

Immigration and Asylum

People can immigrate to the UK or seek asylum. Immigration is regulated in line with government policy and supports economic growth.

What is Immigration Control?

Immigration control is a way of controlling how many people come into the UK. Depending on your reason for coming to visit and how and why you enter the country a decision will be made about:

- how long you can stay
 - if you can work or study
 - if your relatives can come to the UK to join you afterwards
 - if you can use the NHS (National Health Service) or claim benefits
-

Immigration issues

Problems that people coming into the country may need advice on are:

- getting permission to stay in the UK for longer than they originally intended
 - getting permission to do something which they are not at present allowed to do, for example, being allowed to work
 - bringing relatives into the country, for example, a spouse or children
 - being threatened with deportation from the UK
 - being held by the immigration authorities in a detention centre
 - wanting a passport and not knowing whether they are entitled to a British passport or some other passport
 - wanting to apply to become a British Citizen
 - wanting to travel outside of the UK, for example, for a holiday
 - whether they are entitled to use state services or claim benefits, for example, education, health services, council housing, social security benefits, housing benefits, council tax benefit
 - the right to vote
 - a relative or friend being refused entry to the UK when arriving at an airport or port
-

The habitual residence test

If you're an EEA national and want to claim certain means-tested benefits, you must normally meet the conditions of the habitual residence test.

The purpose of the test is to see whether you have the right to live in the UK (known as the right to reside), and whether you intend to settle in the UK for the time being, which is known as habitual residence.

When you fill in your benefits claim form, you will be asked questions to decide whether you need to go through the habitual residence test. If you do, you will be asked for more information to decide if you are habitually resident.

You can argue that you have a right to reside if you are:

- working or self employed
- job seeking
- a former worker
- self sufficient
- a student
- the primary carer of a child who themselves has the right to reside
- the family member of someone with the right to reside
- or have been living in the UK for at least five years

Applying for a visa

[UK Visas and Immigration](#) is part of the Home Office. They decide who has the right to visit or stay in the UK. Use their service to apply for a visa to:

- visit the UK
- work in the UK or sponsor a worker
- study in the UK or sponsor a student
- join your UK, EU, or EEA family member in the UK
- live permanently in the UK and British Citizenship
- apply to the EU Settlement Scheme
- apply for an online eVisa

From March 2025 you will need an eVisa to prove your immigration status. Biometric residence permits (BRP) and biometric residence cards (BRC) will no longer be accepted. To get an eVisa you must have a UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) online account. If you need help to do this or are not online [you can find help on www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

There is E-Visa support in Newcastle through [Work and Thrive Central](#)

Seeking protection or claiming asylum in the UK

You must [apply for asylum](#) if you want to stay in the UK as a refugee. To be eligible you must have left your country and be unable to go back because you fear persecution.

You should apply when you arrive in the UK or as soon as you think it would be unsafe for you to return to your own country. Your application is more likely to be denied if you wait.

After you apply you'll have a meeting with an immigration officer (known as a 'screening') and then an asylum interview with a caseworker.

Asylum support

You can [apply for money and housing support](#) for you and your family while you wait to find out if you'll be given asylum. This means your children can go to a free state school and you may get free healthcare from the NHS. You can still apply for short term support if you've been refused asylum and are preparing to leave the UK.

[Asylum Team at Newcastle City Council](#) support people during the asylum process. They support the 'move on' process if you are granted refugee status. They offer advice and signposting if you are refused asylum.

Newcastle City Council is a recognised City of Sanctuary and are committed to welcome people seeking sanctuary and help rebuild their lives. Read more about the asylum process in Newcastle on www.newcastle.gov.uk

Asylum Helplines

Get help with your asylum application or asylum seeker support application. [Visit Gov.uk](#) for more information.

[Migrant Help UK](#) is a telephone helpline for asylum applicants or refugees. Get advice about the asylum process, help to make claims for support or adapting to life in the UK.

Local help and advice

[Support for asylum seekers and refugees](#) find more on InformationNOW

[Where to get legal advice](#) find more on InformationNOW

[The North East Law Centre](#) provides free confidential legal advice on Immigration & Asylum issues to Newcastle residents.

[Citizen's Advice Newcastle \(CAN\)](#) can give you free, confidential, impartial and independent advice and information on a wide range of subjects including benefits, housing, employment, legal matters, immigration and family and personal matters. They have a Welcome Service for people who have recently moved to the North East from Hong Kong

[Northumbria University – Welfare, Immigration and Funding](#) support their current and prospective students with immigration and visas issues.

[Action Foundation](#) supports refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants with housing, English, information and practical support. They can help you access services, find out about housing, legal support, to access health services, and to settle into life on Tyneside.

[The North of England Refugee Service](#) provides confidential advice and support on all matters relating to asylum seekers and refugees.

The West End Refugee Service (WERS) is a registered charity working with refugees and asylum seekers living in the West End of Newcastle. Their services include:

- Advice sessions
- Counselling service
- Home visits
- Befriending scheme
- Clothing store
- Emergency hardship fund

Rights of women give free legal advice and information to women about immigration and asylum issues. They can also help with sexual violence, divorce, the criminal justice process and sexual harassment at work. They have 4 free telephone helplines.

Support for Hong Kong Nationals

Support is available for Hong Kong British National (Overseas) adults and dependants who have been granted leave on the British National (Overseas) visa (sometimes called BNO) to access public services and make the most of the opportunities in the UK. **Read the Welcome Guide on Gov.uk**

Citizens Advice Newcastle offer free, confidential and independent support to people who've recently moved to the North East from Hong Kong. They can give advice on housing, employment, health care, schools and other issues.

Barnardos runs Boloh a free telephone helpline and web chat for adult asylum seekers or a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic parents or carers. Their advisors speak English, Urdu and Hindi. They provide advice, signposting and emotional support. They can help with advice about respiratory problems and Hong Kong nationals settling in the UK.

North East Hongkongers Club support new arrivals from Hong Kong to settle into British society. They offer financial assistance to Hongkongers and their dependants who are suffering financial hardship

If you are granted asylum or refugee leave to remain

Contact Asylum Team at Newcastle City Council who will help you:

- access accommodation and benefits
- settle into the local community
- signpost you to education, training and employment opportunities

A guide for new refugees: by the Home Office gives adults who granted asylum in England, a general introduction to the UK and more information on:

- how to access public services
- make the most of the opportunities in the UK

- overview of what needs to happen in your 'move on period' for newly recognised refugees to access support, employment and housing
- how to access education and healthcare
- your rights and responsibilities
- useful contacts
- it's available in 12 languages

[See the Decision to Exit Process here](#)

Refused Asylum Seekers

If your application for asylum is not successful you may be refused asylum. You may be at risk of homelessness or destitution.

You can still [apply for short-term support if you've been refused asylum](#) and are preparing to leave the UK.

[Asylum Team at Newcastle City Council](#) offer advice and signposting if you receive a negative decision on your asylum claim.

[Support for asylum seekers and refugees](#) find more on InformationNOW

Last updated: April 28, 2026

Useful Organisations

Citizens Advice Newcastle (CAN)

Email: citycab@newcastlecab.org.uk

Website: <http://citizensadvice-newcastle.org.uk>

Telephone: 0808 223 1133

Address: 4th Floor, City Library, NE1 8AX

North East Law Centre

Email: reception@nelawcentre.co.uk

Website: www.nelawcentre.co.uk

Telephone: 0191 230 4777

Address: 2nd Floor, 10 - 13 Saville Row, NE1 8JE

West End Refugee Service (WERS)

Email: info@wers.org.uk

Website: www.wers.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 273 7482

Address: St Philip's Vicarage, NE4 5JE

Solicitors for the Elderly

Email: admin@sfe.legal

Website: www.sfe.legal

Telephone: 0844 567 6173

Address: Studio 209, MillStudio Business Centre, SG12 9PY

St Cuthbert's Care

Email: enquiries@stcuthbertscare.org.uk

Website: www.stcuthbertscare.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 228 0111

Address: St Cuthbert's House, NE15 7PY

North of England Refugee Service (NERS)

Email: info@refugee.org.uk

Website: www.refugee.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 245 7301

Address: 2 Friars St, NE1 4XA

UK Visas and Immigration

Email: ApplyOnlineE-Support@homeoffice.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>

Telephone: 0300 790 6268

Northumbria University – Welfare, Immigration and Funding

Email: sv.welfareandInternational@northumbria.ac.uk

Website: <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/study-at-northumbria/support-for-students/>

Telephone: 0191 227 4127

Address: Student Support and Wellbeing, NE1 8ST

Riverside Community Health Project at Carnegie Community Hub

Email: admin@riversidechp.org.uk

Website: <http://riversidechp.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0191 226 0754

Address: Carnegie Building, NE4 8XS

Migrant Help

Email: info@migranthelpuk.org

Website: <https://www.migranthelpuk.org/advice-and-guidance>

Telephone: 0808 8010 503

Migration, refugee and Asylum Team at Newcastle City Council

Email: asylum@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/communities-and-neighbourhoods/asylum-and-immigration>

Telephone: 0808 8010 503

Action Foundation

Email: info@actionfoundation.org.uk

Website: www.actionfoundation.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 231 3113

Address: CastleGate, NE1 2JQ

Doctors of the World UK

Email: safesurgeries@doctorsoftheworld.org.uk

Website: <https://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0207 167 5789

Address: 29th Floor, One Canada Square, E14 5AA

Barnardo's

Email: supporterrelations@barnardos.org.uk

Website: <https://www.barnardos.org.uk>

Telephone: 0191 271 4615

Address: Barnardo's Head Office, IG6 1QG

North East Hongkongers Club

Website: <https://www.nehk.org>

Telephone: 0191 271 4615

Address: 17 Main Street , NE20 9NH

Rights of women

Email: info@row.org.uk

Website: <https://rightsofwomen.org.uk/>

Telephone: 020 7251 6577

Address: 52-54 Featherstone Street, EC1Y 8RT

Related Articles

[Support for Asylum Seekers and Refugees](#)

[Where to get legal advice](#)

[Racial Discrimination](#)

[Food banks and free emergency food in Newcastle](#)