Every person has freedom of thought and the right to practise their religion. However it is illegal if, as part of this, you take part in activities which break UK laws. It is against the law to discriminate against or persecute someone because of their beliefs.
- Every individual has a right to marry whomever they want, regardless of race, or religion. However there are exceptions, for example you cannot be married to more than one person at one time, or marry certain relatives.



Right to equality



Right to education



Right to work

Values and responsibilities in the UK

Based on the rights and freedoms protected in law, everyone living in or visiting the UK is expected to adhere to a set of shared values and responsibilities.

Core values include:

- Respect and obey the law
- Respect the rights of others, including their right to their own opinions
- Treat others with fairness



Right to marry



The law in the UK

The law applies to everyone in the UK. Cases are decided by judges in a court of law. In every case both sides are treated fairly. Every person can be represented by a lawyer.

Respect for the law is very important in the UK and everyone must obey the law. If you break the law, there are consequences. You could receive a fine or you could go to prison.

It is important to know that some things which may be allowed in other countries are not acceptable in the UK and it is your responsibility to live within the law of the UK. It is also important to understand some things which may not be allowed in other countries may be legal in the UK.

What is legal and illegal?

There are two types of law in the UK:

- Civil Law, which settles disputes between people
- Criminal Law, which covers crime and punishment

Both govern what you can and cannot do in the UK.

Some specific laws vary between England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The table below applies to England.

Below are some examples of issues that are decided in law, and their consequences:

Civil Law

Marriage and divorce

Anyone can marry whomever they want unless they are closely related (e.g. sibling, half sibling or aunt/uncle) or are already married. People of the same gender can marry each other. Either partner can apply for a divorce. If the couple is unable to agree the terms of the divorce, the courts will decide them.

Employment

The law protects both employers and employees. If an employer asks you to do things you did not agree to in a contract, you can challenge this.

Consumer rights

If a company does not provide the service or product you paid for, you can challenge this.

Housing

Any dispute between a tenant and landlord will be settled through Civil Law. As a tenant you should be fully aware of your rights, please look at chapter 5.

Discrimination and harassment

Discriminating against or harassing another person on the grounds of gender reassignment, colour, national or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, disability or sexual orientation is prohibited under the equalities legislation. Any conduct that can reasonably be expected to cause harassment, alarm or distress to another person on any grounds is also prohibited under harassment legislation. Anyone who suffers this kind of discrimination or harassment can claim damages or seek an injunction against the perpetrator. This includes verbal insults based on religion.

Criminal Law

Violence

It is illegal to kill or injure another person or group of people, and this can be punished severely. Violent offences which are against UK law include forced sexual contact or behaviour and domestic violence between family members in the home.

Racist and religious hate crime

Criminal behaviour such as violence, verbal abuse, bullying or damage to property is hate crime if it is carried out because of race or religion. This can include where the victim is believed to be of a particular religion or race, or where their partner or friend is. It is also illegal to encourage religious or racial hatred.

Harassment

Any conduct that can reasonably be expected to cause harassment, alarm or distress to another person on any grounds is a criminal offence. The perpetrator can face criminal charges as well as or instead of damages or an injunction under civil law.

Sex

The age of consent (when it is legal) for two people to have sex is 16, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

Criminal Law

Drugs

It is illegal to possess, transport or distribute certain controlled drugs. Punishments can be severe, including custodial sentences.

Alcohol

It is legal for adults over 18 to purchase and consume alcohol.
It is illegal to drive under the influence of alcohol.

Smoking

It is illegal to smoke indoors in most public areas, e.g. shops, restaurants, bars. It is illegal to sell tobacco to anyone under the age of 18. In England it is also illegal to smoke in vehicles with passengers under 18. Breaking these laws could lead to a fine.

Driving

It is illegal to drive without a driving licence. You can begin learning to drive from 17 years of age and you must pass a driving test in order to obtain a driving licence.

