

Information for families

Welcome

We are pleased to be able to support you to reunite with your family.

This pack is to provide you and your family with information about life in the UK. We encourage you to share it with your family before they arrive. You are welcome to get in touch and ask us if you have any questions.

Whilst being able to live together as a family again will be a positive experience for many families we want you to be prepared for potential problems.



Contact us

You can contact us any time via your Whatsapp group or caseworker or email us at enquiries@togethernow.org.uk

together
now

When you first arrive

Housing



It may be difficult to get housing when you arrive. You should talk to your spouse about what the plan is for housing so you are prepared for when you arrive.

Many families with children will be housed by the local authority. This is likely to be a single room where you share a kitchen and bathroom with other families. You could spend weeks or months in this property.

Couples without children will find it more difficult to get government help with housing. You may need to find your own place to stay. If you are provided with government housing there are lots of rules to follow. You will not be able to choose where you live.



Money

There is government assistance in the UK. You will receive benefits called 'Universal Credit'. You need to apply for this when you arrive and it can take up to 8 weeks to get the first payment.

In the first 8 weeks you may get emergency payments but these will not be very much. It is likely that you will find it difficult to pay for what you need in the first few months.

If you get into debt please do not ignore this. It is usual in the UK for companies and organisations to support people who cannot pay bills. Please seek help early.

Healthcare



Healthcare in the UK is free. When you arrive in the UK you will need to get an NHS number to allow you to access these services.

You can register with a medical practice to get an NHS number. You have the right to request an interpreter for your medical appointment, but you should try to ask for one in advance. You have the right to request to be seen by a female or male doctor.

Healthcare in the UK has a strict system, you cannot see specialists without a referral. This may be frustrating and different to what you are used to.

Dealing with agencies

It may be very frustrating to get help when you are facing problems. People at different organisations will want to help you but they will have certain rules to follow.

Here are some tips on how to get help:

- You are likely to be asked the same questions repeatedly. This will be annoying but you need to provide the information.
- If an organisation tells you they will do something you should ask when this will happen and what to do if it does not happen.
- You may have to call back many times and wait on the phone for a long time to get help.
- You may need to attend appointments. Make sure you are on time for these.



When you have settled

Education for children

Your children will be entitled to a school place. It can take weeks or months for them to start school after they arrive. This is because it is difficult to find school places in some areas. You will need to apply for a school place through the council.

Education for adults

There are English classes and other classes available for adults. These can have long waiting lists.

Work

You are eligible to work in the UK and should try and work if you can. The government payments will stop if you do not try and find work.



General information

Getting help



In an emergency you should call 999

Both 999 and 112 are free to call even from mobiles. The operator will ask you what service you require, the police, ambulance or fire brigade. They will also ask you for your name and location. They will then come as soon as possible. You may be able to ask for an interpreter if you need.

If you are unable to speak on the phone call, call 999 and press 55. This will alert the operator that you are in danger and your call will be transferred to the police.

If it is not an emergency you can call the police on 101.

Domestic abuse is abuse within a family or relationship. This is illegal in the UK. Please seek help if this is happening in your family.

Charity supporting with domestic abuse: www.womensaid.org.uk

Safeguarding

If you have a concern about the wellbeing of a child or adult you can call your council's safeguarding team. They may investigate and take action to keep the person safe.

Information on safeguarding for children:
www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/children-and-young-people/protecting-children

Your wellbeing



Relationships

It may be difficult to live together as a family after a long period apart. In your first few weeks and months there is likely to be additional stresses around housing and money.

After being apart you may find that your relationship with your husband, wife and children is different. Your family may have been through a prolonged period of stress with both partners managing many difficulties and hardships.

Both you and your partner will have adjusted to living independently. You may find that you have changed since you were last together in person. Children may have become used to only having on parent or are wary of a parent they have not seen in a long time.

This may cause difficulties in your family relationships. This is really common and lots of families experience this.

Some relationships break down and families separate. If this does happen please seek advice so you are receiving the correct support and your immigration status is not affected.

You may also struggle with missing your life before you came to the UK or friends and family overseas. This is really common and lots of families experience this.

Community

It can be a big adjustment coming to the UK. You may feel isolated and find it difficult to integrate. In our communities there are many individuals, groups and organisations who may be able to help you meet other people and make friends in your area.

Find a social group near you: www.cityofsanctuary.org/groups/

We may also be able to put you in touch with other families we have brought to the UK and will try and link you in with people in your area who are from the same country, speak the same language and have had similar experiences.



Where to get help



Together Now

We welcome you coming back to us for advice or information on other services after your family arrive in the UK. We understand it will take time for you to get settled.

You can contact us any time via your Whatsapp group or caseworker or email us at enquiries@togethernow.org.uk

Citizens Advice

This is a national charity that offer advice in local areas. They have advisors who have specialist knowledge in a wide range of areas.

Get advice: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/

Foodbanks

If you are unable to feed your family you may be able to get help from a food bank. They will give you a food parcel for a short period. You may need a referral to access this service. We can make a referral for you.

Immigration advice

You may need more immigration advice as you settle in the UK. It is important to understand the implications of changing your status, for example if you still have children who are not yet in the UK.

You should make sure you speak to an OISC qualified advisor.

Find an immigration advisor: www.gov.uk/find-an-immigration-adviser