

Organisations that can help you:

Your social worker and foster carer (if you have one)

Asylum Justice

asylumjustice.org.uk
029 2049 9421

Welsh Refugee Council

welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk
029 20489 800

TGP Cymru

www.trosgynnal.org.uk
029 2039 6974

Ethnic Youth Support Team (EYST)

eyst.org.uk
01792 466980/1

Cardiff City of Sanctuary

cardiff.cityofsanctuary.org
029 2048 2478

Swansea City of Sanctuary

swansea.cityofsanctuary.org
07496 172895

Children's Commissioner for Wales

www.childcomwales.org.uk
0808 801 1000

Remember that the police in Wales are here to help you. Don't be afraid to contact them. If it is an emergency, call 999. Otherwise, you can call 101 to speak to the police.

Other guides in this series:

- ▶ **Child First – A Guide to Rights and Entitlements for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children**
- ▶ **Child First – A Guide to applying to Stay in Wales for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children**

Find out more about children's rights and the law as it affects children in Wales on the Children's Legal Centre Wales Website
www.childrenslegalcentre.wales

✉ childrenslegalcentre@swansea.ac.uk
☎ 01792 295399
🐦 @ChildLegalWales


Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe
Hillary Rodham Clinton
School of Law | Ysgol y Gyfraith


Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government


Child first

A Guide to Being Looked After for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Information about 'being looked after' if you've come to Wales without your family and you're under 18

This is one of three guides designed to help you. You should read all three of them.

Canolfan Gyfreithiol y Plant
Children's Legal Centre



If you're under 18 and you've come to Wales without your family, you will be looked after by the local authority, also known as the council.

My rights when I'm being looked after

All children in Wales have rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These rights apply to you if you're being 'looked after' by a **local authority** (the organisation that looks after the area of Wales where you live).

- ▶ Decisions taken by adults about you should be made in your 'best interests'
- ▶ Your views should be listened to and taken into account when decisions are made
- ▶ Your language, culture and religion should be respected
- ▶ You should be kept safe from harm

A decision that is 'in your best interests' is a decision taken by adults which takes into account all the relevant circumstances, including your views. It may not always be the decision you want.

Being 'looked after' – what does it mean?

You are 'looked after' if you're under 18 and the local authority organises a place for you to live and be cared for.

Once you are 'looked after', the local authority will arrange for you to have a social worker. A social worker is employed by the local authority and is there to support you while you are being looked after, and to make sure you are safe and that your well-being is being taken care of. Your social worker can't make decisions about whether you can stay in the UK, but they can help you with things like getting medical treatment, organising education or training, or with finding community support for you while you're living in Wales.

The local authority must:

- ▶ Make sure you have food to eat and clothes to wear
- ▶ Find out what other things you need for your health, education and care

If you are under 18, there are some decisions that should be made by whoever has parental responsibility for you. But you should be involved in all decisions about you.

You will be looked after until you are 18. If you are allowed to stay in the UK and have been 'looked after' for 13 weeks or more, you can get ongoing support beyond the age of 18.

Your place to live

You could live in a 'family' environment with a foster carer, or in a children's home with other young people. If you are 16 or 17, you might be given somewhere to live that is more independent.

- ▶ Wherever you live, it must be safe for you.
- ▶ You will be expected to respect and follow the rules where you are living to keep everyone safe
- ▶ You will be supported by adults whichever type of accommodation is arranged for you

Your Care and Support Plan

The services that the local authority will organise for you will be included in a Care and Support plan. This document will include:

- ▶ The support you need to make your asylum claim or deal with other immigration issues
- ▶ Details about your education and how you would like to progress and develop
- ▶ Any health problems that need to involve a doctor or dentist or other health professional
- ▶ Any needs you have in relation to your identity and culture
- ▶ What the outcomes should be for you
- ▶ Help you may need to develop independent living skills in preparation for becoming an adult
- ▶ Who is responsible for making sure your needs are met, and helping you to achieve your outcomes

Thinking about life as an adult

If you've been looked after for 13 weeks before you are 18, the local authority can continue to support you as you become an adult, if you would like this.

Your social worker will work with you to prepare a Pathway Plan, and will explain to you what this Plan is and how it will help you.

If you aren't entitled to support once you are 18, or you don't want it, you may still be able to get some assistance but this will depend on your right to stay in the UK.

Getting your voice heard

When you become looked after, you should be told about your right to 'advocacy'. This is an independent service that can help you explain your problems with the help of a professional who is there to represent your views.

- ▶ When you are looked after, you should be able to access advocacy services at any time
- ▶ Advocacy can help with any issue you have and aims to help you resolve your problem.

If things don't go well

If you don't agree with the way you are being looked after or something isn't going well, you can complain. Advocacy may help you make your complaint.

- ▶ Every local authority has a complaints process. Ask your social worker or foster carer to tell you about it.
- ▶ If the local authority doesn't deal with your complaint properly, you may be able to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman. Ask your social worker to tell you about it.