

Refugee Move-On: Next Steps for after Receiving Permission to Stay in the UK for Asylum Seekers in Oxfordshire

If you have been granted permission to stay in the UK, YOU NEED TO ACT NOW to plan your next steps. You will need to find work, find accommodation and settle in the community.

If you are still waiting for a decision, START PLANNING on what you will do when you receive the decision. Read this document as it will help you to prepare for the future.

On the next page you will see the main steps.

The rest of the document gives more information on these steps.

If you have any questions:

- Asylum Welcome every Monday and Thursday morning in Kassam lobby 10-12.30 or 01865 819666,.
- Oxford City Council housing team on Thursday morning in Kassam lobby or call 01865 249811.

Helpful Guides

What happens when you get Refugee Status? – Right to Remain:

<https://righttoremain.org.uk/toolkit/what-happens-when-you-get-refugee-status/>

This information is available in all languages.

A guide for when you have been granted refugee status - Rainbow Migration

<https://www.rainbowmigration.org.uk/a-guide-for-when-you-have-been-granted-refugee-status/>



Further information

I HAVE RECEIVED A DECISION ON MY ASYLUM CLAIM – WHAT NOW?

- ✓ **Positive decision:** There are three types of status ('leave to remain') that the Home Office may grant (Refugee Status, Humanitarian Protection, or Discretionary Leave to Remain). Your rights differ slightly depending on your immigration status, but **the information in this document applies to everyone with a positive decision** on their asylum claim.
- ✗ **Refusal:** If your asylum claim has been refused, you may have the right to appeal. Asylum Welcome can support you to submit your appeal application and understand the appeal process. Where possible, we find an immigration solicitor to help with this. We can also support you if your asylum support situation changes to ensure you still have Home Office support.

What is in this guide

1. Preparing to leave the hotel
2. Things you must do right away
3. Housing:
 - Understanding your housing options
 - Getting help from the Council
 - Reintegration loan
 - Finding private rented housing
 - Paying for private rented housing
 - Moving into your new home
 - Homelessness – what to do
4. Next steps:
 - Working in the UK after your positive decision
 - Study
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1. WHAT TO EXPECT – PREPARING TO LEAVE THE HOTEL

When you receive humanitarian or protection refugee status, you will have to leave your asylum hotel accommodation. The Home Office currently say that you have **28 days** to move out from the date of your asylum support discontinuation letter, but it is often less. The official "Notice to Leave" might only come **7 days before** your move-out date. **Start planning immediately.**

2. DO THESE THINGS RIGHT AWAY

A. Bank Account

- ☐ You will need your proof of identity and proof of address.
- ☐ If you do not yet have your eVisa, show your ARC card and decision letter at the bank.
- ☐ Get a GP letter as address proof. Ask for this in the Kassam hotel on Monday morning.

B. Universal Credit

Apply for Universal Credit as quickly as possible. **Your asylum support will be stopped as soon as you get your eviction letter.**

Universal Credit is money that is paid by the UK government to people who are not employed or who are earning very little. Universal Credit helps with your **living costs** and sometimes **housing costs**.

The maximum amount you will get each month:

- Single person under 25: **£316.98**
- Single person aged 25 and over: **£400.14**

How to apply for Universal Credit

- ☐ Go to <https://www.universal-credit.service.gov.uk/start>
- ☐ Apply even if your eVisa is not ready
- ☐ You must have a bank account to complete the application
- ☐ Attend the Job Centre for your initial appointment. Your claim will not be processed until the Job Centre have confirmed your identity and you have met your Work Coach.
- ☐ Payments may take five or more weeks, so save where you can.
- ☐ Check your online 'To Do' list and attend your Job Centre appointments. If not, your UC payments may stop.

You can ask for an advance payment after your first appointment.

