

NEW HORIZONS

Skills Sheets for unaccompanied asylum seekers
navigating life in the UK



Name: _____

The Care system of the UK

The UK care system for unaccompanied asylum seeking children aims to provide a secure and nurturing environment for you whilst your asylum case is being processed. It strives to ensure your well-being and protection, and makes sure that you have access to essential services during your stay in the UK. Here's how it generally works:

- **Identification and Registration:** When you arrive in the UK, you are identified by immigration authorities and registered as an asylum-seeker. Your age is determined through various assessments to ensure you receive appropriate care.
Local Authority Care: You will be placed under the care of a local authority (council). The local authority becomes your corporate parent and is responsible for your well-being, just like a parent would be for a child.
- **Accommodation:** The local authority is responsible for providing you with suitable accommodation. This could include foster care, group homes, or specialised housing that takes into account your age, cultural background, and specific needs.
- **Education and Healthcare:** You have the right to access education and healthcare services. The local authority will ensure you have access to schools/colleges and necessary medical care.
- **Support:** A Social worker will be assigned to you to provide emotional support and monitor your well-being. They will help you to adjust to your new environment, provide advice, and advocate for your rights. It's important that you keep in contact with your Social worker and meet them when you are supposed to.
- **Asylum Process:** You will be guided through the asylum application process, which includes legal procedures to determine if you qualify for refugee status or other forms of



protection. Legal assistance is often provided in the form of Legal Aid.

- **Best Interest Determination:** The local authority is required to act in the best interests of the child. This means making decisions that prioritise your welfare and safety.
- **Transition to Adulthood:** As you approach the age of 18 (adulthood), you might start to transition out of the care system. Plans are made to ensure you have the necessary support and resources to continue to live your life independently.
- **PA:** You will usually have a Personal Advisor (PA) who will be available to you until you are 24. Ask a support worker to find out what your Local Authority will have in place for you post 18.
- **Support worker:** they are employed to work with you, to keep you safe and look after you where you live. They will contact your social worker and PA for you if you need help.
- **Solicitor:** A Solicitor will contact the Home Office on your behalf and handle your asylum claim. They're your legal representative in the UK. The asylum process in the UK can be complex and lengthy. It's crucial that you seek legal advice and support to ensure your rights are protected throughout this process.

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Rights & responsibilities

You are expected to co-operate with the asylum process and Home Office officials at all times. Any misrepresentation or omission of facts might affect the decision made on your claim. If you have used deception to obtain leave to enter or remain in the UK, any leave you have been given can be taken away and you might be prosecuted.

It's your responsibility to:

- keep in regular contact with the Home Office
- obey UK law at all times - if you have any doubt about what the law is then it is your responsibility to find out. Eg: carrying an offensive weapon such as a knife, could result in a prison sentence. Sexual offences and committing violence are serious crimes that carry significant prison sentences. It is important to remember that the age of sexual consent in the UK is 16

There may be important cultural and religious differences in the UK that you need to make yourself aware of and we will explore some of them in future skills sheets.

It's not allowed to smoke in any public building. Shops, bars, restaurants, train stations, hospitals etc. If in doubt - do not smoke and ask before you do. You can be fined for smoking in public places.

Antisocial behaviour

You can get into trouble if you take part in:

- Vandalism or graffiti, begging, fighting, spitting or anti-social drinking.
- Using drugs or selling drugs, carrying a knife or weapon in public.
- Loud or intimidating behaviour or being a nuisance.
- Dumping rubbish or not following road safety laws.

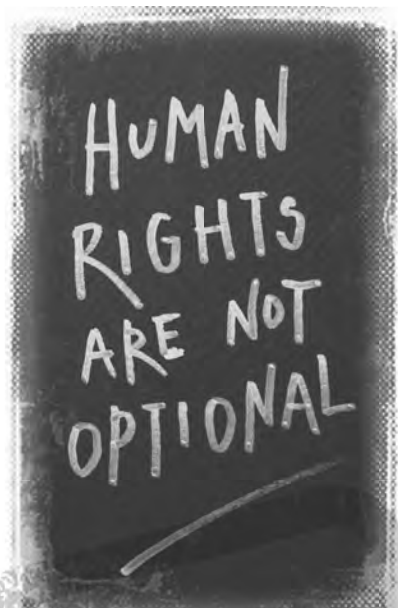
Harassment

This includes verbal or physical threats, abuse or violence. If someone threatens you or has harmed you because of your age, a disability, your nationality, race, gender, gender reassignment, religion, belief or sexual orientation you should report the incident to your support worker who will help you

contact your local police station and you should also inform your solicitor. You must never harass anyone as it could get you into trouble with the police and affect your asylum claim.

Advocacy services are like having a supportive friend who understands your needs and speaks up for you. If you're an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child in the UK, advocacy services are there to help you when you face challenges or have questions. These services are provided by people who are trained to listen to you, understand your situation, and help you express your thoughts and feelings. Advocates can assist you in understanding your rights, communicating with local authorities, accessing services, expressing your views and solving problems. Remember, advocates are there to support you and work in your best interest. They are fully independent and impartial, so you can trust them to help you navigate the asylum process and make sure your needs are met.

