

Asylum Advice

Prior to Screening
Interview



Section 2:

Prior to Screening Interview

2.1 Introduction to Asylum Screening

The Home Office is committed to treating you with respect, dignity and fairness regardless of your age, disability, ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI), a department of the Home Office, is the part of the United Kingdom (UK) Government that is responsible for considering your asylum claim and must decide whether you are in real danger in your country and need international protection in the UK.

There are several stages in the asylum process and how long this takes depends on your circumstances, but you will not be removed from the UK while your case is being considered.

The first stage is normally a screening interview and this should take place when you first apply for asylum. The main reason for the screening interview is to establish your identity, how you arrived in the UK and what particular needs you may have.

You will just need to answer basic questions asked at the screening stage. Your substantive interview (main asylum interview) will take place at a later date. During your substantive interview you will need to explain why you and your family want to claim asylum in the UK, and why you are seeking protection. The asylum screening process is to register your request to claim asylum, record all your personal details and ask brief details about your situation. You will also be asked if you would prefer to be interviewed by a male or a female interviewing officer. You will not be asked for in-depth information about your asylum claim at this stage.

Please note that information you provide at the substantive interview will be checked for consistency against what you said at the screening interview.

You must be truthful in all communications with the Home Office. If you phone for an appointment to attend the asylum intake unit for a screening interview you will be asked some basic questions over the phone, which you will have the opportunity to confirm when you attend your appointment. Please make the Home Office aware of any vulnerabilities or immediate needs you or your dependents have.

If you would like to speak to the appointment line for the asylum intake unit please call:

0208 196 4524 Monday to Thursday 9am to 4.45pm and Friday 9am to 4.30pm.

2.2 Asylum Screening Process

If you are applying for asylum at the asylum intake unit and you want any of your dependants (such as a partner, or children under 18 years old) to be part of your asylum application, you **must** bring them with you. You have the right to apply for asylum as a dependant but you may also wish to submit your own separate claim for asylum if you have separate information you wish to be taken into consideration.

On arrival at the asylum intake unit you may need to wait in reception until you are called into an interview room. The screening process can **take several hours** and so you may wish to take something to eat and drink with you if possible. The asylum intake unit has facilities for families such as family interview rooms that have separate areas for your children to play, draw or watch television. However, you may still wish to take activities with you or take a friend who can help to look after your children.

The asylum screening process is split into several parts. These include:

- Gathering your biometric information (this is taking your fingerprints and photographs). Your biometric information will be collected and stored on a card that you are given during the screening process. This is called an Application Registration Card (ARC). This will confirm that you have claimed asylum and will record the identity you give the Home Office. If you are given a right to stay in the UK you will receive confirmation of your right to remain via the biometric residence permit card that is given to all foreign nationals who have a right to work and live in the UK. The biometric residence permit card confirms your immigration status and the conditions of your right to stay in the UK.
- Carrying out identity and security checks.
- Confirming whether or not you require accommodation and gathering information to assist with making a decision on where in the UK you will be accommodated.
- Completing a screening interview in which you will be asked:
 - Basic questions about your identity and details of your family
 - Confirmation of when you need to report (See reporting Section for more information)
 - How you travelled to the UK
 - Whether you have any medical conditions

- To give a brief explanation of why you fled your country
- Questions relating to any criminal convictions you may have and any necessary questions relating to national security
- Whether you would prefer to have a man or a woman to interview you during your substantive interview
- If you are homeless you should inform the Home Office of your family's needs. After your screening interview the Home Office will consider whether to place you in temporary accommodation. Decision will be based on likelihood of destitution. You will need to inform the Home Office of any medical conditions you or your dependants have and;
- If you have run out of medication
- If you are in need of medical attention
- If you are a victim of torture
- If you have been or are being trafficked and/or exploited
- If your children have another parent in the UK
- If any children are doing final exams at school
- If you are pregnant.

