

BOOK I

During the screening
ACCESS TO ASYLUM



WELCOME!



This story is about four young people — just like you.

They have arrived safely in Europe after a long journey.
Some of the young people arrived alone. Some of them arrived with family.
They have lots of questions — and they are helped by the people who work where they live.



This story can help you too!

You will learn:

- what **access to asylum during the screening** means
- what to expect
- why it is necessary for you to participate and work with the officers
- who can help you
- about your rights

You can read this story:




- alone
- with a friend
- with someone who works here




Take your time. It's OK to stop and come back to it later.

If something is hard to understand, **ask for someone to explain it to you.**
Your guardian, social worker or lawyer can help you.

AT THE END, YOU WILL FIND:

-  a page with local information
-  a fun quiz
-  space to write your own questions and add useful contacts



For people **below 18 arriving alone**, a guardian will be appointed. In some countries, the guardian is also called a representative.

Also, in some countries, **asking for asylum** is called **asking for international protection**.



Lastly, be aware that all services offered at the reception facilities where you are staying are free. If a staff member asks you for money, talk to an officer you trust or your guardian.

MEET THE CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY

Mohamed

I am 17 years old. I am happy most of the time. I like helping my friends and family whenever I can.

I arrived alone some weeks ago and I am looking for my grandfather. I am eager to start working.



Ahmed

I am 15 years old. I arrived with my older sister Jasmine, who has been taking care of me since our mother died. I like to hang out and make new friends. I really want to go back to school as soon as I can. At the moment, I am learning the local language here.

Jasmine

I am 24 years old. I arrived together with my brother, Ahmed, who I take care of as best I can. We arrived recently and are trying to join our uncle who has been living in Europe for some time. I love sports and I am very good at playing football.



Adam

I am 9 years old. I am here on my own.
For now, I have decided not to speak.
I experienced many bad things before arriving here. I need some time before I will talk again.
But I am smart and I understand everything. I am a very good listener and want to go to school.
I like all the new friends I have made so far.



Ms Ines

I am a guardian working in this reception centre. I try to support all children and young people seeking asylum as best I can. I love cooking and it makes me happy when everyone is busy and active. Exercise keeps us all physically and mentally healthy.



Mr Fred

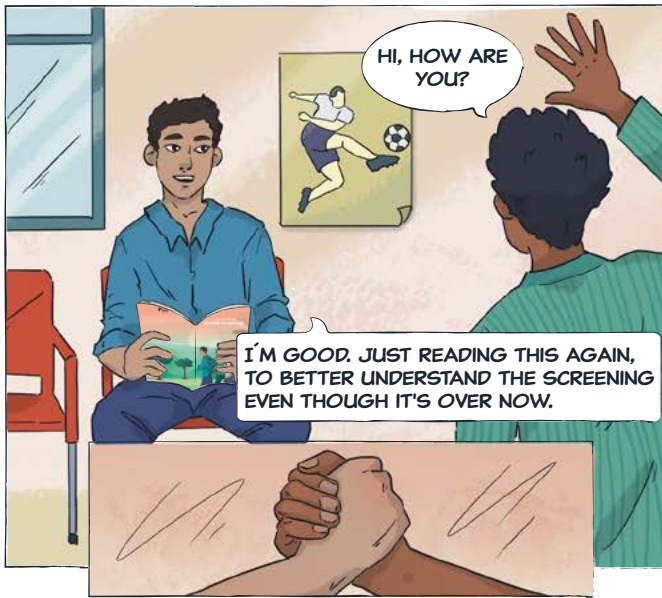
I am a legal counsellor, which is a type of lawyer. I work here together with many well-trained colleagues.
I give information and support to all asylum seekers on legal matters and on their asylum applications. I love wearing colourful t-shirts with a message.



A big thank you goes to all the young asylum seekers who read this story before it was published and helped to finish it so nicely.

They also helped choose the names of the main characters.