You may be able to apply for other benefits as well. Use this calculator if you think you might be eligible: <https://benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk/>

Ask Asylum Welcome or go to the Citizens Advice Bureau in Oxford at the Westgate Library on Monday or Wednesday 10am – 1pm. For information about other towns in Oxfordshire, go to this webpage: [In person | CAOx](#).

C. EVisa

Your eVisa lets you prove your immigration status and generate a share code to work or rent.

- ☐ Make sure the Home Office has your correct email and phone number.
- ☐ You will get instructions on how to access your eVisa within 14 days.
- ☐ If details are wrong or you are not sent details, report an error here: [Report an error with your eVisa - GOV.UK](#).
- ☐ Report any errors on your eVisa within 10 working days here. Send the confirmation email to positivemoveon@migranthelpuk.org and ask for more time in your Home Office accommodation.

If you have other eVisa problems, you can contact Asylum Welcome or the Citizen Advice Bureau on 03444111444.

Once you have your e-Visa, you can use it to generate a **share code**. This proves your right to live in the UK, to work and to rent.

- ☐ Go to: <https://www.gov.uk/view-proveimmigration-status> and follow the instructions on the screen.

3. HOUSING

- ✓ Have family or friends to stay with? → Talk to them now
- ✗ Nowhere to stay? → Apply for Council support
- ✗ Not Priority for council? → Look for private rent

Important: If you want to move to a new area, you will not be entitled to support from the local council. You will need to be sure that you can find somewhere to live, for example with friends or family. If you are unsure, speak to the Council before you leave the hotel to understand what support you will receive in a new town or city.

Many people think that if they have nowhere to live when they leave the hotel, the local government (Council) will give them somewhere to stay. **The Council must try to stop people from becoming homeless, but this does not mean you will definitely get housing.** Many new refugees still end up sleeping on the street.

The Council provides long-term Council or Social Housing for people with low incomes. It is given to people based on strict rules. You can apply but there is a long waiting list. Single people often **wait many years**. You can apply here: <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/apply-social-housing> but it is not an immediate solution.

If you **have friends or family members who you may be able to stay with safely** when you leave the hotel, it is a good idea to talk to them about this early on.

If not, it is very important that you follow the steps below very carefully.

A. Getting help from the Council

Fill in a Homelessness Prevention Application **as quickly as possible**, even before you have received an eviction letter.

The Council will use this form to assess whether they must help you find housing.

- ☐ Visit the Housing Team at the hotel lobby on Thursdays (10:00–12:30)
- ☐ Phone 01865 249811
- ☐ Email housingneeds@oxford.gov.uk

You can speak to Asylum Welcome at drop-in sessions or call 01865 722082.

The Council will need: eVisa or decision letter, proof of Universal Credit application, eviction letter when you get it. Give the Council your hotel eviction letter (Notice to Vacate) as soon as you get it.

The Council will assess if you are **Priority Need** (e.g., pregnant, children under 8, serious health issues or disabilities, trafficking survivor). Medical evidence helps speed this up.

If you get priority need status:

You may get temporary housing:

- Hotel, hostel, or bed & breakfast
- Shared house with support worker (up to 2 years)
- **Usually outside Oxford city.**

Important steps:

1. Apply for Housing Benefit right away:
<https://oxfordconnect.oxford.gov.uk/scripts/OPENPortal-Live.wsc/hb/hbnewclaim.p>
It is very important that you apply immediately so that you do not end up owing a lot of money.
2. Keep looking for private rental - don't wait for council housing
3. Accept the housing you are offered - if you say no, the Council can stop helping you.

What to expect:

- Council takes time to decide
- You may only find out on the day you leave the hotel
- If your situation changes, you may have to leave temporary housing

If council says you are **NOT** priority need and you think that you are:

- Contact Asylum Welcome for help appealing. You will need legal advice

If **NOT** Priority Need: The Council will give advice. Start looking for private housing early.