The Home Office will look at the information you give them and make a decision about the area in which you will be offered temporary accommodation. This accommodation will be in a temporary hostel. Accommodation is on a no choice basis but the Home Office will consider your situation.

Once your application has been recorded a decision will be made about whether you should be detained. If you are detained your application will be decided as part of the detained fast track (DFT) process which means that your application will be decided quickly. If you are detained the reason for this will be explained to you. As part of the DFT process you will be given the opportunity to have free legal representation and you will be fully interviewed about your asylum claim. If your application for asylum is refused, you may be detained until you are removed from the UK. If you qualify for an in-country appeal, this will take place whilst you are detained.

2.3 Need to be truthful

You may have been advised not to tell the Home Office about some aspects of your claim or may even have been advised to provide a completely different story. If you do this it will be detrimental to your case and will be likely to lead to refusal. It is essential that you tell the truth.

If you make an unfounded or abusive asylum claim, including a late or opportunistic claim, it is likely to be refused and you will be liable for removal once your claim has been processed. In certain circumstances appeals may only be made after departure from the UK. It is a criminal offence to use deception or provide false documents in support of an application for leave to remain in the UK and you may be prosecuted and may be sent to prison if you do so.

2.4 What to expect at your screening interview

During your screening interview the Home Office should take only basic information from you. They should take your needs into account. They will also assess how to decide your claim. For example, if you come from a country which is deemed not to have protection issues, you are likely to be detained and have your case decided quickly (detained fast track, DFT). If you have entered another safe country on your journey to the UK and are known to immigration officers in that country, your case may be referred to the Home Office Third Country Unit. This means that the Home Office may ask officials in that country to consider your claim for asylum there. This may mean you are returned to that country. The Home Office may also decide that you are from a country that has protection issues and fast track your case to enable a quicker grant of refugee status. The Home Office will treat you fairly and openly and will only make a decision based on the relevant law. Please note that you have the right to request a copy of your screening interview.

2.5 Interpreters

An interpreter will be made available to you if you need one. If you have made an appointment then an Interpreter should already be available. You may need to wait for an interpreter to arrive if you are using the walk in service and are being screened on arrival.

The Home Office will provide an interpreter for the screening interview if you need one and the interpreter must interpret what you say accurately so that the Home Office has a full record of the information you provide. You can ask for a male or female interpreter if you prefer this.

Interpreters are required to treat any information you provide as strictly confidential.

Please let your interviewing officer know if you have any concerns about the interpreter - for example if you have difficulty understanding them. It will not affect how your case is decided or the outcome of your case.

2.6 How to make a complaint

If you are unhappy with the services that have been provided or feel that the Home Office staff, interpreters or anyone connected with the Home Office did not treat you with respect and dignity, or you are concerned with the professional conduct then you can make a complaint. It is important that you make your complaint as soon as possible after the event. The Home Office will not normally investigate complaints that are more than 3 months old.

You will need to make a complaint in writing. This can only be written in English or Welsh. If you are in the UK you will need to send this to either:

- Email: complaints@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk. The Home Office normally respond quicker to email complaints.
- In writing: UKVI, Complaints Allocation Hub, 11th Floor, Lunar House, Wellesley Road, Croydon, CR9 2BY.

You will need to make sure the following are included:

- your name and full contact details;
- full details of the complaint (including times, dates and places);
- the names or identifying numbers of any UKVI staff or contractors' staff who you have dealt with;
- details of any witnesses (if relevant);
- your Home Office reference numbers.

Your complaint will be managed by one of the Home Offices customer service units (CSUs). They will be responsible for ensuring that your complaint is resolved in a satisfactory and timely manner. The Home Office will send you an acknowledgement, telling you who is dealing with your complaint. They will normally give a full response in 20 days. However, if your complaint alleges serious professional misconduct it may take up to 12 weeks as an independent investigation will take place. Making a complaint will not affect how your case is decided, or adversely affect the outcome of your case.

