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## **Useful information for pregnant women and families with children about benefits, additional payments and support**

This leaflet contains information that might be useful if you are pregnant or have young children.

### **Asylum Seekers**

If you are an asylum seeker or the dependant of an asylum seeker who receives UKBA Section 95 (NASS) support you can apply to UKBA (Home Office) for a maternity payment of £300 if you are pregnant or have just had a baby, this money is to help you to buy things for the baby. You must apply for this grant either in the last month before the baby is born or within 2 weeks of giving birth.

Once your baby is born you must register the baby's birth at the local Registry Office, you will then receive a birth certificate for the baby. You should make sure that UKBA know that your baby has been born so that your level of support can be increased, your local Refugee and Asylum advice centre should help you with this.

If your asylum claim is refused whilst you are still receiving UKBA Section 95 Support, your support should continue as long as you had a dependent child under 18 as part of your original application section 95 application and that child is still under 18 when your claim is refused.

For advice on these or any related issues you should contact your local refugee and asylum advice centre, such as the Refugee Council.

### **Refused Asylum Seekers**

If your claim for asylum has been refused and you are not currently in receipt of any UKBA (Home Office) financial support, or your Section 95 (NASS) support is due to be terminated, you may be able to apply for section 4 support from UKBA, which consists of accommodation and supermarket vouchers.

To apply for section 4 support you must be able to prove that you are destitute and either that you are unable to leave the UK because of medical reasons, which includes the late stages of pregnancy, or that your case with UKBA is ongoing (this could be because you have a high court appeal pending or because you have submitted new evidence about your case to UKBA, this is often called a fresh claim). You can also apply for section 4 support if you are destitute and are trying to leave the UK to return to your country of origin.

To make an application for section 4 support you should contact your local refugee and asylum advice centre such as the Refugee Council, or contact your solicitor or immigration advisor.

If you are in receipt of section 4 support you are entitled to claim an extra £3 a week in vouchers during pregnancy and also can also apply for £250 worth of maternity vouchers to buy things for the new baby. You must apply for this grant either in the last month before the baby is born or within 2 weeks of giving birth.

Once your baby is born you must register the baby's birth at the local Registry Office, you will then receive a birth certificate for the baby. You should make sure that UKBA know that your baby has been born so that your level of voucher support can be increased, your local Refugee and Asylum advice centre should help you with this.

There are also additional vouchers you can apply for if you have a baby or young children. For a child under 1 year old you can apply for an extra £5 a week in vouchers, for a child under 3 years old you can apply for an extra £3 a week in vouchers.

You can also apply for an extra £5 a week in vouchers for clothing, this is for each child under 18 years old who is living with you and is your dependent.

It may also be possible to apply for assistance with essential travel, such as travel to attend medical appointments or to register the birth of a new baby and also to apply for assistance to cover the cost of essential telephone calls and other correspondence.

For advice on these or any related issues you should contact your local refugee and asylum advice centre, such as the Refugee Council.

### **Refugees**

A refugee is a person whose claim for asylum has been successful. If you have been granted refugee status in the UK you should have the right to work and also the right to claim mainstream benefits.

Any family members who were dependents on your asylum claim should also be granted the same status as you. You can apply for family members such as your spouse, partner and dependent children under 18 to join you in the UK if they live abroad and they should also be granted the same status as you.

If you are receiving mainstream benefits and are pregnant, have recently had a baby, or have children joining you in the UK, you should check how these

changes will affect your benefits, you will probably be entitled to additional benefits or the amount of money you receive may increase.

If you are working, there are laws that give pregnant women certain rights in the workplace, such as the right to paid time off for antenatal care and the right to 52 weeks maternity leave from work. You will also be entitled either to maternity pay from your employer or if you do not qualify for this, maternity allowance, which is paid by the Job Centre Plus.

For advice and on these or any related issues you should contact your local Job Centre Plus or a local advice centre such as Citizen's Advice Bureau.

### **Overstayers and Undocumented Migrants**

If you have overstayed your visa or have entered the UK without a visa and without regularising your stay in the UK, you will not be entitled to work in the UK or to claim benefits.

This will make it difficult for you to access any financial support if you are pregnant or have young children.

If your child was born in the UK and the child's father is British or had permission to stay in the UK at the time of the child's birth and his name is listed on the child's birth certificate, he may be able to apply for some benefits for the child in certain circumstances.

In certain limited circumstances it may be possible to approach your Local Authority (Social Services) for support under section 17 of the Children's Act. But they can refuse support to overstayers under Section 54 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 unless they feel that it would be a breach of your human rights for them to refuse to support you.

For more information and advice on this or any related issues, you should contact your own solicitor or a specialist immigration or community care advisor.

***This information sheet has been created by ASIRT (Asylum Support & Immigration Resource Team) and is intended to provide general guidance only. This information was correct at time of printing in June 2009.***

***For further information or to request more information sheets please contact:***

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