



Infos for refugees or displaced persons  
concerning asylum and residence in Germany  
in English language

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Some of the websites you will be directed to are only available in German. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have further questions. ProAsyl Essen has got many volunteers who will gladly support you and accompany you to appointments. You can reach ProAsyl Essen via e-mail: [info@proasylessen.de](mailto:info@proasylessen.de) or via phone: 0201 – 2 05 39.

Or you can speak with some ProAsyl volunteers in person. They are available for you in a video conference Mondays 14.00-16.00, Wednesdays 10.00-12.00 and Thursdays 17.00-19.00 via this link: <https://meet.jit.si/ProAsyl-Ehrenamtliche-Alltagshilfe>. You can also reach them via Telegram: 0157 50652737.

**Last updated: May 2021**

## 1. Family and Children

**Couple/Family Counselling**: This is a special counselling for couples or families that want to solve their problems.

- **Who offers this kind of counselling in Essen?**

The **City of Essen** offers counselling and support with regard to parenting:

[https://www.essen.de/leben/einstieg\\_fuer/eltern/erziehungsberatung.de.html](https://www.essen.de/leben/einstieg_fuer/eltern/erziehungsberatung.de.html)

**Kinderschutzbund Essen**, a German NGO that protects children's rights, can advise you about family and relationship issues.

Contact: <https://www.dksb-essen.de/kinderschutz/kinderschutz-zentrum>

**Diakonie** also offers couple counselling. Contact: <https://www.diakoniewerk-essen.de/de/Jugend%20und%20Familie/FamilienRaum/281.20>

**ViBB Essen e.V.** offers counselling and support in several languages for persons in various critical situations. They can be reached at:

<https://www.vibb-essen.de/angebote/beratung/migrationsberatung/>

- **Who can I approach if I have experienced domestic violence?**

There is a **Violence against Women Support Hotline**: 08000 116 016. Female advisors offer you moral and practical support in 17 languages.

In Essen, several organisations offer counselling in this field.

**Frauenberatung Essen** (Women's Counselling ) is an organisation in support of women in crisis. They are available at: [https://www.frauenberatung-essen.de/cms/front\\_content.php?idcat=18](https://www.frauenberatung-essen.de/cms/front_content.php?idcat=18)

Also, there is **Distel e.V.**, an organisation that offers counselling and support to women in Essen. Contact: <https://www.distel-ev.de/frauenberatung-essen.html>

Men can address **Männerhilfe-Telefon**, a hotline that helps men who are in situations of crisis: 0800 123 99 00, <https://www.maennerhilfetelefon.de/>.

For victims of violence, the organisation **Weißer Ring** also has installed a **hotline**: 08000 116 006.

- **What can I do if I am scared of my partner?**

You can call the **Violence against Women Support Hotline**: 08000 116 016. The counselling is in 17 different languages.

In case of an **emergency**, you should call the police at **110**.

If you don't want to live with your partner anymore, there are places in Essen where you can stay temporarily.

**Frauenhaus Essen**, a women's refuge, is available at: <https://www.frauenhaus-essen.de>. They also offer counselling in many languages.

**Diakonie** offers a safe space for women and women with children.

Contact: <https://www.diakoniewerk-essen.de/de/Jugend%20und%20Familie/Aufnahmeheim/Frauengruppe/281,22.143>

- **What can I do if I know that another person is being abused?**

In case you hear screaming, blows or other noise that sounds worrying, you best call the **police** at **110**. If you think or know that a child is being abused, you can also call **Kindernotruf: 0201-26 50 50** that belongs to Jugendamt of the City of Essen.

**Kita, Kindergarten**: In Germany, many children visit a Kindergarten or Kita from the age of three on. That is a place where they learn together, are prepared to go to school by kindergarten teachers and play with other kids. Kids can also visit a Kita when they are even younger than three.

