

Asylum support

Spring 2007

This section provides basic information about support and accommodation for asylum seekers – individuals who have applied for asylum and are waiting for a decision on their claim. A more detailed description of the support system for asylum seekers can be found in the [Refugee Council Information Service](#).

For information about support after the Home Office has issued their decision, please see the [asylum decision](#) section in this guide or the [Refugee Council Information Service](#).

Warning: This support pack was updated during a time of radical changes within the refugee sector. Including some significant changes within the Home Office such as -

- The Government body responsible for asylum issues is now the **Border and Immigration Agency (BIA)** – a new executive agency of the Home Office. The BIA assumes the responsibility of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) for managing immigration control in the UK, including applications for permission to stay, citizenship and asylum.
- Support for asylum seekers is no longer overseen by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS). Asylum support may now be referred to as **BIA support**.
- In February 2005, the UK Government published a five-year strategy for immigration and asylum which included the development of the New Asylum Model (NAM). The aim of the NAM is to introduce a faster, more tightly managed asylum process with an emphasis on rapid integration or removal.

Note:

Because of all the recent upheaval, the information provided in the support packs are likely to change throughout 2007 as the procedures are implemented, current government consultations are finalised and new policies are introduced. We recommend you check the Refugee Council website for the most current information: www.refugeecouncil.org.uk.

Also, please keep us informed of any changes on the ground and common problems by emailing us on subscriptions@refugeecouncil.org.uk.

Contents

Status of the asylum applicant	3
Support for asylum applicants – overview	6
Eligibility for asylum support	7
Applying for asylum support	7
Housing for asylum applicants	9
Accessing cash support	12
Change of circumstances	14
Termination of asylum support	19
Section 4 support	21
Special needs	27
Further resources	28

Status of the asylum applicant

It is important to know what stage of the asylum process your client is at, as it affects his/her rights and entitlements, and will shape the advice you give them. To find out his/her stage in the asylum process, you will need to look at the documents s/he holds:

Documentation	Explanation of status
<p>Immigration Status Document (states "refugee status" and given along with United Kingdom Residence Permit endorsement [granted to those without a passport])</p> <p>or</p> <p>Home Office letter ICD0725 headed "Grant of status (asylum)" [given to those granted asylum prior to March 2004]</p>	<p>Refugee</p> <p>Under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is a person who has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, and who is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country or return to it.</p> <p>Refugee status is granted for five years, after which it will be reviewed (see the <i>asylum decision</i> section for information).</p>
<p>Immigration Status Document (states "Humanitarian Protection" and given along with United Kingdom Residence Permit endorsement [granted to those without a passport])</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>Home Office letter ICD0716 headed "Grant of status (humanitarian protection)" [given to those granted asylum prior to March 2004]</p>	<p>Humanitarian protection (HP)</p> <p>Granted to someone refused asylum but who cannot be returned to their country of origin as s/he face a serious risk of persecution.</p> <p>Humanitarian protection is granted for five years, after which it will be reviewed. (see <i>asylum decision</i> for more information)</p>
<p>Immigration Status Document (states "Discretionary Leave" and given along with United Kingdom Residence Permit endorsement [granted to those without a passport])</p> <p>or</p> <p>Home Office letter ICD0716 headed "Grant of status (discretionary leave)" [given to those granted asylum prior to March 2004]</p>	<p>Discretionary leave (DL)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Granted to people who are refused asylum but do not fulfil the criteria for HP. • Awarded in very limited situations, (for example, unaccompanied minors who can't be returned, those who can't be returned due to illness) <p>Letter will note how long s/he will have this status.</p>
<p>Home Office letter headed "Grant of status" (exceptional leave to remain)</p> <p>No 'vignette'</p>	<p>Exceptional leave to remain (ELR)</p> <p>Prior to 1 April 2003, granted to those refused asylum but who cannot be returned to their country of origin as they face a serious risk of persecution. This status has been replaced by HP and DL.</p>

Asylum Registration Card (ARC)	<p>Asylum seeker/asylum applicant</p> <p>In immigration terms, an asylum applicant is someone who has claimed asylum under the 1951 Refugee Convention in the UK and is waiting for a decision from the Home Office on his or her application.</p>
<p>IS96 Or Statement of Application Letter (SAL)</p>	<p>Asylum seeker/asylum applicant</p> <p>Asylum seekers who applied for asylum at their port of entry may be granted temporary admission only and given an IS96. Some applicants are given time-limited SALs after screening which acknowledges the individual applied for asylum.</p> <p>Those granted an IS96 or SAL should eventually be granted an ARC.</p>
NASS 35 letter	<p>Refugee status/Humanitarian protection/Discretionary leave</p> <p>This document confirms that the individual has been granted leave to remain and is therefore no longer supported by BIA. This document is needed by those moving from BIA support to mainstream welfare benefits as it proves that the individual is not receiving any income and thus meets any means-tested criteria.</p> <p>This document is not given to those who are not supported by the BIA whilst applying for asylum (ie. those refused under section 55), nor is it given to those whose BIA support has ended but were not granted a positive decision (ie, end of process).</p>
Refusal letter	<p>Asylum applicant/ unsuccessful asylum applicant</p> <p>If the individual has a letter from the Home Office stating that his or her asylum application has been refused, check to see if the client has a letter from a legal adviser stating that s/he has lodged an appeal or applied for judicial review.</p>

This section discusses support for asylum seekers – those who have applied for asylum and are waiting for a decision on their claim. They will have an ARC, an IS96 or a letter from a legal representative saying they have lodged an appeal.

For information about support and accommodation for people with a positive decision (refugee status, humanitarian protection, discretionary leave), please see the [asylum decision](#) section.

What can I do if...

I am unable to learn the status of the applicant?

It is vital to know the status of your client as this will determine what support they are entitled to. If your client does not have any of the above documentation, there are other ways you may be able to learn an individual's status:

- First, contact your client's legal advisor. This is especially vital if the Border and Immigration Agency (BIA) say your client has been refused asylum (and thus is not entitled to support), confirm this with his/her legal adviser (the legal adviser may have applied for an appeal which may not be confirmed on the BIA system).
- If there is no legal representative, it might be helpful to contact the Asylum & Immigration Tribunal: www.ait.gov.uk
- Call the BIA Asylum Support Enquiry Line on 0845 602 1739 and have them check the status of your client on the ACID (the BIA internal database).
- An asylum applicant is entitled to obtain copies of information held on them by BIA under the Data Protection Act 1998. There is a £10 fee. If the request is regarding asylum, post the request to: Subject Access Bureau, ICD, 8th floor West, Block C, Whitgift Centre, CR9 1AT.

