

Useful telephone numbers and websites

In an emergency: Call the police, ambulance or fire service on 999.

If you are scared, lonely, worried, sad, confused or just need advice:

Call Childline for free on 0800 1111 at any time

or visit: www.childline.org.uk

For free support, advice and information especially for children in care or living away from home: Call the Children's Commissioner's advice line "Help at Hand" on

0800 528 0731 (9am-5pm Monday to Friday) or visit:

www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/learn-more/help-at-hand

If you are being forced to work or to do things that you don't want to do, if you are not free to leave the place where you live, if someone is threatening you or your family, if you are being hurt, or if someone is controlling you in any other way:

Call the Modern Slavery Helpline for advice at any time on 08000 121 700

If you need advice and support about being an unaccompanied

asylum-seeking child: Call the Children's Section of the Refugee Council on

020 7346 1134 or email: children@refugeecouncil.org.uk

To search for help near to you: www.miclu.org/servicesmap

If you are an adult and you want to help a child who you think might have been trafficked or is in danger of exploitation, or if you would like to understand more about the asylum process, you can find useful information below:

NSPCC's Child Trafficking Advice Centre:

www.nspcc.org.uk

NSPCC have a helpline 0808 800 5000 and email too:

www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-trafficking

Every Child Protected Against Trafficking (ECPAT):

www.ecpat.org.uk

Coram Children's Legal Centre - Migrant Children's Project:

www.childrenslegalcentre.com/about-us/what-we-do/migrant-childrens-project

WHO IS WHO?

After you arrive in the UK you will meet a lot of different adults. **But who are they all?** This is a guide to help you understand the different jobs that they do, and how they can help you.



This factsheet is designed for children who have arrived in the United Kingdom and are seeking asylum by themselves.

Ask an adult to read this through with you if you don't understand.



Why not carry this leaflet with you and ask the people you meet to point to who they are?





IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer)

► Who they are

An **IRO** makes sure that the **Local Authority** is doing what it is supposed to do for you while you are in their care. The IRO is responsible for making sure that your social services placement is **right for you**, and that you are happy. An IRO is **independent** and **separate** from social workers.

► What they do

An IRO should check that your care plan is right for your **future**, that everyone listens to what you have to say and considers it carefully, and that everyone is keeping to their part of the plan. You should **meet** with your IRO at least **every six months**.

It is very important that you tell your IRO if there are any problems with your care, if you feel your social worker isn't listening to you, or if there are any **problems** that have **not been solved**.

The people in this leaflet are introduced in the order you will meet them. They all have different roles but sometimes it can seem like they are the same or connected.

Some adults in this leaflet have to share information about you with other professionals as a normal part of their job. This is so that they can work together to better help and protect you.



Some adults don't normally share information with other professionals unless you give them permission. You usually have a choice about what information they can share, unless it is about a serious danger to you or another person.





Interpreter

► Who they are

An interpreter's job is to make sure that **all the words** that you speak are **translated clearly** into English exactly as you said them, and to translate all the words that are said to you in English clearly into your own language so that **you can understand**.

► What they do

In **most meetings** with adults there is likely to be an interpreter to help you **communicate** and you have the **right to ask for one**. An interpreter does not have training to give you legal advice, and **should not tell you what to do or what to say**.

If you **don't understand** your interpreter well, if you think they are not translating everything, or if you have any other worries then you must tell someone. If you are not comfortable with an interpreter for any reason, you have the **right to ask** for another interpreter.





Therapist

► Who they are

A therapist (or psychotherapist) is a person who helps people deal with **stress** or other **problems** when they are going through difficult times. Through therapy, people learn about themselves and discover ways to overcome **difficulties** or make changes in themselves or their situations. Often, it feels good just to have a person to talk to.

► What they do

Things that **happened** to you in your **home country**, while travelling to the UK, or even after arriving here, may cause you to experience **difficult feelings**.

You may feel sad, angry, or find it hard to **sleep**. You may feel very **frightened** still. Working with a therapist can help you understand your feelings and learn how to stop them overwhelming you. This can help you to concentrate on your every day life and on your future.

Your therapist may also be able to give **evidence** which can help your **asylum claim**, if you agree to this. If you feel that you would like to talk to a therapist then ask your foster carer, social worker or your lawyer.





Immigration officer

► Who they are

The role of an immigration officer is to make sure that the **immigration laws** of the UK are **followed**. An immigration officer has **some of the same powers as a police officer**, but they do not belong to the police: they work for a part of the **UK government called the Home Office**. They have a responsibility to ensure you are safe and well.

► What they do

When you arrive in the UK an immigration officer will put you in a place of **safety** while you recover from your journey. Immigration officers will take **basic information** about who you are and where you came from, and refer you to social services who will arrange for your care. They may also register your asylum claim.

