

Asylum Frequently Asked Questions

The Wales Strategic Migration Partnership (WSMP) was established in 2001 and is funded by the Home Office and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to facilitate strategic leadership, advice and coordination on migration. The WSMP is hosted by the [Welsh Local Government Association](#) (WLGA) to reflect the Partnership's All-Wales role around migration.

The WSMP Asylum Coordinator supports councils in Wales with the dispersal process, under which the Home Office moves destitute asylum seekers to councils across the UK under their Full Dispersal policy.

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Who is a person seeking asylum (asylum seeker)?

A person seeking asylum, (or an "asylum seeker"), is a person who has left their country of origin and formally applied for asylum in another country but whose application has not yet been concluded. **Their presence in the UK is lawful whilst their asylum claims are being considered.** All asylum claims that are lodged from within the UK and admitted to the UK asylum system must be given full and careful consideration so that the Home Office does not remove anyone who faces persecution or serious harm on return to their country of origin.



Protection is normally granted where a claimant has a well-founded fear of persecution under the [Refugee Convention](#), or a claimant faces a real risk of serious harm. Those who qualify are normally granted five years' limited leave and have access to the labour market and welfare support. Applicants who are found to not need protection are refused and once their appeal rights are exhausted, they are expected to leave the UK.

How many asylum seekers are there in the UK and Wales?

108,000 people claimed asylum in 2024, relating to 84,000 cases in the UK ([Summary of latest statistics - GOV.UK](#))

3389 asylum seekers are accommodated by the Home Office in Wales (4% of the UK total) year ending June 2024. Source www.gov.uk

What are the top nationalities of people seeking asylum in the UK?

The top 5 nationalities in 2024 were

- Afghanistan
- Iran
- Syria
- Eritrea
- Vietnam

Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics](#).

What happens to people seeking asylum?

While waiting for a decision on their claim for refugee protection, people seeking asylum in the UK cannot claim benefits and are usually **not allowed to work**. The Immigration rules allow asylum seekers to request permission to work if they have been waiting for **more than 12 months** on their claim "[through no fault of their own](#)".

Some asylum seekers will have their own savings or get support from family or friends and will not ask UK Government for support.

For people seeking asylum who would otherwise be destitute, the Home Office provides a weekly allowance of £49.18 per person in the household in self-catered accommodation and £8.86 per person in accommodation with meals provided. The Home Office uses a private contractor, [Clearsprings Ready Homes](#) to provide asylum accommodation in Wales.

The Home Office has contracted [Migrant Help](#) to provide additional independent support, information and guidance to people seeking asylum, with a 24/7 helpline on **0808 8010 503**.



What happens when someone gets a decision on their asylum claim?

If an asylum seeker is granted leave to remain in the UK – either refugee status, discretionary leave, or humanitarian protection, they will then be eligible to work,

access welfare benefits if required, look for private sector housing. They will receive a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), and their entitlement to asylum support ends 28 days after the date they are granted leave.

From 1st January 2025 the BRP will be replaced with an electronic visa (eVisa) which is an online record of your immigration status and the conditions of your permission to enter or stay in UK. You will need a UKVI account to be able to access your visa. You can find more information on eVisas here: [Online immigration status \(eVisa\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/online-immigration-status-evisa)

Those who get a negative decision from the Home Office (“refused asylum seekers”) are expected by the Home Office to leave the UK, or if an appeal is made once appeal rights have been exhausted.

Households without children lose support and are evicted from asylum seeker accommodation after 21 days. Those who do not leave voluntarily may be forced to leave once the criteria to arrange removal has been met. Some of the criteria includes being served with a Notice of Liability to Remove, no outstanding casework barriers, and that the individual is fit to remove. The Home Office will not remove anyone to their own or any other country where they would face persecution or serious harm.

What can you tell me about asylum accommodation?

- The [Home Office](#) has a statutory obligation to support and accommodate asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute (Immigration and Asylum Act 1999).
- The accommodation used is broadly split into two categories – Initial Accommodation and Dispersal Accommodation.
- Contingency Accommodation is temporary accommodation, usually in hotels, when there are high numbers of people seeking asylum within the system.
- The accommodation providers for Wales are [Clearsprings/Ready Homes](#) (CRH) who provide accommodation, transport and support services.
- CRH source each property, usually Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) or self-contained flats and submit each proposal to councils for approval.
- Under the current [Asylum Accommodation Support Contracts](#) (AASC), accommodation providers follow a due diligence process to ensure that every site is safe and suitable to accommodate people whilst they are on asylum support.
- The Home Office and Clearsprings Ready Homes supported by WSMP, engage with Welsh Government, councils, health partners, policing, and the



third sector to enable a coordinated approach to the dispersal of asylum seekers.