- Consider if you have family or friends whom you could stay with for a period safely and securely.
- Talk with the Council before you move; they will explain that you may not get supported with housing if you are moving outside the Oxford area.
- Stay in contact with the Housing Officer, reply quickly, and seek advice if appealing a decision.
- Ask Asylum Welcome if there are housing charities and hosting schemes (where people offer a spare room in their house for a short period).
- If you become homeless, please see 'Homelessness' guidance: <https://www.asylum-welcome.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/OHG-Feb-2025.pdf>.
- You can apply for financial assistance to move into your accommodation. This is explained below: 'Help to pay the deposit and rent'. You can apply for this before you have found your accommodation.

B. Finding Private Rented Housing

Most people will need to find a room in a shared house or flat. This means you will share the kitchen, bathroom, and other spaces with other people. You might live:

- In the landlord's home (as a lodger), or
- In a house where the landlord rents rooms to different people, or
- In a house rented by a group of people together.

Housing in the UK, especially Oxfordshire, is expensive and often hard to find. **Your next home may not be perfect, but it should be safe for a few months, so you can avoid becoming homeless and begin to settle.**

How to search

The main websites to find a room are [SpareRoom](#), [Daily Info](#) and [Gumtree](#). Other sites like [Rightmove](#) and [Zoopla](#) often show more expensive places.

Make an account on the website and search for rooms within your housing benefit allowance if you are not yet working. Choose the area 'Oxfordshire' — this includes cheaper towns like Didcot, Banbury, and others.

When reading adverts, skip any that say: for students only; for women only (if you are not a woman); for professionals only (if you are not working).

Be careful of scams. If a room in Oxford city centre has its own bathroom and looks perfect for £550, it is probably not real.

Contacting landlords

When you find a room you like, send a polite and formal message to the landlord. Here is an example message you can change for your situation:

Hello, my name is [your name]. Is your room still available? Can I come to see it? I am [your age] years old. I have lived in Oxford for [time] and I study English at EMBS college. I recently received refugee status. I am looking for work in [hospitality / retail / healthcare]. I receive Universal Credit and can show you proof of income, my share code, and a reference. Your room looks like a good match. I look forward to hearing from you. Best wishes, [your name]

Keep checking websites often. Rooms come and go quickly. You may need to contact many landlords before you get a reply. Finding housing takes effort and time.

Viewing a room

If a landlord invites you to view a room, this is your chance to make a good impression. You may meet the landlord, someone working for the landlord, or people who live in the house.

Tips:

- Be ready to go quickly. You might not get another chance.
- Be on time. Plan how to get there and plan to be there before the time in case of delays.
- Be ready to talk about your life and plans.
- Bring useful documents: a character reference, your share code, bank statement, or CV.

Ask questions like:

- Who else lives here? What do they do?
- Is there furniture in the room?
- Where do people store food? Is there bike storage?
- Are there house rules? Who does the cleaning?
- If I like the room, when can I move in?

Being offered a room

Before formally offering you a room, a landlord is likely to ask for:

- proof of address (get a letter from your GP).
- proof of income (for example, your bank statement showing universal credit payments).
- your share code <https://right-to-rent.service.gov.uk/rtr-prove/id-question>

- character reference (this is a letter written by someone who knows you, saying that you are a reliable person).

If you are offered the room, the landlord may ask for a “holding deposit” (maximum one week’s rent). **If you change your mind**, you may lose the money. If the **landlord says no**, you should get the money back.

Never send money before seeing the room — it could be a scam!

Accepting an offer

Ask for a **tenancy agreement** (a contract). It may be on paper or sent by email. Read it carefully. Make sure you understand:

- How much rent you pay
- If bills are included
- When you pay rent
- How long you can stay
- How to leave (notice period)

If bills are not included, ask how much they usually are and when they are due so you can plan ahead.

Before you move in, you must usually pay:

- A **deposit** (up to 5 weeks’ rent)
- **One month’s rent in advance**

Rent is the amount you pay to your landlord every month. It is usually paid **in advance**, at the start of each month. You must pay the **first month’s rent** before moving in.

