

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

## ASYLUM SEEKERS IN WALES

### What to expect as an asylum seeker in Wales

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#### Are there others like me in Wales?

Although asylum seekers make up only about 0.1% of the population, there are around 3,000 people seeking asylum living in Wales. Charities such as Welsh Refugee Council can help you find a support network and make friends.

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#### How long will it take to get a decision on my asylum application?

The asylum process in the UK can take a long time, often longer than 6 months. If you appeal the decision it can take even longer.

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#### Can I work whilst I'm waiting for my application to be resolved?

Generally, asylum seekers are not allowed to work, but you can apply for permission to work if you have waited over 12 months for an initial decision on your asylum claim or for a response to a further submission for asylum, and you are not considered responsible for the delay in decision-making.



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#### If I'm not allowed to work, will I receive any financial support?

You have a right to financial support if you are not able to financially support yourself while your asylum claim is heard. You will be entitled to a specific allowance for asylum seekers which is £39.60 per week. Charities across Wales can offer you additional help with food, clothing or even bikes! To find out more please get in touch and we can signpost you to support in your area.

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#### Where will I be living?

You have a right to accommodation if you are not able to financially support yourself, and will usually be housed by the Home Office in private accommodation that is offered on a 'no choice' basis. This means you won't get to choose where you live and could be housed anywhere in the UK whilst you wait for the outcome of your case.



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## Can my children go to school?

Yes, education is compulsory in the UK for all children aged 5-16. You will need to enrol your children at the local state school where you live. If you are entitled to financial support or housing, you should also be able to access free school meals for your children. At Welsh Refugee Council we run free play sessions for children and out of school holiday programmes.

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## I've heard the phrase 'illegal asylum seeker'. Is what I'm doing illegal?

There is no such thing as an 'illegal' asylum seeker. Under international law (1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol on Refugees) everyone has the right to apply for asylum in the UK. In seeking sanctuary, you are exercising a human right.

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## But I've heard I could be detained by immigration authorities?

Unfortunately, UK immigration authorities have the right to detain asylum seekers indefinitely, even if they have not committed a crime. If this happens, you should have access to a lawyer who can help you understand your rights. [RightToRemain.org.uk](http://RightToRemain.org.uk) have a [checklist](#) on how to be prepared in case you are detained.

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## Can I access healthcare?

Yes, you have a right to access the National Health Service (NHS) for free, as well as free dental care and prescription medicines. It can be confusing knowing what you need to do and to register for the right services. You can contact Welsh Refugee Council for help or speak to other asylum seekers who have already been through the process. There is also more information on healthcare in Wales on the [Welsh Government Sanctuary website](#).

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## Are there others who can help me?

As well as the official asylum helpline run by Migrant Help, there are a number of organisations working in Wales to support asylum seekers, providing practical help, advocacy, crisis support and a social community.

## Useful Contacts

### Welsh Refugee Council

0808 196 7273  
[info@wrc.wales](mailto:info@wrc.wales)  
Advocacy, support and advice for refugees and asylum seekers in Wales

### Welsh Government Sanctuary Website

[sanctuary.gov.wales](http://sanctuary.gov.wales)  
Providing information for Asylum Seekers in Wales covering topics such as education, health and housing

### Migrant Help

0808 8010 503  
[MigrantHelpUK.org](http://MigrantHelpUK.org)  
Official 24 hour support service for refugees and asylum seekers in the UK

Seeking asylum can be long and difficult, especially for those fleeing danger.

At Welsh Refugee Council we are committed to welcoming and supporting asylum seekers in Wales.