

HELP WITH YOUR ASYLUM CASE, SOLICITORS, AND SOCIAL WORKERS

When you come to the UK, things can be confusing at first. Here is some information that should help you.

THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS

1. **Keep a folder.** Keep any papers you have about your asylum case and other important letters together in a folder. Keep this safe, you will need some of them later.
2. **Look at the dates.** Important decisions (for example, about your asylum case), usually have a deadline to appeal (challenge them). Always look for the deadlines in decision letters if you are not happy with them, and act quickly!
3. **Ask for help.** Always ask organisations and charities for help if you feel confused or you need support. You can find a list of organisations on the back of this paper.



These 3 rules should help you in other situations as well, for example, if you get into problems with the police or you want to apply to go to college.

ABOUT YOUR ASYLUM CASE

- **Make sure you understand!** The asylum process is complicated, so it's good to ask an organisation you trust to help you understand it.
- **About refugee status.** The best outcome for your case will be for the Home Office to give you Refugee Status. This means you can live here for 5 years, and then you can ask to make it permanent after that.
- **Interviews:** You will generally have two interviews with the Home Office: your screening interview, and then later, your big asylum interview. Your asylum interview is very important. It is your main opportunity to explain your story and the dangers and problems you experienced.
- **Interpreters:** You should be given an interpreter in your interviews.
- **Time:** The Home Office can often take a long time to make a decision, but if you are not happy with their decision, it is important to act as quickly as possible.
- **Appeals:** If you are given 'limited leave to remain' (sometimes called 'UASC leave') for less than 5 years, and your



solicitor advises you to accept this, get the advice of another solicitor as soon as possible as it will be very difficult to challenge this later. This other solicitor should be good quality – you can try asking one of the charities in this leaflet for help with this.

- **Act quickly!** If you are not given refugee status, you will normally only have 14 days to challenge this, so act quickly!
- **Going to court:** Lots of people are given refugee status and the case ends there. However, if you need to appeal (challenge) a decision, you will probably have to go to court, where your lawyer will argue for you to be allowed to stay in the UK. You will need to prepare for this.
- **Tell people if you don't understand!** If you do not understand exactly what your interpreter is saying in your interview or in court, it is extremely important that you tell people. If you can't hear, you need to tell people as well.



SOCIAL WORKERS & SOLICITORS



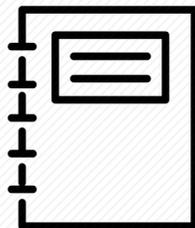
- **Who are they?** You may have a solicitor (a type of lawyer). They help you with your asylum case. You may also have a social worker. The social worker works for the government and his or her job is to make sure you have things like money, education, and a place to live.
- **If you have problems with your social worker or solicitor:** You can ask to speak to their manager about it. If this doesn't help, you can make a complaint to their managers and ask to change to a different one. Be aware that changing social workers or solicitors is not always easy, and it is better to ask someone for help to do this.

WRITE THINGS DOWN!



- **Why?** If you are unhappy with your solicitor or social worker, it is important to write down details of your conversations with them. For example, write down the time and date after you had a phone conversation that you were not happy about, and what you both said. If you do not record this information, it can be difficult to challenge things later.

- **Keep a notebook.** Keep a notebook for writing all these things down so that you can see the full history.
- **Write in any language.** You can keep notes in your own language if that's easier.
- **What if they never answer my calls?** If you try to call your social worker or solicitor and they do not answer, make sure you write details after each time you tried to call them. If she or he says that they will come to a meeting and they don't come, write that down too.
- **Take control!** It is extremely important you take responsibility for your own case. This means that if, for example, you haven't heard any news about your asylum case, then call your solicitor to ask. Don't just wait for people to contact you. Ask for help when you need it.



FOR MORE HELP

CORAM – For legal advice over the phone, call on Mondays 10-2pm on 020 7636 8505, or email mcpadvice@coramclc.org.uk

Love to Learn – Helps young refugees in South West London with education and other problems. 02075850339
www.love-to-learn.org.uk

CARAS – Caras support refugees and are based in Tooting. 020 8767 5378 www.caras.org.uk

Young Roots – Young Roots support young refugees and are based in Croydon. 020 8684 9140
www.youngroots.org.uk

Refugee Council – lots of advice and support for refugees. 020 7346 1134
www.refugeecouncil.org.uk