



UK Visas
& Immigration

A Home Office Guide to

Living in Asylum Accommodation

English



Purpose of this guide

This guide is for asylum seekers staying in temporary accommodation while their claim for asylum is assessed.

It contains important information about:

- the housing and services you can expect to receive from us
- the organisations that provide and deliver these services
- what we expect from you
- where to report problems, concerns and change in circumstances

How should I use this booklet?

Please read this booklet carefully. Highlight any information important to you and your family. There is a lot of information in this booklet so please keep it in a safe place, so you can refer to it later.

What can I expect as part of induction?

You will be given keys to the property, and a detailed induction from your accommodation provider. You will get information about appliances and utilities in a language you understand.

You will also get:

- information about your accommodation provider and what to expect from them
- information about Migrant Help and what to expect from them
- information about local services that you can use, for example health, education, local authority (local government) and support services
- the 'Home Office Guide to Rights and Expectations in the UK' booklet, which includes information on UK culture and services available to you while in the UK

If you have not got any of these services or resources, please ask your housing officer for them. Keep booklets in a safe place to read again later. You can access the information in this booklet online as well on: www.gov.uk/government/publications/living-in-asylum-accommodation

Immediately tell your housing officer if you believe that the accommodation isn't suitable for a specific need you have, for example, a need due to a disability.

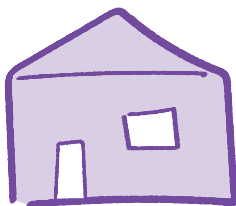
Who are the important organisations involved in providing me with accommodation and support?



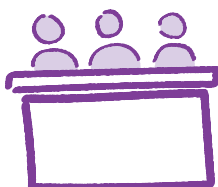
The Home Office which is ultimately responsible for the accommodation you are living in and your financial support.



Migrant Help are the Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility (AIRE) provider appointed by the Home Office. They are a charity separate from the Home Office offering independent advice. If you need information about your support, to report an issue, or to tell the Home Office about a change in your circumstances, you should contact Migrant Help by phone on **0808 8010 503**.



Your accommodation provider. The Home Office uses private companies to provide housing for you. When moving in you will be assigned a housing officer who will provide an induction into your property and answer any questions.



Local authorities, also known as councils, are the part of government that provide public services and facilities in a local area, such as schools and social services. The local services provided and who provides them depends on if you live in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

Contacting emergency services

In an emergency, you should call **999** straight away and tell the service operator what service you need – Fire, Police or Ambulance. It is important that you only dial these numbers in emergencies.

If you do not speak English, you should say the name of the language you wish to speak when you first call 999. An interpreter will be provided for you if one is available. Calls to 999 are free.

Police: when violence is being used or threatened, or if you witness a crime being committed, you should call 999 and ask for the police. If you want to report a crime or have been a victim of a crime which does not need an emergency response, you should call **101**.

Fire: if you see a potentially dangerous fire or signs of a fire such as smoke, you should call 999 immediately and ask for the fire service. You should not approach or try to put out a dangerous fire.

Ambulance: if there is a medical emergency when someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk, you should call 999 and ask for an ambulance. For urgent medical concerns that do not need an ambulance, you should call **111**.



Have a question?

For any questions you might have:

- > look in your induction and information booklets
- > visit www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/asylum or www.migranthelpuk.org
- > call Migrant Help on **0808 8010 503**

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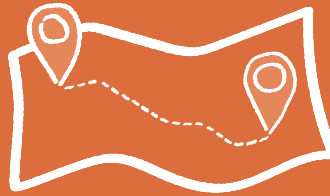
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Section 1



Asylum accommodation journey

The amount of time it takes to process an asylum claim can vary. It can depend on how complex your case is and how long it takes to receive evidence and documents.

Asylum support, including accommodation, is provided to asylum seekers who do not have any other way of supporting themselves. Asylum accommodation is provided on a 'no choice' basis so you cannot choose where you live. However, your accommodation provider has to make sure the accommodation meets any specific needs you may have.

1. Initial accommodation



Initial accommodation is short-term housing that can be full-board, half-board or self-catering. It is usually in a hostel-type environment. It is for asylum seekers who need accommodation urgently, before their support applications have been fully assessed and longer-term accommodation can be arranged. The amount of time people stay in initial accommodation can vary, but around 3-4 weeks is normal, before moving onto dispersal accommodation.

2. Dispersal accommodation



You are currently here. Dispersal accommodation is longer-term temporary accommodation managed by accommodation providers on behalf of the Home Office. You will normally be able to stay in dispersal accommodation until your asylum claim has been fully determined. It is not always possible to stay in the same property.

3. Moving on



When your asylum claim (including any appeals) has been fully determined you will need to leave asylum accommodation and your Home Office support will stop. If you are granted leave to remain, you will be eligible to work, claim mainstream benefits, look for housing and get help with this in the same ways as other UK residents. However, if your claim is unsuccessful you will be expected to leave the UK. Advice and guidance will be provided by Migrant Help soon after receiving your decision from the Home Office. You can find out more information about this in the section '[Moving On](#)'.

Expectations

You will always be treated with respect, fairness and impartiality. Equally, we expect you to treat all staff and the people you live with the same way.

You should report any issues around your accommodation or support as soon as you notice them, by contacting Migrant Help. Your asylum claim or residence in dispersal accommodation will not be affected by reporting an issue or problem.