If you require any further information regarding this please contact: Asylum Advice UK on 0808 8000 630

2.7 Documents to take with you to the Asylum Intake Unit

You should make sure that you provide all available documentation at the earliest opportunity, to support your claim for asylum.

Passport - your passport and the passports of any dependants who are on your claim for asylum.

Travel documents - you should also take any tickets and boarding passes you have with you.

Police Registration Certificates - if you or your family have any.

Any other Identification Documents - such as Identity cards, birth/marriage/school certificates, membership cards, etc. This is to help the Home Office establish your identity and nationality.

Medical documents - the Home Office need to know the details of any medical conditions you have and any medicines you are taking.

Evidence of your accommodation – if you have been living in the UK already, the Home Office will ask for documentary evidence of your accommodation such as a tenancy agreement or recent utility bill (for example gas, electricity, etc.) showing your full name and address history in the UK.

If you are living in someone else's house please bring recent letter from the householder confirming whether or not you can stay in their house, AND documentary evidence such as a utility bill showing the full name and address of the householder.

If you require temporary accommodation you will need to bring proof of why your existing accommodation is no longer available and why you are unable to support yourself. The Home Office will look into any support and assets you have available in the UK and abroad. The Home Office will take your original documents from you and will keep them while your asylum claim is processed. You may wish to request a photocopy of your documents, as they will only be returned once your case has been concluded.

2.8 Accommodation and Asylum Support

When you are in your screening interview you will be asked if you need accommodation and support. Checks will be made to see whether you meet the criteria for support. The Home Office will run credit and other checks to assess your eligibility to support.

If you need accommodation and support:

If you need accommodation it is important that you take all your belongings to the screening interview. If it is accepted that you are in need of accommodation and have no means to support yourself then you will be placed directly into a temporary 'initial' accommodation centre after your screening interview. This may be many miles away. You must inform the officer of any urgent needs you have, as this may affect which

centre you are sent to. This is temporary accommodation and it is likely that you will be accommodated for around 21 days. However, this may be longer depending upon your individual circumstances.

It is important that if you cannot support yourself, you are able to prove this to the Home Office. The Home Office will look into your financial situation both in the UK and abroad. If you have any means to support yourself or you have friends or relatives who can provide you with accommodation and food then the Home Office will expect you to support yourself.

The Home Office will expect you to provide the following evidence for you and your dependants:

- Bank Statements – 6 months for all accounts in the UK and abroad. They will also check to see if any monies have been transferred from your account that you still have access to
- Details of any assets – if these can be sold to enable you to support yourself
- Information about any work you have carried out in the UK – need a copy of a P45 or letter from your employer confirming that this has ended and when it ended
- Details of income and how this income has been spent – receipts, agreements, proof of how this money has been spent
- Any valuable jewellery
- Property in the UK and abroad – confirmation of if this can be sold
- Any money you have or had when you entered the UK and where this money is and if it is still available
- Any benefits you are claiming in the UK – proof that this has either stopped or confirmation of the amount and how often this is received.

Once you arrive in the initial accommodation location, Migrant Help members of staff are available on site to provide free, independent advice and information. An appointment will be arranged as soon as possible to complete the UK Visas & Immigration Asylum Support Form (ASF1). Please bring all your documents and supporting evidence.

Initial accommodation is hostel type accommodation and basic meals and toiletries are provided. You will not be given any financial support while you are in the initial accommodation. In Scotland initial accommodation is self-catering and claimants are given £5 per day toward the cost of toiletries and food.

If your application for support is successful you will be moved to your dispersal accommodation. This can be anywhere in the UK and is provided on a no-choice basis. It is therefore important that you notify the Home Office of any factors that may affect the area or type of accommodation you are placed in. It is important that you do this when completing the application form otherwise you may find that your accommodation is not suitable for your needs.

Please discuss all of your needs with the Asylum Support Application caseworker when completing your application for support.

If you are staying with a friend while waiting for accommodation, financial support will not start until you have moved to your long term accommodation.