- **How can I get a spot in a Kita in Essen for my child?**

Parents can call Kita and Kindergarten and ask whether there are free spots for their children. Or they can apply for several spots on a website that is run by the City of Essen: <https://kinderbetreuung.essen.de/>

You can find explanations concerning this website in Arabic:

[https://kinderbetreuung.essen.de/pdf/Tutorial\\_LB\\_Essen\\_AR.pdf](https://kinderbetreuung.essen.de/pdf/Tutorial_LB_Essen_AR.pdf) and French:

[https://kinderbetreuung.essen.de/pdf/Tutorial\\_LB\\_Essen\\_FR.pdf](https://kinderbetreuung.essen.de/pdf/Tutorial_LB_Essen_FR.pdf)

- **How much do I have to pay for a Kita spot in Essen?**

The costs for Kita, Kindergarten and public schools are taken over by Jugendamt. But parents have to contribute to the costs. The amount of the contribution each family is expected to pay depends on the family's income.

- **Who organises the allocation of Kita and Kindergarten spots in Essen?**

That is done by „**Familienpunkt**“, a facility with the City of Essen. It is part of Jugendamt.

Contact:

[https://www.essen.de/leben/einstieg\\_fuer/kinder/kinderbetreuung\\_1/familienpunkt\\_de.html](https://www.essen.de/leben/einstieg_fuer/kinder/kinderbetreuung_1/familienpunkt_de.html)

- **Where can I get counselling concerning Kita, Kindergarten and school?**

**AWO** offers counselling that specialises in these topics. The counselling is in German, English or Turkish. Contact: <https://www.awo-essen.de/rat-hilfe/migrationsberatung/>

School System in Germany: Every child has a right to learn. That is why in Germany, all children from the age of six on visit a school. In Grundschule (elementary school), all kids of the same age learn together. After four years at Grundschule, they visit different schools depending on their performance.

- **Which elementary schools/Grundschulen does Essen have?**

The City of Essen has published a list of its elementary schools (in German):

[https://media.essen.de/media/wwwessende/aemter/40/Elternbrief\\_Grundschule.pdf](https://media.essen.de/media/wwwessende/aemter/40/Elternbrief_Grundschule.pdf)

- **Who can I approach with the City of Essen for questions concerning school?**

City of Essen, School Section, Gildehof, Hollestr. 3, 45127 Essen.

Contact: [https://www.essen.de/leben/bildung/schule/der\\_fachbereich\\_schule.de.html](https://www.essen.de/leben/bildung/schule/der_fachbereich_schule.de.html)

- **Where can I get counselling about school?**

**Kommunale Integrationszentrum** in Essen offers counselling to asylum seekers with kids that visit school. Kommunales Integrationszentrum, Gildehof, Hollestr. 3, 45127 Essen.

Contact:

[https://www.essen.de/leben/migration\\_und\\_integration/kommunales\\_integrationszentrum/kistartseite.de.html](https://www.essen.de/leben/migration_und_integration/kommunales_integrationszentrum/kistartseite.de.html)

## 2. Health and Medical Issues

**Disability:** This means that you have a physical or psychological impairment and therefore need additional support or attention in your everyday life.

- **Which counselling facilities are there in Essen?**

**EUTB Essen** gives advice to people with disabilities and their families. They can help with applying for state benefits, for example.

Contact: <https://www.teilhabeberatung.de/beratung/eutb-traegerbuendnis-essen>

Counselling is also offered by the organisation **SONII e.V.**, contact:

<https://sonii.de/de/>

„**Aktion Menschenstadt**“, which is part of the Protestant Church, also offers support:

<https://p346966.mittwaldserver.info/?c=angebote&file=angebote>

Moreover, there is **Integrationsfachdienst Essen** which can advise and support you.

Contact: <https://www.ifd-essen.de/de/unser-angebot.html>

- **Where do I get information and help if I have a child with disabilities?**

You can turn to a **brochure** about support that parents of kids with disabilities are entitled to. This brochure is also available in Turkish, Arabic, English and French:

<https://bvkm.de/ratgeber/mein-kind-ist-behindert-diese-hilfen-gibt-es-in-mehreren-sprachen/>

Also, there is a **hotline** for people who have got questions about home care or health insurance:

<https://www.patientenberatung.de/de/beratungsangebot/beratungswege/beratungstelenfon>. The hotline is available at 0800 0117722 (German), 0800 0117723 (Turkish), 0800 0117724 (Russian) und 0800 33221225 (Arabic).

