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# Asylum Support Team



## **This leaflet is a general guide to the support offered by the Asylum Support Team to asylum seekers living in Gateshead.**

The Asylum Support Team is one of seven Local Authority teams in the North East offering support to asylum seekers and is a member of North East Strategic Partnership for Asylum and Refugee Support (NESPARS).

### **Who is an Asylum Seeker?**

The Immigration and Asylum Act (1999) defines an asylum seeker as "A person over the age of 18 years who has made a claim for asylum, to the Secretary of State, and is awaiting a decision."

### **Who is a Refugee?**

A refugee is someone to whom the Home Office has granted permission to stay in this country due to "A well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation or membership of a particular social group or political opinion."

### **Human Rights abuses are also taken into account.**

The Asylum Support team works closely with the Move-On Service for refugees (Please see Help for Refugees who want to stay in Gateshead leaflet).

### **What help can the Asylum Support Team Offer?**

The primary responsibility of the team is to support asylum seekers who are housed in council accommodation in Gateshead. Support workers have regular contact with asylum seekers to support them until they receive a decision from the Home Office. The team have a worker on duty in the office each day to assist with problems, give advice if required, or refer on to other organisations.

You do not need to make an appointment, and the assistance is free of charge.

The team can also give advice to asylum seekers who are housed by private accommodation providers. Services offered include:

- Interpreting support arranged by the team
- Regular contact with a support worker to assist with any difficulties
- Assistance to register with G.P. (doctor), dentist, optician, children's health clinic
- Contact with social groups, community centres and faith groups
- Assistance to register at college
- Contact list for legal advice
- Reporting system for racist incidents
- Assistance to report housing repairs
- A listening ear
- Contact with NASS
- General information and advice
- If an asylum seeker is granted permission to stay in this country, becoming a refugee, they can transfer to the 'Move on Service' for refugees (see separate leaflet).

### **Community Services**

There are many community centres, faith groups, sports facilities, libraries, art galleries, museums, public parks, mother and baby groups, voluntary work projects and other activities in Gateshead. Please ask a member of the asylum team for details of times, days and locations.

### **How to contact us**

Visit or write to us: Asylum Support Team  
Civic Centre  
Regent Street  
Gateshead  
NE8 1HH

Call us: 0191 433 2684

Fax us: 0191 433 3230

Email us: [asylumteam@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:asylumteam@gateshead.gov.uk)

The office is open between 8.45am and 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and 8.45am to 4.30pm on Fridays.