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Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
Age Disputes

If you are under 18 when you arrive in the UK to claim asylum it is very important that you **say this as soon as possible. You will first be asked to point to your age on a piece of paper.**

Under UK law, someone under 18 is considered a child and receives different support. If you are under 18, and are arriving in the UK without your parents or an adult who is caring for you, you are considered a **"unaccompanied asylum seeking child"**



Initial Age Assessment

If the Home Office does not believe that you are under age (17 or under), then they will carry out an 'Initial Age Assessment' which is a **short interview. This normally lasts around 40 minutes.**

They will decide whether you are a minor based on **how you look** and **how you have behaved** and the **answers you give to some questions.** This will happen soon after you arrive and you may be very tired. It is good to be prepared for this.

What questions will they ask?



In this short interview you will be asked how old you are. You will also be asked questions about your journey, how you know how old you are and why you have come to the UK.

DO NOT guess your date of birth – this is very important. If you do not know the exact date that you were born, explain why you know you are the age you are. You may be asked:

- Your date of birth AND age
- How old you were when you left your country e.g. I left my country just after Ramadan last year when I was 15 so now I am 16.
- How old you were when you left school
- How old are your brothers and sisters e.g. I have a brother two years older than me who recently turned 18 so I know I am 16.
- if you have any physical or mental health concerns or
- If you have been treated as a minor in any country on the way like Italy or France you can talk about this.

It is also important to tell the officers who will conduct this interview and your screening interview, if you have any relatives in the UK, even if you do not plan on trying to live with them.

Do you need to have any proof?



If you have any evidence of your age, such as a **passport, ID card or a birth certificate**, original or copy, you should tell the officers this as soon as possible. A document is not always enough to prove your age at the first age assessment and sometimes people are not allowed to show this but it can be useful for your case later on if you are found to be an adult at the first 'age assessment'.

This may also be very important for your asylum claim as children also have the right to claim asylum.

How will you know if they have accepted your age?



After the initial age assessment, the Home Office will decide whether :

- 1.They believe you are a minor OR
- 2.They think you are an adult (over 18)
3. They needs more information.

If they believe that you are under 18 OR that they need more information you will move to an accommodation where you will live with other children. You may go on to have another longer age assessment. This accommodation can be anywhere in the UK.

If they do not accept you are under 18 they will send you to an accommodation with adults and treat you as an adult too.

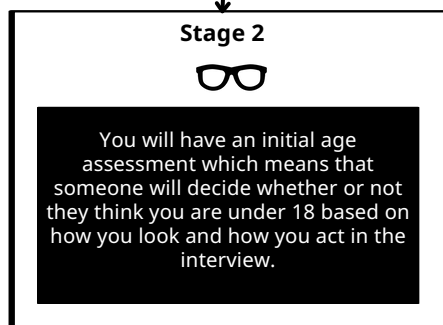
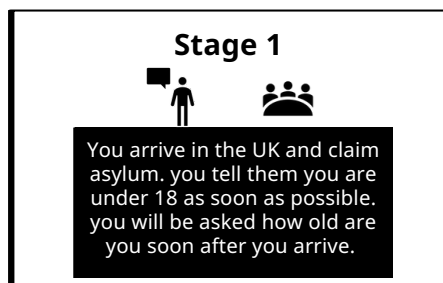
What can you do if the Home Office does not accept you are under 18?



You **should tell the staff at this ADULT accommodation that you are under 18, a doctor or nurse, and any organisations that you are working with that you are a child as soon as you can.** You should also inform Migrant Help. You should ask them to refer you to the local authority or say that you want to **see a social worker for an age assessment.**

You should also contact Humans for Rights Network can assist you with this and can be contacted on **00447506663089.** They are specialist organisation who help children who are wrongly treated as adults in the UK.

Unfortunately lots of people under 18 are being are wrongly treated as adults in the UK. This is not personal and is not because of anything you have done wrong. It is possible to try and challenge the decision that has been made about your age.



For some people, this assessment will not take place because the Home Office does not think it is needed to confirm your age. If this happens, you will be sent to an accommodation for children and looked after by the local authority.