These immigration officers **should not interview you to make a decision** about whether you can **stay in the UK** but you must **always be truthful** with them and they may write down what you say.





Designated teacher

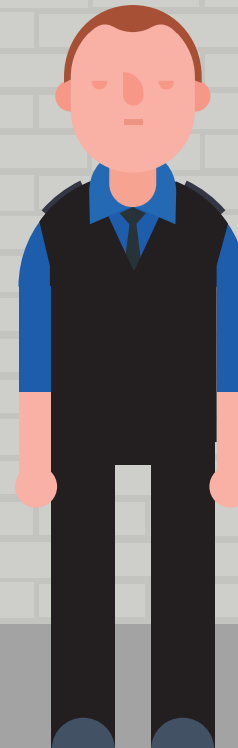
► Who they are

A **designated teacher** is a teacher at your school or college who has **responsibility** for children who are looked after by the local authority. You might not be taught any lessons by them. They will know a bit about your **situation** but might not know personal things about your family background and why you are looked after.

► What they do

A designated teacher will **help** your school or college to **support** you and meet your needs, checking that you are properly involved in what and how you are learning. They will make sure that your school/ college understands the issues that might **affect** your **education** and they will keep track of how you are doing. They'll also be responsible for your **Personal Education Plan (PEP)**.

A designated teacher will talk to your social worker regularly about how you are getting on at school. Your designated teacher should not tell other pupils that you are looked after, or treat you differently in front of them.





Social worker

▶ Who they are

A social worker is a person who is responsible for helping children in their local area. Because you are alone with no family to care for you the Local Authority is responsible for looking after you. They will make sure that you have a safe place to live, food, clothes, healthcare, education and other support you need as a child. This is called being “**looked after**” or “**in care.**”

▶ What they do

A social worker will make decisions about your care. Your social worker should visit you at least **every 6 weeks**. They must **listen** to you and **include** your **wishes** and **feelings** in the plan for your care. They should **explain decisions** and make sure you know how to get your voice heard.

They should always speak to you using an interpreter if you do not understand English. You might have more than one social worker as sometimes they change. Keep your social worker’s **name and number** with you at all times.

You have the right to be protected from all kinds of physical violence, mental violence, exploitation or neglect. If:

- someone is hurting you
- an adult is not caring for you as they should
- someone is making you do work for them or do things you don’t want to do
- you are not free to leave the place you stay*
- someone is saying they can do bad things to you or your family
- you are not free because you owe someone something, or
- you are scared for some other reason...

...there are people who can help you, but you have to trust and tell someone. Tell your social worker, foster carer or any person on this leaflet who you feel most comfortable with, or call any of the numbers on the back of this leaflet.

* Sometimes when a local authority believes that there is an adult in the UK who it is not safe for you to have contact with, they may limit where you can go and who you can see for a period of time in order to keep you safe. They should explain this to you. If you are unhappy or confused then you can still speak to your lawyer or another person about this.



You have to keep trusting even though you are in danger. Maybe you don’t think anyone else cares, or you don’t know anyone, but someone cares.

All children have the same rights

- The right to have my voice heard
- The right to housing, food and care
- The right to protection from violence and abuse
- The right to see a doctor/dentist and get medical treatment for free
- The right to free, full-time education
- The right not to be detained
- The right to find my family
- The right to not be discriminated against
- The right to fully develop as I grow older

Fact: In the eyes of UK law, a person is a child until they reach the age of 18 years. Local authorities have a legal duty to care for a child with no family, up until they reach 18, and in some circumstances to support them beyond that age. This is why asylum seeking children who arrive in the UK on their own are taken into care.





Foster carer

► Who they are

A foster carer is someone who **opens their home** to provide care to **children who do not have family who can look after them**.

► What they do

Foster carers offer a safe and secure home. They will **look after** you on a day-to-day basis, take you to school and provide the things you need such as **clothes and food**.

A foster carer will also have contact with several of the adults involved in your life e.g. your **social worker**, your **GP**, your **lawyer** and your **teachers**. Their family life may not be what you are used to, and if you find this difficult it is important to share your feelings so they can help.





Police officer

▶ Who they are

A **police officer** is responsible for **keeping people safe**, for making sure that the **law is followed in the UK**, and for **investigating crime**. Police officers have to **follow the law too**.

▶ What they do

If you are in **danger or need to report a crime** you should speak to the police as soon as you can. Call 999.

If you are afraid to speak to the police or don't want to give your personal details then speak to another adult who you trust. Crimes may still be reported without providing your personal details.

Criminal law in the UK may be quite different to the criminal law in your country. For example, you can get a penalty for dropping a cigarette in the street. Ask your social worker or another adult to help you understand more about the law.

If you are charged with a crime then you have the right to have a lawyer be with you while you are interviewed by a police officer.