Support for asylum applicants - overview

BIA Asylum Support (previously referred to as NASS support)

Destitute asylum applicants are not eligible to receive mainstream welfare benefits. Instead, destitute asylum applicants can apply for accommodation and/or support with subsistence to the Border and Immigration Agency (BIA), the government agency responsible for asylum issues, including supporting destitute asylum seekers.

Destitute asylum applicants can apply for

- subsistence only;
- accommodation only; or
- accommodation and subsistence support

under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (IAA).

Subsistence

Currently, subsistence is paid in the form of cash vouchers claimed at a post office. At the time of writing, the weekly value of cash vouchers per individual is as follows:

Single adult (aged 18-24):	£31.85
Single adult (over 25):	£40.22
Lone parent (over 18):	£40.22
Couple (over 18):	£63.07
Child (up to 16):	£45.58 (100% equivalent of income support)
Child (16-17)*:	£34.60 (*Amount decreases from first Monday in September following birthday when they turn 18)

Accommodation

Asylum applicants in need of someplace to stay will be dispersed outside London and the South East. This is where the asylum applicant will live until his/her application is decided.

Maternity provision

Maternity payment

A single, one-off maternity payment of £300 may be provided to new mothers on asylum support to help with the costs arising from the birth of a new baby. Payment should be made to the value of £300 per child, so if twins are due, £600 will be paid.

Milk allowance

All women supported by BIA who are pregnant or have children under three years of age are entitled to additional payments similar to the milk token system available to people on income support. An additional £5 a week is available for babies under the age of one. Pregnant women and children between one and three years are entitled to an additional £3 on top of their basic asylum support cash payment.

For information about applying for the maternity payment, see the section on *Change of circumstances* below.

Eligibility for asylum support

In order to be eligible for BIA support, a person must

- have claimed asylum at an Asylum Screening Unit (Croydon, Liverpool or Solihull);
- have had his/her asylum claim recorded by the Secretary of State (this can take several months for 'fresh claims' - claims that have been re-submitted with new evidence);
- be destitute;
- be at least 18 years old; and
- not have had his/her asylum or article 3 claim determined (refused or granted). Note: A person is eligible for support if they have submitted an on time appeal.

Applying for BIA asylum support

People can apply for BIA asylum support at any time in the asylum process if they are unable to support themselves. Most asylum seekers will apply for asylum support immediately after being screened (see [Asylum process](#) for more information about screening).

Asylum applicants need to complete a NASS1 form to apply for asylum support. Asylum applicants can get a NASS1 form at their local one stop service (see below), at an induction centre, or from the BIA website.

Most asylum seekers will need advice and help to complete the form. A number of organisations have been contracted by BIA to assist asylum applicants with applying for asylum support. These include Migrant Helpline, Refugee Action, Refugee Arrivals Project, Refugee Council, Scottish Refugee Council and Welsh Refugee Council. (For your local one stop service, see [Contacts](#)).

What can I do if...

My client just arrived in the UK and needs support and accommodation now?

- Ensure your client has applied for asylum. If they have not yet applied for asylum, they will not be entitled to support.
- Your client may need financial assistance to reach the BIA Asylum Screening Unit. The BIA will not pay for the travel costs for the journey to Croydon or Liverpool ASU in order for someone to claim asylum. Many charities, including some One Stop Services, have emergency/destitution funds that can be used for travel to ASU.
 - Call the Refugee Council to find out if they have a destitution fund that your client can access (see [Contacts](#)). If not, ask if they are aware of charities that can assist your client.
- If your client has applied for asylum but has not yet gone through induction, again, direct your client to your local one stop service (see [Contacts](#)) where they will provide any necessary information briefings, and place him/her in an initial accommodation centre where they can stay until his/her application for asylum support is processed.

My client has become destitute and needs help applying for asylum support?

You can assist your client in completing the NASS1 form, be sure to review the guidance notes included with the form. Only those who meet the eligibility criteria will be granted asylum support. You can download the NASS1 form from the BIA website (www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk > applying > asylum support > NASS1 form and guidance).

You can also signpost them to your local one stop service (see [Contacts](#)). Staff at the one stop service can explain the asylum support system, help complete the NASS1 form, place people in initial

accommodation, signpost asylum seekers to local services, and inform BIA of any changes in circumstances that may impact an applicant's eligibility or entitlements to asylum support.

My client is destitute, but has a friend to stay with?

Those asylum seekers who have a friend or relative to stay with and therefore do not need accommodation, but are still destitute, can apply to BIA for subsistence-only (sometimes referred to as the 'support-only' option). If asylum seekers choose this option, they will be able to use their ARC to access cash to cover basic food and hygiene needs.

If at any point, your client is no longer able to stay with his/her friend or relative, they can apply for accommodation and support. However, they will be dispersed to accommodation outside London and the South East.

My client is working/may be working illegally?

BIA may refuse or withdraw support if the applicant is suspected of breaching one of the conditions of support, including working while claiming support.

My client was approved for asylum support, but the BIA won't give my client cash support yet because s/he declared some financial resources on his/her BIA application?

The BIA will state when the cash support will be made available to the client in his/her dispersal letter. Advisers should reinforce the message that if the cash vouchers are delayed because the client declared some money on the support application form, the client will need to spend his/her money wisely and make it last until the date stated in the BIA dispersal letter.

For more information about how BIA calculate whether or not any existing funds will meet your client's essential living needs, see policy bulletin 4 (www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk > applying > asylum > asylum support policy bulletins)

My client was denied BIA support under Section 95 of the 1999 Act?

This may occur if BIA has reason to believe

- your client is not destitute; or
- your client is not an asylum seeker (or a dependent of an asylum seeker).

Furthermore, if your client is already receiving asylum support and the BIA suspect your client is not destitute, either because s/he is receiving other support (such as community care support) or there has been a change in his/her circumstances, they may withdraw support.