Thanks also goes to the authorities in Malta and the Netherlands who supported the discussions with the teenagers.



SO, TO ENTER THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU), YOU NEED A PASSPORT OR A VISA. IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU COME BY LAND, SEA OR AIR.



A VISA GIVES YOU PERMISSION TO VISIT A COUNTRY. IT CAN BE A STAMP IN YOUR PASSPORT.







FOR THE IDENTITY AND SECURITY CHECKS, I MET WITH POLICE OFFICERS WHO ASKED ME QUESTIONS...

YES, DEPENDING ON WHERE YOU ARRIVE, THE BORDER POLICE OR COAST GUARDS ARE IN CHARGE OF THESE CHECKS.



...FOR THE HEALTH AND VULNERABILITY CHECKS, I MET WITH A DOCTOR AND A SOCIAL WORKER.

AN INTERPRETER HELPED ME TO COMMUNICATE WITH ALL THE OFFICERS BECAUSE I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THE LANGUAGE.



YES, EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO AN INTERPRETER WHO WILL SUPPORT THEM FOR FREE. IT'S THE SAME WITH A LAWYER, BY THE WAY.





IF YOU ARE BELOW THE AGE OF 18, AND PARTICULARLY IF YOU ARRIVED ALONE, TELL THE OFFICERS IMMEDIATELY!



THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE A PERSON BELOW 18 IS CONSIDERED A CHILD AND CHILDREN NEED MORE HELP THAN ADULTS.



OFFICERS TRAINED IN WORKING WITH CHILDREN WILL TALK TO YOU.



DON'T TRY TO HIDE THAT YOU ARE A CHILD!



IF YOU ARRIVED WITHOUT ANY DOCUMENTS STATING YOUR AGE, IT MIGHT HAPPEN THAT THE AUTHORITIES WILL ASK YOU TO DO AN AGE ASSESSMENT. THIS IS AN EXERCISE THAT HELPS ESTIMATE YOUR AGE.




THIS BOOKLET CAN EXPLAIN THE AGE ASSESSMENT.



ALSO, WHEN A CHILD ARRIVES ALONE, THEY ARE SUPPORTED BY A SPECIALLY-TRAINED ADULT CALLED A GUARDIAN.



THIS PERSON WILL SUPPORT YOU ON ALL MATTERS.



AT THE BEGINNING, YOU MIGHT HAVE A TEMPORARY GUARDIAN. WITHIN 3 WEEKS OF ASKING FOR ASYLUM, THE AUTHORITIES WILL ASSIGN YOU A PERMANENT ONE.

ASKING FOR ASYLUM?

PEOPLE ASK FOR ASYLUM MAINLY BECAUSE OF WAR AND OTHER DANGERS IN THEIR HOME COUNTRY. SOMETIMES THEY ASK BECAUSE THEY DO NOT HAVE A COUNTRY TO CALL HOME, MEANING THEY ARE STATELESS. EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO ASK FOR ASYLUM, WHICH IS ALSO CALLED INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION.



SO, ASYLUM AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION ARE THE SAME?



BASICALLY YES, BUT SOME COUNTRIES MIGHT HAVE DIFFERENT LAWS.



UHM... ARE THE SCREENING CHECKS ONLY DONE FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE JUST ARRIVED?



CAN YOU PLEASE EXPLAIN THE CHECKS?

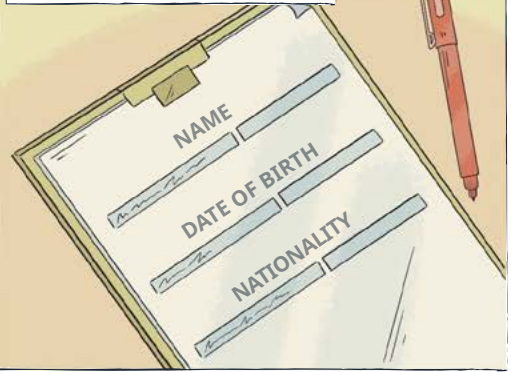
NO, IF YOU HAVE BEEN IN A COUNTRY FOR SOME TIME BUT DON'T HAVE THE PAPERS TO STAY, THE SCREENING CAN STILL TAKE PLACE. IN THAT CASE IT LASTS MAXIMUM 3 DAYS.



