Rossendale Refugee Support Group
Registered charity number 1204240
www.rrsg.co.uk
07350 986104
contact.rrsg@gmail.com
c/o Haslingden Community Link, Bury Road, Haslingden BB4 5PG

MOVING ON FROM ASYLUM SUPPORT

INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE GRANTED REFUGEE STATUS OR OTHER LEAVE TO REMAIN

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Key addresses and phone numbers

Rossendale Borough Council Housing Options: Futures Park, Bacup, OL13 0BBTelephone 01706 217777. Email: housingoptions@rossendalebc.gov.uk

Rossendale Job Centre 75 Bacup Road, Rawtenstall, BB4 7NH.
Telephone: 0800 169 0190. Textphone: 0800 169 0314.

Work advice: https://www.activelancashire.org.uk/projects/rossendale-works
Paul at Rossendale Works 07732 156060, or pbecouarn@activelancashire.org.uk
Jordan at New Horizons 07399139504 or hello@renewedhorizons.co.uk.

Universal Credit Applications https://www.universal-credit.service.gov.uk/start
You can also get free help from the Universal Credit helpline 0800 328 5644

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Summary

When you get leave to remain there are a lot of things to do urgently!
Soon after you are granted leave to remain, you will have to leave your asylum accommodation and your cash support (Aspen card) will stop.

1. You need an **eVISA** (electronic visa), and a National Insurance Number (NINo). Within two weeks, you should receive a letter from the Home Office that tells you about you how to access these. If you don't receive this letter, contact Migrant Help.

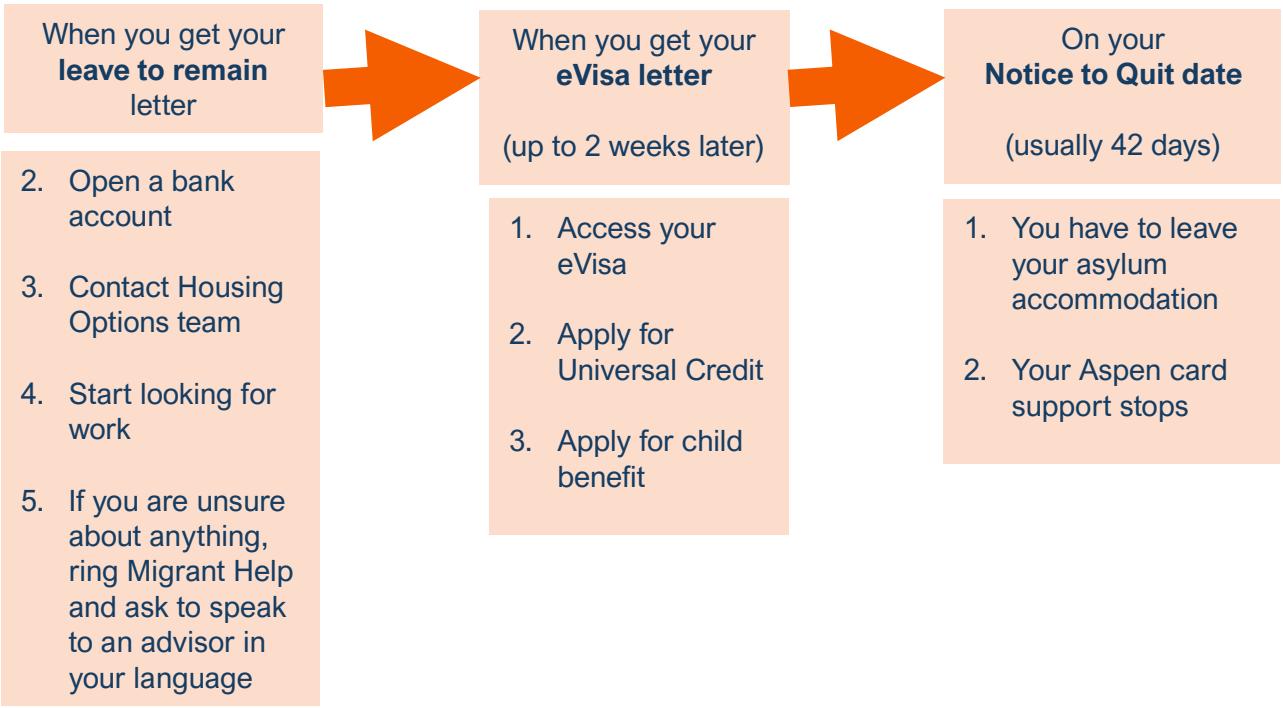
2. Open a **bank account** You need a bank account to receive Universal Credit or payment from a job.