Your client can appeal this decision to an asylum support adjudicator (ASA). Appeals must be made within two working days of notification of refusal. They will not receive support up until and during the appeal. For more information about the asylum support adjudicators, and to download appeal forms, please see: www.asylum-support-adjudicators.org.uk

For more information on asylum support appeals see BIA policy bulletin 23 (www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk > applying > asylum > asylum support policy bulletins)

Housing for asylum applicants

As stated earlier in this section, all destitute asylum seekers in need of accommodation are housed in regions throughout the UK outside of London and the South East. This is called 'dispersal'. This is where the applicant will stay until his/her asylum application is decided.

When someone qualifies for support, the BIA will send them a letter giving details of the location of their long-term accommodation and details of travel arrangements from their initial accommodation.

Accommodation may be provided by the local authority, a registered social landlord (RSL) or a private landlord. BIA accommodation should meet certain basic quality and safety standards which are detailed in the contract between BIA and the accommodation provider.

What can I do if...

My client needs a place to stay until they are dispersed?

Newly arrived asylum seekers who claim destitution during the screening interview at the Asylum Screening Unit will be transferred to an induction centre (outside London and the Southeast). The induction centres are full-board temporary accommodation where asylum applicants can stay until dispersed.

If your client is living in your region and is in need of immediate housing and support, s/he can go to a One Stop Service (OSS) agency (such as the Refugee Council or Migrant Helpline). The OSS agency will help your client access full-board temporary accommodation while his/her application for asylum support is being assessed. This is referred to as initial accommodation. This is support under section 98 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. During his/her stay in initial accommodation, your client will not receive any cash support.

- Signpost your client to your local one stop service (see *Contacts*)

See BIA policy bulletin 73 for more information about access to initial support pending completion of an application for BIA support (www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk > applying > asylum > asylum support policy bulletins)

My client does not want to be dispersed, but needs accommodation?

Dispersal accommodation is offered on a 'no-choice' basis and applicants are only given one option. However, if the applicant wishes to be dispersed to a particular area, it is worth noting this on the NASS1 form as BIA may take it into account.

My destitute client feels there are legitimate reasons why they should not be dispersed?

When dispersing clients, BIA is to consider personal circumstances. A client may challenge dispersal only in extreme circumstances including:

- Dispersal would mean an interruption of medical treatment which would be damaging (cancer treatment, for example).
- Lack of availability of treatment in dispersal areas (specialist counselling services, for instance).
- In receipt of ongoing Medical Foundation treatment that would be damaging to interrupt.
- Child in a school for one year or more.
- Negative effect on the needs of the child.
- Community Care case.

- If it seems an asylum seeker has a compelling reason not to move, then a fax a letter to your BIA regional office with reasons and supporting evidence (see *Contacts*). Also include client's full name and BIA reference number. If your client is part of NAM, speak to his/her Case Owner.

Note: see also the section on Special Needs. If an adult has care needs, then a referral should be made to Social Services for a community care assessment.

My client failed to travel to his/her dispersal accommodation

BIA policy states that people who fail to travel without providing a 'reasonable excuse' will have their support discontinued and be evicted from initial accommodation. 'Reasonable excuses' may include being too sick to travel (must have a note from a doctor), or being accepted for treatment by the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture.

Asylum seekers who the BIA believes failed to travel without a reasonable excuse should be sent a letter advising them that they will have to leave their initial accommodation within two working days (if single or a childless couple) or five working days (for families with dependent children).

- The offer of support in the dispersal area remains open if the asylum seeker (and family) travel within this time.
 - There is no right to appeal to the Asylum Support Adjudicators against this decision.
- If your client failed to travel, but believes there were compelling reasons, fax your BIA Regional office and include explanation for failing to travel. Also include client's full name and BIA reference number. If your client is part of NAM, speak to his/her Case Owner.

See BIA policy bulletin 17 for more information about failure to travel (www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk > applying > asylum > asylum support policy bulletins)

My client asks to be rehoused or moved elsewhere?

It is very difficult for an asylum seeker supported by BIA to relocate. BIA will only consider moving someone in exceptional circumstances, including:

- Racial harassment (a police report must be submitted and, if violently attacked, a medical report)
 - Medical reasons (medical evidence must be submitted – for instance, if have ongoing medical treatment and there isn't provision available locally)
 - Personal reasons (for example, to be near family members, submit family names and area where the family resides and why the asylum applicant should be relocated)
- Send the request and evidence to the BIA regional office (see *Contacts*). Also include client's full name and BIA/NASS reference number.

Your client wants to make a complaint about the dispersal accommodation:

Asylum seekers must remain in the accommodation they are allocated unless they are given permission to move by BIA, or they receive an asylum decision from the Home Office. If they leave their accommodation without permission from BIA, they risk having their support terminated.

- Before complaining, it is important that you, as an advisor, understand the contract BIA has with accommodation providers. If you cannot access the link directly from this document, copy and paste this link into your web browser:
<http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/6353/12358/schedule3tothetargetcontract.pdf> (If you still have trouble accessing the contract, contact your OSS office- see *Contacts*).
- You should contact your client's housing provider's head office first about the complaint. At this stage, also discuss the issue with your local one stop service so they can keep a record of the complaint (See *Contacts*).
- If there is no improvement, then contact your BIA regional office (see *Contacts*) or NAM Case Owner in writing – they should pass on the complaint to the BIA contract compliance team.
- Your client may also wish to obtain legal advice about the possibility of judicial review.

- If there are serious health and safety concerns, contact the local council's Environmental Health Service.

Your client left his/her accommodation because s/he felt racially harassed: If an asylum seeker has left accommodation due to racial harassment, s/he may be admitted to emergency accommodation in exceptional circumstances. Otherwise, the BIA may interpret your client's absence from accommodation as absconding or no longer needing support, and thus terminate his/her support.

- First ensure your client has contacted the police about any racial harassment (see the comments on racial harassment in the *asylum decision* section)
- Contact your BIA regional office or, if applicable, NAM Case Owner, and send evidence of racial harassment.
- Contact your local OSS agency. They can help your client negotiate with the BIA about the accommodation.

See BIA policy bulletin 81 for more information on BIA's racial harassment procedures (www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk > applying > asylum > asylum support policy bulletins).

Accessing cash support

Asylum seekers access their cash support at a designated post office using their ARC. They will receive a letter from Sodexho, the company that is hired by the BIA to administer the cash payments. The Sodexho letter will tell your client when they can access their cash entitlement using their ARC and will give the address of the post office they should go to.

The asylum applicant should present themselves at the specified post office with their ARC, which will be checked, payment verified and issued in cash.

What can I do if...

