



Home Office

Asylum
Consequences
of Behaviour

Understanding behaviours and expectations in the UK

A guide for asylum seekers

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Living in the UK

You are in the United Kingdom (UK) because you are seeking asylum.

We understand that coming to a new country can be difficult, and that laws and customs here may be different from your home country.

In the UK, there are laws that protect everyone's safety, dignity and rights. It is important that you understand them, because not following UK law can have serious consequences. You could get in trouble with the police, lose your asylum support, or it could affect your asylum claim.

This booklet will help you understand what is expected of you when living in the UK. These rules and expectations are not just for people seeking asylum, they apply to everyone living here.

If you have questions about anything in this booklet, speak to staff at your accommodation or contact Migrant Help on **0808 8010 503** or use their webchat here. You can also Email Migrant help here.

If you or someone you know needs help because of abuse, violence or crime, there is a list of organisations that can support you at the end of this booklet.

Gender equality

In the UK, men and women have equal rights. This is an important part of UK culture and is protected by law.

Women can:

- work and earn their own money
- study and go to school or university
- travel freely
- choose who they marry, or choose not to marry
- make their own decisions about their lives

Women do not need permission from a husband, father, brother or any other man to do any of these things.

Men and women are treated equally by the law, by employers, by schools and by services like hospitals and the police. It is against the law to treat someone unfairly because of their gender.

What is expected of you

Everyone in the UK is expected to treat men and women equally. Even if you are a family member, like a husband, father or brother, you must never:

- stop a woman from working or studying
- control what a woman wears or where she goes
- stop a woman from seeing friends or family
- make decisions for a woman without her agreement

What could happen if you do not follow these rules



Treating someone unfairly because of their gender can have serious consequences. If your behaviour is controlling or threatening, it may also be treated as domestic abuse, which is a crime. You could get into trouble with the police, lose your accommodation and support, and it could affect your asylum claim. There is more information about domestic abuse in the next section.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is when someone hurts, threatens, or controls their partner or family member. It can happen to anyone, regardless of their gender, age, or background.

Domestic abuse includes:

- physical violence – hitting, pushing, kicking, or any physical harm
- threats – saying you will hurt someone or making them afraid
- controlling behaviour – controlling someone's money, where they go, or who they can see
- emotional abuse – criticism, humiliation, or making someone feel worthless
- taking away documents – keeping someone's passport or identity documents from them

What is expected of you

You are expected to:

- treat your partner and family with respect
- let them make their own choices
- never physically or verbally abuse or control them



Domestic abuse is a serious crime in the UK. If you do any of the behaviours in the list, you could be arrested and go to prison, lose your accommodation and support, and it could affect your asylum claim.

If you are experiencing domestic abuse

You do not have to stay with someone who hurts or controls you. Help is available, and you will be treated with dignity and respect.

Reporting abuse will not negatively affect your asylum claim.

Domestic Abuse Helpline England: **0808 2000 247**

Women's Aid Scotland: **0800 027 1234**

Live Fear Free Helpline Wales: **0808 80 10 800**

Domestic Abuse Helpline Northern Ireland: **0808 802 1414**

In an emergency, always call **999**

If you are worried about your own behaviour, you can get help. Migrant Help can refer you to specialist support: **0808 8010 503**

Sex and consent

Consent means both people freely agree to sex or sexual contact.

In the UK, the law is clear and strict: both people must agree to sex or sexual contact of any kind. This means:

- both people must say yes freely, without threat or pressure
- someone can change their mind at any time, even if they said yes before
- if someone is asleep, drunk, or unable to respond, they cannot consent

Consent is needed in every situation. This means even if you are married or in a relationship with someone, they must consent to sex every time.

If you have sex with someone without their consent, this is called rape. Rape is a serious crime in the UK. You could go to prison, lose your support and accommodation, and it will affect your asylum claim.

What is expected of you

You are expected to:

- always make sure the other person freely and clearly agrees to sex or sexual contact
- never use threat, force or pressure to make someone have sex
- never try to have sex with someone who is asleep, drunk, or unable to consent clearly
- stop if they say no or change their mind

The legal age of consent

The legal age of consent in the UK is 16. This means that anyone under the age of 16 is considered a child and cannot legally agree to have sex.



Sex with someone under the age of 16 is a serious crime in the UK. There are no exceptions to this rule. Even if they say yes, it is still illegal. You could go to prison, lose your support and accommodation, and it will affect your asylum claim.

If this has happened to you

If you have experienced sexual abuse or assault, support is available. You will be treated with respect and dignity. Anyone of any age or gender can get help.

The numbers for Rape Crisis in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are available at the end of this booklet.

You can report to the police by calling **999**. Reporting will not negatively affect your asylum claim.

Respect in public

In the UK, people have different beliefs, religions, cultures, relationships and ways of life. You must treat others with respect, even if you disagree with their beliefs or how they live.

What is expected of you

When you are in public spaces, alone or with friends, you must never:

- make sexual comments to someone, even if you think it is a compliment
- whistle or make kissing noises at someone
- follow someone or block their path
- make rude or offensive gestures
- verbally abuse someone because of their gender, religion, or how they look

Taking photographs and videos

In the UK, we respect people's privacy. This means you should not take photographs or videos of someone without their consent.

It is a serious crime to:

- take sexual images of someone without their consent
- share sexual images of someone without their consent



If you do any of these things, you could be arrested and go to prison, lose your accommodation and support, and it could affect your asylum claim.

Getting help

If you have questions about anything you have read in this booklet or want more information, speak to staff at your accommodation.

If you think you may be a victim, or know someone who is, help is available. Getting help or reporting a crime will not negatively affect your asylum claim.

Emergency contacts

For emergencies or to report a crime:

Emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) **999**

Police (non-emergency) **101**

NHS urgent medical help **111**

Asylum support

For independent advice and support specifically for asylum seekers:

Migrant Help: **0808 8010 503** Webchat Here Email Migrant Help Here

Domestic abuse

If you are being hurt, threatened or controlled by a partner or family member:

www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

Domestic Abuse Helpline England: **0808 2000 247**

Women's Aid Scotland: **0800 027 1234**

Live Fear Free Helpline Wales: **0808 80 10 800**

Domestic Abuse Helpline Northern Ireland: **0808 802 1414**

Sexual abuse and rape

If you have experience sexual violence or assault:

www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Rape Crisis England and Wales: **0808 500 222**

Rape Crisis Scotland: **08088 01 03 02**

Rape Crisis Northern Ireland: **0800 0246 991**

Forced Marriage Unit: **020 7008 0151**

Mental health

If you are struggling with your mental health and need someone to talk to:

Samaritans: **116 123** / www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help

