

Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Persons with Alternative Status

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Asylum seekers in Latvia come from countries such as Vietnam, Uzbekistan, Cameroon, Congo and India, USA, Algeria, Colombia, Yemen, etc. Traditionally, the list has also included the former Soviet republics of Azerbaijan and Russia. Their most common reasons for seeking asylum are still fleeing hostilities, religious or political persecution.

When starting life in Latvia, it is important that people are not left alone and receive quality state support to help them solve problems and integrate into their new environment, which is why the Society Integration Foundation provides asylum seekers with a social worker and a social mentor.

The social worker:

- solves the client's social problems in cooperation with the client, providing social case management;
- develops and coordinates an individual socio-economic inclusion plan for each client;
- assesses and determines the complexity of the client's social case management according to the established assessment criteria;
- uses appropriate methods to work with the client individually or in a group, or with a family, to identify the social problem and determine the appropriate type of social service;
- analyses the client's social problem and helps them find alternative ways of solving it;
- represents the client's interests and rights before other bodies
- provides a social support network for the client, work with the family to find solutions to problems in relationships, interactions, social roles and care;
- develops cooperation with other social service providers, employment, education and healthcare institutions and other institutions involved in solving the client's social problem in order to obtain comprehensive feedback on statistics/trends, including dynamics of the identification/solving of the client's social problem.

The social mentor:

- provides practical support to the client in implementing the socio-economic inclusion plan;
- supports the client's integration and socio-economic inclusion by developing an understanding of life in society, helping them to acquire everyday skills in a real community setting, encouraging them to develop new skills, and supporting them in dealing with everyday situations;
- helps the client identify and assess needs, identifies, attracts and recommends the necessary resources, respecting the client's self-determination;
- supports the client in his/her dealings with other natural and legal persons;
- supports the client in dealing with everyday situations, using their own knowledge and the resources available in the environment as resources;
- identifies the situation and provides a possible solution in cooperation with the client or the client's family;

helps the client to get to their place of (future) study, (future) work or (future) receipt of services;

performs the tasks set out in the operational plan for the provision of services to asylum seekers who have received a decision granting them refugee or alternative status.

Who can get support from a social worker and a social mentor?

The service is being provided at the "Mucenieki" Asylum Seekers Centre and outside it:

asylum seekers in need of international protection who have been accepted by Latvia under the European Union (EU) resettlement programme;

people arriving independently in Latvia;

persons who have received refugee or alternative status;

For how long can an asylum seeker receive support from a social mentor?

An asylum seeker may receive the services of a social worker and a social mentor for 3 months from the moment of arrival in Latvia or until the moment of being granted refugee or alternative status. After obtaining refugee or alternative status, you are entitled to a social worker and a social mentor for a further 12 months.

The provision of the service of a social worker and a social mentor shall be terminated if the asylum seeker, refugee or person with alternative status leaves Latvia during the period of receiving the service.

<https://www.sif.gov.lv/en/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-persons-alternative-status>