My client does not have money, but BIA cash support won't begin for 18 days?

When asylum applicants are first dispersed, the BIA should provide each applicant with an interim support token worth £90. This money is to support the asylum applicant for 18 days. Before the 18 days pass, asylum applicants should receive a letter from Sodexho informing them that they can use their ARC to access cash payments as stated above. They are not eligible to receive more money if they run out before the end of the 18 days.

- Many asylum seekers experience problems with the delivery of their tokens, leaving them and any dependents without any money to buy food. Any such problems should initially be directed to Sodexho. Call the Sodexho helpline on 01276 687 099 (Open weekly 09.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday). They may issue your client a courier reference number. If so, call the courier and ask them to track the letter.
- If the BIA has not sent any information to Sodexho, you or your client should call his/her NAM Case Owner, or the BIA Support and Discontinuation Helpline on 0845 6000 914. The BIA should send out emergency tokens.

18 days have passed since my client was dispersed and s/he has not received a letter from Sodexho about accessing his/her cash payment?

- Call the Sodexho helpline first on 01276 687 099 (Open weekly 09.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday).
- If they are unable to help, you may need to confirm that the BIA has sent the needed information to Sodexho. Call your client's NAM Case Owner or the BIA Support and Discontinuation Helpline on 0845 6000 914. They may need to send out emergency support tokens until the problem is rectified.

My client was told that his/her payment "cannot be verified" and thus was not able to access his/her cash support?

- Your client will be informed and given a receipt with a refusal code and the BIA Support and Discontinuation helpline on 0845 6000914 to call. Your client will need two (2) receipts – thus try to collect cash support twice - to prove there really is a problem before the BIA will take action.
- If there is still a problem, contact the Sodexho helpline on 01276 687 099 to learn what other actions to take.

My client has lost his/her ARC or it has been stolen?

- Your client should first report the loss or theft of his/her ARC to the police and obtain a crime reference number.

- S/he should then call his/her Case Owner if applicable. If not, call the Sodexo helpline: 01276 687 099.
- Copies of the slip given to them by the police should be sent to Central Event Booking Unit (CEBU) and faxed to 0151 237 6391.
- To request emergency support and stop payment on the old ARC, fax 020 8633 0653. Give them the crime reference number, the name of the police officer who recorded the incident, and the name of the police station where it was reported. The BIA will issue emergency support tokens until the Immigration Service has notified the BIA that the ARC has been replaced.
- The Immigration Service will write to the asylum seeker requesting that they attend the nearest reporting centre local enforcement office (LEO) or SAL/ARC event site to collect the replacement ARC, where they will have to conduct a quick fingerprint check. It will take the Immigration Service about 2 weeks to replace the ARC.
- BIA will reimburse travel costs for journeys of three miles or more. When collecting replacement ARCs, asylum seekers will have to show the Immigration Service officer tickets or receipts for travel.

My client's cash support was lost/was stolen?

As above, call your client's Case Owner if applicable. If not, fax 020 8633 0653. Give them the crime reference number, name of the police officer who recorded the incident, and the name of the police station where it was reported. The BIA will issue emergency support from the date written notification is received, to the date on which the regular support is next available to be accessed from the post office.

My client has problems receiving payments with his/her ARC?

Contact the BIA Support and Discontinuation of Support Helpline on 0845 6000 914. Make sure you have your client's name, address, date of birth, nationality, amount of cash they receive, his/her BIA reference number, and the date they last received payment.

- If you have called the BIA Immigration Enquiry Bureau (0870 606 7766) and have been given a timescale for a response which hasn't been met, you can call the Asylum Support Helpline on 0845 602 1739 to enquire about the status of your request.

Note: Some housing providers and local charities may provide emergency food parcels. Check with the relevant housing provider whether this is their policy. Contact your local OSS agency for a list of local charities that may be able to assist (see *Contacts*).

My client did not receive a payment on his/her support?

Your client can apply for a back-payment of support. However, this is only if the reason for the non-payment is not the fault of the client, for instance if the applicant was underpaid or there was a delay to the support.

To apply for a back payment of support, send a signed request for a back payment to the BIA. Send the written request to your Asylum Support Regional Office (see *Contacts*)

- If your client is owed more than £200, back payments will be made in weekly instalments of sums no greater than £200 in addition to the usual amount of weekly support.

For more information, see BIA policy bulletin 80 (www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk > applying > asylum > asylum support policy bulletins)

Change of circumstances

While receiving BIA support, asylum seekers must inform their NAM Case Owner or the BIA of any changes in their circumstances, such as:

- finding or losing employment (when eligible)
- marriage or separation
- children leaving home
- an extra person joining their household
- pregnancy
- a stay in hospital
- reaching an age that affects support entitlement, ie turning 18 or 25

What can I do if...

Circumstances in my client's life have changed?

It is important that your client is aware that his/her NAM Case Owner or the BIA should be notified of any changes in the applicant's circumstances (including issues listed above)

- Fax a letter to the BIA stating the change in your client's circumstances, to your Asylum Support Regional Office (see [Contacts](#)). If your client is part of the NAM process, send the letter to his/her NAM Case Owner.
- The letter must include the client's full name, his/her BIA/NASS reference number, current postal address and be signed by the client.
- Any queries or problems with changes in circumstances, call the BIA Asylum Support Enquiry Line on 0845 602 1739 (open 9am – 9pm).

My client is turning 25 years old and his/her cash support value needs to be increased?

When applicants turn 25 before receiving a decision on their asylum application, they will be eligible for a higher rate of BIA subsistence support. To ensure full payment is received on time, applicants should inform BIA in advance of their 25th birthday and send proof to this effect.

- Send written notification by fax to your Asylum Support Regional Office (See [Contacts](#)) or, if applicable, your client's NAM Case Owner.
- The letter must include the client's full name, his/her BIA/NASS reference number, current postal address and be signed by the client.
- Any queries or problems with the transition to the higher rate of BIA subsistence support, call the BIA Asylum Support Enquiry Line on 0845 602 1739 (open 9am – 9pm).

My client is living with a friend but will move/has moved to another address?

If your client is receiving subsistence support only and is changing addresses, notify your local Asylum Support Regional Office (see [Contacts](#)) or, if applicable, his/her NAM Case Owner of the new address.