Confidentiality and data sharing

The Home Office and our providers will protect and keep your personal information confidential. There are some circumstances where we may need to share your information with other agencies. These include:

- sharing information with local councils so that social care, specialist housing or property adaptations are made for you
- sharing information with health services to make sure the right healthcare provisions are in place for your general health needs and any medical conditions
- sharing information to protect or 'safeguard' you and your family, especially children and vulnerable adults
- sharing relevant information with education authorities so that they can provide their services
- reporting criminal matters to the police and to help keep you safe in the community
- sharing of information to combat fraud
- disclosing information in connection with court proceedings

Any agency that your data is shared with will also need to respect the confidentiality of your information. You can make a subject access request to see the information that the Home Office or other organisations hold about you.



Conditions of your support

- **You must follow the travel arrangements made for you.** For example, moving to another property. You must tell the Home Office in advance if there is any reason you will be unable to follow the travel arrangements.
- **You must live at the authorised address.** You will need to get permission from the Home Office by contacting Migrant Help if you plan to be away for more than 7 days continuously. You must not be absent more than 14 days or nights in any 6-month period.
- **You must follow the rules of the accommodation you are staying in.** Your accommodation provider will tell you the rules.
- **You must not behave in a violent manner or be verbally or physically abusive.** Violent behaviour may result in criminal prosecution as well as risking losing your accommodation and financial support.
- **You should access your financial support regularly.** You are given a weekly amount to cover essential living needs, and if this is not used we may ask you why.
- **You must keep to reporting requirements set by an Immigration Officer.** If you fail to do this, you may not be able to access your support. The BAIL 201 form you were given at your screening interview will detail the conditions of your immigration bail.
- **You must meet Home Office requests.** This includes requests for:
 - information relating to your asylum claim
 - information relating to your asylum support and
 - your attendance at any interviews

If you do not keep to the conditions of your support, you risk losing your support.

Change in circumstances

Immediately tell the Home Office if there are any changes to your circumstances. The easiest way to do this is through Migrant Help. If you no longer need accommodation, you could still get financial support, but you must ask first.

The change in circumstances that you must tell the Home Office about are:

- if you receive or gain access to money or financial assets
- if you get a job (you must check whether you have permission to work before getting a job)
- if you move to a different address or decide to live with family, friends or a partner
- if you get married, separated, divorced or form a civil partnership
- if you are hospitalised or imprisoned
- if you (or your partner) become pregnant or have a child
- if any of your children leave school or leave home
- if any other family members join you in the UK or leave the UK
- if anyone else joins or leaves your household
- you change your name
- you plan to leave the UK and return home

If you do not tell us about a change in your circumstances, you may:

- lose your support from the Home Office
- have to pay back any support that you have received, to which you were not entitled
- be guilty of an offence under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Appealing an asylum support decision

You can usually appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Asylum Support) if:

- your application for asylum support has been refused
- you were receiving asylum support but it has been stopped

You will receive a letter from the Home Office if your application has been refused or your support has been stopped explaining why the decision has been made. The letter will also tell you if you can appeal and how to appeal. The tribunal is independent of government. A judge will listen to both sides of the argument before making a decision.

You can get help and advice before you appeal.

- Migrant Help can help you with completing an appeal form
- Contact the Asylum Support Appeals Project (ASAP) for free legal representation if you have an oral hearing at the First-tier Tribunal (Asylum Support).
www.asaproject.org
- You can contact Refugee Action www.refugee-action.org.uk and Refugee Council www.refugeecouncil.org.uk for advice and support - they may be able to find another organisation to help you. (England and Wales)
- You can also get other legal advice, including from a lawyer.
For more information go to www.gov.uk/find-a-legal-adviser

More information can be found on www.gov.uk/appeal-first-tier-asylum-support-tribunal



Section 2

Important organisations



Home Office

Home Office

What is the Home Office?

The Home Office is the lead UK government department for immigration and visas, passports, policing, fire and rescue services and ensuring that UK citizens are protected. The area of the Home Office that you will be directly dealing with is called UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI).

What can I expect from the Home Office?

Your asylum claim will be processed and assessed by UKVI's Immigration and Protection directorate. Whether your asylum claim is successful will depend on their assessment, and they will be in contact with you about the decision that is made.

Your asylum accommodation and support are overseen by a different part of UKVI, the Resettlement, Asylum Support and Integration (RASI) directorate.

RASI is responsible for deciding what support you should get and for overseeing the providers that deliver this support. RASI will also make sure that services provided by our accommodation providers meet expectations set out in this booklet.

What does the Home Office expect from me?

The Home Office expects that you keep to all the conditions of your support, and that you tell us any changes in your circumstances. If you do not, your continued entitlement to support is likely to be affected.

Do not ignore any letters sent to you by the Home Office. If you are not sure what a letter means, contact Migrant Help for advice and guidance.

You can find out more information about the services provided by the government by visiting www.gov.uk

Your accommodation provider?

