

## Obtaining a National Insurance Number: Information for asylum seekers who have permission to work

A recent change in immigration law means that *some* asylum seekers are now able to work. The Law Centre has already published a briefing paper that explains how asylum seekers can request permission to work from the Home Office. Click [here](#) and follow the steps.

This second briefing paper is aimed at asylum seekers who have already obtained permission to work. It explains the process of obtaining a National Insurance Number and translations are available in Arabic, Farsi, Somali and Tigrinya.

**Have you applied for permission to work?** You should have received an updated Asylum Registration Card (ARC). The card confirms you have permission to work in specific professions and states 'Work permitted / Shortage Occ'.



### 1. What is a National Insurance Number?

Everyone who works in the UK aged 16 years+ must have a National Insurance Number. This number is unique to you and remains the same your whole life.

Your National Insurance Number makes sure that the financial contributions you make are properly recorded on your National Insurance account. You often need this number when communicating with government departments including in relation to social security and tax.

### 2. Do I need a National Insurance Number to start work?

Your prospective employer will want to see your National Insurance Number. The Law Centre recommends that you apply for a National Insurance Number before you start work.

### 3. How do I apply for a National Insurance Number?

Once you have received your updated Asylum Registration Card from the Home Office you are ready to apply for a National Insurance Number.

You must apply for a National Insurance Number [online at NI Direct](#). The application form is only available in English. Enter your personal details exactly as they are entered on your Asylum Registration Card. This includes:

- Your full name
- Your date of birth
- Your nationality
- Your contact details: address and telephone number
- Details of your passport (if you have one)
- Confirm that you:
  - Do not have a Biometric Residence Permit
  - Do not have a UK Residence Card
  - That you are not waiting for a visa application to be processed

#### **4. How long does it take to receive a National Insurance Number?**

After you submit your online application it will take approximately 4 – 8 weeks to receive your National Insurance Number. This will be sent to you by post.

#### **5. Do I have to attend an appointment to complete the process?**

It is likely that you will be asked to verify your ID by attending an appointment at a Jobs & Benefit Office. This appointment will be arranged by telephone so make sure you provide your correct phone number in your online application. You can ask for an interpreter for the appointment.

Take as much paperwork as you have to the appointment for example:

- ARC card
- BAIL 201 form
- MEARS tenancy agreement
- Copy of your passport / national ID card (if you have one)

#### **6. Can I let my friend use my National Insurance Number?**

No, you must not let anyone else use your National Insurance Number. This is fraud and could result in criminal penalties and could adversely impact your asylum claim.

#### **7. I still haven't received my updated ARC. What should I do?**

If the Home Office has issued a letter confirming that you have permission to work but has not yet issued you with an ARC card, a different application process applies. Contact the Law Centre to discuss.

#### **8. If I start working, can I keep my NASS / asylum support?**

If you start working, you are likely to lose some or all of your entitlement to NASS asylum support including accommodation. The Law Centre will publish further information explaining this.

#### **What should I do if I experience problems when applying for a NINO?**

Contact the Migration Justice Project at Law Centre NI

✉ [Migrationjustice@lawcentreni.org](mailto:Migrationjustice@lawcentreni.org) ☎ 028 9024 4401

**Work for asylum seekers**  
Briefing 2: National Insurance Number  
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