

# From No Status to Status – managing transition



# A Grant of status

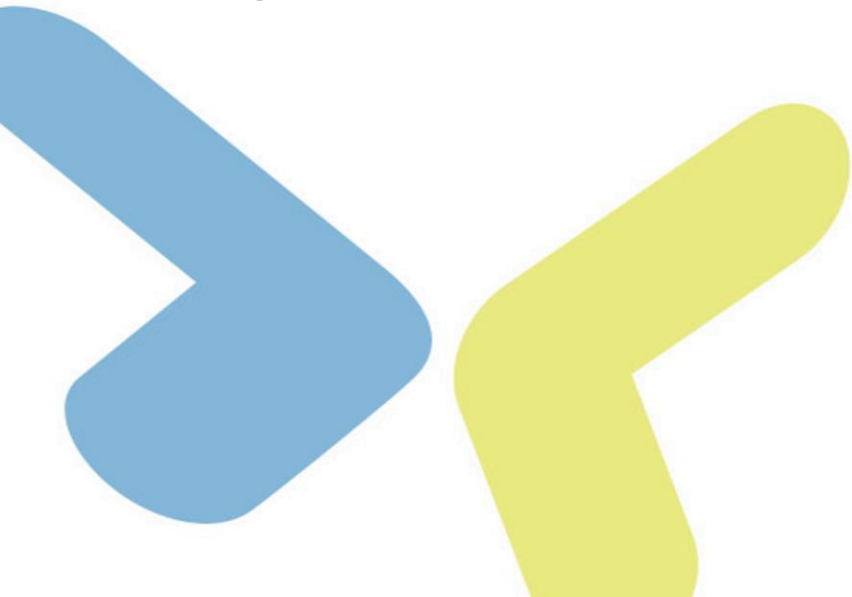
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- People in the immigration & asylum system usually spend a long time (sometimes years) waiting for a decision.
- Attaining some kind of immigration status becomes the goal & may be difficult to see beyond that.
- However, a grant of status is not the answer to all a person's problems but is often the start of new challenges.
- Planning for & positively managing the transition can help people to move forwards.



# Planning & Preparation

- People without immigration status may find it hard to find the mental capacity to think beyond getting status;
- They may be very busy managing basic survival;
- However, they should be encouraged to plan & prepare for life after a grant of status



# Preparation – Adult Education & work experience

- Most people without status will not qualify for adult education
- People seeking asylum will be eligible for adult education if they have been waiting for a decision for 6 months or more
- Lots of community organisations run free courses – English conversation, First Aid or others & may take on those with no status
- Preparation for Higher Education – course open to those seeking asylum - Reconnect
- People with no immigration status CAN volunteer. They can be remunerated for expenses but not paid.

# Other prep

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- Ensure registered with a GP & health conditions on record
- Those seeking asylum can open bank accounts
- Research – what do they want to do?



# Granted status – what now?

- Check BRP/status documents correct. Check online status.
  - Non-EEA [Prove your right to work to an employer: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/proof-your-right-to-work-to-an-employer)
  - EEA [View and prove your immigration status: get a share code - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/view-and-prove-your-immigration-status-get-a-share-code)
  - Report BRP problems [Biometric residence permits \(BRPs\): Report a problem with your new BRP - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biometric-residence-permits-brps-report-a-problem-with-your-new-brp)
- If errors on a refugee BRP, can apply for extension of asylum support while awaiting corrected BRP. Email [positivemoveon@migranthelpuk.org](mailto:positivemoveon@migranthelpuk.org)

## As soon as possible...

- Open a bank account if don't already have one
- Apply for benefits - Universal Credit or similar – Refugees don't need a BRP to apply for UC
- If facing homelessness, apply to local authority
- National Insurance number – Refugees should have one. If don't have one, application for benefits should trigger application for one.



# Soonish...

- If granted Refugee status, apply for Refugee Integration Loan (if required)
- If granted Refugee status & have children, apply for backdated Child Benefit
- Any status – apply for any secondary benefits – e.g. Child Benefit, PIP, etc.
- Local authority guides to services & support for newly granted refugees



# Finding accommodation

- Local authority accommodation only usually available to those in priority need – generally those with children or with substantial physical or mental health issues;
- Local authorities have duties under Homelessness Reduction Act to work with people to try to prevent homelessness – look at options
- Specialist schemes – room rental, hosting, accommodation – usually very small
- Short term options – night shelter?

# Offers of accommodation

- Managing expectations – shortages of accommodation, high likelihood of relocation
- Worries about relocation & further upheaval
- Must understand consequences of refusing an offer of accommodation
- Offer help to link with services in new area if relocated
- Think of it as “something for now” if want to move elsewhere later

# Private Rented Sector

- Shortage of landlords willing to let to those in receipt of benefits
- Problems of references, rent in advance etc
- Rent deposit schemes, Discretionary Housing Payments, Refugee Integration Loan
- Consider if a move to another area might make it easier to find property



# Accommodation - Understanding responsibilities

- Budgeting for rent payments, utilities etc.
- Who is responsible for bills?
- Council Tax
- TV licence
- Basic skills – cooking etc.



# Employment

- Lots of Refugee specific employment support – some government funded, some not
- Other generalist employment support programmes open to all
- Job centre courses & support
- Discourage cash in hand work



# Family reunion

- Refugees & those with protection status have a “right” to family reunion for certain types of family member
- Still costs involved in application, flights etc
- No legal aid for family reunion
- For other categories of migrant, bringing partners or children to the UK can be difficult & expensive, though not always impossible
- Consequences of leaving family applications too long – very difficult to bring in children once they turn 18

# Register to Vote

- Having immigration status in the UK does not automatically entitle you to vote
- However, Commonwealth citizens with immigration status can vote in both national & local elections
- EU citizens with status can vote in local elections only
- As well as having a say in local matters, being on the electoral register is good for other things, such as ID or credit score
- [Register to vote - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)



# Longer term goals

- University – Refugees entitled to home student rates & student finance immediately, other types of status do not have the same entitlement
- Adult education – very accessible to migrants in London
- Re-qualification – accreditation of overseas qualifications, IELTS courses, specialist help
- Applying for a refugee travel document





# Final Points

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- Importance of making an in-time application for extension of leave
- Children born post-grant of status – apply for leave in line or wait until time for extension?
- Mental health – ensure registered with a GP, encourage to get support if necessary