Weapons

You cannot buy or possess a firearm without a licence. Carrying a knife in public is also punishable.

Protecting and caring for your children

The UK has signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international laws promoting children's rights. The UK takes children's rights seriously and is always trying to improve the situation of all children. For this reason the UK has passed a number of laws that help protect children.

Children have a right to have their views listened to and considered. There are official Children's Commissioners that help make sure that the rights and views of children are considered.

In some circumstances in the UK, children aged 14 and older have a right to make certain decisions for themselves, such as medical decisions.

As a parent you are legally responsible for the protection, care and well-being of your children.

- It is a parent's responsibility to make sure their children attend school. If you do not there can be legal action such as: a Parenting Order, an Education Supervision Order, a School Attendance Order or a fine.
- It is an offence to leave children alone if this will put them at risk. Babies, toddlers and very young children should never be left alone.

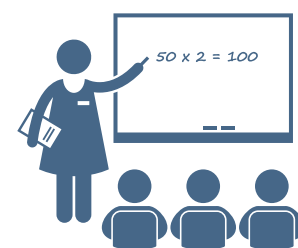
Going to school is very important for the welfare of a child. Helping out with tasks at home must not stop a child from going to school.

When parents are having difficulties caring for their children, the government social services may be able to offer some help or advice. UK laws require social services to investigate allegations of child neglect or abuse.

If you beat, harm or neglect your children social services can intervene. In some severe cases courts can ask social services to take the child to a foster home to make sure they are safe from harm.



Responsible parents



Going to school

If you are worried about your child or another child you can contact:

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) on

0808 800 5000

Childline on

0800 1111

Gender and sex in law

Issues related to gender and sex are taken very seriously in the UK. The law says that you cannot be discriminated against because of your sex or your gender. This means:

- Organisations, including companies and individuals in the UK have a legal duty to treat men and women equally
- Men and women have equal rights and duties in employment and in marriage and in all aspects of private and public life in the UK
- Transgender people have equal rights too

You can also contact the police if you are worried about crime.



Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse usually occurs in the home and can take many forms:

- It can be physical abuse like hitting, kicking or hair pulling
- It can include emotional abuse like blackmail, mental torture and threats to disown a person or harm those they care about
- It can also be controlling, for example, restricting a person's movements or access to or contact with family or friends or preventing access to money or a chosen career
- It can be coercive behaviour for example threats, humiliation or intimidation that is used to harm, punish or frighten
- It can be rape – being married doesn't mean that a partner has the right to force sex against the will of the other

Anybody, regardless of gender, nationality or any other distinguishing factor, can find themselves at risk of domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse is a serious crime in the UK. Anyone who is violent towards their partner, spouse or another family member, whether they are a man or a woman, married or living together, can be prosecuted. If children witness domestic abuse this could be considered child abuse and social services will investigate.



Anyone, including neighbours, can report domestic abuse and violence. Police will respond to reports and may make arrests or ask one partner to leave the home.

Conviction of a crime related to domestic abuse can negatively affect your immigration status and your ability to apply to live long term in the UK.

In some cases courts can order the perpetrators of domestic abuse to stay away from the victim, from the family home and from places where the victim and children normally go, such as school. Violating this order can result in police action.

It is important for anyone facing domestic abuse to get help as soon as possible. There are safe places to go and stay in, called refuges or shelters.

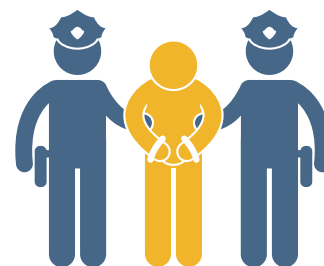
If you experience domestic abuse, you should report it to the police. They can help you find a safe place to stay. You can also phone the 24 hour national Domestic Violence Freephone Helpline on **0808 2000 247** at any time.