If you have been residing with friends or family and need to find accommodation somewhere else it is very important to contact Asylum Help on 0808 8000 631 as soon as possible and not wait until you are homeless. If you are staying somewhere temporarily it is generally best to stay there so that the Home Office can process your application, look for most suitable accommodation for you and initiate dispersal to the regions.

If you do not require accommodation

If you are staying with friends or family you will need to show proof that you can stay there. If they can only supply you with accommodation, but offer you no other support then you can apply for financial support (subsistence only).

If you require accommodation

If friends and family can provide you with food or you have a low income, you can apply for accommodation only from the Home Office.

It is important that you contact Asylum Support Application UK to submit an application for support if you require it.

Asylum Support Application UK - 0808 8000 631

www.asylumhelpuk.org

If you are applying for subsistence only, and are staying with a friend, money support will not start until you have been assessed as eligible for support.

If you have been in the UK for a long time and have not claimed asylum as soon as possible, you may be refused Home Office support.

If you can not prove that you do not have access to an adequate place to stay and/or have access to items needed for life (food, heating) or that withholding support will breach your human rights, then the Home Office has a right to refuse support.

2.9 What if I am unable to look after myself?

The Home Office will assess your needs when completing your screening interview. It may decide that you are not able to look after yourself.

This maybe because you have a serious illness, physical disability, learning disability, mental health problems or frailty because of old age. If one of these applies, then you maybe referred to social service after screening for them to complete a Community Care Assessment. If you have a clear and immediate care need, it is likely that the local authority will have a responsibility to provide you with support. This may include accommodation and financial support.

If you need additional support but do not have a clear and immediate care need, a Community Care Assessment will be completed when you are dispersed to your longer term accommodation. The assessment will decide whether you require any additional support (e.g. equipment).

If there is a child in your household with a clear care need (for example due to a severe disability or serious illness) then it will be necessary for the local authority to ensure the appropriate level of care can be provided while you are going through the asylum process. A referral will need to be made to child services to ensure that the correct support is provided.

If you need advice and guidance to do this, please contact:

Asylum Advice UK – 0808 8000 630

2.10 Documents Given at Screening

Application Registration Card (ARC) You will be given an Application Registration Card (ARC). The card is an important document that shows that you have made an application for asylum. If you have not been issued with an ARC you will be given a standard letter of acknowledgement (SAL). This will contain your personal details and photograph and confirm that you have claimed asylum.

You should receive a letter telling you when and where you can exchange your SAL for an ARC. If you do not receive information regarding this appointment please call the Central Events Booking Unit (CEBU) on 0300 123 2235 - lines are open Monday to Friday 9.30am - 3pm.

Your ARC contains your personal details and photograph. It is important that you check that your personal details on your ARC are correct. You need to ensure that your name, date of birth (D.O.B) and country of origin have been recorded correctly. It is difficult to change these once they have been recorded. Your card will confirm any conditions

that are attached to your status. Your ARC will confirm whether you are allowed to work. If you did not have permission to work before you claimed asylum, you will not be given permission to work when you make your claim. Your card will say that you are forbidden from taking employment.

Your ARC does not prove your identity, but records the identity you gave when you claimed asylum. You will need your ARC when you collect your financial support, if you qualify for it. You will be given an ARC for each member of your family. It is important that you keep this safe. If you are an asylum seeker or failed asylum seeker over 18 and you and your dependants' ARC has been lost, stolen or damaged please contact Asylum Help who will assist you to report it to the Home Office. If you have status in the UK or are a minor, please contact the Home Office directly on 0300 123 2235 to report your card lost, stolen or damaged.

If you are getting weekly support from the Post Office using your ARC, you will also need to notify the asylum support section. When you call Asylum Advice UK on 0808 8000 630 please have this information available. You can find the details of the team dealing with your support on any Home Office letter regarding your money and housing support. They can arrange emergency money to be sent out to you while a new ARC is arranged. An appointment is likely to be arranged at your local reporting centre to collect your new ARC. You will need to pay your own travel costs to attend this appointment.