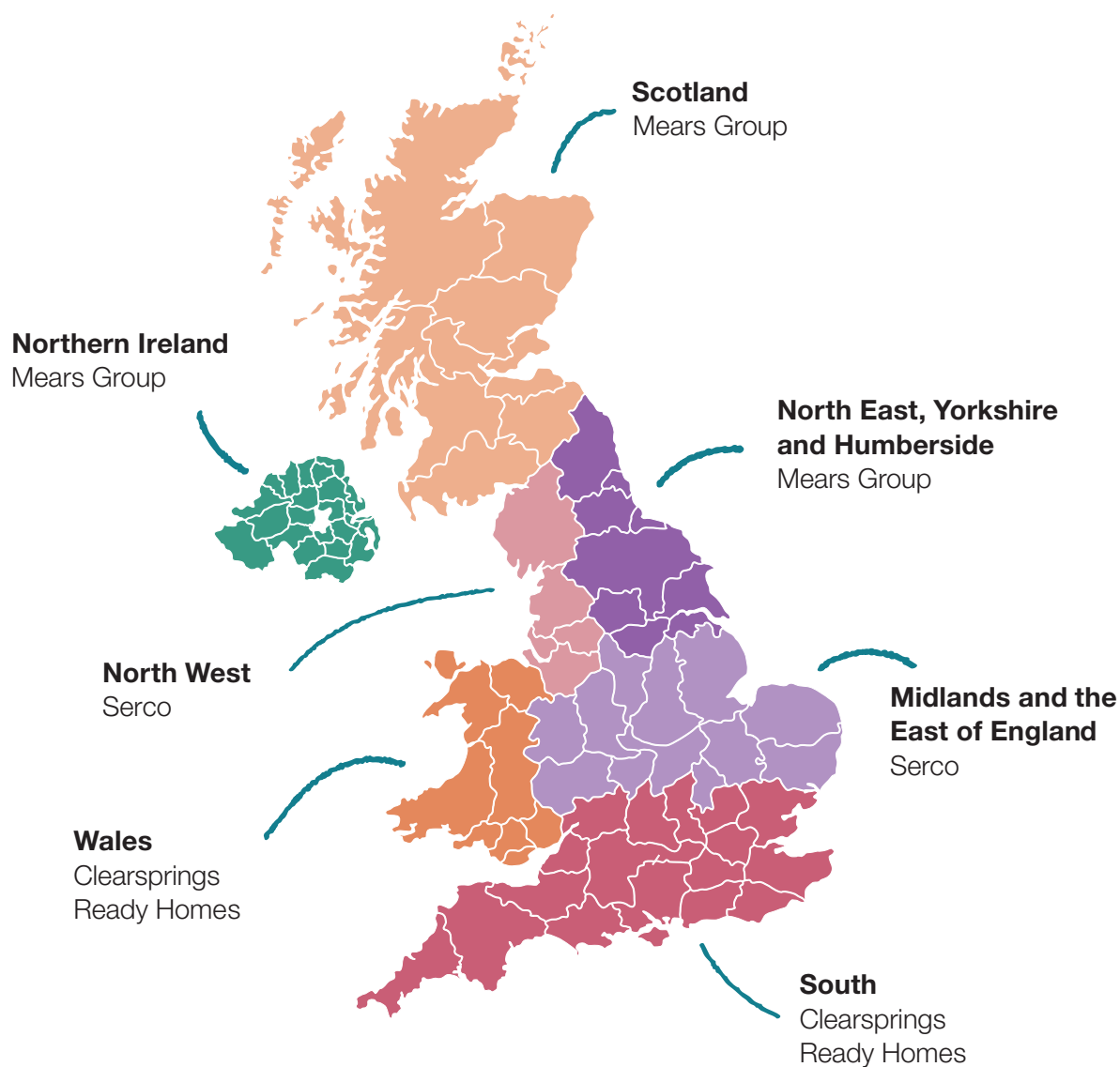
What is an accommodation provider?

An accommodation provider is a company contracted by the Home Office to give asylum seekers accommodation and to maintain the accommodation. Accommodation providers vary depending on location.

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What can I expect from my accommodation provider?

The services that an accommodation provider will deliver includes:

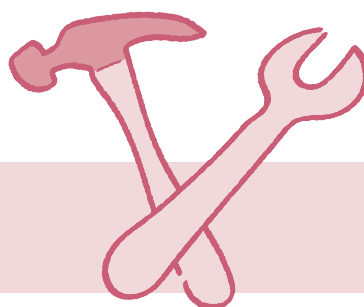
- providing and maintaining accommodation, furniture, equipment and utilities
- an induction service when you arrive at the property, including information about the local community and local services available to you
- visiting you at least once per month
- promoting your wellbeing, including making referrals to relevant agencies where this would help
- providing translation and interpreting services where necessary when communicating with you
- explaining feedback and complaints processes to you and resolving any complaints within 5 days wherever possible
- managing anti-social and violent behaviour that may occur in the accommodation
- informing you where the nearest available GP (doctors) surgery is or helping you to register with a GP if you have a medical condition
- providing direct support to you when in obvious and urgent or specified need of medical care on arrival at the accommodation
- providing you with transport if you move to another property
- providing emergency funding if there is a problem with your usual financial support

If you have any issues with the property during your stay in dispersal accommodation you should raise them through Migrant Help, on **0808 8010 503**. They will then raise the issue with your accommodation provider on your behalf. See '[Issue Reporting and Complaints](#)' for more information.

What does my accommodation provider expect from me?

You should treat the accommodation respectfully. This includes keeping it clean and being careful not to damage fixtures and fittings within the property.

You should also be respectful to anybody you share the accommodation with and any staff you meet.



Migrant Help

What is Migrant Help?

Migrant Help is a charitable organisation operating a national service called Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility (AIRE) separate from the Home Office. Migrant Help can provide you with independent advice and guidance on the asylum process and your rights. They can also direct you to other services available in the UK.