Emergency numbers and Domestic Violence Helpline

- The police, ambulance and fire brigade: **999** (freephone, 24 hours)
- National Domestic Violence Helpline: **0808 2000 247** (freephone, 24 hours) Run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge
- Broken Rainbow National LGBT domestic abuse helpline: **0300 999 5428** (not 24 hour freephone line)
- Worldwide: visit **International Directory of Domestic Violence Agencies** for a global list of helplines and crisis centres



Reporting abuse



Police may make arrests



Police, ambulance and fire brigade:
999

National Domestic Violence Helpline:
0808 2000 247

Broken Rainbow National LGBT domestic abuse helpline:
0300 999 5428

Honour based violence

In the UK it is illegal to abuse or harm anyone for cultural reasons or reasons of family honour, whether they are a member of the same family or not. For example, it is illegal to punish another family member for what someone considers to be dishonourable behaviour. There are men and women in the UK who have been convicted and sent to prison for harming family members for reasons of honour.

If you are worried about honour based violence you can speak to the police. You can also get confidential advice from an organisation called Karma Nirvana on **0800 5999 247**.



Karma Nirvana:
0800 5999 247

Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) also known as cutting or female circumcision is illegal in the UK. Practising FGM or taking a girl or woman abroad for FGM is a criminal offence punishable by law.

If you are a victim of FGM, you need to speak with your doctor. There are doctors who specialise in helping FGM victims. You can also ask for advice from one of several national organisations, such as the NSPCC on **0800 028 3550**.

Children who are worried that they are in danger of FGM can speak to police, teachers, social workers, or Childline on **0800 1111**.



NSPCC:
0800 028 3550

Childline:
0800 1111

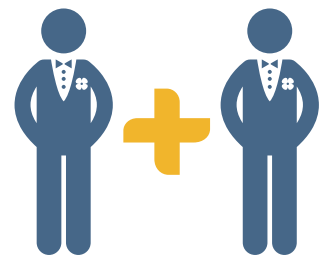
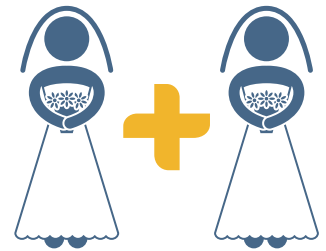
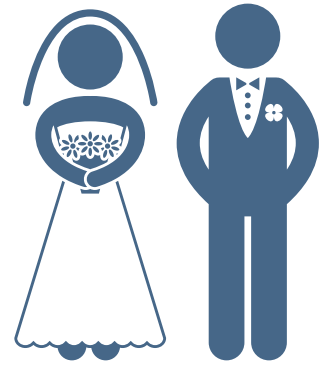
Marriage

There is a distinction between civil and religious marriages. Religious marriages are not recognised unless they are registered by the state. Some religious marriages are not recognised in the UK and couples entering into them must have a civil marriage as well.

The legal minimum age to marry in the UK is 16. In England you need parental consent to marry between the ages of 16 and 18.

In England it is legal and accepted for men and women to marry, for women and women to marry and for men and men to marry. All of these marriages are protected by law.

A marriage should be entered into with the full and free consent of both people involved.



Arranged marriages, where both parties agree to the marriage, are acceptable in the UK.

Forced marriage is where one or both parties do not or cannot give their consent or where duress is a factor. Forcing another person to marry is a criminal offence. Parents cannot force their children to marry. It is also an offence to take someone overseas to force them to marry.

For advice on forced marriage, contact Karma Nirvana on **0800 5999 247** or The Forced Marriage Unit on **020 7008 0151**.



Karma Nirvana:
0800 5999 247

**The Forced
Marriage Unit:**
020 7008 0151

Racism and discrimination

In the UK it is illegal to treat anyone differently because of their gender, race, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation.

Racism is unacceptable in the UK. It is a serious offence to injure, harass or verbally abuse someone because of their race or to damage their property for that reason. It is also against the law to stir up racial hatred. It is unacceptable to discriminate against another person because of their race, ethnicity or where they came from. You should not be treated any differently because of your race when applying for a job, looking for somewhere to live, using the National Health Service (NHS) or just buying something in a shop.