- **How can I get in touch with others in a similar situation?**

For family members of people with disabilities, there is an online platform called

**Kendimiz**. It is available in German and Turkish: <https://kendimiz.de/>

You can find **self-help groups** in Essen on this website:

<https://www.wiesenetz.ruhr/selbsthilfegruppen>

Corona/Covid-19: The coronavirus is a newly discovered virus that causes COVID-19. People who are infected with the coronavirus often suffer from symptoms of a cold or influenza, but sometimes patients also suffer from heavy lung damages and have to be treated in a hospital.

- **How can I protect myself and others from the coronavirus?**

The coronavirus is mostly spread in the air, this means you can infect others by talking, coughing or sneezing close to others. The coronavirus can also be passed on by physical contact, for example by shaking hands. A sick person can pass on the virus even if he or she doesn't feel sick. Therefore, **it is very important that you stick to the following rules**: keep distance to others, follow rules of hygiene (washing hands, coughing into your elbow) and wear a face mask.

- **How dangerous is COVID-19?**

For many people, a COVID-19 infection does not have severe consequences. But there are also people, mainly elderly and chronically ill people, for who an infection can be life-threatening. These persons need to be protected from an infection with COVID-19 in a common effort.

- **Where can I get information about the coronavirus?**

The organisation **Ethnomed** offers information on the coronavirus in many languages: <https://corona-ethnomed.sprachwahl.info-data.info>.

The German **Ministry of Health** has published information about COVID-19 in Germany, available in English <https://www.zusammengegencorona.de/en/> and Turkish <https://www.zusammengegencorona.de/tr/>

**Health System in Germany**: In Germany, people have an insurance in case they get sick. This means their health insurance takes over the costs for doctors, medication and a stay in the hospital.

If you can't go to work because of your health problems, the doctor will give you a certificate of illness (Krankenschein). You must send the health insurance certificate to your employer and your health insurance company. Done this, your wages will be paid during your illness.

- **When do I have a health insurance?**

As long as you undergo the asylum procedure, you do not have a health insurance. If you are sick or hurt, you can go and see a doctor if you have obtained a **Behandlungsschein**

from Sozialamt before. If the treatments are necessary, they are paid by Sozialamt. If you have Duldung or have been in Germany for 18 months before you get a decision on your asylum application, you get a **Gesundheitskarte** (health card) from an insurance company. With this card, you can get all treatments with a doctor, not just for acute problems. As soon as you get political asylum or are granted refugee status or subsidiary protection status, you can choose a health insurance.

For further information in different languages, see: <https://www.gesundheitliche-chancengleichheit.de/brandenburg/aufgaben-und-schwerpunkte/how-to/>

- **Where can I learn more about the health system in Germany?**

You can find more information here:

Arabic: [https://www.wegweiser-gesundheit-fuer-alle.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/LF\\_Gesundheitsprojekt\\_ARAB.pdf](https://www.wegweiser-gesundheit-fuer-alle.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/LF_Gesundheitsprojekt_ARAB.pdf)

Farsi: [https://www.wegweiser-gesundheit-fuer-alle.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/LF\\_Gesundheitsprojekt\\_ARAB.pdf](https://www.wegweiser-gesundheit-fuer-alle.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/LF_Gesundheitsprojekt_ARAB.pdf)

French: [https://www.wegweiser-gesundheit-fuer-alle.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/LF\\_Gesundheitsprojekt\\_F.pdf](https://www.wegweiser-gesundheit-fuer-alle.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/LF_Gesundheitsprojekt_F.pdf)

Kurdish: [https://www.wegweiser-gesundheit-fuer-alle.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/LF\\_Gesundheitsprojekt\\_KU.pdf](https://www.wegweiser-gesundheit-fuer-alle.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/LF_Gesundheitsprojekt_KU.pdf)

**Psychotherapy:** That is the treatment of psychological problems. By means of conversations and relaxation methods, psychological diseases such as depression and phobia are discovered and handled.