What can I expect from Migrant Help?

Migrant Help will help you in accessing financial support, accommodation, legal advice and other services that you are entitled to by law. They will provide information to help you understand the asylum process, your support entitlements and how you can access other essential services (including health care and legal advice) before your asylum interview.

Migrant Help's free helpline can advise you in your language. The topics they can assist with include:

- how to claim asylum
- financial support
- finding legal representation
- the asylum processes
- accessing healthcare
- accommodation support
- any other asylum issues

Their helpline assists a large numbers of asylum seekers and the phone lines can get busy which may cause a delay in answering your call. Please be patient and your call will be answered as quickly as possible.

Migrant Help can also help you fill in the application form for financial and accommodation asylum support. This is known as an ASF1. They will also help if you need to tell the Home Office of a change of circumstance.

Migrant Help cannot provide legal advice or representation. They can provide information on how to access legal services. You can also search for a legal adviser on www.gov.uk/find-a-legal-adviser

Migrant Help should also be contacted if you would like to make a complaint about your accommodation provider, the payment provider, Home Office or Migrant Help themselves. If you have any issues with your accommodation you should also contact Migrant Help. More information on how to do this can be found in '[Issue Reporting and Complaints](#)'.

What does Migrant Help expect from me?

- When you communicate with Migrant Help, please have any reference numbers from your Home Office documents available.
- Attend any appointments that are made for you. Take any information or documents related to your claim.
- Speak to Migrant Help personally whenever possible rather than friends or family on your behalf. Don't worry if you don't speak English, interpreters will be available.
- Make notes before you call Migrant Help or attend a meeting, so all your queries can be dealt with efficiently.
- Answer their advisers' questions as fully as possible. They are trained in questions they need to ask to help with your enquiry.
- Keep them updated with any change in contact details such as phone number and email address.
- Migrant Help will always confirm your identity and will never disclose personal information to other parties unless you give them prior consent.
- Migrant Help will not accept abusive, threatening or aggressive behaviour. Their staff will treat you with courtesy and respect. Please do the same towards them.

Contacting Migrant Help

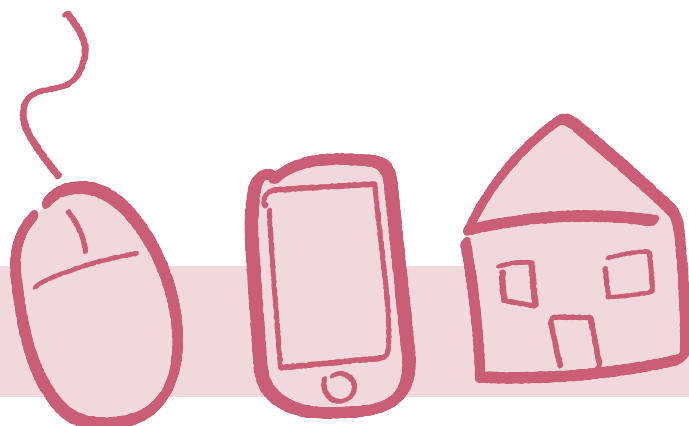
More information and translated advice in 10 languages is available on Migrant Help's website www.migranthehelpuk.org.

They can also be contacted the following ways:

Phone: **0808 8010 503**

Email: as@migranthehelpuk.org

Address: Migrant Help
Charlton House
Dour Street
Dover
CT16 1AT



Section 3

Issue reporting and complaints



If you have a problem with the accommodation or support, or would like to make a complaint about any of the organisations in this pack, you should do this through Migrant Help as soon as you can.

Any complaints or issues raised will not affect your asylum claim or your continued entitlement to support. You should feel comfortable knowing that any complaints received are taken seriously and investigated by the relevant organisations. Faults reported will be dealt with in a certain timeframe depending on the category of the fault. Examples can be found in the section ‘[Repairs and Maintenance](#)’. If the fault isn’t fixed within this timeframe, you should contact **Migrant Help** again and they will escalate the problem.

It is important that if you want to make a complaint, to make it as soon as possible. Feedback and complaints are welcomed as they help improve the services that are provided.

You should contact Migrant Help regarding:

Maintenance issues – to report problems with your asylum accommodation. They will talk with the accommodation provider on your behalf to address these.

Requests for assistance – if you feel there is a risk to your or your family’s health and wellbeing. This can be to report suspected child neglect, domestic violence, sexual harassment or exploitation, anti-social behaviour, destitution or homelessness or suspected extremism or radicalisation.

Asylum payment issues – in case your card is lost or stolen, you forget your PIN, receive incorrect payment or don’t receive your payment. They will talk with the payment provider on your behalf.

Complaints – if you wish to make a complaint regarding services provided by Migrant Help, your accommodation provider, the asylum support payments provider or the Home Office

Feedback – to continuously improve the support available throughout your asylum claim journey. You can tell them about your experience of services delivered by Migrant Help, your accommodation provider, the asylum support payments provider or the Home Office. They will pass your comments onto the appropriate organisation.

To do this, call 0808 8010 503 or download the feedback or complaints form from the Migrant Help website. The issue raised will be resolved by Migrant Help directly

or they will make sure that the relevant provider deals with it. Their advisers will give you a timeline of how fast you can expect the issue to be addressed.

Migrant Help aims to resolve complaints within 5 working days. If it can't be resolved by Migrant Help, they will escalate it to the Home Office.