You should not experience racial harassment at work, school or in public (where other people make comments about your race or where you come from that are offensive or make you uncomfortable). If you or someone you know is the victim of racism:

Do tell the authorities about it.

- You can go to the police. If you don't want to walk into a police station there are many ways you can report a racist crime; for example you can do it online at www.report-it.org.uk/home

Do not try to deal with racism or racist attackers on your own. Get the authorities involved. If you try to resolve it on your own you could get hurt or even get into trouble with the police yourself.



Harassment



Talk to the police



Report crime online

The police and their duties

The police in the UK will:

- Protect life and property
- Prevent disturbances
- Prevent and detect crime

The police exist to protect the public, their rights and the law. The police are there to help and assist you and you should not be afraid to approach them if you are the victim of a crime, see a crime happening, or for general assistance for example if you are lost.

If you need the police because of a crime then you should call the following telephone numbers:

999 – This is the number to call if you have an emergency, for example if you are the victim of an assault or see a crime taking place. When you call, say you need 'police', as this is also the number to call an ambulance or if there is a fire.

101 – This is the number to call for less urgent situations, for example if your property has been damaged, to give police information about a crime, or any general enquiries.



Summary

Everyone in the UK has rights that are protected in law – everyone also has a responsibility to respect the law



The law may be different from where you came from, so you should make sure you understand what is legal and illegal in the UK



If you have children, you have a responsibility for their health and well-being



Issues related to gender are taken very seriously in the UK – domestic violence, FGM, forced marriages, and discrimination based on sex are illegal



Discrimination is illegal in the UK – if you experience racism, you should report it



The police exist to enforce the law, and protect and assist you if needed – you should call 999 in an emergency



Chapter 8

Healthcare

In this chapter you will learn about:

- Accessing health services
- The National Health Service
- What other health services are available and how you can access them



A General Practitioner

A General Practitioner (GP) is the first doctor you will usually visit when accessing healthcare in the UK. You may have registered with a GP before you were granted status.

If someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk call 999.

You can also visit your nearest hospital with an Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department if there is a genuine life-threatening emergency. If you have phoned 999 an ambulance may take you to the hospital. Do not use A&E for minor medical problems.

If you urgently need medical help or advice but it's not a life threatening situation call NHS 111 if you are living in England.

A General Practitioner (GP) is the first doctor you will usually visit when accessing healthcare in the UK

What is the National Health Service?

As a person granted humanitarian protection or refugee status, you are entitled to access the health services provided by the National Health Service (NHS) if you are living in Great Britain.

You can access the following services for free:

- General Practitioners (GPs), also known as family doctors
- Hospitals
- Maternity services

The NHS provides services to those who need medical treatment and can also help with - contraception, family planning, healthy eating and mental health.

Your health will not affect your immigration status or affect what NHS services are available to you. None of the people who work for the NHS, including doctors, nurses and interpreters will pass on any information about your health to any other person or organisation outside of the NHS without your permission (except in very exceptional circumstances, such as if the doctor believes you may be of harm to yourself or others).



Visit a GP



Visit A&E



Call 999 or 111



Seeing a General Practitioner (GP)

What are GP services?

Visit a GP if it is not an emergency and you need to see a doctor or nurse about your health. GPs are highly skilled doctors who are trained in all aspects of general medicine e.g. child health, adult medicine and mental health. Practice nurses are qualified and registered nurses who usually run clinics for long-term conditions e.g. diabetes.

GPs also provide services such as:

- Antenatal care (care for pregnant women and their unborn children)
- Vaccinations
- Advice on smoking and diet

You will not be charged for the majority of GP services.

How do I register with a GP?

You will need to register at a GP surgery, also called a practice, near where you are living as soon as possible, even if you are not currently ill.

