The refugee journey – resettled refugees and asylum seekers

Resettled refugees

- Remain in refugee camp outside the UK.
- Exposure to hazards in transit and in camps (e.g. injury, violence, exploitation, overcrowding, unsanitary conditions). Limited access to healthcare.
- UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency) identifies and assesses vulnerable people for resettlement under UK schemes. Refers to Home Office for eligibility checks.
- If accepted by Home Office, IOM (International Organization for Migration) conducts pre-departure health assessments and cultural orientation. Provides travel assistance, including support to apply for UK visas, enrol biometrics and book flights.
- Local authorities receive IOM health assessments and refugees are matched with accommodation appropriate to their needs.
- Local caseworker support for 12 months to assist with registering and navigating healthcare and education, including ESOL and benefits assessments.
- Have the right to work and to access benefits immediately. Typically treated as normal UK residents for eligibility purposes.
- Can apply for permanent status free of charge after 5 years in UK. Exempt from knowledge and language test requirements.

Asylum seekers

- Travel to the UK seeking asylum.
- Exposure to hazards during transit (e.g. injury, violence, exploitation, bad weather).
- Low/no access to healthcare for extended periods.
- Request asylum at port of entry, or after entering the UK.
- Home Office screening interview. Option to apply for accommodation and financial support if destitute.
- Destitute asylum seekers housed in initial accommodation centres. Basic health assessment provided but typically not registered with a GP.
- Dispersed to longer-term housing across the UK.
- Housing contractors provide settlement information and support, including registering for healthcare.
- Not permitted to work (some exceptions) or access mainstream residency-based benefits (e.g. ESOL classes).
- Charities and local organisations provide casework, advocacy and navigation support, as well as mental health and ESOL services.
- Most asylum seekers subsist below the poverty line while awaiting a decision.
The refugee journey – decisions on in-country asylum claims

Receive decision on asylum claim from Home Office (can take months or years to decide).

**Granted leave to remain**
- Granted refugee status or humanitarian protection.
- Must leave Home Office provided accommodation within 28 days. Financial support also ends after 28 days.
- Eligible to work and for mainstream benefits immediately, but may not be in place within 28 days.
- Documents proving entitlement and right to work are often delayed.
- Newly recognised refugees are at high risk of homelessness and destitution.

**Refused asylum seekers**
- Over two thirds of all asylum claims are refused.
- Nearly 40% of appeals are successful but process can be lengthy.
- Refused asylum seekers are expected to leave the UK.
- Refused asylum seekers move in and out of entitlement to support, and are at high risk of homelessness and destitution.
- Remain in UK as undocumented migrants.
- Detained in immigration centres until removal.
- Receive Home Office or local authority support if destitute, vulnerable or have dependent children until able to leave UK.