If another person has **made you carry out crimes** then you are a victim, and **you need help and protection**.





Designated nurse and GP (General Practitioner)

► Who they are

A designated nurse is a nurse who **understands the problems and issues** faced by children looked after by social services. They will work with your social worker to make sure your **health needs** are met.

A **GP is a doctor** who provides **general medical advice** and **treatment** for people who live in a particular area.

► What they do

A designated nurse will need to examine you and check whether you have any health problems. This is called a “first assessment.” They should arrange this as soon as possible after you **arrive** in the UK. You can see your **GP for free** if you have any **health problems** or other problems like **feeling very sad** or **having trouble sleeping**. You do not need to pay for medical treatment in the UK, including seeing a dentist or optician.

Do not be afraid to **be honest** with the nurse or your GP about the **problems** you are facing. Your designated nurse should book an **interpreter** to accompany you to appointments with your GP.





Home Office case worker

► Who they are

A Home Office case worker will **ask you questions about your claim** for asylum in an interview, **examine** all the **evidence** that you or your lawyer provide about your claim, and compare this with **information** and **guidance** that the government has. They will use all of this to make a decision about what kind of **permission** you might be given to **stay** in the UK.

► What they do

It is important that you give the caseworker **as much information as possible** about your asylum claim. The caseworker should make you feel comfortable and help you to explain what has happened by asking questions and listening to your answers. **Don't be scared** to tell the caseworker everything that happened to you - if you do not tell them they do not have a magic way of knowing! It is also very important that you always tell the truth and say if you do not know, or are not sure, about an answer. The **caseworker's decision is not final** as you may have a right to ask for an appeal.

If you have been referred to the **National Referral Mechanism (NMR)** then a different Home Office caseworker will decide whether they think you have been trafficked. This decision should be separate, but information about each decision can be shared between the different caseworkers.