How can I make a complaint to the Home Office?

You should make a complaint directly to the Home Office if:

- you have already made a complaint through Migrant Help and are not satisfied with the outcome, or
- you have a complaint that you do not consider it appropriate for Migrant Help to resolve

If the Home Office receive a complaint that should have been directed to Migrant Help, it will be sent to Migrant Help.

To make a complaint to the Home Office:

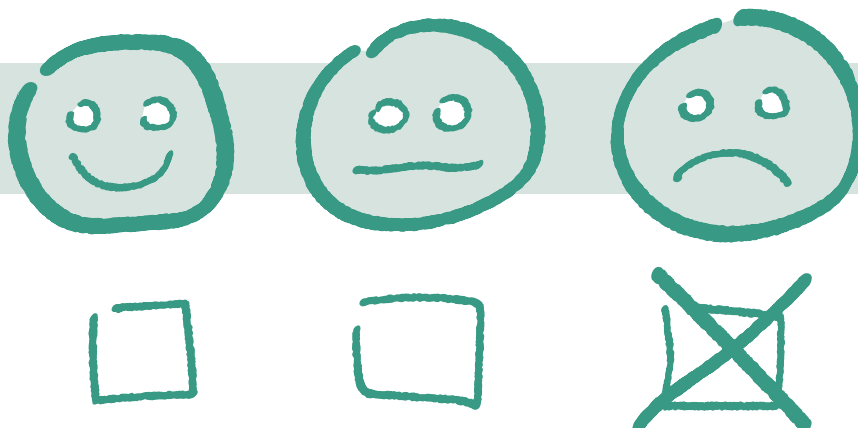
Email your complaint to complaints@homeoffice.gov.uk or write to us at:

Complaints Allocation Hub
Customer Correspondence Hub
7th Floor Lunar House
40 Wellesley Road
Croydon
CR9 2BY

You should include in your complaint:

1. Your contact details, so we can contact you
2. Your Home Office reference numbers, so we can locate your case
3. Full details of the matter you are complaining about including times, dates and locations
4. Names/identifying numbers of any staff you know to be involved
5. Details of any witnesses to the incident, if appropriate

We will send you an acknowledgment when we receive your complaint and we aim to investigate and reply to you within 20 working days. If you are not satisfied with how your complaint has been handled, you can ask us to review the matter.



Section 4



Accommodation information and standards

**Our providers have several types of accommodation.
You will either be staying in:**

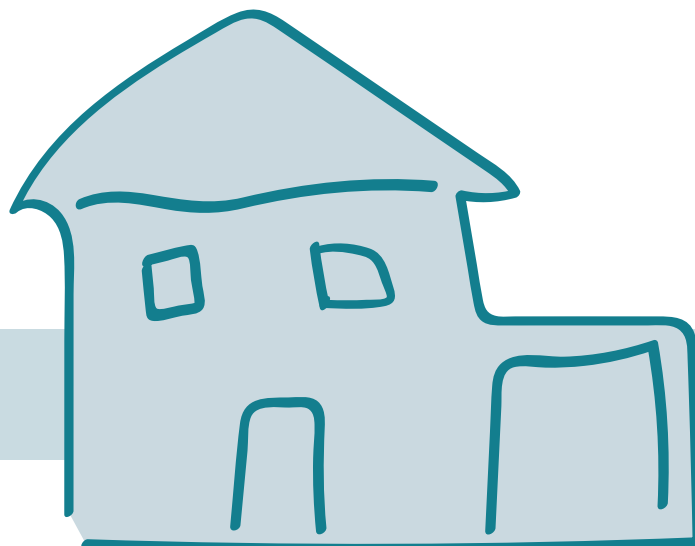
Self-contained accommodation

This type of accommodation is usually occupied by families and is normally a flat or house. The family will have their own kitchen and bathroom facilities and will not share these with anyone else.

House in multiple occupation (HMO)

This type of accommodation is where households share accommodation and/or facilities, and is usually occupied by single people, couples without children and/or single parents. All HMOs must have at least one bathroom and kitchen per 5 people.

Many HMOs are licensed by the local council. A copy of the licence will usually be displayed in a communal area, and will set out any local council requirements, such as how many people can live there.



Rules and guidelines

To help you settle into the accommodation you are staying in and minimise disruption to others, here are some simple rules and guidelines to follow:

Do:

- be mindful of your health and safety and handle all appliances with care
- treat any housemates respectfully regardless of sex, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, language, nationality, religion, disability
- act in a courteous and respectful manner to other occupants and neighbours
- report repairs or maintenance issues to Migrant Help as soon as you notice them
- if sharing a property keep any personal belongings in your room
- flush the toilet after every use, but do not flush items such as baby wipes or sanitary products
- clean the accommodation on a regular basis and take out the bins for the scheduled collection day
- make sure that your property is properly ventilated to prevent mould or dampness occurring
- make sure that doors are locked, and windows are closed at night and while you are out



Do not:

- make too much noise, especially between 11pm and 8am
- smoke inside the accommodation
- keep pets or animals in the property
- allow visitors to stay overnight
- damage the property
- throw food or other waste down the sink
- carry out any changes or repairs to the property or electrics
- disable the smoke alarms
- keep or use unauthorised drugs on the premises
- disturb other occupants on purpose
- use inappropriate behaviour or language to anyone
- open other people's letters



Items to expect in the accommodation

The following items are required to be provided in the accommodation. If anything from these lists is missing or broken, please contact Migrant Help.

