

4. Attending your asylum interview

- At the Home Office, you have to go through security procedures. Security staff will search your bag and ask you to empty your pockets. Security staff will be wearing uniforms. Do not feel upset or intimidated. Everyone has to go through the same security checks. If you are wearing clothing that covers your face, a female officer will ask to check your identity in private.
- Tell your interviewer immediately if you requested a female interviewer or interpreter and this has not been provided for you, or if you do not understand your interpreter.
- You may feel scared. Be strong. Stay calm. Tell your story. Take your time and do not feel rushed. Think about what you want to say before you answer questions.
- Stay focused on the question you have been asked. Be clear about what has happened to you.
- Sometimes you might not remember details of what happened to you and you might feel upset. If you get confused, tell your interviewer. Do not try to guess exact dates. If you cannot remember, try to explain why. Try not to give conflicting information at different points in the interview.
- Tell the interviewer if you do not understand the question. Do not say 'I don't know' if what you mean is 'I don't understand'.

- You may feel ashamed about some of the things that happened to you. You may never have spoken about them and may not want to. But you must tell your whole story at your interview, either verbally or in writing. If you do not do this, the Home Office might think something you say later is untrue.
- If during the interview, you feel that you are unable to speak about your experiences, tell the interviewer that you have more to say but you will write it in a statement and provide it after the interview.
- You must provide all your evidence to the Home Office at your interview or up to 5 days after your interview. If you cannot provide some evidence, tell your lawyer and the Home Office. You can also ask for the time period to be extended.
- You have the right to ask the interviewer for a break during your interview.
- You have the right to a copy of the record of the interview. You can ask for copies at the end of the interview. After the interview, you will be able to review the written record with your lawyer. You can correct or add to your answers.

5. Your decision

- If your asylum claim is accepted you will be granted international protection and will be allowed to stay in the UK. You will not be returned to the country where you face persecution. You should seek advice on housing and benefits as soon as possible.
- If your claim is refused you could have the right to appeal. Speak to your lawyer urgently. Appeals need to be 'lodged' within 14 days of your decision.

6. Contact details

- We cannot help with individual cases or claims. If you need legal advice you should contact your lawyer. If you would like to follow the work of the group please contact us via:

Email: rwsg@mail.com

 <https://www.facebook.com/RefugeeWomenSG>

 Follow us on Twitter @RWSGScot

www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/rwsg



USEFUL CONTACTS

Scottish Refugee Council

www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

0141 248 9799

Asylum Help Helpline (Migrant Help)

0808 8000 630 (open Mon-Fri 8.30am-5.30pm)

www.asylumhelpuk.org

Scottish Women's Aid

www.scottishwomensaid.org.uk

Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline:

0800 027 1234 (open daily 24hrs)

Rape Crisis Scotland:

www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk

Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline:

08088 01 03 02 (open daily 6pm-midnight)

Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees:

www.gctwr.co.uk

For a list of legal representatives in Glasgow and Edinburgh visit:

www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/how_we_can_help/i_have_not_made_a_claim_for_asylum



CLAIMING ASYLUM: What Women Need to Know

The Refugee Women's Strategy Group is an independent group of refugee and asylum seeking women with experience of the asylum process. We work together to get our voices heard. We represent women's views to decision makers to improve life for refugee women living in Scotland.

We know that women have particular needs that are often not considered in the asylum process.

We also know how difficult the asylum process can be and how it can affect your mental well-being.

We hope this leaflet will help inform you about the asylum process in the UK.

Please note that this leaflet is not legal advice, so you should check all details with your lawyer.

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ASYLUM
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CHILD CARE
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1. Claiming Asylum: General information

- The UK Government can protect you if you have to leave your country because you are at risk of persecution or serious harm.
- You have a legal right to claim asylum. Do not be scared. You are not committing a crime.
- An asylum seeker is someone who has made a claim for asylum and is waiting for a decision. A refugee is someone who has been recognised as a refugee by the Home Office and granted leave to remain in the UK.
- To be recognised as a refugee, you have to show that you have a real fear of being harmed for reasons of: race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, and that the authorities in your country cannot protect you. For example, there may not be laws to protect you, or the police may not be able or willing to protect you. You also have to show that you are unable to move to another part of your country.
- If you cannot show this but you can show that you will be at risk of serious harm, then you may still be granted Humanitarian Protection.
- Violence by your family or community such as rape, domestic violence, forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation or harm because of your sexuality may be relevant to your asylum claim.