If you need further advice and guidance regarding this you can contact Asylum Advice UK on 0808 8000 630.

Once you have received your new ARC your regular support will be set up again on your ARC.

2.11 Reporting requirements – IS96

You may have been told to report to an immigration office at a specified time each week/month. You will be given a document called an IS96 that confirms your reporting conditions and explains the details surrounding your temporary admission into the UK. Most asylum seekers who are not detained are expected to report to a reporting centre or police station.

If you are an asylum applicant living three miles or more from your reporting centre and you receive Home Office support you may be eligible to receive help with travel tickets for reporting. You will need to attend your first reporting event with proof that you are getting support from the Home Office. You will then be provided with tickets so that you can report. These will normally be given to you at the reporting centre. In most circumstances you will need to arrange your own travel to your first reporting event.

You will not receive the cost of this back. You will need to show your IS96 and ARC card (only if it has been issued) every time you report.

If you are not Home Office supported you may be able to apply for travel tickets if there are exceptional circumstances. You will need to ask for an “Exceptional travel request form” from the immigration officer at your reporting event. You will need to submit a request in writing and evidence that you are not able to fund your own travel.

2.12 Failure to report

It is important that you attend each reporting event. If you are unable to report then you must contact the reporting centre (on the number provided on the IS96) prior to your reporting date and request that reporting be suspended. You must submit evidence to support your request. For example if you cannot report due to illness you must provide medical evidence.

If you are in the last trimester of pregnancy you can ask for the reporting to be suspended until after the birth of your child. You should attend the reporting centre with your maternity certificate (MAT B1). This is available from your doctor or health visitor. The reporting centre should then be able to postpone your reporting until after the birth of your child. If you are unable to attend your reporting event it is important that you contact the reporting centre or contact your legal representative who maybe able to assist with this.

2.13 Documents you need when reporting

When you attend the reporting centre you will need to take with you your IS96 (Reporting Paper) and your ARC card. Reporting centres will update your ARC card to confirm that you are complying with your reporting requirements and your admission in the UK. If you fail to report or if you forget your card then your card is programmed to tell the Post Office not to issue support until you contact the reporting centre and your card is updated. The Post Office will issue a code 4 error receipt. If you fail to report and do not contact the Home Office, then your support will be suspended and in some cases your support may be stopped. You must attend your local reporting centre to get your card updated to enable your support to continue.

2.14 Legal Advice

It is important that you speak to a legal advisor at the earliest opportunity. The legal advisor will be able to assist you with information regarding the asylum process, help you to translate your documents and arrange for any additional reports to be submitted to the Home Office.

You need to ensure that your legal representative is registered with one of the following organisations:

- Law Society of England and Wales as a qualified lawyer.
- Law Society of Scotland as a qualified lawyer.
- Law Society of Northern Ireland as a qualified lawyer.
- Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC), which has a register of advisers who are level 2 or 3. Level 2 or 3 means that the advisor is qualified to give you advice regarding your asylum application and represent you in all your asylum matters.
- You should ask your solicitor who they are registered with. The logos of the above organisations should appear on any letters you receive from your legal representative. You will also be able to check directly with the organisation that your legal representative is registered with them.

Free Legal Advice

As an asylum seeker you may be entitled to free legal advice if you meet the criteria for Legal Aid. You will be classed as an asylum seeker once you have been fully screened. To be eligible for legal aid you will need to prove that you are on a low income and that your case has a realistic chance of success.

Legal Aid England and Wales

The Legal Aid Agency oversees Legal Aid.