The NHS Choices website has a list of all GP surgeries in the UK: www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/GP/LocationSearch/4. You should check online to see where your nearest surgery is and how you can register there.

GP surgeries are generally open Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 6.30pm, and some surgeries are also open on Saturdays.

To register with a GP you will need to give your name, date of birth, address and telephone number if you have one. GP surgeries may ask to see proof of identity with your name and date of birth (such as your Biometric Residence Permit) and proof of address (such as your tenancy agreement). However, they cannot refuse to register you if these are not available. More information about registering with a GP can be found here: <https://assets.nhs.uk/prod/documents/how-to-register-with-a-gp-asylum-seekers-and-refugees.pdf>

After you have registered with your new GP you might be asked to have a health check. This will usually be carried out by a nurse. It is important that you go to this appointment even if you are well.

If you move to a different part of the UK you will need to register with a new GP.



Biometric Residence Permit



Proof of address



Health check



What if a GP refuses to register me?

A GP surgery can refuse your application to register if they have reasonable grounds for doing so, but a surgery cannot refuse an application on the grounds of race, gender, social class, age, religion, sexual orientation, appearance, disability or medical condition. A GP surgery cannot refuse to register a patient because they do not have identification or proof of address.

If a GP refuses to register you, they must provide, free of charge, any immediately necessary treatment that is requested for a period of up to 14 days (this can vary according to circumstances).

If a GP surgery refuses to register you the surgery must notify you, in writing, of the refusal and the reason for it, within 14 days of its decision.

A GP surgery may not be able to register you if they have no space, but you will always be able to find another surgery near to your home that can register you.

If you have difficulty registering with a GP you can contact your local NHS England area team:

www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Area-Team/LocationSearch/1839

- Your local Patient Liaison Service: [www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Patient-advice-and-liaison-services-\(PALS\)/LocationSearch/363](http://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Patient-advice-and-liaison-services-(PALS)/LocationSearch/363)
- Doctors of the World: www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/pages/UK-Programme



Male or female GP

How do I make an appointment?

To see a GP or nurse, you must make an appointment in person in the GP surgery or by telephone or online.

You can ask to see a male or female GP or nurse and your GP surgery will do their best to accommodate this.

You may have to wait a few days for a non-urgent appointment. If you think you need to see the doctor urgently tell the receptionist when you make the appointment that you need an emergency appointment. You will be seen that day if appropriate.

If the GP thinks you are too ill to come to the surgery, they may visit you at home.

GP appointments are usually 10 minutes long and occasionally longer if appropriate.

You must make a separate appointment for each family member as the GP or nurse will only be able to see one patient in each appointment.

Please make sure you arrive on time for your appointment or cancel it if you are unable to attend.



**Appointments
are usually
10 minutes long**



What if I do not speak English?

If you need an interpreter you must tell the receptionist when you make the appointment. Tell the staff which language you speak and they will book an interpreter for you or get an interpreter on the phone.

It is important that you and the doctor understand each other so that he/she can make an accurate diagnosis of your problem.

You will not be charged if you require an interpreter. Everything discussed in the consultation is confidential including anything discussed in the presence of an interpreter.

What do I do if my GP surgery is closed?

If your GP surgery is closed:

- For minor illness or injury (cuts, sprains, or rashes), you can visit a walk-in centre, minor injuries unit or urgent care centre. Visit NHS Choices online (www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx) to find your nearest centre.
- You can also get medical help for problems that cannot wait by calling the NHS non-emergency number, 111. This number is free to call and the service is available 24 hours a day. You will be asked for some details, such as your name and address. If you do not speak English, you will need to either request an interpreter in English at the beginning of the call or ask a friend or relative to make the call for you to ask for an interpreter.

How do I access specialist services?

Your GP will decide if you need to see specialist services (for example, a specialist doctor in a hospital). A specialist doctor can also be called a consultant.

Everyone has to wait to see a specialist; the waiting time can vary from two weeks to a number of months.