**Trauma:** A trauma is a very disturbing and overwhelming experience which is not comparable to everyday life situations. People who had a traumatic experience often suffer from physical and psychological symptoms later on.

- **Where can I find more information concerning trauma?**

The website **Refugee Trauma Help** offers information concerning trauma in

English: <https://www.refugee-trauma.help/en/persons-affected/adults/>

Arabic: <https://www.refugee-trauma.help/ar/persons-affected/adults/>

Farsi: <https://www.refugee-trauma.help/fa/persons-affected/adults/>

- **Can I try to handle my problems on my own?**

If you feel bad, you should contact a **therapist**. In case you first want to get informed about trauma and fleeing, you can watch these **information films** that give you an introduction to the topic.

Arabic:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flh4guUiWRk&list=PLGLgaqvZTv7B6ynMoY5tnpLuxRA2jXXSo&index=3>,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DpMrdR1h10E&list=PLGLgaqvZTv7DXMCiXv015bdSClrjgQZYz&index=3>

English:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFN8MsONC2U&list=PLGLgaqvZTv7B6ynMoY5tnpLuxRA2jXXSo>, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R\\_kP-qLhKok](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_kP-qLhKok)

Somali:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QeWhqTUY6jU&index=7&list=PLGLgaqvZTv7B6ynMoY5tnpLuxRA2jXXSo>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pv7QvYHNVQ>

- **Are there support facilities for traumatised persons in Essen?**

There are several counselling facilities for people with psychological problems in Essen., for instance

**SoNII e.V.:** <https://sonii.de/de/> and **ViBB Essen e.V.:** <https://www.vibb-essen.de/angebote/beratung/migrationsberatung/>

In Düsseldorf, you can address **Psychosoziale Zentrum (PSZ):**

<https://psz-duesseldorf.de/>

In Bochum, you can go to **Medizinische Flüchtlingshilfe:** <https://mfh-bochum.de/?sfw=pass1618566554>

- **What can I do if my child has suffered a trauma?**

For parents of traumatised children, a **manual** is available online in several languages.

English: [https://www.bptk.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/20160408\\_BPtK\\_RatgeberFluechtlingsealtern\\_englisch.pdf](https://www.bptk.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/20160408_BPtK_RatgeberFluechtlingsealtern_englisch.pdf)

Arabic: [https://www.bptk.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/20161102\\_BPtK\\_RatgeberFluechtlingsealtern\\_arabisch\\_stoerer.pdf](https://www.bptk.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/20161102_BPtK_RatgeberFluechtlingsealtern_arabisch_stoerer.pdf)

- **Do specialised facilities for kids and teenagers exist in Essen?**

Refugee kids and teenagers can go to **ETH (Entwicklungs- und Trauma-Hilfe) Essen**. It offers psychological and medical care as well as counselling in German, English and Arabic. Contact: <https://www.eth-traumahilfe.de>

Also, there is a clinic for refugee kids in emergency situations at **LVR-Klinikum Essen**, Wickenburgstraße 21, 45147 Essen. Contact: [https://klinikum-essen.lvr.de/de/nav\\_main/erwachsene/klinik\\_fuer\\_psychiatrie\\_psychosomatik\\_und\\_psychotherapie\\_des\\_kindes\\_und\\_jugendalters/ambulanz\\_2/ambulanz\\_essen/ambulanz\\_fuer\\_gefluechtete\\_kinder\\_und\\_jugendliche/ambulanz\\_fuer\\_gefluechtete\\_kinder\\_und\\_jugendliche.html](https://klinikum-essen.lvr.de/de/nav_main/erwachsene/klinik_fuer_psychiatrie_psychosomatik_und_psychotherapie_des_kindes_und_jugendalters/ambulanz_2/ambulanz_essen/ambulanz_fuer_gefluechtete_kinder_und_jugendliche/ambulanz_fuer_gefluechtete_kinder_und_jugendliche.html)

You can get informed about the **clinic's work** with a **flyer** in different languages:

Arabic: [https://klinikum-essen.lvr.de/media/klinikum\\_essen/kinder\\_und\\_jugendliche/klinik\\_fuer\\_psychiatrie\\_psychosomatik\\_und\\_psychotherapie\\_des\\_kindes\\_und\\_jugendalters/flyer\\_kjp/Flyer\\_Ambulanz\\_fuer\\_junge\\_Gefluechtete\\_2seitig\\_RAB.pdf](https://klinikum-essen.lvr.de/media/klinikum_essen/kinder_und_jugendliche/klinik_fuer_psychiatrie_psychosomatik_und_psychotherapie_des_kindes_und_jugendalters/flyer_kjp/Flyer_Ambulanz_fuer_junge_Gefluechtete_2seitig_RAB.pdf),

Farsi: [https://klinikum-essen.lvr.de/media/klinikum\\_essen/kinder\\_und\\_jugendliche/klinik\\_fuer\\_psychiatrie\\_psychosomatik\\_und\\_psychotherapie\\_des\\_kindes\\_und\\_jugendalters/flyer\\_kjp/Flyer\\_Ambulanz\\_fuer\\_junge\\_Gefluechtete\\_2seitig\\_Farsi.pdf](https://klinikum-essen.lvr.de/media/klinikum_essen/kinder_und_jugendliche/klinik_fuer_psychiatrie_psychosomatik_und_psychotherapie_des_kindes_und_jugendalters/flyer_kjp/Flyer_Ambulanz_fuer_junge_Gefluechtete_2seitig_Farsi.pdf),

French: [https://klinikum-essen.lvr.de/media/klinikum\\_essen/kinder\\_und\\_jugendliche/klinik\\_fuer\\_psychiatrie\\_psychosomatik\\_und\\_psychotherapie\\_des\\_kindes\\_und\\_jugendalters/flyer\\_kjp/Flyer\\_Ambulanz\\_fuer\\_junge\\_Gefluechtete\\_2seitig\\_Franzoesisch.pdf](https://klinikum-essen.lvr.de/media/klinikum_essen/kinder_und_jugendliche/klinik_fuer_psychiatrie_psychosomatik_und_psychotherapie_des_kindes_und_jugendalters/flyer_kjp/Flyer_Ambulanz_fuer_junge_Gefluechtete_2seitig_Franzoesisch.pdf)

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** This is an especially severe form of violence against women. During this procedure, the exterior sexual organs of girls or women are completely or partially removed without a medical reason. This goes along with extreme physical and psychological pain for the women and girls concerned.

- **Who can I address if I (or a friend) am/are affected by FGM?**

There is a **Violence against Women Support Hotline**. It can be reached in 17 languages at: 08000 116 016.

You can also visit the website:

[https://www.hilfetelefon.de/fileadmin/content/04\\_Materialien/1\\_Materialien\\_Bestellen/Flyer/100x210\\_mehrsprachiger\\_Informationenflyer\\_barrierefrei\\_2019.pdf](https://www.hilfetelefon.de/fileadmin/content/04_Materialien/1_Materialien_Bestellen/Flyer/100x210_mehrsprachiger_Informationenflyer_barrierefrei_2019.pdf)

For further facilities that give advice to women in distress in Essen, see [Gewalt gegen Frauen](#)

- **Are there facilities that specialise in supporting victims of FGM?**

In Düsseldorf, you can go to Stop Mutilation e.V., an organisation that supports girls and women affected by FGM in their everyday life. Contact: <http://www.stop-mutilation.org>

The organisation **agisra** in Cologne also works together with women who have suffered FGM. Contact: <https://agisra.org/beratung/>

**Diakonie** in Essen offers counselling to women who battle the physical and psychological consequences of FGM. The counselling is in German and English. Contact: <https://www.diakoniewerk-essen.de/de/Jugend%20und%20Familie/Schwangerschaftsberatung/281.1694>

### 3. Residence in Germany and the Asylum Procedure

**Determination of the Age of Minors:** During the asylum procedure, it is important for German authorities to know your age. If you don't have identity documents or your birth date is not mentioned in your papers, this is problematic to authorities, especially if they cannot know whether you are a minor or an adult. Then, employees of BAMF may ask you to answer questions about yourself in an interview or undergo medical tests to prove your age.