FOR THE IDENTITY AND SECURITY CHECKS, OFFICERS WILL ASK FOR YOUR PASSPORT, BIRTH CERTIFICATE, OR OTHER DOCUMENTS. IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY, DON'T BE AFRAID. MANY CHILDREN ARRIVE WITHOUT THEM.



THE OFFICERS WILL ASK YOU TO CONFIRM YOUR:



THEY MIGHT ALSO WANT TO KNOW:

- HOW YOU TRAVELLED HERE, AND
- IF YOU TRAVELLED ON YOUR OWN, WITH FRIENDS AND/OR WITH FAMILY.



FOR THE SECURITY CHECK, THEY WILL CHECK WHETHER YOU MIGHT BE DANGEROUS TO OTHERS.

DANGEROUS TO OTHERS?



YES, FOR EXAMPLE IF YOU HURT INNOCENT PEOPLE BEFORE.

THEY MAY DECIDE TO SEARCH YOU AND, SOMETIMES, TO KEEP YOUR PHONE OR OTHER ITEMS. THIS IS TO ENSURE EVERYONE'S SAFETY. THEY'LL RETURN THEM TO YOU LATER.



ALWAYS TRY TO WORK WITH THE OFFICERS AND REMEMBER...

ALL OFFICERS MUST TREAT YOU WITH RESPECT. IF THEY DON'T, YOU CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT. DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS?



A COMPLAINT IS WHEN YOU TELL SOMEONE THAT YOU ARE UNHAPPY ABOUT THE WAY YOU WERE TREATED OR A SERVICE YOU RECEIVED, OR A SERVICE YOU SHOULD HAVE RECEIVED BUT DIDN'T, RIGHT?

ABSOLUTELY.

UHM, IF I MAKE A COMPLAINT, CAN IT BE BAD FOR MY ASYLUM APPLICATION?



NO. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO COMPLAIN ABOUT BAD TREATMENT. IF YOU ARE UNSURE ABOUT WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE AND WHAT IS NOT, ASK A TRUSTED OFFICER, A LAWYER PRESENT OR YOUR GUARDIAN FOR ADVICE.

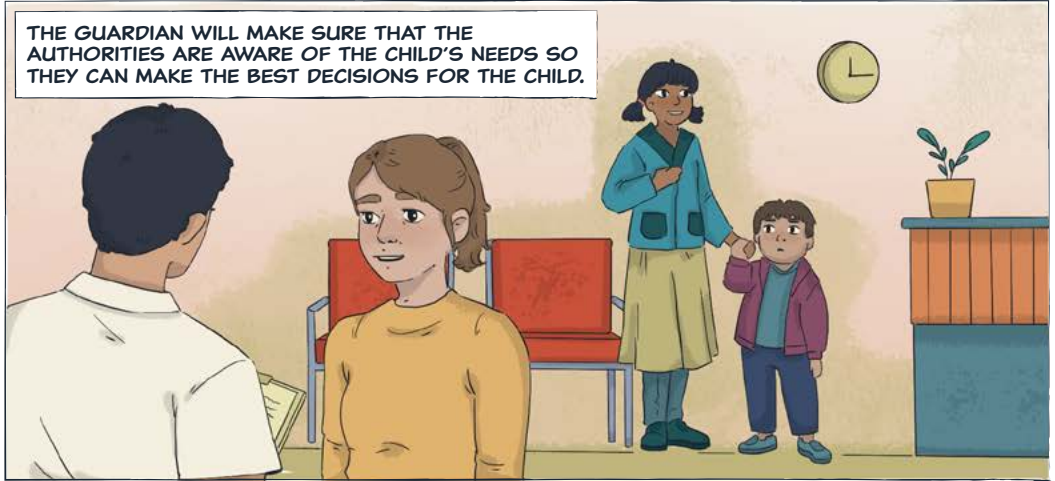
OR TALK TO YOUR FAMILY, IF YOU ARRIVED WITH THEM.