The hospital will write to you with details of your appointment.

If you need an interpreter, contact the hospital and let them know.

It is very important that you tell your doctor that you have either Humanitarian Protection or refugee status so that you do not get charged for any part of your hospital stay and treatment.



Specialist



Mental Health Services

Mental health problems range from the worries we all experience as part of everyday life to serious long-term conditions. Anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and depression are the most common problems. If you have been feeling depressed for more than a few weeks or your anxiety is affecting your daily life, make an appointment to speak to your doctor.

Advice is also available on the NHS website to support you on your way to feeling better. The NHS website also gives details of support organisations and their helplines that you can contact for help and advice.

The helplines are staffed by specially trained volunteers who will listen to you, understand what you are going through and help you through your immediate crisis.

Please visit www.nhs.uk/livewell/mentalhealth/Pages/Mentalhealthhome.aspx

How to access these services:

Help is also available from the Samaritans, a charitable organisation operating a 24-hour service available every day of the year. www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/. You can telephone them on 116 123 or email them at jo@samaritans.org.

You can check on the Directory of Mental Health and Wellbeing Services at to see what your local area offers.

Further advice can be found at:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/Suicide/Pages/Getting-help.aspx

Migrant Health

Website: <https://migrant.health/>



Mind

Tel: 0300 123 3993

Website: <https://www.mind.org.uk/>

Priory Group

Tel: 0800 6911552

Website: <https://www.priorygroup.com/>

Psychiatry – UK

Tel: 0330 1241980

Website: <https://www.psychiatry-uk.com/>

Refugee Council

Website: <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/>

Traumatic Stress Service – South London and Maudsley

NHS Foundation Trust

Tel: 020 322829 69

Kooth (for children and young people)

Tel: 0845 3307090



What services do I access in an emergency?

If you or a family member has an accident or a sudden serious illness you should go to your nearest hospital with an A&E department which is free for everyone.

If it is an extreme emergency call 999 and ask for an ambulance to transport you to a hospital. This service is free of charge and should only be used in an emergency.

If you are able to, you may also make your own way to the A&E department.

Do not use A&E for minor medical problems.

Once your medical situation has been stabilised in the Accident and Emergency department you may need to stay in a specialist department of the hospital until you have fully recovered and can return home.

If you are admitted to hospital it is very important that you tell your doctor that you have either Humanitarian Protection or refugee status so that you do not get charged for any part of your hospital stay and treatment.

How do I access medication from the pharmacy?



Pharmacy

Your GP may want you to take medicines and will write you a prescription. Take your prescription to the pharmacy or chemist.

You can visit NHS Choices to find your local pharmacy: www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Pharmacy/LocationSearch/10 or ask for advice at your GP surgery.

The pharmacist can also give free advice on treating minor health problems, such as colds and coughs.

You can buy some medicines from the pharmacy without a prescription, including some painkillers and cough medicines however you will have to pay for these medicines.

You may be charged for prescription medicines (see next section).



How do I access financial support for health costs?

Although treatment on the NHS is free at the point of delivery, prescriptions, dental treatment, sight tests, wigs and fabric supports are not free to everyone in some parts of the UK.

Some people are automatically entitled to free prescriptions and dental care including children, pregnant women and people receiving certain benefits. NHS eye tests are also free for some people (for example children or those aged 60 or over).

If you are no longer receiving benefits but have a low income, you can get financial help by filling in an HC1 form. You will be asked to explain your current sources of income and to provide payslips if you have a job. You will then get an HC2 certificate which is normally valid for one year. The HC2 certificate covers:

- Prescription costs
- Dental costs
- Eye care costs
- Healthcare travel costs
- Wig and fabric supports

HC1 forms are available from your GP surgery, Jobcentre Plus, most NHS hospitals and may be available from your dentist or optician. You can also get an HC1 form by calling 0300 123 0849.

