

Quick Guide to Helping with an Asylum Claim

WARNING!

There *are* things that you can do to help, but you cannot provide 'immigration advice' unless you are regulated. If you do, you would be committing a criminal offence.

In order to provide immigration advice, you need to be trained and supervised. If you are interested in becoming trained, you can find out more about free training through Refugee Action's [Frontline Immigration Advice Project](#). There is a great need for people who are trained at Level 2 of OISC (the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner), which is casework level, and offers significant support to the work of immigration solicitors.

What exactly is 'Immigration Advice'? How does it differ from simply sharing information? The Right to Remain Toolkit has a clear and comprehensive explanation of what constitutes Legal Support (Taking action without giving legal advice) [here](#).

You may find that you are asked for help by someone whose asylum claim has been turned down. If so, make sure you understand what type of refusal it is. Is it a refusal of their initial claim, or of their appeal? The section on the [Asylum System](#) will help you understand this. Do they still have a solicitor, and is the solicitor still willing to continue on their case? If the answer to that is yes, then you may be able, with the consent of the asylum seeker, to clarify the situation with the solicitor, and allay any fears. Changing solicitor is never easy, as legal aid work is not well paid, and there are not enough legal aid solicitors. Unless there is a good reason to change, it's better to stick with the one that's dealing with the claim.

One area in which your help could be crucial is at appeal stage, when the asylum seeker has to attend an immigration tribunal. This can be a very stressful time for them, as their whole future hangs on the outcome. Having a friend to accompany them, sit with them while they wait – sometimes for hours – until their case is heard, and support them in court, can be the difference between success and failure. Judges often take note of the fact that there are British people there lending support to their case.

If the person you are helping is a Christian convert, or seeking asylum on the basis of persecution for their Christian faith, then [Helping Christian Converts with their Asylum Claim](#) will take you through the very practical ways you can support them.