

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

ADVICE FOR SCHOOLS

This advice sheet provides schools 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



BURSARIES AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT



THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW

Young refugees and asylum seekers progressing to FE from school are likely to be under 19 and so eligible for state funding. Support young refugees and asylum seekers with finding and providing evidence on their eligibility for study.

If supporting older or former students, who are ineligible for state funding for FE, help them to identify and apply to bursaries or other forms of financial support. Check out the [grant search tool from Turn2Us](#).

2 CHALLENGE: RELUCTANCE FROM FE INSTITUTIONS



MECHANISM FOR HELP



ADVICE AND SUPPORT WITH THE APPLICATION PROCESS



THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW





Help young people to check their eligibility for courses at FE institutions and challenge wrong decisions or discrimination.






Encourage asylum seekers or refugees to apply to multiple post-16 institutions as early as possible in the academic year.

Some young people's GCSE grades may not be an appropriate indicator of academic potential. In these cases, send a follow-up email to a senior member of staff at the relevant FE institution with more information on the





student's English level, predicted grades, any SEND needs, and the speed of academic progress made since arriving in the UK. Consider sending marked work to demonstrate English abilities.

Most FE institutions will request a reference. Include the information listed above, and request that the application be overseen by a senior staff member. Institutions are more likely to exercise discretion if they are aware of the background of young people and have access to detailed professional judgements from schools.

 MECHANISM FOR HELP	 THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW	 THINGS YOUR INSTITUTION CAN DO
 <p>CLEAR INFORMATION AND ADVICE</p>	<p>When advising young people, ensure you have up to date and accurate information about their rights and entitlements to FE by checking Coram Children’s Legal Centre’s fact sheet on access to FE.</p>	<p>Ensure that there is a trained focal point at the school who can respond to queries from refugee and asylum-seeking students and help them navigate educational challenges.</p> <p>Ensure that the availability of additional support for refugees and asylum seekers is advertised and that young people know who to approach.</p> <p>Run training or awareness-raising initiatives for all school staff about the challenges young people can face in progressing in their education, and how to help.</p>

 MECHANISM FOR HELP	 THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW	 THINGS YOUR INSTITUTION CAN DO
 <p>EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE SUPPORT</p>	<p>Refer young refugees into educational mentoring programmes or English/ English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) groups.</p> <p>Liaise and build relationships with colleges in order to better understand the range of FE options – especially ESOL courses, Level 2 and 3 courses, and Access courses.</p> <p>Work with young people to set realistic goals for their future studies and careers, based on their skillset and previous education.</p>	<p>Provide small group and one-to-one education support in school.</p> <p>Improve English as an Additional Language (EAL) provision within school.</p>
 <p>LONGER TERM PLANNING</p>	<p>Invite voluntary sector organisations or community groups to run tailored guidance and pathway planning sessions for young refugees and asylum seekers as early as possible.</p> <p>When advising young people about pathways through FE, keep in mind post-19 funding implications if they are embarking on a three-year course. Liaise with FE institutions to understand what their ‘three-year plan’ for that student would be.</p>	<p>Organise school trips or FE taster days to support refugees and asylum seekers to better understand the options available.</p>

CHALLENGE: MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

 MECHANISM FOR HELP	 THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW	 THINGS YOUR INSTITUTION CAN DO
 <p>STRONG PASTORAL AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT</p>	<p>Link young people to befriending or mentoring schemes run by voluntary sector organisations.</p>	<p>Ensure that strong pastoral and in-school mental health support is available. Draw on services that provide youth-focused counselling and well-being activities.</p> <p>Be particularly mindful of key pressure points, such as exams, onward application, and enrolment periods.</p>

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/