- The letter must include the client's full name, his/her BIA/NASS reference number, new postal address and be signed by the client.
- The information should be submitted at least two weeks before moving to prevent any delay in support. Otherwise, there is a risk that your client will not be able to access support while BIA updates their system with his/her new address.

- Any queries or problems, contact your Asylum Support Regional Office or call the BIA Asylum Support Enquiry Line on 0845 602 1739 (open 9am – 9pm).

My client wants to switch from accommodation and subsistence support to subsistence support only?

The BIA will need to be informed if your client wants to leave BIA dispersal accommodation to live with a family or friend.

- Contact your local Asylum Support Regional office by post or fax (see *Contacts*) or, if applicable, your client's NAM Case Owner to advise them of your client's wish to leave dispersal accommodation. It is very important to keep a copy of the fax receipt.
- You may want to make sure that the accommodation your client is moving into is secure, and that s/he has the right to live there. If your client is moving into someone else's BIA accommodation, this will jeopardize his/her support as well as the tenant's.
- The letter must include the client's full name, his/her BIA/NASS reference number, new full postal address and be signed by the client.
- If your client has not received any notice from the BIA after a week, it is advised that you, or your client, contact the BIA to confirm the change in circumstances have been dealt with.
- Ensure your client fully understands what costs they will incur if they move in with friends or family (such as rent, utilities, or council tax). Your client will not receive additional support to pay towards these items.

For more information about switching to subsistence support only, see BIA policy bulletin 69 (www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk > applying > asylum > asylum support policy bulletins)

My client left BIA accommodation to live with a friend but was refused subsistence support?

If your client was originally refused BIA asylum support because they did not meet the criteria of section 55 (did not apply for asylum "as soon as reasonably practicable"), they may have been granted BIA accommodation to avoid a breach of his/her Convention rights. However, if your client does not have a child and wants to live with friends or family, BIA may reconsider whether or not the need for any asylum support should continue (since refusing or withdrawing support may no longer be considered a breach of his/her rights). Your client may be asked to attend another section 55 interview and stop support pending the decision.

- You can help your client write a letter about why it is important for them to live with a friend in these circumstances (such as the need for emotional support).
- Recommend your client visit his/her local one stop service for further advice.
- Remind your client that, even if refused under section 55, the option of both accommodation and support is still available to them in order to prevent a breach of his/her human rights.

My client gets subsistence support only but needs accommodation as well?

An asylum applicant who is living with friends or family but is not longer willing or able to do so, will need BIA accommodation. Ensure your client understands that s/he will be dispersed and that BIA accommodation is offered on a no-choice basis.

- Contact your client's NAM Case Owner or local Asylum Support Regional office by post or fax (see *Contacts*) to advise them of your client's wish for dispersal accommodation. It is very important to keep a copy of the fax receipt.
- Include the client's full name, his/her BIA/NASS reference number, current postal address and client's signature.
- Note: it takes at least ten days for dispersal accommodation to be allocated. If needed, signpost your client to your local one stop service (see *Contacts*) to request initial accommodation until dispersed. For more information about admission into initial accommodation, see BIA policy bulletin 73: www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk > applying > asylum > asylum support policy bulletins.

My client is now pregnant?

Pregnant women on BIA support are entitled to a one-off maternity payment of £300 per child in vouchers. In addition, your client is entitled to an additional £3 to be added to her weekly asylum support cash payment.

- Applications must be made in writing to the BIA up to one month before the expected day of delivery or two weeks after. Either medical evidence of due date or a full birth certificate must be attached to the form.
- To apply for a maternity grant, post the letter (do not fax) and medical evidence to your Asylum Support Regional Office (see *Contacts*) or your client's NAM Case Owner. Ensure the letter is signed by the mother or father of the child and states his/her full name and BIA/NASS reference number.
- Clients cannot exchange the vouchers for cash and they must be spent before the expiry date, usually around four weeks after issued.

My client has an infant but cannot afford to buy milk for the baby?

All BIA supported mothers of children under the age of three are entitled to additional payments akin to the milk token system available to those on income support. An additional £5 a week is available for babies under the age of one year. Pregnant women and children between one and three years will be entitled to an additional £3 on top of their basic BIA payments.

- To have the additional milk allowance added to your client's weekly payment, contact your client's NAM Case Owner or the local Asylum Support Regional Office (see *Contacts*).
- The letter should be signed by the child's mother or father, include his/her BIA/NASS reference number and include evidence of the child's age.

My client has just given birth to a baby and needs to add the new baby to her application for support?

- To add a new baby to an asylum support application, your client will need to submit a letter to his/her NAM Case Owner or the BIA regional office (see *Contacts*). In the letter, include: his/her full name, BIA/NASS reference number, and the original full birth certificate (photocopies or 'short' birth certificates are not sufficient).

- This should ensure that your client receives the appropriate amount of cash support for a parent with children.

Note: your client may wish to also add the new baby to his/her asylum claim. To do so, s/he will need to go to an Asylum Screening Unit (Croydon or Liverpool)

My client has had another family member join them, and wants to add them as a dependent to his/her application for support?

When a new asylum seeker joins an applicant or family already supported by the BIA, s/he can be included in the first applicant's or family's BIA support application.

- Send a letter the local BIA regional office (see [Contacts](#)) or NAM Case Owner, to advise them of the change in circumstances. Include copies of the new family member's immigration papers (ARC, SAL or IS96). Also include main applicant's full name and BIA/NASS reference number, signature and explanation of the relationship of the dependent to the main applicant.
- If the new family member is a spouse or child, include the original marriage certificate or birth certificate. If original documents are not available, then a signed declaration witnessed by a solicitor is acceptable.
- If the new family member is a dependent over 18, s/he will have to apply for BIA support in his/her own right. If the new arrival is applying for accommodation and wants to be housed with his/her family, s/he must clearly state in Section 12 of the BIA form that s/he would like to be accommodated with the applicant whose BIA details must be included in the form.
- The newly arrived family members may require initial accommodation so contact your local one stop service (See [Contacts](#)).
- For any queries about the addition of dependents, contact the BIA Asylum Support Enquiry Line on 0845 602 1739 (open 9am – 9pm).

Please note: newly arrived family members should seek legal advice first for asylum purposes before approaching BIA.

My client receives local authority support (or is on benefits) and has been recently joined by a family member?

If an asylum seeker under the age of 18 joins someone who is supported by a local authority or is on benefits, s/he can be added to the claim as a dependent.

If the new family member is a dependent over 18, s/he will have to apply for BIA support in his/her own right.