To find a legal representative:

Law Society: www.lawsociety.org.uk/find-a-solicitor/

Direct Gov:

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

OISC- Level 2 | level 3 (Specialist):

www.oisc.homeoffice.gov.uk/how_to_find_a_regulated_immigration_adviser

You can also contact:

Asylum Advice UK – 0808 8000 630

www.asylumhelpuk.org

Legal Aid Scotland

The Scottish Legal Aid Board. Further information on Legal Aid can be obtained on:
0845 122 8686

To find a legal advisor:

Scottish Legal Aid Board:

www.slab.org.uk/public/solicitor-finder/#register

OISC:

www.oisc.homeoffice.gov.uk/how_to_find_a_regulated_immigration_adviser

The Law Society of Scotland:

0131 226 7411 | www.lawscot.org.uk

Legal Aid in Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission administers Legal Aid in Northern Ireland.

To find a legal representative:

Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission:

www.nilsc.org.uk/solicitors.asp?on=solicitors

Law Society of Northern Ireland:

www.lawsoc-ni.org/solicitors-directory/how-to-use-the-solicitors-directory

OISC:

www.oisc.homeoffice.gov.uk/how_to_find_a_regulated_immigration_adviser

Wherever you are based in England, Wales, Northern Ireland or Scotland you can also contact: Asylum Advice UK - 0808 8000 630 www.asylumhelpuk.org

2.15 How to complain about bad legal advice

If you believe that you have received bad legal advice then you have a right to submit a complaint. You must first submit a written complaint to the firm dealing with your case. You need to include the following:

- your name and full contact details;
- full details of the complaint (including times, dates and places);
- details of any witnesses (if relevant);
- copies of letters or papers that are relevant;
- your case reference number.

When you first meet your legal advisor they should have issued you with a client care letter. This letter confirms the work they will do for you as well as their complaints procedure. This will also confirm how long it will take to investigate your complaint.

2.16 Changes to Circumstances

You must notify the Home office of any changes to your circumstances for you and your dependants.

This Includes:

- A change to your name
- Receiving or gaining access to money that you have not previously mentioned
- Receiving or gaining access to money after selling something
- Moving to a different address
- Getting married, divorced or separated from a partner
- Forming a civil partnership or deciding to live with your partner
- Being hospitalised
- You (or your partner) becoming pregnant or having a child
- Any of your children leaving school or leaving home
- Any other family members joining or leaving you in the UK
- Anyone else joining or leaving you in your accommodation
- Being imprisoned
- Starting or leaving work
- Pregnancy
- Change from receiving accommodation and financial support to financial support only and vice versa.

It is important that you notify the Home Office of any changes to your circumstances as these may have an effect on you entitlement to support.

Asylum Help will help you to notify the Home Office of any changes to your circumstances. Please contact:

Asylum Support Application UK – 0808 8000 631

www.asylumhelpuk.org

It is important that you also notify your legal representative and/or the immigration part of the Home Office of any change to your circumstances.

2.17 Health Care

You are entitled to access National Health Service (NHS) care without charge while your claim or appeal is being considered. If you are housed in initial accommodation, you will be referred for a health screening on arrival in your accommodation.

If you are not in initial accommodation or have been dispersed, you should register with a doctor, known as a general practitioner (GP), as soon as possible, so that you can get medical care if you need it. To register you will need to give your name, date of birth, address and telephone number if you have one, you will also need to complete a new patient record check. You may also be required to show your ARC to prove that you are an asylum seeker and have an entitlement to free health care.

If you are supported under Section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act you should receive a health form known as an HC2 certificate. This will either be given to you in initial accommodation or as part of the information you receive 18 days after arriving in your long term accommodation. If you are not receiving Home Office support you need to get an HC1 form. Details can be obtained from a GP or from the Department of Work and Pensions. The HC2 certificate is usually valid for six months. To renew an HC2 certificate you will need to complete a new HC1 form. This can be requested from the following link: www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/HealthCosts/1128.aspx. You can also collect the form from the Jobcentre, dentist, optician and pharmacy.