- **Who is responsible for the determination of age?**

**Jugendamt** with the City of Essen is responsible for young refugees and their age determination. If there are doubts about the age of a young person, employees of Jugendamt may order a medical examination, for example an X-ray treatment at a hospital.

- **What are the consequences if authorities classify me as a minor/as an adult?**

Asylum seekers who are minor (under the age of 18) are taken care of and supported by **Jugendamt** staff. If Jugendamt gets to the conclusion that a person is older than 18, it can end the support of the asylum seeker.

- **What can I do against a wrong determination of age?**

You can enter an objection against a false determination of age and the decision of Jugendamt to end your support. Also, you can bring an action against that decision before a court. If you want to do this, you should consult a lawyer before. For counselling facilities that deal with asylum and residence in Germany, see [Flüchtlingsberatung](#)

- **Where can I get more information with regard to the determination of age?**

**Bundesfachverband unbegleitete minderjährige Flüchtlinge (BumF)** has published further information on this subject: <https://b-umf.de/p/alterseinschaetzung/>

**Asylum:** The German Constitution says that persons who are persecuted for political reasons get asylum in Germany. This status means that the people can stay in Germany indefinitely, but it is only for people who haven't been in another safe state before they entered Germany. That is why many people do not get asylum; most people get another form of protection, so-called international protection ([internationalen Schutz](#)).

- **What is an asylum application?**

That is the official application by which you say that you came from another country because you couldn't stay there, and now want to live in Germany. When you file the application at a BAMF office, BAMF examines your application and decides whether you get asylum or international protection in Germany or whether you could be sent back to your country of origin.

- **What happens after I file my asylum application?**

This will be explained to you in detail at asylum procedure counselling (**Verfahrensberatung**). A few days or weeks after you have filed your application, you get an appointment for an interview at BAMF. During the interview, employees of BAMF ask you questions about yourself and you are supposed to explain why you had to leave your home country. As soon as BAMF has examined your application, you get a decision from BAMF in a letter. In this letter, you are told about the status you have been granted and what this means for you.

- **What kind of status do I have during the asylum procedure?**

During the asylum procedure, you have a status called **Aufenthaltsgestattung**. This is not a residence title because with Aufenthaltsgestattung, you only have a right to stay in Germany until the end of your asylum procedure. You still have Aufenthaltsgestattung when your asylum application is rejected, and you file a lawsuit against this decision. With Aufenthaltsgestattung, you have certain rights. You are entitled to get social benefits, for instance.

**Residence:** This is the permission of the German state that allows you to enter Germany and stay in the country for a certain period of time. There are different residence titles for various reasons to come to Germany. Residence titles are issued by Ausländerbehörde.

- **Where do I get further information concerning residence?**

**Handbook Germany** provides information on residence in different languages.

English: <https://handbookgermany.de/en/rights-laws/immigration.html>,

Arabic: <https://handbookgermany.de/ar/rights-laws/immigration.html>

French: <https://handbookgermany.de/fr/rights-laws/immigration.html>

- **Which residence titles are there?**

The three most important residence titles in Germany are Aufenthaltserlaubnis (Residence Permit), Niederlassungserlaubnis and Visum.

**Aufenthaltserlaubnis** is a title that is temporary, and it is issued for a certain purpose.

The purpose can be academic studies, a job or the fact that you had to flee your country of origin and need a safe place.

**Niederlassungserlaubnis** is a residence title that is indefinite. Niederlassungserlaubnis is for people who have had Aufenthaltserlaubnis for five years and who have built up a life in Germany.

**Visum** is issued by German embassies in other countries. It is a residence title that gives persons the right to enter Germany, for example for a family reunification (see [Familiennachzug](#)).

- **Does Duldung give me a right to residence?**

No, Duldung is not a residence title and does not give you a right to stay in Germany.