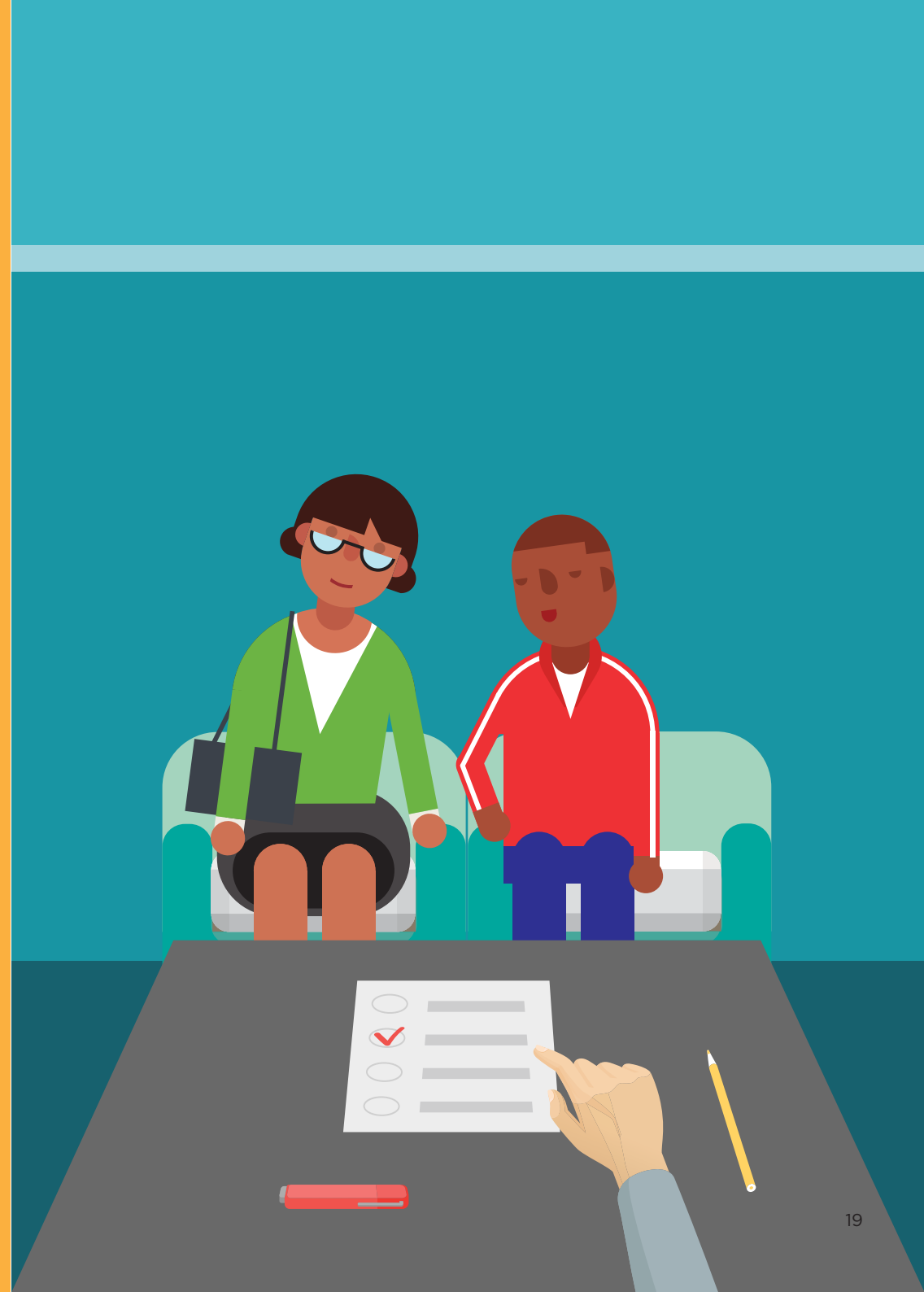


I was asked the same questions, and I felt they did not believe me. You need trust to talk about everything easily. But sometimes I had to force myself to.

You may go through several interviews with different adults over a period of time, which can be frustrating. **Be patient.**

If you have any difficulty answering a question, if you are too scared, ashamed, unwell, or if you do not remember, you must explain this. **It is ok to say “I cannot talk about this now.”**

If you do not say then the person interviewing you will not know, and it's **important** that **they understand.**





Appropriate or Responsible adult

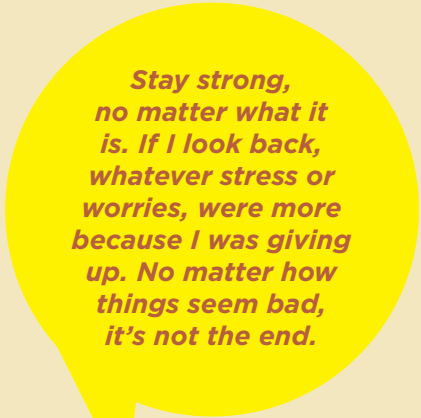
► Who they are

An “appropriate adult” or a “responsible adult” is a person who is responsible for **protecting the rights** and **welfare** of a child when they are being **interviewed**.

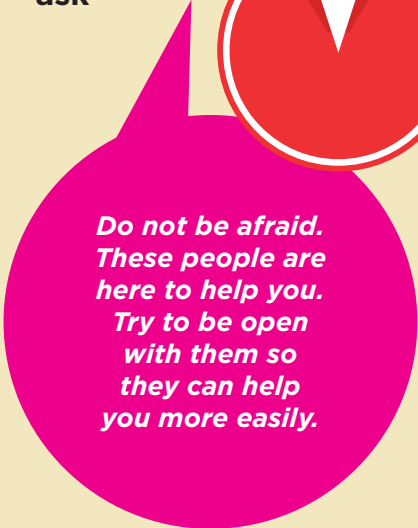
► What they do

An appropriate adult will go with you to interviews like your **asylum interview**, an **age assessment** (which is a formal process to decide your age), or a police interview. They will provide independent support to you, bring the interviewer’s attention to any needs that you have, and make sure that you understand what is happening and are able to communicate. A responsible adult can be a **foster parent**, your **social worker**, **a refugee support organisation worker**, or a **guardian**, but they should also be someone you know and trust.

- Don't be worried that anyone will be angry with you or think that you are rude
- If you are struggling to understand rules at school or in your foster home – ask



Stay strong, no matter what it is. If I look back, whatever stress or worries, were more because I was giving up. No matter how things seem bad, it's not the end.



Do not be afraid. These people are here to help you. Try to be open with them so they can help you more easily.



- It is important to share information and be truthful
- Ask as many questions as you want and say if you do not agree with something



Lawyer

► Who they are

A lawyer is someone who **knows** and **understands** the **law**. An immigration lawyer knows the laws that the Home Office will use to make a decision on your asylum application, but there are other types of lawyers who understand for example **criminal law**, **family law**, or **social services law**.

► What they do

A lawyer works for you. A lawyer will help you to understand what will happen while you are going through the asylum process, and how the different **laws** and **procedures** apply to your **situation**. They will need to know about what has happened to you in order to do this. They should listen to what you say.

They will need to **meet you several times** while preparing your asylum claim in order to understand everything that has happened to you. If you do not understand your lawyer, or you are afraid or ashamed to speak to them, you should tell someone. You may be able to work with a different lawyer.

Your lawyer should help to identify the parts of your **experience** that are important to your asylum claim. They should be with you in all formal interviews with immigration officials or the police and make sure that you **provide information on time**.

Your lawyer **should not ask you for money** to work on your asylum application. They can make a claim on your behalf to a government agency to ask for money called “legal aid” to prepare your case, but this does not mean that they work for the government.

