

2

How to Look for a Lawyer

In the United Kingdom



One of the best things you can do when claiming asylum in the UK is to find a good lawyer as quickly as possible. You can often find a lawyer for free through 'legal aid'. This is not always easy because there are not enough lawyers for everyone and not all lawyers have the relevant experience and expertise.

Here are some ideas about how to look for one:



► Visit the website: <https://find-legal-advice.justice.gov.uk/>

Filter by 'post code' and tick "immigration and asylum" to limit the search



► Find your nearest law centre. Visit the website:

<https://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/geographically>

► Look for a local organisation which offers legal support, drop-ins, or a hotline.

Search online: **"asylum/migrant support" + the name of your town**



► Ask an organisation like **Care4Calais (+44 7519 773268)**; contacting an organisation does not guarantee they will find you a lawyer

► Ask friends, family and other people at your accommodation if they know a good lawyer



► **Asylum Aid (+44 2073 549264)** offers one-off free, confidential and independent legal advice by telephone

Mondays from 2.00pm to 4:30pm, Thursdays from 10.00am to 12:30pm

It can be very difficult to find a lawyer in the UK. It is important to document evidence of any attempt to find a lawyer, e.g. whatsapp messages, emails, calls etc.

WHAT IS LEGAL AID?

“*Legal aid helps people with no or little income to pay for the cost of getting legal advice. The government allocates funds for this purpose, and the legal aid fees are paid directly to the legal advice provider. A legal aid lawyer does not work for the Home Office.*”

Sometimes people think that because they are not paying for a lawyer, that means they won't be as good as a private (paid for) lawyer. In our experience, many of the best lawyers working in asylum, immigration and human rights are those working under legal aid. The quality of legal representation can vary a lot – both for legal aid lawyers, and for private lawyers. It's important to understand the legal process as much as possible so that you can keep track of whether your lawyer is doing a good job.”

This information is adapted from the Right to Remain Toolkit; a website which contains lots of other useful information about claiming asylum in the UK and is available in several languages. You can find it at

<https://righttoremain.org.uk/toolkit/>

Note It is important to always have an interpreter who understands you; tell your lawyer as soon as possible if you cannot understand the interpreter. Legal aid money should pay for an interpreter in your language. You should not need to pay for an interpreter or be asked to bring your own interpreter.