ALSO, IF YOU ARE ASKED QUESTIONS AND YOU DO NOT REMEMBER THE ANSWER, DON'T MAKE THINGS UP. JUST SAY THAT YOU DON'T KNOW OR DON'T REMEMBER. THEY WILL UNDERSTAND.



SURE!

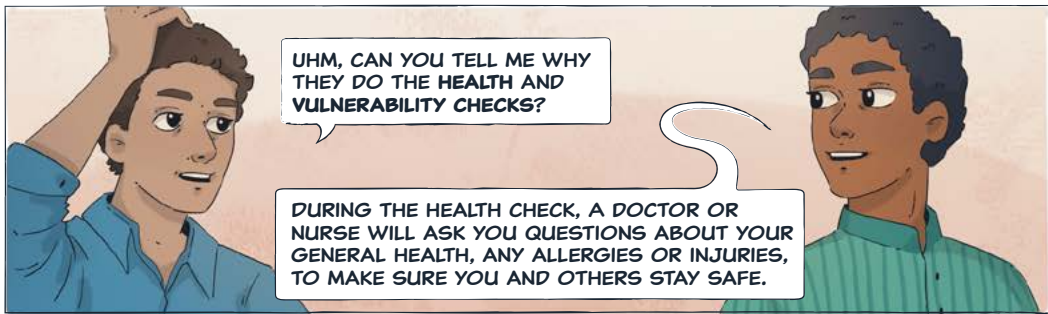


AFTER THE SCREENING, WHEN YOU ARE MOVED TO A PLACE WHERE YOU WILL STAY LONGER, THE GUARDIAN MIGHT CHANGE.



IN THE NEW PLACE, YOU CAN GO TO SCHOOL OR TAKE PART IN ACTIVITIES.





UHM, CAN YOU TELL ME WHY THEY DO THE HEALTH AND VULNERABILITY CHECKS?

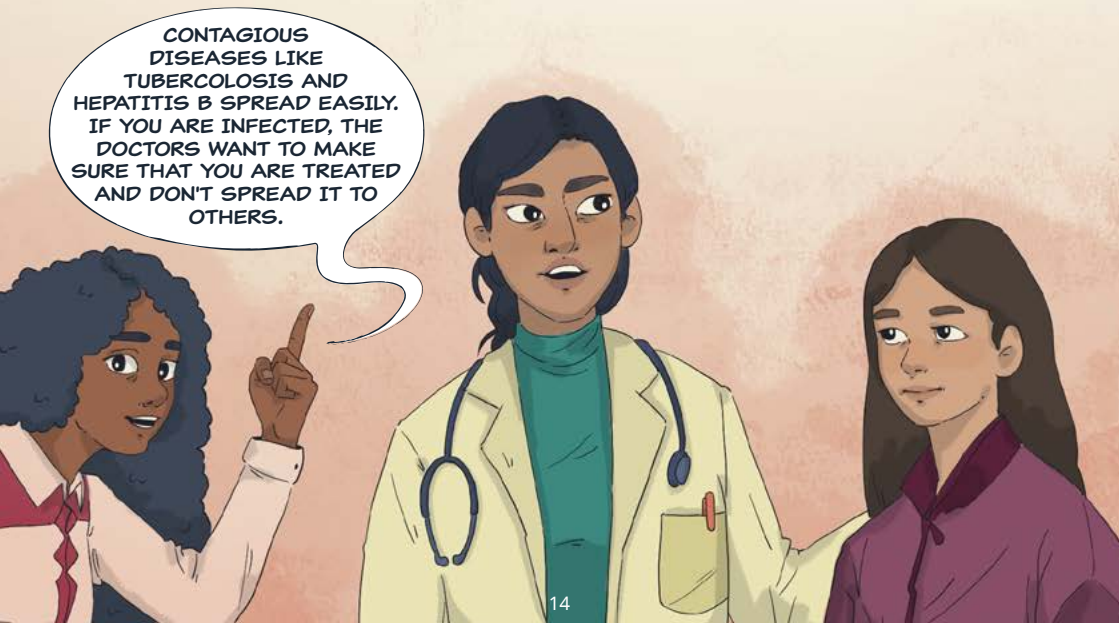
DURING THE HEALTH CHECK, A DOCTOR OR NURSE WILL ASK YOU QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR GENERAL HEALTH, ANY ALLERGIES OR INJURIES, TO MAKE SURE YOU AND OTHERS STAY SAFE.



