

NATIONAL TRANSFER SCHEME

Your guide to the
National Transfer Scheme



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London Asylum Seekers Consortium

WHAT

Children looking for safety often arrive in a few of the same places in the UK.

These areas become busy and do not have enough homes, schools, hospitals or social workers to support all of the children living there.

When someone is under 18 years old, without parents to care for them, they become a 'Looked After Child' with the Local Authority.

If you are looked after, you will have a social worker who is like a parent, looks after your interests, helps you with day-to-day life and provides things you need like food, clothing and housing.

The National Transfer Scheme helps children move to a different area so that they can have a new home and the support and care that they need to start a new life in the UK.

WHY

If you move to a new area through the NTS, it is not your fault or because of anything you have done wrong.

The Local Authority where you are now does want to care for you, but because there are a high number of children in a similar situation in their area, they want to make sure you move somewhere that you can get the full care and support that you need.

WHERE

Like your home country, the UK is made up of different areas and districts.

Your new home could be anywhere in the United Kingdom including Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Unfortunately you cannot choose where you are moved to because each area can only take a certain number of children. The NTS works on a turn taking system, one region at a time. You will be told in advance where you will be moving to and transport will be arranged for you to get there.

You can search on the Internet about the area you will be moving to, but it might not always be accurate. You can ask your social worker to help you find out more about your new home, what is in the local area and any questions you have.



WHEN

The time it takes for you to move can vary.

We aim to help you move to a new home within **10 working days** (not including weekends) but sometimes it can take longer.

Lots of children arrive in the UK, and it can take time to find enough homes. We are working hard to move you quickly and safely.

You will be cared for while you wait and given the things you need including somewhere safe to live, food and medicine.



FAMILY & FRIENDS

It's important to tell your social worker about any family you have in the UK so that they can try and find you a home near them if possible.

If you have family members who can take care of you, your social worker will meet with them and make sure it is safe for you to live there. This may take some time. If you can't live with your family, your social worker will try and help arrange for you to visit them sometimes.

If you have friends, maybe who you travelled to the UK with, you can tell your social worker. Again they will need to check it is safe for you to see them first. They will try and help you keep in contact and visit them sometimes depending on how far away they live.



HOUSING

Your new home might be with a family in their house which we call foster care or in a shared house with other young people.

This is called semi-independent accommodation. There would be staff there all the time or who come and visit for several hours or days each week to support you.

When you are under 18 you will not be allowed to live alone without support to help keep you safe. This may change when you are 18, depending on your situation at the time.



EDUCATION

Wherever your new home is, your social worker will help you access education at school or college as quickly as they can.

This will include learning English and maybe other subjects like Maths and IT depending on your level of English and what the education provider can offer. The school year runs from September to July in England and Wales (from August in Scotland).

Sometimes it can take a while for places to become available but there are other ways to learn while you wait.



RELIGION

It is important to speak to your social worker about your religion so that they can support you to access resources or a place of worship to be able to practice your religion.

If there isn't the right place of worship in your new area, your social worker will try and help you visit another area sometimes.



HEALTH

Your social worker will help you access health services including for your body, eyes, teeth and your mental health if you would like support with this.



ASYLUM CLAIM

It is important that you have an immigration solicitor to help with your asylum claim.

Your social worker will help you to find a solicitor when you move. You will receive an ID card from the Home Office which you must keep safe. It may take a while to receive this card, so don't worry if it takes some time.

You can also watch this film made by young people about what to expect from an immigration solicitor [youtube.com/watch?v=UyTOMYjpuHs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyTOMYjpuHs)



The Refugee Council is a charity with a specialist service for children seeking asylum. They can provide advice and information including about the asylum process. They have a very helpful booklet which helps explain the asylum process and the roles of different staff helping children claiming asylum in the UK including social workers.

Find out more information on their website [refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/services/childrens-advice](https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/services/childrens-advice) or freephone 0800 175 3499.



STILL WORRIED?

If you feel worried about anything to do with the NTS, speak to your social worker or someone else you trust like your foster carer or teacher.

You can also speak to an advocate. An advocate is a professional who will help and support you to have your wishes heard, help you understand your rights and get the support you need from the Local Authority. Coram Voice is a charity that offers advocacy services in the UK.



If you still feel like you aren't being listened to and have strong reasons why you don't want to move, you can try and get advice from a welfare solicitor. They are different from an immigration solicitor and specialise in getting the right support from the Local Authority.

You can try and find an immigration solicitor about your asylum claim on this website solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk, choosing 'immigration and changing countries' and entering your postcode. For a solicitor to help with the NTS and support from the Local Authority select 'social welfare, health and benefits'.

If your age is not being believed by the Home Office or the Local Authority, you can also speak to your social worker, foster carer, teacher or other professional you trust. There are some resources here that were made by young people to help explain age assessments, what the process is and what your rights are. You can find these online gmiau.org/speaking-out/children/age-assessments

THE FUTURE

Moving to an area does not mean you will be there forever.

When you become an adult and have more independence, you might be able to move to a different area for a job or education, depending on your immigration status.

It might take a bit of time for you to settle into your new area but there will be new opportunities for you, friends to make, activities to do and staff there to support you.

If you are interested in meeting other young people, taking part in social activities or sports like football, your social worker will try and help you find if there are any activities like this in your area that you could join.



Co-produced with young people involved
with the Norfolk in Care Council who have
experienced the NTS.