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The Screening Interview

"The Little Interview"



If you want to claim asylum in the UK you should say "I want to claim asylum".

The screening interview is usually conducted very soon after you have arrived in the UK. Sometimes it is on the same day you arrive. You are likely to be tired and stressed. Most people do not have an opportunity to speak to a lawyer before the interview. **Be prepared.**

The interview is not recorded. It may take place by telephone with an interpreter also present via telephone. It is very important to speak in **short, simple and clear sentences** (the UK Home Office interviewer may not write down everything you say). Stick to the most important information, you can provide more detail later at your asylum interview (the 'big' interview).



Interpreter and Language

You **MUST** tell the interviewer if you cannot understand.

You have the right to an interpreter who interprets your chosen language in a way that is clear to you. For example, if you speak Sorani, English and Arabic, you can choose which language you prefer to speak in.



Names

Give your full name and **ALL** the names of your family members if you want them to join you.



Date of Birth

DO NOT guess your date of birth – this is very important. If you do not know the exact date, explain why you know you are the age you are.



Minors (under 18)

If you are under 18 you must describe as much detail as possible about your age and why you are sure e.g. I left my country just after Ramadan when I was 15 so now I am 16. If the Home Office does not accept you are under 18 they might take you to a hotel with adults or to a detention centre. If you are taken to a hotel with adults, tell your age to the hotel staff, ask to see a doctor, tell anyone you meet who is working for an organisation, you can find a lawyer to help you. If you are detained, you must tell your age as soon as possible to the medical centre, the staff, and anyone you have contact with until you are bailed (freed).



Do you require housing

Ask to stay in asylum accommodation, unless you are certain you can stay with friends/family. It is difficult to get into accommodation later if you have initially refused it.



Physical and mental health

If you feel too unwell to do the interview, **say this at the start.**

During the interview, **tell the interviewer about any physical health problems you have.**

Do you worry a lot? Are you anxious? Do you have difficulties sleeping or nightmares? Are you often feeling **angry or sad**. Are you having trouble engaging with other people? These are all signs of **poor mental health. Tell the interviewer.**

After your interview, register with a GP as soon as possible to seek treatment. **If you are detained, go to the medical centre as soon as possible and make sure your health problems are recorded.**



Your history of detention

Were you ever in prison and treated badly? This might be in your own country or on the journey. **Tell the interviewer.** You should also tell them if you have ever been tortured by your government or another group or person.



Your journey to the UK

You will be asked to disclose all countries passed through, together with any claims for asylum or grants of refugee status in other countries. If these are not disclosed and they are later discovered, it can damage your case.

If they ask you why you did not claim asylum in another country, you can explain if you did not have access to asylum procedures or why you did not feel safe to remain there.



Why did you come to the UK?

When asked this, say: **“TO CLAIM ASYLUM”**
Do **not** say any other reason, only this.



Briefly explain why you cannot return to your home country

Give a very brief summary:

- What happened to you in the past – why did you leave your country?
- If you have been detained or mistreated, say so.
- Explain the reasons why these things happened. Is it because of your race, your religion or your political opinions? Are you a member of a particular social group or tribe? Do you identify as LGBTQ+?
- What would happen to you if you returned home?



Human trafficking

The interviewer will try to understand if you are a victim of trafficking. This means have you ever been forced to go somewhere you didn't want to; have you been forced to work maybe without being paid including being forced to sell drugs; have you been forced to have sex with someone; has someone kept you in one place and you weren't allowed to leave? This is relevant whether it happened in your own country or on your journey (e.g. Libya)



Access to justice

Usually you won't have time to speak with a lawyer before you do this interview; you can say this.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Your responses in the interview must be consistent with future interviews.

During the interview

Pay close attention to the questions you are asked. Although they might seem simple and straightforward, your **responses will be recorded** and are very important. The UK government will **compare the information** you provide with information provided in all other interviews or statements (previous or in future).

After the interview

The UK government interviewer **will take notes** of what you say during the interview.

- You must ask for a **copy of the record** of this screening interview
- Check the answers for **accuracy** if you are able to
- **Give it to your lawyer** and ask that they check it with you. If there are mistakes, you can **tell the Home Office**.