THEY MIGHT ALSO ASK YOU ABOUT THE COUNTRIES YOU PASSED THROUGH ON YOUR WAY HERE AND IF ANYTHING BAD HAPPENED THERE.

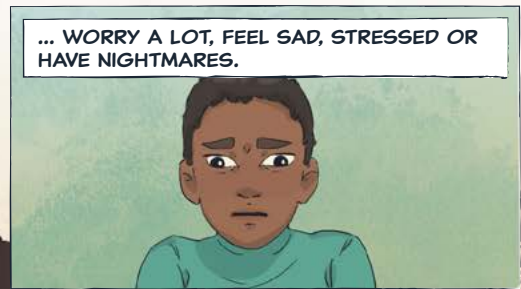


WHY DO THEY ASK THAT?



CONTAGIOUS DISEASES LIKE TUBERCULOSIS AND HEPATITIS B SPREAD EASILY. IF YOU ARE INFECTED, THE DOCTORS WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE TREATED AND DON'T SPREAD IT TO OTHERS.

AS FOR THE VULNERABILITY CHECK, THE OFFICERS DOING THIS CHECK ARE OFTEN SOCIAL WORKERS. THEY KNOW HOW TO TALK TO CHILDREN AND FOCUS MORE ON HOW A PERSON FEELS.



...UHM... WHEN YOU FIRST ARRIVE YOU MAY FEEL TIRED, SCARED OR SUSPICIOUS. SOME OF US HAVE SEEN VERY SAD THINGS AND SOME MIGHT FEEL EMBARRASSED TO TALK ABOUT THEM.



WE TRY TO FORGET AND START A NEW LIFE. WE CAN HAVE SCARS ON OUR BODIES BUT ALSO SCARS IN OUR HEARTS. THIS CAN MAKE US WORRY AND FEEL UNWELL.



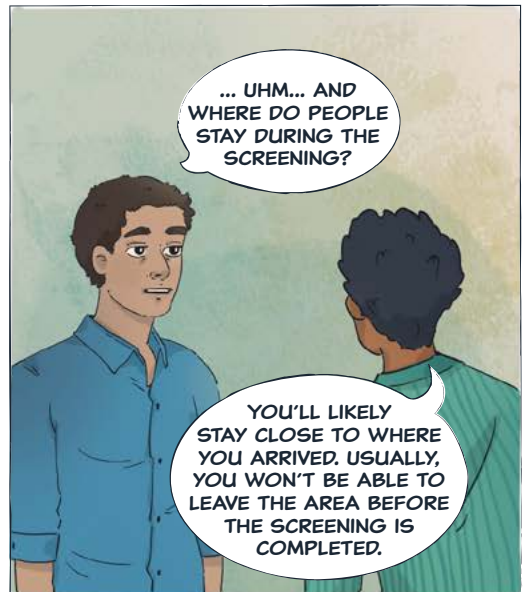
THE THINGS SOME OF US WENT THROUGH HURT A LOT. PEOPLE WE TRUSTED MIGHT HAVE LIED TO US OR TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF US.



