



IMMIGRATION DETENTION

Am I at risk of immigration detention?

Most people who use our group will not be held in immigration detention. However there is chance that this can happen, especially if your appeal has been refused or you have no active immigration or asylum application. This information sheet is about how to protect your rights, just in case it does happen.

Be prepared

You don't need to wait until you are think you are at high risk of being detained. These are helpful things you can do:

- **Write down on paper** your case reference number, and important contact numbers: your lawyer, close friends and family, anyone caring for your children, your doctor, your community group. Keep a paper copy inside your phone case. Save the numbers on your SIM card, not just on your phone.
- Copy or photograph **important documents** (ID, Home Office letters, medical or legal papers). Email them to yourself. Give a copy to a trusted friend.
- Keep copies of **Home Office Support** letters.
- **Choose someone** to contact Migrant Help when you are detained. Give them written permission (a letter of authority) to act for you if you are detained. Sign and date the form every 6 months. Set a phone reminder to do this. You can download a letter of authority that you can print out: <https://righttoremain.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Form-of-Authority-Template.pdf>
- If you think you might want people to write support letters or campaign for you if you're detained, tell them what information they can share, and what you want to keep private.

If you have to go to report ...

Many people who don't have leave to remain must report regularly at a Home Office reporting centre, or a police station. When you go to report you may be at risk of detention, particularly if your asylum application has been refused. You may not know this until you get there. So it is important to prepare:

- Before you go, do the things you can do to **be prepared** (above)
- Before you go, **tell someone you trust** where you are going to report and when. Agree with them how you are going to check in before and after you report. For example you might agree to phone them just before you go in, and as soon as you come out. Agree what you want them to do if you are detained and cannot phone them within a few hours.
- Take only your most recent and **essential documents**.
- Take any **medication** you are using.
- If you are prescribed medication, take a paper **prescription** and if possible a GP letter explaining what you need and why it shouldn't be changed.

If you are in an immigration raid

Occasionally people are picked up during an immigration raid and taken to detention. It is important to know your rights. In an immigration raid, you don't have to say anything. Unless there is a warrant for your arrest you don't have to let the officers in, and you don't have to go with them – you can just walk away. There is information about your rights in different languages here: <https://antiraids.net/english/>

If you are in detention

Some things you can do to help yourself

- If you have a lawyer, phone them.
- If you don't have a lawyer or your lawyer can't help, you can ask the detention centre to find you one. You are eligible for free legal (advice under what is called the **Detention Duty Advice Scheme (DDA)**). <https://righttoremain.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Form-of-Authority-Template.pdf> To book an appointment, contact the welfare team at the detention centre. You'll get a 30 minute appointment, with an interpreter. Go the appointment with any documents about your immigration case. They should give you a summary of your appointment at the end of the meeting. Remember to ask for the lawyer's contact details.
- Contact **Detention Action**: Detention action is a charity that provides emotional, and practical support for people in immigration detention. Their advice is free, confidential and independent of the Home Office. Tel: 0800 587 2096 or 0207 7226 3114. They are open: 10.30 to 13.00 Monday to Friday and 14.00-16.30 Tuesday and Thursday. You can also email them at casework@detentionaction.org.uk.
- If you were in **asylum accommodation**, it is helpful if a friend, supporter or a lawyer contacts **Migrant Help** immediately to explain you're detained and still need housing or money. They will need a letter of authority (see above, 'Be prepared')
- Consider **applying for bail** (to be released) but be aware the Home Office is unlikely to release you without new information. You can get an application form from the Welfare Office. The charity BID can give you guidance. Their advice line. 020 7456 9750, is open Monday- Thursday 10.00-12.00 and outside of those times you can email them on casework@biduk.org.
- **Learn more** about immigration, and about your rights:
<https://righttoremain.org.uk/detention/#prelist>