

Adjusting to a new way of living in Scotland can take time. This leaflet aims to help you understand life in Scotland. It provides brief information about some of the customs, behaviour, laws and rules which may differ from your home country.



Legal age restrictions

People are generally considered to be adults or of legal age after the age of 18. However, legal age for certain activities can vary as follows:

- Drinking alcohol – must be **18 years** or older
- Smoking tobacco – must be **18 years** or older
- Obtaining a driving licence – must be **17 years** or older
- Leaving education – must be **16 years** or older
- Sexual consent – must be **16 years** or older to have sexual relations

Children

- Parents are considered responsible for their children until the age of 18
- Young children should not be left unattended in public places or at home.
- Hitting or smacking children is not allowed

Smoking

- Smoking is not allowed anywhere you see this sign
- Smoking is not permitted in indoors or enclosed public places including offices, restaurants, bars and cinemas
- Smoking in a unpermitted area may result in a fine
- Smoking is permitted outside, in your own home or in your own vehicle, unless otherwise specified by your landlord or if the vehicle is used for business purposes



Alcohol

- Drinking alcohol in public places, such as on the street and in parks is not allowed. Doing so may result in a fine.

Knives

- Carrying a knife is illegal in Scotland. If you are stopped by the police and you are carrying a knife, it may result in arrest.
- Knives are not permitted in schools

Littering

- Littering or dropping rubbish or unwanted items on the street may result in a £50 fine.

Discrimination

- It is illegal to be treated, or to treat someone differently or discriminate against them because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- harassment is illegal and can lead to legal prosecution.
- If you feel you have been harassed, either verbally or physically, you should contact the police. You can also get help by speaking to someone at Scottish Refugee Council or contacting the Anti-Social Behaviour Task Force on 0800 027 3901

Violence against women

- Violence against women can include: domestic abuse, rape, sexual assault, prostitution, sexual exploitation and trafficking, childhood sexual abuse, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and honour crimes
- All women and girls in Scotland have a legal right not to be subjected to any form of violence against women
- Domestic abuse can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse and financial abuse
- Confidential help and support is available for anyone experiencing any form of violence or domestic abuse

Help and advice is available from organisations such as:

- Scottish Women's Aid Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0800 027 1234 (24hrs)
- National Rape and Sexual Assault Helpline: 08088 01 03 02
- Archway Glasgow: 0141 211 8175

Differences in customs and acceptable behaviour

Although some behaviour is not covered by law, Scottish customs and expectations may differ from your home country. These may include:

- Expectations about personal space and physical contact vary from country to country. In the UK people generally expect to be given some personal space in public to maintain a sense of comfort
- Gathering in large groups, particularly of young men, may be seen as intimidating.
- A common way to greet both men and women in the UK is to say 'hello' and/or offer a handshake

Driving in the UK

If you have applied for asylum in the UK and have not yet received leave to remain, you will no longer be able to apply for a UK driver's licence as of 25 March 2010.

If you have a valid access to a vehicle you must have:

- Current/valid driving licence
- Insurance for the vehicle
- Current/valid MOT certificate verifying your vehicle is safe
- Current/ valid road tax disc
- If you have a full valid driving licence from a country outside the UK and the documentary proof of this, you will be able to drive on your overseas licence for up to 12 months from the date you entered the UK.
- You could be legally prosecuted if you drive a vehicle when under the influence of alcohol or drugs

TV licences

- If you have a television you must buy a TV license.
- You can buy a TV license by calling **0300 790 6131**, online at www.tvlicensing.co.uk or in person at any shop with this sign:

