

THE UNITED KINGDOM

This information sheet outlines key information for people seeking legal help who are impacted by the crisis in Afghanistan.

This includes people who are currently:

1. In the United Kingdom seeking asylum/protection;
2. In Afghanistan (or another country) and want to relocate to the United Kingdom

This information is collated by a collective of legal actors to support legal needs arising from the crises in Afghanistan. Should you have any updates or resources you would like included please contact: grfpledge@pilnet.org.

PILnet, APNOR, APRRN, and AMERA are unable to provide direct legal assistance or referrals, but if you are an asylum seeker, refugee or stateless person in need of legal assistance please see the list of local legal aid providers and their contact details [below](#). In addition to this contact information, you can find further details about local legal aid providers in the countries covered on the country pages of [UNHCR Help](#) or AMERA's [Rights in Exile](#) platform.

PEOPLE ALREADY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

People who are in the United Kingdom and wish to remain you can find information about the options here:

Refugee Status

- In the United Kingdom applications for refugee status are determined by The Home Office UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI).
- Applications made from within the UK must be registered through an appointment at the Asylum Intake Unit (AIU). The AIU is located in Croydon, England. **Applicants should apply as soon as possible.** If arriving to the UK through a port of entry, tell the immigration officials you want to claim asylum on arrival.
- If you are already in the UK applicants are required to telephone the AIU before applying in person to book an appointment. The number to reach the AIU is **0300-123-4193**. If you have nowhere to live you do not need to wait for an appointment slot as they can be many weeks ahead. Call the intake unit to let you know the nearest asylum registration location and that you are homeless and the Home Office should direct you to the nearest location and accommodate you after screening. Applicants should be prepared to provide personal information when making an appointment.
- Making an appointment with the AIU will result in a screening interview. In this screening interview, an AIU officer will take the applicant's fingerprints and begin gathering the basic details of the asylum claim.



- The Home office will then start processing the claim and will invite you for a substantive interview to help assess the claim. Your lawyer will help you to prepare a statement and gather any further evidence.
- To be eligible for asylum, the applicant must have left their home country and be unable to return because of fear of persecution. The rules in the UK have recently changed meaning that claims can be ruled as 'inadmissible' if you have passed through a 'third safe country' and the Home Office can attempt to remove you to a third country if they deem it safe.
- **It is essential that you seek legal advice on claiming asylum as soon as possible.** The UK process is complicated and there is legal aid available for most people to assist.
- For further information about the asylum process please see:
 - <https://www.gov.uk/claim-asylum>
 - <https://righttoremain.org.uk/toolkit/claimasylum/>
 - <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/united-kingdom/asylum-procedure/general/>

For help with the application process please see the 'free legal help' section [below](#).

PEOPLE WISHING TO RELOCATE TO THE UNITED KINGDOM DUE TO **RISK OF HARM**

People who are currently in Afghanistan (or other countries) and are at risk of harm may be eligible for:

Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)

- To be eligible for ARAP, the applicant must either be current or former Locally Employed Staff (LES) of the United Kingdom.
- There are four categories of individuals who may be eligible for ARAP. For more information on these categories for eligibility, see the link [below](#).
- To apply for ARAP, people need to complete an application on the Ministry of Defense's website.
- Guidance on the process/form can be found [here](#).

Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)

- Afghan Citizen Resettlement is for Afghans who have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for values such as democracy and women's rights and for vulnerable people including women, girls and minority groups at risk.
- More information can be found [here](#).
- There is no application process for ACRS. The process of nomination is through three pathways:
 - Evacuation through Operation Pitting (which has now ended)



- Nomination through the UNHCR (see below)
- Nomination through the UK government who will identify at risk groups. The expression of interest for the first nominated groups has now closed but information can be found [here](#).
- Applicants **must** have left Afghanistan to be nominated for UNHCR resettlement.
- More information on finding a UNHCR office and registering can be found [here](#).

For help with the application process please see the 'free legal help' section [below](#).

PEOPLE WISHING TO RELOCATE TO THE UNITED KINGDOM WITH FAMILY LINKS

People currently in Afghanistan (or other countries) who have family members in the United Kingdom and want to relocate:

People who are currently in Afghanistan (or other countries) can apply for:

Family Visas

- Application criteria: You can apply for a family visa to live in the UK with your spouse or partner, fiancé, child, parent, or a relative who will provide long-term care for you. The family member **must** already be either a British or Irish citizen or have settled in the UK with leave to remain indefinitely and proof of permanent residence.
- Applicants generally need to demonstrate English language competence and meet accommodation and financial requirements. There may also be an application fee.
- To apply for a Family Visa, people need to complete an application online.
- Guidance on the process/form can be found [here](#). More detailed guidance can be found [here](#)

Refugee family reunion

- Application criteria: You can apply for a family visa to live in the UK with your 'pre flight' spouse or partner or parent who has refugee status or humanitarian protection, including if they have been given indefinite leave to remain as a refugee or recipient of humanitarian protection.
- This is a free application and there is no accommodation, language or financial requirements. The rules for family reunion are changing for refugees who have arrived after 28 June 2022. If your family member in the UK arrived after then you need to seek separate legal advice as to whether they will qualify.

Family visas are complicated and best done through the help of a solicitor. You can find one through the law society [here](#). Most family visas are out of the scope of legal aid (free legal help) but it may be that the solicitor can apply for 'exceptional case funding' to get legal aid.

For help with the application process please see the 'free legal help' section [below](#).



There may be other ways to relocate to the UK if you have a profession or in demand skill or occupation. **Skilled work visas** exist for those in the UK who have been offered a job in a role which is 'skilled' or is a 'shortage occupation'.

You would need to have a job offer from an organisation with a sponsor licence to apply. For more details see [here](#). These visas have application requirements such as English language proficiency and professional qualifications and there will be fees to apply.

There is an organisation linking Afghans in skilled occupations with employers in different countries called Talent Beyond Boundaries. For more information see [here](#).

FREE LEGAL HELP

The following organisations or legal service providers can support with free legal help for those already in the UK:

Migrant Help UK

- **Types of services or specialisation:** Asylum application support and finding representation, asylum support accommodation, refugee resettlement services, interpretation.
- **Criteria for referrals:** n/a
- **Website:** migranthelpuk.org
- **Email:** ASCORespondence@migranthelpuk.org
- **Contact number:** 0808 8010 503
- **Hours:** n/a
- **Other info:** Self-service web portal available.

Refugee Council info line

- **Types of services or specialisation:** Connecting asylum seekers and refugees to information and services in their area to support them to find legal representation and help.
- **Website:** <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/services/infoline/>
- **Contact number:** 0808 1967272
- **Hours:** Mondays and Thursdays 9:30 -12:30

The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants

- **Types of services or specialisation:** Legal advice on asylum applications and family and work-based petitions.
- **Criteria for referrals:** n/a
- **Website:** <https://www.jcwi.org.uk/Pages/Category/legal-advice>



- **Email:** info@jcw.org.uk
- **Contact number:** 0207 251 8708
- **Hours:** n/a
- **Other info:** Applicants must be under an income threshold to qualify for free legal aid.

Law Centre Network

- **Types' of services or specialisation:** Legal advice on asylum applications and family and work-based petitions.
- **Criteria for referrals:** n/a.
- **Website:** <https://www.lawcentres.org.uk/>
- **Email:** <https://www.lawcentres.org.uk/contact-us>
- **Contact number:** Location specific.
- **Hours:** n/a

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

The Right to Remain UK Toolkit

- **Types' of services or specialisation:** Comprehensive and essential self help guide to immigration processes in the UK. Pashto and Dari language available.
- **Website:** <https://righttoremain.org.uk/toolkit/>

Afghan pro bono Initiative

- **Types' of services or specialisation:** Newsletter with updates on Afghan schemes and frequently asked questions. Pashto and Dari available.
- **Website:** Sign up [here](#).

DISCLAIMER

This information sheet outlines key information on English asylum and immigration law and does neither intend to provide a comprehensive overview nor replace legal advice in the individual case.

Please note the draft was prepared by the Leitner Center on December 20, 2021 and reviewed by the Afghan Pro Bono Initiative on October 11, 2022.

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