My client has applied for asylum, but has a partner, or wants to join a family member who is not an asylum seeker?

If your client is an asylum seeker and enters a relationship with a British citizen or someone who has been granted status in the UK, this is called a 'mixed household'.

- Your client should notify his/her NAM Case Owner or the BIA regional office in writing, stating his/her full name, BIA/NASS reference number, and details of the change in living arrangements. Also include any information about the new relative or partner's benefits or employment.
- It is a very complex issue and your client may need to take up legal advice.

- If your client's family member/partner can and is willing to support him or her, then they are usually free to do so. Also, the BIA may take the level of the co-habitant's benefit into account and provide top-up payments as appropriate.
- We recommend you read BIA policy bulletin 11 on mixed households and how an asylum applicant's support is affected when one or more members are supported by their local authority or by social services while others are in need of BIA support (www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk > applying > asylum > asylum support policy bulletins)

(For information on family members who come as a dependent of a refugee, see 'family reunion' section below.)

My client has been admitted to hospital for an extended period?

BIA supported asylum seekers required to spend extended periods in hospital are entitled to subsistence support at a reduced rate during their stay. This may also impact amounts due to other members of the household. Single people in hospital can authorise a member of hospital staff to collect payments from the post office.

- Fax the regional BIA office (see *Contacts*) or your client's NAM Case Owner as soon as possible.
- Send a letter to BIA with your client's full name, NASS reference number, reason for going into hospital, date of admission and the estimated length of stay, the estimated date of discharge (if possible), and contact details of hospital and ward.
- When discharged, send signed confirmation to the NAM Case Owner or BIA as above.

My client's partner has been admitted to hospital for an extended period?

The partner of a patient will have his/her subsistence payments adjusted from a couple's to a single person's payment. A partner with children will move on to single parent payments while the partner is in hospital. Family members can collect payments for their relatives in hospital.

- Notify NAM Case Owner or BIA as stated in paragraph above.

Termination of asylum support

The BIA will **terminate** support when an individual is not, or ceases to be, an 'asylum seeker', for example, when

- granted refugee status, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave; or
- when all appeals are refused.

Positive decision

When a BIA supported applicant receives a positive decision, the BIA will discontinue asylum support after 28 days.

The BIA will confirm support was terminated by issuing a NASS 35 form. Your client needs to take the NASS 35 form when applying for welfare benefits at a Jobcentre Plus. S/he should also take his/her 'grant of status' letter/Immigration Status letter.

Your client may have been given a national insurance number (NINO) during his/her asylum claim. If so, this will speed up his/her benefit claim.

Please see the [asylum decision](#) section for more information.

What can I do if...

My client has received a 'grant of status' letter but has not yet received a NASS 35?

- First call the BIA Asylum Support Enquiry Line on 0845 602 1739 (open 9am – 9pm) or your client's NAM Case Owner, requesting the NASS 35. The letter should include your client's full name, BIA/NASS reference number, a copy of the 'grant of status' letter and your client's current postal address.
- If your client has still not received his/her NASS 35 within two weeks, call the NAM Case Owner or BIA (as above).
- Alternatively, your client can request Jobcentre Plus staff to get one from BIA for them.

My client has received a positive decision, but does not have a national insurance number needed to apply for mainstream benefits?

- If your client is going through the NAM process, s/he should have been given a national insurance number. If not, call your client's NAM Case Owner to enquire why this was not the case.
- If your client is not part of NAM (currently referred to as 'legacy cases'), your client can apply for a national insurance number at a Jobcentre Plus. S/he will need to take any ID documents and proof of address to the national insurance interview.
- If there is a delay, your client may be able to apply for a crisis loan at the Jobcentre Plus.

Negative asylum decision

When a BIA supported applicant receives a negative decision, the BIA will discontinue support after 21 days. However, if they have a dependent child under 18 living as part of the household, the whole family continue to receive support until the child reaches 18 or until your client leaves the country.

If your client lodges an appeal in time (5-10 working days depending on whether or not it is a fast-track appeal), then the BIA will continue to support your client beyond the 21 day period until the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) makes a decision.

What can I do if...

My client lodged an appeal yet the BIA has terminated asylum support?

If the BIA has not received confirmation from their central database that an appeal has been lodged, they will accept a letter from the IAA confirming that the application for appeal was made in good time.

- To ask for your client's asylum support to be restarted, fax his/her NAM Case Owner or the BIA regional team (see *Contacts*). Include your client's full name, BIA/NASS reference number, an explanation of the grounds on which your client would like the support restarted, and any supporting evidence (ie, documents proving appeal has been lodged).
- If your client's appeal was made out of time, s/he may be able to appeal to the asylum support adjudicators. Otherwise, s/he may need to apply for section 4 support (see below for more information).

My client received a letter from the BIA saying his/her asylum support will be terminated, but has not received a formal letter about refusal of his/her asylum claim from the Home Office?

- First, speak to your client's legal representative to chase the refusal letter or confirm that your client has not had a decision made on his/her asylum claim.
- If your client has not received a formal refusal letter but the BIA has sent an asylum termination letter, call the Immigration Enquiry Bureau (IEB) on 0870 606 7766 and ask for the decision papers.
- If the Home Office says that no refusal papers have been sent out, contact your client's Case Owner or your BIA regional team and ask to have asylum support restarted.

My client has exhausted all appeals?

Some asylum applicants at the end of process may be eligible for support under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. (see below for more information)

My client has dependent children and has exhausted all appeal rights?

As mentioned earlier, if your client has a dependent child under 18 living as part of the household, the whole family will continue to receive support until the child reaches 18 or until your client leaves the country.

Note: Section 9 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Act 2004 may apply if the family does not comply with removal directions. At the time of writing, section 9 had been piloted but not yet implemented or enforced. For more information, see the BIA website (www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk > applying > asylum support > section 9) or the Refugee Council website (www.refugeecouncil.org.uk > policy and research > refugee council policy positions > 2006 > section 9)

Section 4 support

Under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, asylum seekers who have exhausted their appeal rights but cannot be removed immediately are unable to receive section 95 support. Instead, they may be able to apply for a 'hard cases support grant' administered by the BIA.