Visit NHS Choices for more information: www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcosts/Pages/nhs-low-income-scheme.aspx



Prescription costs



Dental costs



Eye care costs



Travel costs



Wig and fabric supports

| Service | Description of service | How to access |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Dental care | <p>Regular check-ups allow your dentist to see if you have any dental problems and help to keep your mouth healthy. Your dentist will suggest how frequently you should have your next check-up based on how good your oral health is.</p> <p>Dental surgeries provide both private care and care under the NHS. If you are not entitled to a HC2 certificate you will have to pay for NHS dental care.</p> | <p>You can register at a dental surgery as an NHS patient. You can find your nearest dental surgery at www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx or ask the organisation supporting you for advice.</p> <p>If you require urgent dental care either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Call your dentist 2) Call NHS 111 3) If it is an emergency go to your nearest hospital with an A&E department |
| Eye care services | <p>If you need your eyes tested or need new glasses, make an appointment to see an optician.</p> <p>If you are not entitled to a HC2 certificate you will have to pay for eye sight tests and services.</p> | <p>There are opticians in most town centres.</p> <p>If you require urgent eye care either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Call NHS 111 2) If it is an emergency go to your nearest hospital with an Accident and Emergency department. |

Sexual health services

Sexual health services are free and available to everyone regardless of sex, age, ethnic origin and sexual orientation.

Sexual health services are provided by GPs and specialised sexual health clinics. You can visit any sexual health clinic; it doesn't have to be one in your local area. For sexual health services, you do not have to give your real name or tell staff who your GP is if you do not want to.

You can find your nearest sexual health service at www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx

Maternity services

You can access maternity services for free care including during pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal care.

It is very important that you tell your midwife or doctor that you have either Humanitarian Protection or refugee status so that you do not get charged.

After the birth of your child extra support will be given in the form of child health visitors. These are qualified nurses who provide free support and advice to new mothers. They may come to visit you and your baby at your home.

When you first learn that you are pregnant book an appointment to see your GP as soon as possible and your GP will give you the details of NHS help and services available.

Mental health

Mental health services in England deal with a wide range of issues including depression, anxiety and post traumatic stress disorder. There are services for children, young people and adults including older adults.

How and what services are available in each area may differ.

Your GP will be able to provide information on what services are available in your area. You can also look on NHS Choices: <https://www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx>

You can access NHS mental health services for free.

There are a number of ways to access support for mental health problems.

You can make an appointment with your GP and ask them to refer you or a child to a mental health service.

There may be local mental health services provided by the voluntary sector, either ask your GP or look on NHS Choices for what is available in your area.

If you are an adult with depression or anxiety, your local Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services may allow you to refer yourself without seeing your GP. Look on NHS Choices to see what is available in your area:

www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx

If you are dealing with a mental health crisis, you can:

- 1) Look on NHS Choices for crisis services in your area
- 2) Contact NHS 111
- 3) You could go to your nearest hospital with an A&E department

Drugs, alcohol and smoking

It is illegal to:

- Buy alcohol when under 18, or sell alcohol to anyone under 18
- Sell tobacco products to anyone under 18
- Smoke in an indoors public place or workplace
- Drive or sit in the driving seat of a vehicle when you have been drinking alcohol or taking illegal drugs and some prescribed medicines
- Possess or sell some drugs

There are many organisations that can give you confidential, non-judgemental advice on reducing or stopping the use of alcohol, nicotine or drugs.

You can visit your GP or pharmacy for further support and information.

Summary

A General Practitioner (GP) is the first doctor you will usually visit when accessing healthcare – you should register with a GP as soon as possible



If someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk call 999



If you urgently need medical help or advice but it's not a life threatening situation call NHS 111



As a refugee, you will be able to access National Health Services including GPs, hospitals and maternity services without charge



Chapter 9

Useful Contacts and Further Information



Emergency contact details

Emergency services

Call **999** and ask for the police, an ambulance or the fire service

National Grid

If you smell gas in or near your home, call **0800 111 999**

Other useful contacts and information

Police

To report crime and other concerns that do not require an emergency response, please call **101**

Website for England: www.police.uk

Healthcare

If you urgently need medical help or advice but it's not a life-threatening situation, you can contact:

- **NHS England**
Website: www.nhs.uk
Tel: **111**





For less urgent health needs, contact your GP or local pharmacist.

