

Beginners Immigration Glossary of Key Terms (May 2026)

Someone becomes **Appeals Rights Exhausted (ARE)** when their asylum claim has been refused, and you have no further options to challenge that decision.

An **Asylum Seeker** (we prefer the term '**person seeking asylum**') is someone who has asked the UK government for protection and is still waiting for a decision.

Asylum Support is housing and money provided by the government to asylum seekers who have nothing, while they wait for a decision.

Destitution is a state of extreme poverty where a person cannot afford essentials such as food, shelter, heating, and sanitation.

An **Electronic Visa (e-Visa)** is a digital online record of a person's identity, immigration status (e.g., visa type or indefinite leave to remain), and any conditions attached (e.g., permission to work or study).

Entry clearance is the formal term for a visa granted to someone applying to come to the UK from abroad.

The **EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS)** is a free post-Brexit scheme for EU, Swiss, Norwegian, Icelandic, and Liechtenstein nationals and their family members to remain in the UK.

The **Home Office (HO)** is the government department that controls immigration, borders, and asylum in the UK.

Immigration control is the UK's legal framework that determines who requires permission (leave) to enter or remain in the UK.

The **Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS)** is a mandatory fee that most applicants for temporary leave to remain in the UK (including work, study, and family visas) must pay as part of their immigration application.

Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) (also known as *settled status*) is a type of open-ended immigration permission granted to someone already in the UK, allowing them to stay for an unlimited duration, with no time limit on their stay, and with no conditions attached, meaning they may work and access public funds.

Irregular migration is the movement of people outside the laws or international agreements governing entry and exit from a state. The term is preferred over "illegal migration" and is used by the Home Office and the EU.

No recourse to public funds (NRPF) is an immigration condition, meaning the affected person cannot access 'public funds', including most welfare benefits (e.g., Universal Credit), local authority housing, and homelessness assistance. It applies to those who are "subject to immigration control" under section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

Public funds are a [defined list](#) of welfare benefits, local authority homelessness assistance, and social housing allocations that people with a No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition cannot access. The term has a specific meaning in immigration law and does not include all services funded by public money.

A Refugee as defined in the 1951 Convention, is any person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside their country of nationality and is unable or unwilling to avail themselves of its protection.

The **Right to Work** is legal permission to take up employment in the UK.

Sponsorship is a role in which a person or organisation supports a visa applicant's immigration application to enter the UK.

An **Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child (UASC)** is a person under 18 years old who is applying for asylum in their own right and is separated from both parents and not being cared for by an adult who has the responsibility to do so.

UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) is the Home Office division responsible for deciding who has the right to visit, study, work, and stay in the UK. It manages applications for visas, asylum, British citizenship, sponsor licenses for employers and educational institutions, and appeals from unsuccessful applicants.