

Your Questions Answered:

Travelling as a refugee

A Refugee Travel Document is required if you wish to travel to another country. This FAQ explains the process that you are required to follow if you plan to apply.

For advice tailored to your circumstances about any aspect of this FAQ please call (028) 90 24 4401 and ask to speak with the Immigration Legal Hub.

What is a Refugee Travel Document?

A Refugee Travel Document is a travel document issued to a refugee living in UK who wishes to travel to another country. The Refugee Travel document looks like a blue passport. It is sometimes referred to as a *1951 Convention Travel Document* or as a *Geneva Passport*.

A Refugee Travel Document is issued to refugees. It can also be issued to Syrian refugees arriving through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement programme and to family members arriving through refugee family reunion.

How do I apply for a Refugee Travel Document?

It is now possible to apply for a Refugee Travel Document [online](#). Alternatively you can download the [application form](#) and return it by registered mail.

The application fee is £75 for an adult and £49 for a child (under 16 years). The application fee is not returned even if your application is rejected.

Do I need to pay someone to help me apply for a Refugee Travel Document?

No. You might be able to apply by yourself. However, it is important that all the information on the form is accurate and correct; mistakes can be difficult to rectify. It is a good idea to read the [Home Office guidance](#) before you apply.

If you feel you need help, you might be able to get **free** assistance from Law Centre NI or from organisations with OISC Level 1 accreditation such as [NIACRO](#), [NICRAS](#), [Extern](#), [Migrant Centre NI](#) etc. If you prefer to go to a solicitor, make sure you understand fees you will be charged.

What other types of travel documents are there?

The Refugee Travel Document is the most common type of travel document. It is only available to refugees. If you have Discretionary Leave to Remain or Humanitarian Protection, you might need to apply for a **Certificate of Travel**. This is currently £280 per adult. The process is more complicated and so you **should seek**

specialist immigration advice. Stateless people can apply for a Stateless person's document (£75 per adult).

I have obtained a Refugee Travel Document: does this mean I can now travel anywhere?

No. A Refugee Travel Document only permits you to travel e.g. to board a flight or get on a ferry. It is not the same thing as a **visa**, which allows you to **enter** the country you are visiting.

Many European countries waive their visa requirements for persons with a Refugee Travel Document. However, **it is your responsibility to check if you need a visa before you travel.** You can find this information from the Embassy to the country you wish to visit. **Make sure you explain that you will be travelling with a Refugee Travel Document.**

If you return to your country of origin – even for a short visit – you risk your refugee status being taken away from you (revoked). Your family members' refugee status could also be revoked.

I hope to apply for British citizenship one day: will I still be able to use my Refugee Travel Document?

No. If you obtain British citizenship you are no longer a refugee and so you cannot use your Refugee Travel Document. You should apply for a British passport in this instance.

How long is my Refugee Travel Document valid?

Your Refugee Travel Document is generally valid for the duration of your Refugee Status. Be aware that some countries may not accept your Refugee Travel Document if you have less than 6 months' leave to remain in the UK on the date you travel.

Do my family members need to apply too?

Every person of your family who wishes to travel needs to apply for a Refugee Travel Document. You must include a separate application (whether online or by post) and payment for each person.

Do I need to send off my Biometric Residence Permit?

No. You should not include your Biometric Residence Permit in your application.

Do I need to send photographs?

Yes. You will need to send passport-type photographs. Make sure your photographs meet the [requirements](#). The photograph needs to be certified by a professional person e.g. your doctor, a teacher at your child's school or your solicitor.

What should I do if I lose my Refugee Travel Document?

You **MUST** report a lost or stolen Refugee Travel Document to the PSNI and to the [Home Office](#). You should do this regardless of whether you plan to travel again.

How long do I have to wait for my Refugee Travel Document to be processed?

Most refugees receive their Refugee Travel Document within 4 weeks, however, the application can take longer. **Do not book your flights until you have received your Refugee Travel Document.**

I need my Refugee Travel Document urgently: what can I do?

It is possible to request that your application is dealt with as a priority in some situations although you will need to provide acceptable documentary evidence. For example, if you need to travel urgently to see a relative who is gravely ill, you will have to provide a medical report or doctor's letter. Read the [Home Office guidance](#) for more information about this. Your MP might also be able to intervene on your behalf and request that your application is prioritised. You can find your MP [here](#).

Please contact the Law Centre's Immigration Solicitor with queries about this and other immigration issues.

(028) 9024 4401, 9.30 to 1.30pm Wednesday - Friday

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