Some rent includes **bills** (gas, electricity, water, sometimes internet). If not, ask how much bills usually cost. In a shared house, bills are often about **£100/month**.

A **deposit** is money paid in advance, which can be up to **5 weeks of rent**. If you damage the property or owe rent when you leave, the landlord may keep part or all of your deposit.

Help to pay the deposit and rent

If you don’t have the money for a deposit or first month’s rent, you can ask the Council for help.

Do not sign the tenancy agreement until the Council confirms they can help you.

The Council will only help if the **rent is realistic and affordable**:

- Under 35:
 - £650/month including bills, or
 - £550/month excluding bills
- 35 and over:
 - £999/month including bills, or
 - £899/month excluding bills

How to apply for help with deposit and first month’s rent

1. Visit [oxford.gov.uk/deposit-guarantee-scheme](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/deposit-guarantee-scheme).

2. Complete the application form.
3. Email the tenancy agreement with your name and date of birth to:
HN-PRSPlacementAndProcurementTeam@oxford.gov.uk

C. Refugee Integration Loan

If you have refugee status or humanitarian protection, you can apply for a [Refugee Integration Loan](#) from the Home Office.

You can use the loan to help with your new life in the UK. For example:

- Tools for work (if you are in a trade)
- Essential items for your home
- A deposit for housing (remember that you can apply for a deposit from the Council – see C above).
- Training or courses (if not available through Jobcentre Plus)

Talk to your Jobcentre Work Coach first.

You must sign a loan agreement before you get the money.

You must **pay back the loan** in small regular amounts. The money is taken from your Universal Credit or your bank account (by direct debit). You start paying back the loan **six weeks** after you receive it.

D. Paying for Private Rented Housing

If you rent and receive Universal Credit, you may get Housing Allowance (part of Universal Credit) to help with rent.

The **maximum Housing Allowance** in the **Oxford** area is:

- Single person under 35: **£550/month**
- Single person aged 35+: **£899/month**

You will only receive the amount you **actually pay in rent** — not the full allowance.

If the rent is **more than** your Housing Allowance, you must pay the extra yourself.

[Oxford Rental Area](#) includes Oxford City, Witney, Wantage, Didcot, Abingdon, and Wallingford.

Banbury and Bicester are **not** in the same rental area. Use the postcode checker to see how much allowance you can get: <https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/search.aspx>

E. Moving into your new home

Set up your housing allowance

After moving, you need to add your new address. Log in to your Universal Credit account. Go to: **‘Change Personal Details’** → **‘Where You Live’**. Add your address, landlord name, and rent. **Upload** your tenancy agreement.

At your next Job Centre appointment, ask if your housing payment has been received.

If you don't have an appointment before the rent is due, send a message through your Universal Credit journal.

Set up a direct debit (automatic payment) to your landlord each month. Save money for bills if they are not included.

Living in Your New Home

IMPORTANT – You have got the keys to your new home, now what?

- Read and follow all the **rules** in your tenancy agreement.
- You must **pay your rent on time** every month.
- If you lose income and cannot pay rent, tell your landlord **immediately** and get advice.
- If you live in a shared house, help to keep it clean and tidy.

Being a good tenant helps you get good references for future housing.

4. HOMELESSNESS – WHAT TO DO

Remember:

When you receive humanitarian or protection refugee status, you will be given **at least 7 days' notice** before you have to leave. You may

Use the housing guidance sheets and keep in regular touch with the Council, and with Asylum Welcome if you wish.

Sleeping outside is dangerous. Avoid it if you can.

IF YOU BECOME HOMELESS, TELL THE COUNCIL!

Call the council on **01865 249 811** and give them your **full name**, **date of birth**, and details about your situation. If you already have a named Housing Officer to support them, tell them.

