

Asylum seekers: getting support

This factsheet gives an overview of help you can get with housing or money if you are an asylum seeker in the UK.

You may be entitled to housing and money from the government if you have applied for asylum. This is called 'asylum support'. It is arranged by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). UKVI is part of the Home Office.

If you can answer 'yes' to each of the following questions you may be entitled to asylum support. Are you:

- 18 years of age or older?
- still waiting for a decision on your asylum claim?
- in need of help to get somewhere to live, or with your living costs?

If you didn't apply for asylum at the point where you entered the UK this could affect whether you get asylum support.

When to apply for support

Most asylum seekers ask for support when they make their asylum application. But you can apply for support at any time before your claim for asylum is finally decided. Call Asylum Support Application UK on **0808 8000 631** if you need help to apply for help with living costs or somewhere to live.

What you will get

You will get a weekly cash allowance to pay for essentials for you and your family. If you need a place to live, UKVI must provide accommodation for you and your family (if they are with you in the UK). This will usually be outside London and the South East.

Under 18 years of age?

If you are an asylum seeker under 18, and have arrived in the UK without an adult, social services should help you. They should provide you with accommodation, food, and clothing. Call the Refugee Council's Children's Panel on **020 7346 1134** for help with your asylum application if you are an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child.

Are you ill or disabled?

Social services should give you support and accommodation if your disability or illness is significant. If you already get support from UKVI, or if one of your family has a disability or a health problem, you may be able to get extra help from social services.

You already have a place to stay

If you have somewhere to stay but no money, you can apply to UKVI for money to pay for food and other basic costs, but not for your rent or utility bills, such as gas and electricity. You can reapply to UKVI for both support and accommodation if you have to leave where you are staying.

You already have some money

If you have money or property that you could sell, you may not be eligible for asylum support. UKVI will take into account any assets that you have, including:

- cash, savings, or investments
- valuable possessions, including cars
- property or land.

If you have any of the above, but can't sell them, for example, because they are abroad, you will have to explain this to UKVI. UKVI should still help you in these circumstances.

Health care and schooling

You can see a doctor or receive hospital treatment free of charge on the NHS. If you get asylum support you should be given a form HC2 by UKVI. This is valid for six months and it lets you and your family get free prescriptions, dental care, and eye tests.

Children aged between 5 and 16 should be given a place at school.

Support if you are refused asylum

You can sometimes get basic support and accommodation if your application for asylum has been refused. You will get support if, for example, you are waiting to leave the UK, or cannot travel because you are ill. You must be destitute, and have no other options.

Further advice

You can get further advice from Shelter's free* housing advice helpline (**0808 800 4444**), a local Shelter advice service or local Citizens Advice office, or by visiting [shelter.org.uk/advice](https://www.shelter.org.uk/advice) or [adviceguide.org.uk](https://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

*Calls are free from UK landlines and main mobile networks.



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Note

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