Bathroom



- Bath and/or shower including a waterproof covering if appropriate (e.g. shower curtain)
- Wash basin
- Toilet

Kitchen



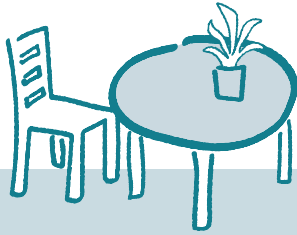
- Cooker or oven and hob
- Microwave
- Cookware and utensils
- Cutlery and crockery
- Cupboards
- Food preparation area
- Hygienic worktops and floor coverings
- Sink
- Refrigerator and freezer
- Broom and/or other forms of floor cleaning equipment
- Dustpan and brush
- Mop

Bedrooms



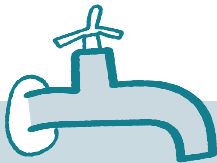
- Bed appropriate to the person (single or double bed)
- 1 wardrobe per room or 1 per single person when the room is shared by unrelated adults
- 1 chest of drawers per room or 1 per single person when the room is shared by unrelated adults

Dining and living



- Table
- 1 dining chair per person
- 1 armchair or sofa seat per person

Facilities



- Reasonable access to fresh drinking water
- Reasonable access to laundry facilities (e.g. washing machine)
- Aired or a clothes line to dry any laundry
- Ironing board and clothes iron
- Child care equipment if applicable, including cots and high chairs and sterilisation equipment for children under the age of 1 year
- Equipment such as curtains or blinds to block or obscure light, or drafts
- 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 properties with solid fuel or gas appliances)

The accommodation provider is also required to provide you with new personal linen when you move into the property.

Bath towel



2 (per person)

Face flannels



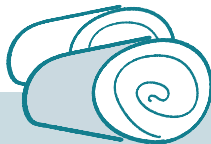
2 (per person)

Sheets



2 (per person)

Blankets and duvet



2 / 1 (per person)

Hand towels



2 (per person)

Tea towels



1 (per person)

Pillows and pillow cases



2 of each (per person)

Duvet covers



2 (per person)

Extra items

Extra items and belongings you take to the accommodation are your own responsibility. Your accommodation provider will not accept liability or responsibility for these items. You will not be allowed portable heaters and you will be asked to dispose of any unsafe or dangerous materials or items.

Some common items which providers do not need to supply:

- telephone
- broadband/wifi connection
- television/TV
- vacuum cleaner

Utilities

Gas, water and electricity are provided for you. Be aware of the environment and keep an eye on the usage of these utilities. You have guidance from your housing officer about how to use utilities, such as how to operate the heating and where the electric trip switches are located. You must not change the supplier of your utilities.

If you smell gas, you should call the National Grid Gas emergency number immediately on **0800 111 999** for England, Scotland and Wales or **0800 002 001** for Northern Ireland and then report the issue to Migrant Help straight after.



Property inspections

Property inspections are in place to make sure the accommodation is suitable and safe for you. Your accommodation provider is required to inspect the accommodation at least once a month to identify and fix any defects.

You will be given at least 5 days' notice of the date and time of inspections so that you can be present at the property. The provider will still inspect the property even if you are not there.

What happens during an inspection?

The inspector will talk to you about the property and check for any faults. If any faults are found, they will be reported for repair. Any faults that might not be clear to the inspector should be pointed out.

Who carries out the inspection?

Property inspections will be carried out at least monthly by your accommodation provider. Someone from UKVI or a local council may also carry out an inspection to make sure that your accommodation provider is meeting certain standards.

How do I report a fault?

Property defects should be reported to Migrant Help so that they can be recorded and fixed. Accommodation providers work to fix faults within set timescales. If you are affected by a fault you should not wait until the scheduled inspection to report it.



Access to accommodation

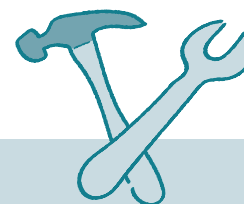
Your accommodation provider holds a duplicate or master key to the property which is stored securely. In usual circumstances, access to the property for repairs and inspections will be made while you are present.

If repairs or routine maintenance are needed on the property, then an appointment will be made, and you should arrange to be present to give maintenance staff access to the property. However, if essential work is needed at short notice, you will be contacted by your provider who will make an appointment. If you are unable to be in the property at the time of the appointment the provider may gain access to the property anyway, using a duplicate key.



Repairs and maintenance

Accommodation providers work to fix any defects within set timescales depending on the classification of the issue. The table below explains the different classifications of defects, the response times and some examples of faults. If you are unsure of the maintenance classification, or if the reported fault isn't fixed within the given time frame, you should contact Migrant Help.



