

Section 4 support



scottish
refugee
council

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Section 4 support - English

What is Section 4 support?



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

If your asylum claim is fully refused, the asylum support you receive from the Home Office will stop. You will receive a letter from the Home Office informing you of this. However, you may qualify for Section 4 support. Section 4 support is short-term support provided by the Home Office but it is different than the support you were receiving previously in several ways:

- 1. Azure card:** You will not receive any cash. Your weekly support will be loaded onto an 'Azure' payment card. The Azure card can be used in certain shops including Asda and Tesco to buy essential items e.g. food, toiletries, cleaning items.
- 2. Shared housing:** If you are single, you will need to share a flat with other people of the same gender;
- 3. No choice housing:** You will only get one offer of a flat in Section 4 accommodation. If you refuse to take this offer for any reason, the Home Office may stop your support; and
- 4. No 'support-only' option available:** There is no option to make your own housing arrangements **and** receive Section 4 payment vouchers.

Who qualifies for Section 4 support?

Scottish Refugee Council can help you apply for Section 4 support if you are destitute and you qualify under any **one** of the following criteria:

- 1. Fresh asylum claim/Human Rights Claim:** If your legal representative has lodged a fresh claim for asylum or a late appeal. The claim will need to have been sent already and we will need a copy of all the papers that were sent;
- 2. Judicial Review:** If your legal representative has lodged a Judicial Review with the Court of Session. Please bring us a copy of all the papers relating to this from your lawyer;
- 3. Unfit to Travel:** If there is a medical reason that prevents you from taking the journey to your home country. The criteria for this are very strict. You will only qualify if you are over 7 months pregnant or if you have a written statement from a doctor stating that you are "Unfit to Travel". Most medical problems will not be considered serious enough;
- 4. No Safe Route:** It is very difficult to meet this criteria. According to the Home Office, there is currently no country to which this applies. Our advisers or your legal representative will be able to tell you if this has changed; or

5. Voluntary Return: If you can prove you are taking steps to return to your home country. (See below “Travelling back to your home country?”)

Evidence of destitution

To qualify for Section 4 support you must be without any other form of support. If you have been helped by friends, family or a religious group you will need to explain why they cannot continue supporting you.

If this is your situation, please bring us letters from the people who have been helping you stating who they are, how they have been helping you, for how long and why they cannot continue to help. This last point is very important.

How long does the Section 4 application take?

It can take a number of weeks for the Home Office to process your application. We will check the progress regularly and contact you as soon as we know the decision, so make sure we have your contact details and tell us if they change. It is not necessary for you to come into our office to check on the progress of your application. If you wish, you can telephone our free phone number 0800 085 6087 (free from a landline but not from a mobile).

If you are accepted for Section 4 support, you will be contacted by your accommodation provider to arrange a date to go to the accommodation where you will live.

The representative will show you the accommodation, give you their contact details and ask you to sign an accommodation agreement. Your accommodation provider is responsible for maintenance of your accommodation. If you have questions about your accommodation, contact your representative using the details they have provided to you.

Appeals

If your application is refused, we may be able to lodge an appeal on your behalf. This will depend on the reasons the Home Office gives for refusing support. The appeal will go to an independent body called the First Tier Tribunal (Asylum Support) based in Croydon, London. You can ask to attend the appeal if you want to argue your case. The Home Office will pay for your journey and accommodation if you tell them you wish to attend.

Travelling back to your home country?

If you are interested in finding out about help to return to your home country, you can contact the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) at their Glasgow office at the following address:

International Office of Migration (IOM)

38 Queen Street, Glasgow

For an appointment telephone: 0141 548 8116

Suggestions and complaints

Your feedback is always welcome and helps us to improve our information and services.

If you wish to make a suggestion about how we could improve our information or services, please complete our feedback form. You can obtain a form from our staff at our office or download it from our website:

http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/0183/Complaint_leaflet_English_March_2010.pdf

Please return the completed form to our office.

You can also complain to the Office of the Immigration Commissioner (OISC):

<http://www.oisc.gov.uk/>