- Asylum law is complicated so make an appointment with a lawyer as soon as possible. Your lawyer can give you free legal advice.
- You can make your own claim for asylum, separately from your husband, partner or family OR you can apply for asylum as a dependent, which means that you are part of someone else's claim. You can also make your own claim for asylum AND be a dependent.
- When you make a claim for asylum, the UK Government will give you temporary admission in the UK. This is not a residence permit but you are allowed to stay until your asylum decision is made. You are not normally allowed to work and you have to report to the Home Office regularly. You will not be returned to your country while your case is being decided.
- You have to attend two interviews: a Screening interview and an Asylum interview:

Screening interview

- You will have to travel to Croydon (London) for your screening interview unless there are exceptional circumstances (e.g. if you are under 18 and have no parent/guardian with you). Check this with your lawyer if you think you may be unable to travel.

- At the screening interview, the Home Office will ask your name and details of where you are from, how you travelled to the UK and why you are claiming asylum. The Home Office will take your photo and fingerprints.
- The Home Office does not provide travel expenses to Croydon but there may be charities in Glasgow that can help you.

Asylum Interview

- If you live in Glasgow or elsewhere in Scotland, your asylum interview should take place in Glasgow. If you are asked to go to another city, speak to your lawyer.
- At your asylum interview the Home Office will ask why you are claiming asylum, what has happened to you and why it is not safe for you to return to your home country. Your asylum interview will be longer than your screening interview and you can give more detailed answers.

- All of the information you provide during the asylum process is confidential.
- After your asylum interview, the Home Office will decide your claim.

2. Your screening interview

- Tell the Home Office if you need an interpreter or if you need extra help because you are a child (under 18), disabled, elderly, pregnant, single parent, or victim of torture, human trafficking or other forms of abuse.
- If you have a support worker, they can attend your interview. Tell the Home Office in advance if you would like to bring someone.
- Some women find it easier to talk to another woman about their experiences, rather than a man. For example, if you have experienced violence because you are a woman. You can ask to be interviewed by a female screening officer with a female interpreter. You should also tell the Home Office if you would like a female interviewer and interpreter for your asylum interview.
- You can ask for your screening interview to take place in a private room.
- Tell the officer immediately if you do not understand your interpreter.
- If you find it difficult to say why you are claiming asylum in front of your children; tell the screening officer. Also, tell the officer that you may need childcare for your asylum interview.
- After the interview, take your interview record to your lawyer as soon as possible to check the details.

3. Preparing for your asylum interview

- You must attend your asylum interview. The Home Office will only change the date or time of your interview in exceptional circumstances, (for example, admission to hospital). If you think you cannot attend your interview, contact your lawyer immediately for advice.
- Any written evidence supporting your claim is very important. You should give this to your lawyer to give to the Home Office as soon as possible before your interview.
- Not all women seeking asylum have written evidence. Telling your story at your interview is also providing evidence.
- If you find it difficult to speak about painful experiences, you can write them down and give them to the Home Office before your interview. You can discuss this with your lawyer.
- You have a right to have the interview recorded. You or your lawyer must request this 24 hours before your interview.
- You have a right to ask for a support worker or friend to accompany you. This person cannot participate in the interview and you must ask the Home Office in advance.
- The interviewer will ask you lots of questions during the interview. Some questions will be about your experiences and why you are claiming asylum. Some questions may be about your family, your home town or country.

Childcare

- It can be difficult to discuss your experiences in front of your children and you may find it easier if your children are not present at the interview.
- You can ask the Home Office to provide childcare for you or you can ask for your interview to take place on a different day so you can make arrangements for someone to look after your children.
- In Glasgow, the Home Office can provide a place at the nursery next door for your children under 5yrs who are not in school.
- You need to request childcare in advance, so tell your lawyer or the Home Office as soon as possible if you need childcare.