Maintenance classification	Meaning	Response time	Example of fault
Category 1	A defect which has, or is likely to cause, a risk to your health, safety or security, or disruption or loss of an essential service of the accommodation	Continuous call out facility to investigate and fix or provide temporary alternative accommodation within 4 hours of the provider becoming aware of the maintenance issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gas leak • Flooding • Structural instability • No mains water supplied • Fire damage
Category 2	A defect that may cause an adverse effect on your health, safety or security or which has a significant impact on the property or your quality of life	24 hours to make safe, 5 working days to make a permanent repair. If the provider cannot make the accommodation safe within 24 hours, temporary alternative accommodation must be provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No hot water supply • Heating not working • No electrical power supplied • No operational smoke or fire alarms • Pest infestation which represents serious hazard to health and safety

Maintenance classification	Meaning	Response time	Example of fault
Category 3	A defect which has or is likely to cause an adverse effect on your comfort and convenience, or the potential to lead to further damage to the property if not addressed	21 working days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peeling paint • Significant signs of dampness and mould growth • Significantly damaged wall and floor tiles • Other pest infestations

Extra accommodation Information

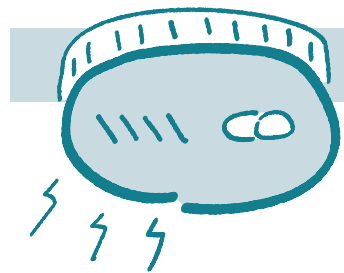
Fire safety

All properties are fitted with a smoke alarm. If there is a fire in the property, the smoke will set off the alarm and it will make a loud continuous 'beeping' noise.

On discovering a fire, you and your family must:

- > leave the house immediately and go to a safe place
- > not stop to collect personal belongings
- > leave the building by the nearest safe exit
- > call the Fire and Rescue Service on 999 and inform your accommodation provider

Do not remove the battery from the smoke alarm as this could endanger life. Your smoke detector will be tested each month when the property is inspected. If the alarm starts to make an intermittent 'beeping' noise, this means that the battery needs to be changed. Contact Migrant Help and ask for the battery to be replaced.



Cleaning

It is important to keep accommodation clean and tidy. If accommodation isn't kept clean, pests can be attracted, putting people's safety at risk. You are responsible for cleaning your own accommodation.

If you live in a house in multiple occupation, your accommodation provider is responsible for cleaning the communal areas regularly, although you and other residents should still look after these areas.



Bin collection

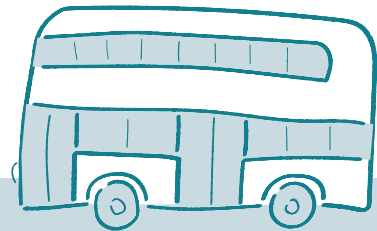
Rubbish should be put into the correct wheelie bin or recycling bin. The local council empty these on a regular basis, so make sure that you put your bins out for collection on the right day.

It is illegal to dispose of waste on streets or in other public areas. This is known as fly-tipping. If you are found guilty of fly-tipping you could be fined or imprisoned.



Travel

You are responsible for paying for your own transport. Your local induction pack provides information on public transport available locally. It is possible for your travel to the immigration reporting centre to be paid for by the Home Office. This may be added automatically to your ASPEN card. Migrant Help can let you know how if you can get assistance with this.



Post

Your post is personal to you. It is a criminal offence to interfere with another person's post. If you receive post addressed to someone not living at the property, please give it to your housing officer.

Most of the correspondence from the Home Office will be by post, so it is important that you regularly check your mailbox and that you keep the Home Office updated with any changes of address.



Accommodation moves

The Home Office are keen to minimise disruption to your life, however, you may be asked to move accommodation. For example, if the lease on the accommodation runs out and the owner wants the property back. The Home Office and your accommodation provider will try to keep you locally, although this isn't always possible. If you are needed to move, a letter will be sent to you confirming the arrangements. If you are offered a move which you don't think is appropriate, you should raise the issue straight away with the Home Office or your accommodation provider, and always before the move is due to take place.

Section 5

Money and support payments



You will usually be given financial support through an 'Aspen card' to enable you to buy food and other items to cover your essential living needs. You should contact Migrant Help if you have any issues or questions about your financial support. Your Aspen card uses Chip-and-Pin and looks like the image below.

Information about your Aspen card

- It is not a credit card and does not create a bank account. Only the Home Office can put funds onto your card, so you cannot use it to receive payments from others.
- The Home Office will notify you of the amount of financial support you are entitled to get and this will be made available on your card each week. Your balance will carry over from week to week.
- You can only spend the funds available on the card. You will need to know you have enough funds available before buying things, or payment may be declined.
- The card is to be used by only the person who has been assigned the PIN. It is your responsibility to make sure that the card is kept securely.
- The Home Office can review card use to protect against fraud and to help safeguard our service users.
- The expiry date on the card does not mean that is the date the support will end. If you are still getting financial support when the card expires it will be renewed.
- You will not be able to make contactless, telephone or internet payments or use your card overseas.
- You may be restricted from using your card to buy certain goods and services.



You will be able to use your Aspen card to:

- pay for retail transactions at most shops displaying the Visa logo, up to the value of your available balance
- check your remaining balance at an ATM, which is also called a cash machine
- withdraw cash from a cash machine, up to the value of £200 but be careful as some cash machines charge for this
- get cash back when you buy something at Visa participating shops

However, if you are a failed asylum seeker on section 4 support, you will not be able to withdraw cash from a cash machine or get cashback from shops.