3. Claim **universal credit**. This is a monthly payment for people who have no income, or a low income. Claim this as soon as possible as you will need this to pay for rent and other expenses until you find work. If you don't have a bank account, you can still start the application.

4. Claim **child benefit** if you have children.

5. Look for **work**. If you are able to work, this is usually the best way to find acceptable accommodation and to have enough income.

6. Search for **housing**. You should start looking for accommodation urgently to avoid being left homeless. You should contact the Housing Options team at Rossendale Borough Council. If you have a medical condition or disability you should tell the housing team as soon as possible.



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Glossary

Leave to remain: This means the right to stay in the UK because you have been granted refugee status, or humanitarian protection etc.

eVisa: This is an on-line ID document that shows you have the right to live and work in the UK. You will not receive any other ID.

National Insurance Number (NINo) This is a number unique to you, that you need in order to work or claim benefits.

Share code: When you access your eVisa, you can generate **a share code**. You can give this to anyone who you want to have access to your eVisa.

Benefits: Payments made by the Government. The money comes from taxes paid by people who are working.

Universal credit: This is a benefit you can apply for if you are not working, or if you working for low pay. (It does not give you a lot of money. You will always be better off if you work.)

Child benefit: This is a benefit you can apply for if you have children under 18.

Personal Independence Payments: This is a benefit you can apply for if you have a serious health problem or disability.

Rossendale Borough Council (RBC): This is the Local Government organisation that covers Rossendale including Bacup, Rawtenstall, Haslingden. Rossendale Borough Council is responsible for housing and some other matters.

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Open a bank account

You need a bank account to receive Universal Credit payments or to receive your pay if you start working.

It is sometimes easier to set up an account with a digital bank e.g Revolut, Monzo or Starling. However some of these banks are not yet able to accept eVisas as proof of identity (only paper documents)

If you want a bank you can visit, some Councils recommend Lloyds bank, Bank of Scotland or Halifax bank.

You will need:

- Phone number and email address
- Proof of identity. E.g. eVISA
- Proof of address. This can be signed by your GP. Some branches (e.g. Lloyd's Rochdale) accept a letter signed by an employee of a charity that knows you, such as Rossendale Refugee Support Group. The letter needs to include:
    - Official heading of the GP or charity
    - The date
    - Your name and date of birth,
    - Your address,
    - A 'wet signature' (this means signed by a pen, not electronically)
    - The name, phone number and job of the person signing the letter.

If you need an address other than your asylum accommodation, you can use a website such as ProxyAddress: https://www.proxyaddress.org

Find a job

It is really important to find a job if you are able to work. It is very difficult to cover your rent and other expenses with Universal Credit. It can also be difficult to rent accommodation privately if you don't have a job.

The Job Centre can help you prepare, search and progress in work. The nearest Job Centre for Rossendale is at: 75 Bacup Road, Rawtenstall, BB4 7NH.
Telephone: 0800 169 0190. Textphone: 0800 169 0314.

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The organisation 'Rossendale Works' provides free mentoring and support for people looking for work: https://www.activelancashire.org.uk/projects/rossendale-works
You can also contact Rosendale Works directly. Contact Paul on 07732 156060 or pbecouarn@activelancashire.org.uk

Claim Universal Credit

This is a monthly payment for people who cannot work, are out of work or who are on a low income. Claim this as soon as possible as you will need it to pay for rent and other expenses until you find work. You can find out how much you will receive here: **https://www.turn2us.org.uk**

To apply you will need:

- Your bank account details
- An email address
- Access to a phone
- Proof of your identity e.g. your eVisa

You will need to provide information on

- Any disability or health condition that affects your ability to work
- Any savings you may have
- Any money you are earning (payslips)
- Where you are living and how much rent you pay)

How to apply

- Most people apply on-line. https://www.universal-credit.service.gov.uk/start
- You can also get free help from the Universal Credit helpline **0800 328 5644**
- Or you can use the Citizens Advice 'Help to Claim Service', which provides translators: **0800 144 8444** (Monday to Friday 08.00-18.00) (Calls are free)
- You can get face to face help from the Job Centre.
- Or ask at RRSG for a Universal Credit Information leaflets in your own language.