Ask a support worker to give you the local advocacy service's contact details and store them somewhere safe.



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Managing Your Finances



- **Budget:** List your essential expenses such as: housing, food, transport, and clothing. Put money away each week for each.
- **Monitor Spending:** Keep track of your spending to understand where your money goes. This will help you make informed financial decisions. There are lots of apps to help you do this.
- **Save for the Future:** Whenever possible, set aside a small portion of your income for emergencies and future needs.
- **Avoid Debt: Be cautious with credit.** Only borrow what you can afford to repay to prevent getting into financial difficulties.

Opening a Bank Account

- Choose your Bank wisely: Research different banks to find one that suits your needs. Look for accounts with low fees and accessible services. Some cultures and religions do not allow interest to be earned on savings so if this is important to you - research the banks carefully before you proceed.
- You'll need identification eg: ARC card and proof of address (your Social worker can give you a letter of ID). You usually fill in an application online and then go to the bank branch with your documents. The staff at the bank will guide you through the process of setting up an account. Consider opening a current and a savings account.
- Learn how to use a banking app to manage your account and transactions. A support worker can help you with this. Carefully read the terms and conditions, including fees and withdrawal limits.

- **Protect Your PIN:** Memorise your PIN and never share it. This keeps your account safe from other people.
- **Update Your Address** if you move home to inform the bank and let them know where to send important communications.

Ensuring your financial safety:

- Be cautious about sharing personal information, especially online. Scammers may try to exploit you. Never click on emails or texts asking you for money. Show a support worker if you are in doubt or go to your bank for advice.
- **Report Lost Cards.** If your debit card is lost, report it immediately to prevent unauthorised use. If you're unsure about any aspect of banking or finances ask a support worker or bank staff.

Having control over your finances and opening a bank account empowers you to build a stable future for yourself and is a necessary part of living in the UK.

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Finding Family

If you're trying to trace your family, here are a few steps you could consider:

- Write down as much information as you can about your family, such as full names, birthdates, last known locations, and any other details that might help in the search.
- Contact Local Authorities: Reach out to organisation that's assisting you with your asylum process. They might have resources or contacts that can aid in your search.
- Charities that work with refugees and asylum-seekers, might be able to assist you in your search. They often have experience in helping people reconnect with their families.
- Social media platforms and online refugee networks might provide a way for you to share information about yourself and seek help from others who might have information about your family.
- Contact the Red Cross:
www.redcross.org.uk
They have programs to help reconnect families separated by conflicts or migration. They might be able to assist you in your search.
- Organisations like UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) can provide assistance and resources for individuals trying to find their families.
- Seek assistance from legal aid organisations that specialise in refugee and immigration cases. They might have resources and contacts to aid in family tracing efforts.

Remember that tracing family members can be a complex and sometimes challenging process, but with determination and the right resources, there's a chance you might be able to reconnect with your loved ones.

A support worker will be able to help you find the above organisations and contact them with you.



Working in the UK

Whilst you are waiting for a decision for your asylum claim you are not allowed to work but you can volunteer for a registered charity or organisation. Always check with your solicitor that this is ok as there are some exceptions and restrictions on volunteering.

If your claim has still not been decided after one year you may request permission to work, but if you do work and then your claim is decided as unsuccessful, you will then have to cease working.

Once you have leave to remain you will be able to work. Having an income will help you settle into your new life. Some jobs need specific skills and others don't. You will probably need to speak some English if you want to increase your chances of getting a job.

You will need a CV - This is a document that tell a prospective employer all about you and your qualifications and skills. You can find examples of a CV on the internet and your support worker or an employability coach will be able to help you make one.

It will take time for you to be able to build up your skills and find a job that suits you. Most jobs in the UK are full time where you work from 9am to 5pm every day except the weekends. Some jobs expect you to work at night or at weekends. You can also work part time (Less than 32 hours a week.) Most people in the UK between the ages of 18 and 67 are expected to work unless they are looking after young children, unable to work because of illness, caring for a family member or studying to



upgrade their work skills. Most people are able to study and work at the same time or you can take on an apprenticeship.

To be employed you have to have a National Insurance Number. This will be on the back of your BRP. You can find jobs by visiting your local job centre, looking in newspapers, looking at online sites such as indeed, register with a recruitment agency, visit local businesses and ask if they have any jobs, or ask friends and relatives.

Employment rights

You are entitled to be treated fairly and work in a safe environment and you also have the right not to be harassed or treated unfairly by your boss or work colleagues. Workers in the UK are usually allowed rest breaks. You will also receive holiday pay, this will depend on how much you work. In the UK there is a national minimum wage which is set annually in April. This is the lowest amount anyone is allowed to be paid. You can check the current rates on line:

www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates

You can get more information about your work rights from ACAS. Tel: 0300 123 1100

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