Contact Migrant Help on **0808 8010 503** as soon as possible if:

- a payment you expect is not received, or you receive a wrong amount
- your card becomes lost, damaged, or stolen (to cancel it and get a replacement)

Extra payments

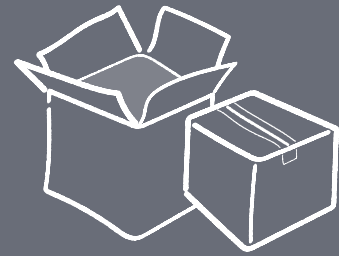
If you think you might be eligible for any extra payments, contact Migrant Help on 0808 8010 503. The information below explains some of the cases where you may be eligible:

- **Pregnancy**
 - If you are pregnant you are also entitled to receive £3 extra per week during your pregnancy. You can also apply for a £300 maternity payment to help buy things for your baby.
 - You must apply between 8 weeks before your baby is due and 6 weeks after the birth. To apply before your baby is born, you will need to show Migrant Help your original MATB1 certificate or other medical proof of your pregnancy. You can also apply if your baby was born outside the UK and your baby is less than 3 months old or in other exceptional cases. You would need to show the baby's original long birth certificate in this case.
 - In order for your regular support to be increased to include the new baby you will need to provide the original long birth certificate within 6 weeks of the birth.
 - When your baby is under 1 year old, you will receive an extra £5 per week on top your normal payments, and £3 for each child aged 1 to 3.
- **Exceptional circumstances:**
 - If you have exceptional circumstances that create significant costs which are more than the standard support levels cover, you may be eligible for extra payments. For example, if you have to travel a long distance to medical appointments (this must be applied for before travel), or have a medical condition requiring a special diet.



Section 6

Moving on



When your asylum claim (including any appeals) has been decided, you will usually stop being entitled to Home Office support. If this is the case, you will be given notice that your financial support will stop and that you must leave dispersal accommodation. What you need to do next will depend on whether your claim for asylum was successful. Migrant Help will contact you soon after you receive your decision and provide advice on next steps.

Before you leave the accommodation, please make sure that all your personal belongings are packed, the accommodation is clean and tidy and that no personal belongings are left behind.

Successful claims

If you are granted leave to remain in the UK – either refugee status, discretionary leave or humanitarian protection, you will then be eligible to work, claim mainstream benefits, and look for private housing, and to get help with these in the same ways as other UK residents. You will receive a Biometric Residence Permit, which you can use to show that you are eligible.

Your entitlement to asylum support ends 28 days after the date you are granted leave. You will receive a letter confirming the exact date that your asylum support will end. It is very important that you start making future arrangements as soon as you receive your letter, as it can take time to move on from asylum support. The Home Office will be unable to extend your support beyond 28 days.

Getting a job or claiming benefits

You will need to seek employment and/or claim benefits. Jobcentre Plus is the government office which deals with these. Migrant Help can support you with this and will contact you to help you make your first appointment with Jobcentre Plus. It is important to do this as soon as possible.



Finding alternative accommodation

You will need to find alternative accommodation. This could be rented accommodation, a live-in job, hostel, flat, or house-share. As well as Migrant Help, your local council's housing department can provide advice and assistance. If you are particularly vulnerable or have children, they may also be responsible for rehousing you if you need them to.

Opening a bank account

You will need to open a bank account (if you do not already have one) so that you can receive any benefits payments and pay your rent if appropriate. Different banks ask for different information to open an account, but they will all need to see proof of your ID, such as your biometric residence permit.

Unsuccessful claims

If your claim (including any appeals) has been rejected you will be expected to make arrangements to leave the UK. The Home Office provides a voluntary return service, which can help you make any necessary arrangements. For more information on this you can visit www.gov.uk/return-home-voluntarily or call the Voluntary Returns Service: **0300 004 0202**.

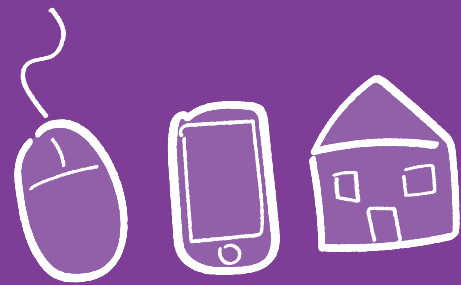
Migrant Help UK will contact you soon after you receive your decision and provide advice on next steps, including information and benefits of the Voluntary Return Service.

If you have children aged under 18 in your household at the time your claim and any appeals have been rejected, your asylum support will not automatically stop.

If you do not have children in your household, your entitlement to asylum support will stop after 21 days. You will receive a letter that tells you the exact date when you must move out of your accommodation. It will also advise you how to apply for further support if you are taking steps to leave the UK but do not believe that you can depart within 21 days. This form of support is known as 'section 4 support' and may also be available in some other circumstances, which will be explained in the letter you will receive.

Section 7

Useful contacts



Emergency contacts:

Emergency Services (Fire/Police/Ambulance): **999**

Non-Emergency Police: **101**

Non-Emergency NHS: **111**

National Grid Gas:

England, Scotland and Wales: **0800 111 999**.

Northern Ireland: **0800 002 001**.

Migrant Help:

Website: www.migranthelpuk.org

Phone: **0808 8010 503**

Email: as@migranthelpuk.org

Address: **Migrant Help**

Charlton House

Dour Street

Dover

CT16 1AT

Home Office:

Information on applying for asylum and asylum support:

www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/asylum

Asylum Support Appeals:

www.gov.uk/courts-tribunals/first-tier-tribunal-asylum-support

Find a legal adviser:

www.gov.uk/find-a-legal-adviser

Voluntary Returns Service:

Website: www.gov.uk/return-home-voluntarily

Phone: **0300 004 0202**

Charitable organisations:

Refugee Action: www.refugee-action.org.uk

Refugee Council: www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

Asylum Support Appeals Project: www.asaproject.org



Version 1