Why are asylum seekers being accommodated in my neighbourhood?

The UK government has a policy of 'full dispersal', so every council in Wales, Scotland and England is expected to accommodate asylum seekers. For each property, councils are given the opportunity to feedback and highlight any issues or concerns about the location, the type of property as well as any health & safety aspects of the building that may need to be addressed.

Have risk assessments been carried out?

The Home Office require that accommodation providers routinely and regularly assess risk when delivering contract requirements. This includes assessing the use of individual locations, as well as the more general system-wide risk of the use of other forms of accommodation such as hotels.

What will happen for people with safeguarding needs?

Some asylum seekers have been through significant trauma before arriving in the UK or may have specific needs and may require additional support.

Where requests for assistance, identifying risks to health and wellbeing, or concerns over welfare, are received, either through **Migrant Help** or through Clearsprings Ready Homes, they are responsible for taking the action they consider necessary to assure the safety and wellbeing of service users, and have to notify the Home Office accordingly. In addition, CRH should refer Service Users at risk or with specific needs to relevant council teams for a [care and support](#) assessment.

What induction will asylum seekers be given on arrival?

Within one calendar day of arrival in dispersal accommodation, Clearsprings Ready Homes has to provide a 'move in' briefing service, which includes the operation of safety equipment and facilities; information on the kinds of services people can expect, information about behavioural expectations and signposting to the advice and guidance [AIRE provider](#) (Migrant Help). Clearsprings Ready Homes are also required to assist people to register with a local GP surgery and dentist (providing information on their location) and providing information on the local area, including the location of shops and facilities.

After seven calendar days an additional 'move in' briefing service is provided, including:

- information on how to register children in appropriate schools (where applicable).



- further signposting including contacting local voluntary sector services, the Home Office's asylum support services, relevant council services, emergency services and the local Police service, legal advisers, local leisure and recreation and religious and cultural facilities, where appropriate.

What kind of medical support and signposting will be available?

CRH works with councils and NHS colleagues who assist in GP registration and access to NHS Services. Newly arrived asylum seekers are offered registration with local GPs, (local NHS advise which GP surgeries are available). Thereafter, individuals are offered the same NHS services as all other UK residents.

What checks does the Home Office undertake to ensure that public health considerations are factored into dispersal operations?

Under new guidance, anyone who identifies themselves as having or presents with symptoms (including those who test positive), for contagious infection at the Manston initial processing site on first arrival will not progress further into the asylum accommodation estate.

Asylum-seekers will either remain at Manston, isolating for a short period or be routed to designated isolation accommodation which the Home Office has in the southeast of England. This new pathway complements existing health services provided immediately on arrival at the Western Jet Foil, (WJF), site and the 24/7 healthcare provision offered, which includes a bespoke diphtheria vaccination offer. The Home Office have also developed a screening and testing process for infectious diseases in consultation with the NHS.

The Home Office also work with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) on the robustness of their testing and screening procedures for infectious diseases, including, (but not limited to), diphtheria.

Containing the spread of diphtheria and other potential infections, and treating those who present with symptoms, is a joint endeavour between the Home Office, UKHSA, local NHS services and councils.

Are people's identities verified and checked? What criminal records checks have been undertaken?

The UK Government has a duty to protect the security of the UK and the safety of its citizens, and all asylum seekers undergo security checks against immigration and police databases to identify those who may have been involved in criminality both in the UK or abroad –including war crimes, crimes against humanity and terrorism.

You can find further information under the [‘asylum screening’](#) section detailed checks undertaken.



Identity Documents

Some asylum seekers will have their own passports or travel documents. However, many asylum seekers arrive without documentation and checks are made upon arrival to establish identity.

What funding is available?

[Funding instruction for councils: Asylum Dispersal Grant 2022-2023 \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Where else can I find help?

[AASC - Schedule 2 - Statement of Requirements.pdf \(parliament.uk\)](#)

Further information on measures taken to improve the asylum accommodation system can be found here

[Accommodation sites factsheet - April 2023 - Home Office in the media \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

Information on the process is available [here](#)

What are your contact details for further information?

Please email WSMPComms@wlga.gov.uk adding 'Asylum query' in the subject line.