- Section 4 support is limited to destitute clients at the end of process (appeal rights exhausted)
- Section 4 support consists of self-catering accommodation with vouchers to purchase food and essential toiletries.
- At the time of writing, the Home Office has proposed to make all recipients of section 4 support undertake compulsory volunteer work. However, the Home Office is not currently enforcing this. For more up-to-date information, please see the Refugee Council website: www.refugeecouncil.org.uk
- For more information, see the BIA website: www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk > applying > asylum support > section 4 support > frequently asked questions about section 4 support.

Asylum policy bulletin 71 is available on the BIA website: www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk > applying > asylum support > section 4 support

We have information on hard cases support for asylum seekers at the end of process which can be downloaded from our website, and is available in 15 different languages (www.languages.refugeecouncil.org.uk > click on English or your client's language > Are you destitute and at the end of process?)

What can I do if...

My client wants to apply for section 4 support?

Asylum seekers who have been refused asylum and have exhausted all their appeal rights will need to meet the eligibility criteria in order to receive section 4 support, including:

- destitution – the client will need to demonstrate they are destitute; and
- taking all reasonable steps to leave the UK, or to place themselves in a position in which they are able to leave the UK. This can be demonstrated by requesting assistance from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) under the Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme (VARRP); or
- unable to leave the UK for physical or medical reasons (including women who are at least seven months pregnant); or
- unable to leave the UK because there is currently no safe route of return available (based on the opinion of the Secretary of State); or
- an application for judicial review has been granted permission to proceed; or
- the provision of accommodation is necessary for the purpose of avoiding a breach of a person's Convention rights, within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998. (This includes clients who have out of time appeals and fresh claims of asylum. Applications for discretionary leave do not count).

Section 4 support can also be provided to those on temporary admission or who are released on bail.

- You can download an application form from the BIA website. Any enquiries, call your client's Case Owner or the BIA Section 4 team 0208 604 6910/6912. To download the application form, go to: the BIA website: www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk > applying > asylum support > section 4 support > new request form for section 4 support

My client is from Iraq, or from Zimbabwe?

There are certain provisions specific to asylum applicants from Iraq and Zimbabwe. Please see the BIA website: www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk > applying > asylum support > section 4 support > frequently asked questions about section 4 support.

My client receives section 4 support and has troubles using the vouchers?

- First speak to the support provider and enquire if they have any suggestions – they have a contract with BIA to help resolve voucher issues.
- If your client continues to have a problem, contact your local One Stop Service for assistance (see *Contacts*).

My client has a complaint about section 4 accommodation?

As with dispersal accommodation, providers have signed contractual agreements for minimum standards for section 4 accommodation. To see the minimum standards, see: <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/6353/12358/section4accommodationsupport.pdf>. (If you cannot access the pdf via the link in this document, copy and paste the web-address into your web browser)

- If your client does not believe the accommodation meets the acceptable standards, s/he should first speak to the accommodation provider.
- If no improvement is made, speak to the regional asylum team (see *Contacts*) and request an investigation.

My client was refused section 4 support?

- Your client can appeal to the Asylum Support Adjudicators: www.asylum-support-adjudicators.org.uk. See below for more information.
- A legal representative can file for a judicial review if they feel a client should receive section 4 support.
- If your client has new evidence, there has been a change in the situation in his/her home country, or a change in your client's circumstances, s/he may be able to submit a fresh asylum claim, making your client eligible for section 95 asylum support. Your client will only be eligible for section 95 if they have a letter from the Home Office confirming it's a fresh claim. Please speak to a legal adviser.
- In some cases, regional charities such as refugee community organisations or church groups may be able to provide limited assistance where an unsuccessful asylum applicant has no other means of support.

My client receives section 4 support, but has special needs that should be assessed by the local authority?

A failed asylum seeker with care needs may be eligible for support from the local authority under section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948.

When the BIA is assessing an asylum seeker's entitlement under section 4 (I & A Act 1999), it must take into account any community care services made available to the applicant under section 21 of the NAA.

However, when local authorities are assessing the care needs of an unsuccessful asylum seeker, they may not consider entitlement under section 4. Thus, local authorities cannot exclude unsuccessful asylum seekers receiving section 4 support from community care services.

My client receives section 4 support and now has trouble meeting reporting requirements?

Clients on section 4 support may be eligible for support under section 69 of the NIAA 2002 – which will cover travel expenses to reporting centres more than three miles away from their accommodation. The policy does not include travel to the first reporting event.

Those who live within three miles of their reporting centre will not be entitled to travel expenses – they are expected to walk. In extenuating circumstances, such as late stages of pregnancy, a request can be made to the Immigration Service to vary the conditions – they may reduce reporting frequency, allow your client to report to a local police station or move your client closer to the reporting centre.

- Your client should ask for a form when they go to report.

My client was refused support under section 55?

If your client was refused support under section 55, then s/he is not eligible for section 4 support.

- Have your client speak to someone at his/her local one stop service (see [Contacts](#))

My client has exhausted all appeal rights, but is not eligible for section 4 support?

Other options for unsuccessful asylum seekers:

- If the individual is in need of care and attention, s/he may be eligible for support from Social Services under section 21 of the NAA (see below). Note: if your client is seen to be a 'failed asylum seeker who is not complying with removal directions' or someone unlawfully in the country, they may not be eligible for this support.
- Families (including those who have a baby after termination of support) can approach Social Services for support under section 17.

Refusal or withdrawal of asylum support

The BIA may **refuse or withdraw** support if, for example:

- The individual breaches the conditions of BIA support. This includes if the person fails to travel, if s/he is found to be working illegally or if they cause a 'nuisance' in the accommodation.
- The individual is suspected of a criminal offence.
- The individual is excluded from BIA support because s/he does not meet the criteria (Section 54 or the person is entitled to income support for example).
- The individual leaves his/her authorised address.

(Please note: this is not an exhaustive list.)

Specific sections of legislation exclude individuals from BIA support, including:

- Section 54 and Schedule 3 (NIA Act 2002) removed the right to BIA and local authority support (including social care services such as section 21 of the National Assistance Act) from individuals from other EEA countries, asylum seekers at the end of process who refuse to comply with removal directions, or individuals unlawfully in the UK.
- Section 55 (of NIA Act 2002) denies asylum applicants who did not apply for asylum 'as soon as reasonably practicable' access to BIA support. For more information about section 55, see the policy and research section of the Refugee Council website: www.refugeecouncil.org.uk
- Section 57 (of NIA Act 2002) allows the Home Office to withhold access to BIA support for all those in-country asylum applicants who, for instance, are unable to provide a clear and coherent account of how they came to the UK or their circumstances in the UK.

