

HOW TO SUPPORT TRANSITIONS TO FURTHER EDUCATION FOR REFUGEE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE UK

ADVICE FOR SIXTH FORMS AND COLLEGES

This advice sheet provides sixth forms and colleges with key information about how to help refugee and asylum-seeking young people reach further education (FE). It accompanies the research report [Education Transitions for Refugee and Asylum-Seeking Young People in the UK](#).

KEY FACTS: RIGHTS AND ENTITLEMENTS TO FE IN ENGLAND¹

Under UK law, refugee and asylum-seeking pupils of compulsory school age have the same entitlement to full-time education as other UK pupils, and schools should not ask directly about a child's immigration status.² However, after compulsory education, immigration status and age can affect young people's eligibility for FE study.



Immigration status (for those under 19)

Young people between the ages of 16 and 18 are eligible for funding from the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).



The intersection of immigration status and being over 19

Once young people turn 19, their access to FE may be restricted as a result of immigration status or ordinary residency requirements. Additionally, many young refugees and asylum seekers may struggle to evidence their eligibility.

'NO STUDY' CONDITIONS

While the 'no study' conditions that were introduced in 2018 have led to some restrictions to access to education, being Appeal Rights Exhausted (ARE) does **not** automatically equate to being unable to study. For more information on the 'no study' condition, please see Coram Children's Legal Centre's [fact sheet on no study conditions and immigration bail](#).

NOTE: Always check Coram Children's Legal Centre's [fact sheet on access to further education](#) for detailed and up to date information. The fact sheet outlines migrant young people's access to further education at different ages and confirms how immigration and residency statuses and sources of support (social service and Asylum Support) further impact on eligibility for ESFA funding.

REACHING FURTHER EDUCATION: HOW TO HELP

Lots can be done to help young refugees and asylum seekers access FE. There are actions that you as an **individual can take now**, and things your **institution can do in the longer term**. Below are **5** challenges young people may face, and how you and your institution can help.

1 CHALLENGE: IMMIGRATION STATUS AND AGE

 MECHANISM FOR HELP	 THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW	 THINGS YOUR INSTITUTION CAN DO
 <p>BURSARIES AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT</p>	<p>If an applicant is over the age of 19 and is ineligible for state funding, direct them towards bursaries and financial support rather than rejecting them outright. See the grant search tool from Turn2Us.</p>	<p>Incorporate in-house bursaries for refugee and asylum-seeking pupils as part of the range of support services offered to students from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p>
 <p>ACCESS</p>		<p>Do not restrict access to FE courses if a young person has a time-limited status that is due to expire before the end of the course; young people can reapply for an extension of status (or make a fresh claim) during their time at college. As long as this is made in time, this should not affect their eligibility to study.</p>

2 CHALLENGE: POVERTY AND DISADVANTAGE

 MECHANISM FOR HELP	 THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW	 THINGS YOUR INSTITUTION CAN DO
 <p>FINANCIAL SUPPORT</p>	<p>If a student is not eligible for sixth form or college hardship funding, support them in applying to local educational and hardship grants to meet costs of travel, educational resources, and equipment. RSN provides a helpful summary of education and hardship funders.</p>	<p>Provide in-house financial support to young people struggling to cover transport costs or to pay for educational resources and equipment.</p>

CHALLENGE: INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE(AT
ENROLMENT
STAGE)

 MECHANISM FOR HELP	 THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW	 THINGS YOUR INSTITUTION CAN DO
 <p>CLEAR INFORMATION AND ADVICE</p>	<p>Check Coram Children’s Legal Centre’s fact sheet on access to FE before responding to queries from refugees and asylum seekers regarding their eligibility to study.</p> <p>Regularly check updates to ESFA guidance.</p> <p>Recognise that being ARE or being a refused asylum seeker does not automatically equate to being unable to study.</p> <p>Familiarise yourself with the challenges that refugee and asylum-seeking young people face, and ask your institution for additional training and upskilling.</p>	<p>Ensure that there is a trained focal point within the admissions team who can respond to queries from refugee and asylum-seeking students.</p> <p>Provide or source training for admissions and student support staff on the rights and entitlement of young refugees and asylum seekers.</p>

CHALLENGE: LIMITED PROGRESSION OPTIONS FOR 19+ STUDENTS

 MECHANISM FOR HELP	 THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW	 THINGS YOUR INSTITUTION CAN DO
 <p>FLEXIBILITY AND DISCRETION</p>	<p>Speak with refugee and asylum-seeking applicants who, on paper, do not fully meet the entry criteria for a course. Consider studies completed in countries of origin and additional barriers that they have overcome while progressing their learning in the UK that demonstrate skills and resilience.</p>	<p>Develop a policy for using discretion to support refugees and asylum seekers to access suitable FE courses, recognising that their learning has been interrupted and they may have had to re-focus on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) for their first 1-3 years of study in the UK (and may therefore be aged 19 or over when attempting to access other non-ESOL FE programmes).</p> <p>Explore and offer alternative pathways for older students (21 and above) whose access to full-time education may be restricted due to their sources of financial support (for instance, Universal Credit) but who may only just be completing ESOL and in a position to progress into vocational or other academic programmes of study.</p>

CHALLENGE: CONTEXTUAL FACTORS**MECHANISM
FOR HELP****UNDERSTANDING
AND
COMPASSION****THINGS YOU
CAN DO NOW**

Recognise that elevated absence rates can be the result of complex issues, including having regular asylum-related appointments and/or struggling with mental health and emotional wellbeing. Do not quickly move to exclude on this basis, but rather ensure a package of support is rapidly put in place to help improve attendance.

For more details, contact [Refugee Support Network](#) or [Unicef UK](#).

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1 For information on Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, please visit [UKCISA](#).

2 See Coram Children's Legal Centre fact sheet on compulsory education for more information. Available at: childrenslegalcentre.com/resources/school-education-migrant-children/