... AND... SOME OF US LOST PEOPLE WE REALLY LOVED. IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING WITH THIS PAIN, TELL AN OFFICER. THERE ARE PROFESSIONALS WHO CAN HELP YOU.



YES, AND THE OFFICERS CAN ONLY HELP YOU FEEL BETTER IF THEY KNOW ABOUT YOUR PROBLEMS.



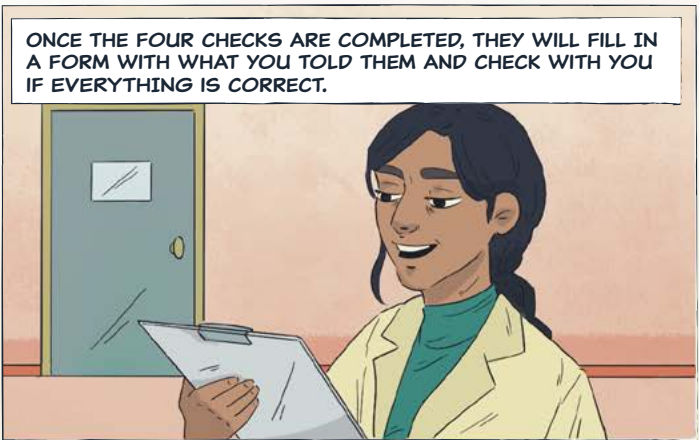


DO YOU KNOW WHY?

UHM... BECAUSE THE AUTHORITIES FIRST WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT US AND TO CHECK IF THE PEOPLE ARRIVING ARE HEALTHY.



EXACTLY!



ONCE THE FOUR CHECKS ARE COMPLETED, THEY WILL FILL IN A FORM WITH WHAT YOU TOLD THEM AND CHECK WITH YOU IF EVERYTHING IS CORRECT.



IF THEY MISUNDERSTOOD SOMETHING OR MADE A MISTAKE, TELL THEM. IT IS HARDER TO FIX IT LATER.

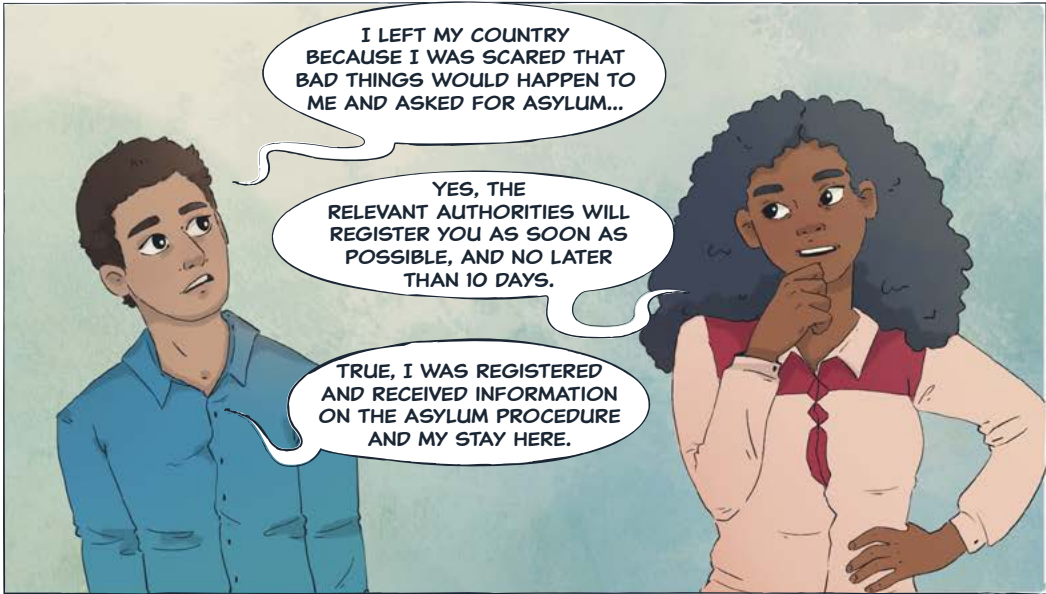


WHAT'S NEXT... ?