An HC2 certificate will entitle you to:

- NHS prescriptions (free to residents in Scotland and Wales)
- NHS dental treatment (non cosmetic)
- Sight tests
- Glasses and contact lenses (the opticians will confirm the maximum cost you can apply for)
- Necessary costs of travel to receive NHS treatment under a consultant
- NHS wigs and fabric supports · for example spinal or abdominal supports or surgical brassieres supplied through a hospital (free to residents in Scotland and Wales).

If you think that you may have tuberculosis (TB) or any other contagious disease you should seek medical assistance immediately. If you are staying in initial accommodation in Scotland you will receive your GP details before leaving the initial accommodation. In Scotland, asylum seekers can access NHS services for as long as they remain in the UK whether or not they have an ongoing asylum application.

2.18 Maternity Payments

A single, one-off maternity payment of £300 may be provided to new mothers receiving asylum support to help with the costs arising from the birth of a new baby. The application must be made in writing no earlier than eight weeks before the baby is Born or six weeks after the baby is born. You must include evidence of the date of expected birth (MATB1 form), or the child's full birth certificate. Payment should be made to the value of £300 per child, so if twins are due, £600 will be paid. If you are receiving Section 4 support, request £250 no earlier than eight weeks before the baby is due or six weeks after the baby is born.

All women who are receiving asylum support and who are pregnant or have children Under three years of age are entitled to additional payments. An additional £5 a week is available for babies under the age of one. Pregnant women and children between one and three years are entitled to an additional £3 on top of their basic asylum support cash payment.

2.19 Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship together, between family members, or between other people who live or have lived in the same household/accommodation regardless of their gender or sexuality.

Domestic abuse can affect anybody at any time. Both men and women may be affected by it regardless of who they live with and their relationship with that person. If you are having to live with this behaviour, either as a victim or witness, it is important to realise that you can ask for help. Everyone is entitled to protection from domestic abuse irrespective of their immigration status.

You can report the abuse to: the national domestic violence 24 hour telephone helpline (0808 2000 247 – calls are free of charge), the police, your doctor, health visitor, refugee agency, local support group. You can ask to speak to a female worker and/ or a female interpreter if you would prefer. The information that you give will be kept confidential.

2.20 Voluntary Return

If after screening you decide that you would like to return home due to a change to your circumstances, and no longer wish to pursue your claim for asylum, then you can contact the Assisted Voluntary Return programme run by the Home Office. For more information visit:

www.gov.uk/return-home-voluntarily

Voluntary Departures Team: 0300 004 0202

If you decide that you do not want to claim asylum, and are an irregular migrant (have no legal right to be in the UK), and wish to return home, you may be able to get help and support from Assisted Voluntary Return programme managed by the Home Office. For more information visit:

www.gov.uk/return-home-voluntarily
Voluntary Departures Team: 0300 004 0202

2.21 What happens next?

After screening a substantive interview will be arranged. It is important to find a solicitor prior to this stage so they can translate and submit any evidence that you have prior to your asylum interview. Please see prior to substantive interview briefing.

Making a complaint about Asylum Help

Anyone accessing Migrant Help's services may complain. If you experience problems with any of our services, then this is what you should do: Raise the matter as soon as possible with a member of staff or volunteer. If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved informally, then you can make your complaint in writing, using a Complaint Form. You can do this by calling the Asylum Advice UK on: 0808 8000 630 or download the form from the website - www.asylumhelpuk.org

You will need to address the complaint to the manager of the service you wish to complain about. Complaints do not need to be written in English. They may be written in your language and Asylum Help will have it translated. The manager will investigate the complaint and provide a response. If we are unable to provide a satisfactory response immediately, we will provide a full written response which will include details of any corrective action within 10 working days.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you can take the matter further by contacting the Complaints Officer, Migrant Help, Charlton House, Dover CT16 1AT. If you are still unsatisfied with this response, the failure to resolve the complaint will be recorded and we will advise you of other possible organisations to which you may report your complaint.

For further information regarding any part of this section please contact Asylum Help.

www.asylumhelpuk.org

Asylum Advice UK 0808 8000 630

Asylum Support Application UK 0808 8000 631