- **Doctors of the World**

Provides help to register with a GP and access healthcare

Website: www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk

Email: clinic@doctorsoftheworld.org.uk

Tel: **0808 1647 686**

- **Freedom from Torture**

Medical and social care, practical assistance and psychological and physical therapy for survivors of torture

Website: www.freedomfromtorture.org

- **Helen Bamber Foundation**

Medical and social care, practical assistance and psychological and physical therapy for survivors of torture

Website: www.helenbamber.org

Emotional support

- **Samaritans**

Support for those in emotional distress or struggling to cope

Website: www.samaritans.org

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Tel: 116 123

Refugee agencies and charities

- **UNHCR UK**

Website: www.unhcr.org.uk

Tel: **0203 761 9500**

Email: gbrlo@unhcr.org

- **Refugee Action**

Website: www.refugee-action.org.uk

- **Refugee Council**

Website: www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

- **British Red Cross**

Advice and support for family tracing and reunion

Website: www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Refugee-support/Our-services-for-refugees





Education and employment

- **National Careers Service**

Information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities

Website:

www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

Tel: **0800 100 900**

- **ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)**

Advice on employment law in Great Britain (Scotland, Wales and England)

Website: www.acas.org.uk

Tel: **0300 123 1100**

- **Modern Slavery Helpline**

Website: www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/

Tel: 0330 0552 2200

Equality

- **Equality Advisory Service**

Advice and assistance on issues relating to equality and human rights

Website: www.equalityadvisoryservice.com

Tel: **0808 800 0082**

Domestic violence

- **England Domestic Violence Helpline**
Website: www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk
Tel: **0808 2000 247**
- **National Centre for Domestic Violence**
Website: www.ncdv.org.uk
Tel: **0800 970 2070**
- **Men's Advice Line**
Website: www.mensadviceline.org.uk
Tel: **0808 801 0327**

Sexual violence

- **Rape Crisis England**
Information and advice for those who are experiencing or have experienced sexual violence in the past
Website: www.rapecrisis.org.uk
Tel: 0808 802 9999
- **Survivors UK**
Help for men who have experienced sexual violence
Website: www.survivorsuk.org
Tel: 020 3598 3898
Text: 020 3322 1860





Forced marriage

- **Karma Nirvana**

Support for victims and survivors of forced marriage and honour based abuse

Website: www.karmanirvana.org.uk

Tel: **0800 5999 247**

- **Forced Marriage Unit**

UK government helpline providing advice and support to victims of forced marriage.

Email: fmufco.gov.uk

Tel: **020 7008 0151**

Children

- **National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children**

Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

Tel: **0808 800 5000**

- **Childline**

Website: www.childline.org.uk

Tel: **0800 1111**

LGBT

- **Broken Rainbow (for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people)**

Website: www.brokenrainbow.org.uk

Tel: **0845 2604 460**

General information and advice

- **Migrant Help**

Advice and support for migrants in the UK

www.migranthelpuk.org

0808 8010 503

- **GOV.UK**

The UK government website, where you can find further details on topics included within this guide, such as benefits, taxes and your rights and responsibilities: www.gov.uk

- **Education UK**

Information about the UK's weather, food and drink, language, clothing, religion and more:

www.educationuk.org/global/sub/welcome-to-the-uk/

- **Expat Arrivals**

Information on life in the UK for global expats

www.expatarivals.com/the-united-kingdom/culture-shock-in-the-united-kingdom

- **Citizen Advice**

Free, independent, confidential and impartial advice on your rights and responsibilities

Website for England:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Tel for England: **0344 111 444**