What can I do if...

My client was denied access to BIA support under section 55?

Your client should be offered both accommodation and support if destitute, and failure to do so would be a breach of his/her human rights under Article 3 of the ECHR.

My client was denied access to BIA support under section 54/57?

- You can write to BIA and request a 'reconsideration'. If possible, the letter should include evidence either that there has been a mistake, or that refusal of support is a breach of Article 3 of the ECHR (such as a letter from a doctor or more information about the effect on your client having no support). Send the request to:
Border and Immigration Agency
Lunar House, 40 Wellesley Road, Croydon, CR9 2BY
- We recommend your client seeks the help of a legal representative when requesting 'reconsideration'
- Any queries, call the Asylum Support Enquiry Line on 0845 602 1739 (open 9am – 9pm)
- You may also approach a legal representative who may agree to apply for a judicial review.
- If none of these options grant your client access to support, your client will have to find charitable assistance, usually from community organisations.

My client wants to appeal the withdrawal or refusal of support?

- Asylum applicants whose application for support has been refused, discontinued or suspended by BIA (except on section 55 grounds or when the applicant has been refused or granted asylum) will have the right to appeal to the Asylum Support Adjudicators (ASA).
 - Appeals must be made within three working days of the notification of refusal unless there are exceptional circumstances.
 - Appeals should be sent by first class post or fax.
 - Information about the asylum support appeals process and appeal forms are available on the ASA website: www.asylum-support-adjudicators.gov.uk
 - The appeal may be considered on paper only (decided within five days), or there may be an oral hearing. If there is an oral hearing, the asylum applicant may attend. Interpreters will be provided.
 - Any applicant refused support under section 55 may ask to have their case reconsidered if their circumstances change, or if they have additional information they wish to be taken into account.
 - Your client will not receive support up until and during the appeal unless s/he has children under 18.
- Contact the Asylum Support Appeals Project (ASAP), an independent charity which provides free legal advice about asylum support and appeals. They also provide advice and information to organisations who are helping asylum seekers with their asylum support issues. More information and contact details can be found on their website: www.asaproject.org.uk
- If support has been withdrawn and no clear reason is given, advisers should contact the Support and Discontinuation of Support Enquiry line on 0845 600 0914 to learn why support was withdrawn. This will help you/your client provide any evidence needed to reinstate support.
- If any of the above actions are taken to appeal the withdrawal of support, fax your local BIA regional office (see *Contacts*) to request that support is reinstated. With the fax, you must include evidence that the client is appealing either the asylum refusal or asylum support refusal/withdrawal.

Note: if however, your client's asylum claim was refused and s/he did not lodge an appeal, his/her support will be terminated and your client will not be eligible to appeal this decision. S/he may, however, be able to apply for section 4 support.

My client's appeal of the withdrawal of support was denied?

There are some other options, including:

- Phone/write to the Director of BIA.
- Have the local MP enquire/write a letter.
- Judicial review of BIA (see policy bulletin 47 for BIA's procedure on judicial reviews).
- Lodge a formal complaint through the BIA complaints system and then via the Parliamentary Ombudsman.

My client is an unaccompanied minor turning 18?

When an unaccompanied minor turns 18 they will be subject to section 55. They may have to undergo a level 2 screening and prove they have applied for asylum "as soon as reasonably practicable" after arriving in the UK.

BIA policy bulletin 29 (version 3) provides guidance to caseworkers advising unaccompanied minors who are approaching their 18th birthday, see: www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk > applying > asylum > asylum support policy bulletins.

Asylum-seeking unaccompanied minors under 18 remain the responsibility of the local authority under the Children Act 1989. See the section on *Unaccompanied children seeking asylum*.

Special needs

If asylum seekers or their family members have exceptional needs, it is possible to apply for extra BIA support. Note that this is at the discretion of the Home Secretary and is rarely granted.

BIA support, however, is inappropriate for asylum seekers with severe or enduring disabilities, or other special needs. Special needs of asylum seekers are met through community care services delivered by local authority Social Services.

What can I do if...

My client has exceptional circumstances that I think warrant additional support?

When additional needs arise out of exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to claim an 'exceptional payment' from the BIA.

- Write to the BIA explaining what the additional income is intended for, and how the applicant has coped without adequate support until that time. Include your client's name, NASS reference number, and signature.

I feel my client has a 'special need'?

- An asylum seeker with special needs can request an assessment under Section 47(1) of the NHS and Community Care Act 1990. Section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948 places a duty on local authorities to provide accommodation and financial assistance to people in the community in need of 'care and attention'.
 - An asylum seeker at the end of process is only eligible if s/he is lawfully here, for example has applied on arrival in the UK and has temporary admission, or s/he has an outstanding fresh claim.
- The local authority your client presents to has a duty to carry out a full community care assessment. Asylum seekers should be assessed using the same criteria as UK residents, based on the severity of their need. In an emergency, the local authority has a duty to house someone while the assessment is being carried out.

Section 21 of NAA support includes residential accommodation for individuals, including asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers, 'in need of care and attention' due to:

- Age
- Pregnancy
- Disability/ restricted mobility
- Physical impairments, including visual impairment
- HIV or AIDS
- Mental health needs
- Other special, 'non-destitution' needs, including support for families (child protection services, nursery provision, after school clubs, home care services, social work services and free school meals).

Local authorities are responsible for supporting destitute asylum seekers when

- an assessment reveals community care needs; or
- where an individual is found to have some level of community care needs that do not include the need for residential accommodation (this is to avoid an overlap in responsibility between BIA and the local authority).

Further resources

www.asylumsupport.info

Independent website with information and updates on asylum support policy, and practice issues, plus links to other sites.

www.multikulti.org.uk

Culturally appropriate translated information in the following areas of welfare law: debt, employment, health, housing, immigration and welfare benefits.

www.lasa.org.uk

London Advice Services Alliance website designed for those providing advice and information services (useful for organizations across the UK).

www.lga.gov.uk/lga/asylum

The Local Government Association has information about local authorities' work on asylum as part of the interim arrangements, and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

www.refugeeaccess.org.uk

Website for asylum seekers, refugees and agencies working in Yorkshire, Humberside and the Liverpool area.

www.rightsnet.org

Run by LASA, Rightsnet provides advice on welfare benefits and tax credits.