IF YOU ASK FOR ASYLUM, YOU WILL BE REGISTERED, AND THE AUTHORITIES WILL NEED TIME TO DECIDE IF YOU NEED PROTECTION AND CAN STAY OR NOT.




IF YOU DID NOT ASK FOR ASYLUM, THE AUTHORITIES ORGANISING RETURNS WILL BE INFORMED TO ENSURE YOU CAN GO BACK SAFELY. SOMETIMES, RETURNS ARE DELAYED OR DO NOT HAPPEN. THIS DEPENDS ON A CHILD'S PERSONAL SITUATION.




I LEFT MY COUNTRY BECAUSE I WAS SCARED THAT BAD THINGS WOULD HAPPEN TO ME AND ASKED FOR ASYLUM...

YES, THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES WILL REGISTER YOU AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND NO LATER THAN 10 DAYS.


TRUE, I WAS REGISTERED AND RECEIVED INFORMATION ON THE ASYLUM PROCEDURE AND MY STAY HERE.



SOMETIMES, ASYLUM APPLICATIONS ARE EXAMINED AT THE PLACE WHERE PEOPLE ARRIVE. THIS IS CALLED THE BORDER PROCEDURE. IT USUALLY DOESN'T APPLY TO CHILDREN ARRIVING ALONE.



LOOK, THERE IS MR FRED, THE LAWYER.



I AM SURE HE IS HAPPY TO TELL US MORE ABOUT THE ASYLUM PROCEDURE.



IMPORTANT

In this country ...

The authority responsible for the screening is: _____

If I asked for asylum, the screening authority will send me to the asylum authorities to register me.

The asylum authority in this country is: _____

My guardian's name during the screening is: _____

I can contact a legal counsellor for free to learn more about the asylum procedure and related topics. For this, I can contact: _____

If I feel worried, scared or afraid of someone I can contact: _____

If anyone working here, like the officers, legal counsellors, social workers or my guardian treat me badly, I can make a complaint and contact: _____

In case of an emergency, I can contact the ambulance at _____
or the police at _____

Other important information: _____

QUIZ

I am checking my knowledge on what I have learnt about access to asylum during the screening. Some questions allow for more than one answer.

✓ Tick the correct answers.

- 1 Tick the four screening checks that every person has to go through.
- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| a. Big foot check | d. Vulnerability check |
| b. Identity check | e. Health check |
| c. Favourite song check | f. Security check |
-

- 2 The screening can take up to 7 days.
- | |
|----------|
| a. True |
| b. False |
-

- 3 I might have to stay in the place where the screening checks are done until they are finished.
- | |
|----------|
| a. True |
| b. False |
-

- 4 The screening authorities do not need to know if I am a child.
- | |
|----------|
| a. True |
| b. False |
-

- 5 The screening authorities are not allowed to search me.
- | |
|----------|
| a. True |
| b. False |
-

- 6 The screening authorities are allowed to keep my personal things until the screening is completed.
- | |
|----------|
| a. True |
| b. False |
-

- 7 I have the right to a temporary guardian if I arrived alone and I am below the age of 18.
- | |
|----------|
| a. True |
| b. False |
-

QUIZ

.....

8 If I am afraid to return to my home country because I think I will be in danger, I can ask for asylum. a. True
b. False

.....

9 I have to pay for the support of an interpreter and lawyer. a. True
b. False

.....

10 The authorities responsible for asylum must register me within 5-10 days of when I asked for asylum. a. True
b. False

.....

Answers to the quiz

Question 1: b, d, e, f; Question 2: a; Question 3: a; Question 4: b; Question 5: b; Question 6: a; Question 7: a; Question 8: a; Question 9: b; Question 10: a.

NOTES

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