

Key messages for People Leaving Contingency Accommodation

The journey towards living independently after someone receives their asylum decision from the Home Office can be challenging. It is very important that people have realistic expectations and that they have a good understanding of what they need to do to help themselves to move forward positively. These are some of the key messages that people should understand and think about:

Once you receive a decision on your application, you will have less than two months to leave Home Office provided accommodation, and you will be required to leave on the date given. Do not wait to hear from the Home Office to prepare for moving on – start planning now.

You will need to move to your own accommodation immediately on leaving the Home Office provided accommodation. You are very unlikely to be provided with accommodation by the Council unless it is decided that you meet 'priority need' criteria (e.g., children, or people with a serious medical condition). Your [local housing authority](#) will determine if you meet 'priority need' criteria.

Check that all the details for your eVisa are correct and report problems immediately following this process [Report an error with your eVisa - GOV.UK](#). If you do not have a BRP or eVisa or if your negative decision is under appeal, you cannot be immediately evicted. Contact [Migrant Help](#) for assistance as once you leave, you won't be allowed to come back.

Keep in regular contact with your solicitor if you have one. Do not ignore any correspondence.

Plan and prepare to make your own arrangements. You are unlikely to be given a council house – there is a housing shortage in the UK and there are years-long waiting lists for council houses.

Hertfordshire is an expensive county to live in – consider what might be affordable for you. Meanwhile, find out what's going on in your area and visit groups at the local community centre. You will be better prepared if you speak to people in the area.

Be aware that criminals are targeting people leaving the hotels by initially appearing to offer help. Make sure that you do not sign any legal documents without having had someone professionally translate for you. Check identification and be sure that an organisation that is legitimate before committing to anything. Do not leave with someone you are not sure about.



Preparing Asylum Seekers to Move Out of Contingency Properties

PLAN AND PREPARE AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE	
Actively look for housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for independent accommodation and consider all options – e.g., private rental, sharing with others, living with friends, renting a room. • Get housing information and advice from the local District or Borough.
Prepare for employment, even if you currently are not allowed to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a resume/CV. Start looking at jobs, get interview practice. • Research, use and visit community resources in the area, e.g. libraries and faith groups, local support organisations. • Look for volunteering opportunities – these will help your English, build your CV, and may lead to work. • The EON programme (Referral forms - EELGA SMP) is now only available to residents living in East Herts with the following immigration statuses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hong Kong BN(O) visa holders; • former Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children now 18+ with permission to work; • Ukrainian schemes (Homes4Ukraine, Ukraine Family Scheme, Ukraine Extension Scheme); • those here under the UK Resettlement Scheme (including Community Sponsorship Scheme, Mandate Resettlement Scheme); • Vulnerable Persons and Vulnerable Children’s Resettlement Schemes visa holders; and • Other Resettled refugees e.g. Afghan visa scheme holders
Improve your English skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for online and free resources, e.g. search for ESOL at Step2Skills • Libraries have free access to computers, the internet, books, newspapers. • For people who have been in the UK for more than 6 months a class in the contingency property or local college may be available.
Organise your finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will need a bank account - open one asap as Aspen cards expire after decision. Banks need ID and evidence of a fixed address. The address can be the hotel/property, but many banks also want a BRP/eVisa. Don't give up if a bank rejects you, others are more understanding and accommodating. • Work out how much you are likely to earn from employment or benefits – Benefits calculators - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). • Apply for Universal Credit (and possibly other welfare benefits) Claiming Universal Credit and other benefits if you are a refugee - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). The Money Advice Unit service can help.

**Make sure you
have access to
healthcare**

- Make sure that you are registered with a local GP. When you leave the accommodation, register with a new GP surgery in your new area. Keep your NHS number so that your health record goes transfers with you.
- Download the [NHS app](#). This may give you access to health records, help with booking and managing appointments, ordering repeat prescriptions. Most people have phones but ask for support to use if not able to do so independently. As their English improves, they will need less assistance.
- Make sure you have notes on your health condition available. If you move to another area, it will be helpful to have some notes to give to the next healthcare professionals that you see.
- If you take medication, make sure that you have enough in the run up to your move out date.

Process Flow for Asylum Seekers leaving Contingency Properties