If you have children, claim child benefit

Claim this as soon as you can.
Ask for it to be backdated to the date that you claim asylum. It can be backdated to this date, if:

- You apply within three months of being granted refugee status
- The application is made in the name of the parent who was the main asylum applicant.

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Search for housing

Unfortunately there is a housing crisis across England. Rents are high, and there are a lot of people looking for housing. For example, in Rossendale, there are hundreds of people waiting for housing. Very sadly some people are unable to find housing, and have to sleep outside, on the street. As a refugee you will have the same chance of finding housing as local people.

Most people have to find their own place to live, and the Council cannot give them accommodation. Many people find that when they have to leave their asylum accommodation, they do not yet have somewhere to stay. Many people find they need to stay with a friend.

When you have found somewhere to rent, you can get some help with your rent through Universal Credit. The amount is based on the 'local housing allowance'. This is different in different areas: https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/search.aspx. The amount is usually not as much as you will want. For example in Rossendale if you are single and under 35, the amount you will get is £67.08 a week.

What should you do when you get leave to remain?

1. As soon as possible, contact the Housing Options Team at Rossendale Council. You should do this even if you are planning to move away from Rossendale.
   Telephone 01706 217777 during office hours
   Email: housingoptions@rossendalebc.gov.uk
   Or fill in the on-line form **enquiry form**
   If you are offered an appointment with the Housing Options team and you don't speak English well, it is a good idea to take someone with you to translate.
   There is more information here: https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/housing-homelessness/housing-options-contact-details.

2. If you have a disability or serious **health problem**, tell the Housing Options team about this, and get evidence from your doctor.

3. **Start looking** for somewhere to stay. Read our information sheet 'Finding somewhere to rent'.

4. If you want to stay in or near Rossendale, **apply for social housing**. However, there is very little available, and most people wait months or years before they can get this. It is definitely NOT an option for when you leave your asylum accommodation.

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How can you find somewhere to stay?

When you have to leave your asylum accommodation, the choices you have depend on your circumstances:

- If you have children living with you, or you have a serious medical condition or a disability, the Council can offer you emergency accommodation (see below)
- If you are under 25, the Council may be able to help you find supported accommodation.
- If you speak English, you can apply to 'Refugees at Home' for temporary accommodation: You can read about this here, and find an on-line application form: https://refugeesathome.org/get-involved/i-need-a-room/
- Otherwise if you are over 25, in Rossendale you usually just have these choices:
  - Renting somewhere privately. Read our information sheet 'Finding somewhere to rent'
  - Staying with a friend. This is what many people do.

If you want to move away from Rossendale, you can do that. Rossendale Council may still offer you some help (see below). The only Council likely to help you is Rossendale. If you move to a different area, the Council there is very unlikely to be able to help. Occasionally people have found accommodation in hostels in different cities. We do not have information about what is available in other areas.

What can the Council do for you?

- If you find somewhere to rent privately, sometimes Rossendale Council can provide **advance payments** to help you rent. These include a 'deposit' or 'bond', and a month's rent in advance. If you are moving to a different part of the country, you can still ask Rossendale Council for this. Other councils have no responsibility for helping you.
- In some cases, Rossendale Council can offer **emergency accommodation**, but ONLY IF they agree that you are homeless AND in 'priority need'. They may decide you are in 'priority need' because you have a serious medical condition or a disability, or because you have a child under 18 living with you. Unfortunately the emergency accommodation is often disappointing, for example a room in a hotel or hostel, usually in a different town. It is very important not to refuse what you are offered, or the Council may no longer be able to help you.
- If you are **aged 16-25**, Rossendale Council may be able to help you find supported accommodation.

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If you are homeless tonight

In Rossendale, the best option is usually to find a friend to stay with. You could also contact www.thestreetlink.org.uk. You could contact the Rossendale Council Housing Options team (details above) but they are unlikely to be able to help. If you are Muslim, you could try contacting a local Mosque.

If you are outside the Rossendale area, there may be different options, e.g. homeless hostels.

Tip: Apply for a UK driving licence

A UK driving licence can be useful as ID. For example it can help you with opening a bank account. If you apply for a driving licence, this it come quite quickly. It costs £34. Apply on line here: https://www.gov.uk/apply-first-provisional-driving-licence