If you are sleeping outside ('rough sleeping')

Contact **St Mungo's**. They can help — but they need to **find you first**.

 **07590 862049**

 Outreach.Oxford@mungos.org

 [Street Link location form](#)

Tell them:

- Where you are sleeping (street, tent, area).
- What time you arrive and leave.
- What you are wearing (clothes, sleeping bag colour).
- Any health problems or special needs.

A team will try to find you **within 1–3 nights**. Stay in the same place so they can locate you. If they find you, they will see if a hostel or support organisation can help you. If not found, they may call you or try again. If no one comes after a week, call again.

You can also meet a St Mungo's team member in person:


- Mondays, 9:00 – The Porch, 139 Magdalen Rd, OX4 1RL
- Tuesdays, 17:00 – The Gatehouse, 10 Woodstock Rd, OX2 6HT
- Wednesdays, 15:00–17:00 – Turning Point, 27-29 Rectory Rd, OX4 1BU


If you are staying with friends ('sofa surfing')

Even if you are not sleeping outside, you can **still get help**.

Go to:

 **Crisis Skylight**, 40 George St, Oxford, OX1 2AQ (The Old Fire Station)

 Open: Monday–Friday, 9:00–17:00

 01865 263900

 reception.oxford@crisis.org.uk

It is important to stay engaged.

If a homelessness organisation tries to help you:

- Stay in contact
- Follow their advice
- Do what you agreed in your action plan

Working with them improves your chance of getting help.

Daytime support

You can find other organisations who provide food or advice if you are homeless [here](#).

Ask Asylum Welcome for information and advice if you are at risk of getting homeless or already homeless.

5. NEXT STEPS - INTEGRATION LOAN, WORK, STUDY, FAMILY

A. Working in the UK after your positive decision

You have the right to work in **any profession** and at **any skill level**.

The **Jobcentre Plus** (Department of Work and Pensions) can help you with finding a job. You can also apply for **Jobseeker's Allowance** while looking for a job. [Contact Jobcentre Plus](#)

Asylum Welcome have an **Education & Employment drop-in** on Mondays and Thursdays from 10am-12pm at our main office (OX4 1RE).

There is a legal minimum wage in the UK (the minimum amount that an employer must pay). Make sure your employer pays the correct amount. [You can check the rate here](#).

Important information for work

Proof of right to work: You must give your employer a Share Code to prove you can work. You can [Get your Share Code](#) here.

You might also be asked for your **National Insurance number (NINO)**. If it's not in your eVisa account, tell your employer. You can apply online for your NINO [here](#).

Pay and tax: Your employer should take tax and national insurance from your wages automatically.

If you have **more than one job**, tell your employers and the tax office to avoid problems with tax.

You must update your **Universal Credit account** when your income or job situation changes.

Do You Have Qualifications?

If you have certificates or qualifications from another country, you can get **free advice** on how they compare to UK qualifications. Call **NARIC**: 0870 990 4088.

B. Study

The JobCentre can help you to continue English lessons if you are not confident in speaking English. This will help you when looking for work and it is also a good way to get to know other people in your community.

If you would like to study other topics or learn a practical skill, the JobCentre can give you guidance on training.

You can also come to Asylum Welcome's **Education & Employment drop-in** on Mondays and Thursdays from 10am-12pm at our main office (OX4 1RE).

C. Bringing Your Family to the UK (Family Reunion)

If you have refugee or humanitarian protection status, you may be able to bring your family to live with you in the UK. This is called Family Reunion.

Important: Family Reunion can take many months. Until your family arrives, the Council and benefits office will **treat you as a single person**.

Your housing allowance and benefits will not change until your family is here. When your family joins you, your support will be updated.

Once the UKVI Family Reunion office confirm that your family's visas have been granted, let the Council know. This is important if you have children and especially if you have a large family.

Asylum Welcome has a separate sheet explaining Family Reunion in detail. This will be available online shortly.