Duldung means that according to the German state, you would have to leave the country, but this is not possible at the moment due to practical reasons (e.g. no papers, health problems). People with Duldung can get counselling on how to get a residence title. Their stay in Germany is only safe if they have a residence title. For further information on who to address in order to improve your status, see [Flüchtlingsberatung](#).

- **How can I reach Ausländerbehörde Essen?**

Ausländerbehörde Essen is responsible for all questions concerning the residence of persons who do not have a German ID card and live in Essen. They deal with questions of residence titles, family reunification, integration and so on.

Contact: Phone: 0201-8838883; E-Mail: [abh@essen.de](mailto:abh@essen.de);

Address: Schederhofstraße 45, 45145 Essen

[https://www.essen.de/leben/migration\\_und\\_integration/staatsangehoerigkeits\\_und\\_auslaenderangelegenheiten/startseite\\_auslaenderbehoerde.de.html](https://www.essen.de/leben/migration_und_integration/staatsangehoerigkeits_und_auslaenderangelegenheiten/startseite_auslaenderbehoerde.de.html)

**BAMF Interview:** During the asylum procedure, you have a very important appointment at BAMF. This appointment is called interview. In the course of this appointment, an employee of BAMF asks you questions about yourself, the situation in your home country and what happened after you left the country. You are supposed to explain why you are asking for protection in Germany. The interview is decisive for the outcome of the asylum procedure.

- **Where can I find information on what happens during the interview?**

**Refugee Law Clinic München** has summarised information about the interview.

English:

<http://rlcm.de/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/anhrungsleitfaden-englisch.pdf>

Arabic:

<http://rlcm.de/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/anhrungsleitfaden-arabisch.pdf>

- **How can I prepare for the interview?**

Flüchtlingsrat Niedersachsen has issued a **catalogue with standard questions** for the interview (in German):

<https://www.nds-fluerat.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019FragenAnhörungVorber-unabhängigHKL-3.pdf>

Also, there is an **information film** about preparing for the interview, available in:

Arabic, <https://www.asylindeutschland.de/ar/فيلم/>

English, <https://www.asylindeutschland.de/en/film/>

Farsi, <https://www.asylindeutschland.de/fa/فيلم-2/>

Here you **find fact sheets** regarding the interview in different languages:

<https://www.asyl.net/view/detail/News/information-zur-anhoerung-im-asylverfahren/>

- **Who can help me with the preparation for the interview?**

You can get counselling and support at **ProAsyl/Flüchtlingsrat Essen e.V.**, contact:

<https://www.proasyllessen.de>. You can also turn to **AWO** Essen, contact:

<https://www.awo-essen.de/rat-hilfe/hilfe-fuer-fluechtlinge/fluechtlingsberatung/#a-3861-2>

Here you find a list of all counselling facilities in NRW:

[https://www.fnrnw.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Netzzeit\\_Dezember\\_2020\\_WEB\\_FE\\_RTIG\\_2\\_.pdf](https://www.fnrnw.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Netzzeit_Dezember_2020_WEB_FE_RTIG_2_.pdf)

**Family Reunification:** If you are allowed to stay in Germany, you can bring your closest family members to Germany under certain circumstances.

- **Who can bring their relatives to Germany? Which conditions have to be fulfilled?**

**You may have a right to family reunification if ...**

1. You receive protection in Germany, this means you were either granted **asylum** or were recognised as a **refugee**. If BAMF only granted you a deportation ban (Abschiebeverbot), you do not have a right to family reunification. Persons who are

granted subsidiary protection are not automatically entitled to family reunification, but they can apply for it. Every month, there are 1,000 spots available for family members of persons with a subsidiary protection status. Your relatives may get one of these spots if there is a humanitarian reason for them to come to Germany, e.g. when they are threatened in their home country or have health issues.

**AND**

2. You need to have a **residence title** (see [Aufenthalt](#)).

You should know about an **important exception** in this context:

If you apply for family reunification with Auswärtiges Amt within three months after you get a positive result on your asylum application and are granted asylum or refugee status (not subsidiary protection!), you don't have to prove that you have got enough money and living space to support your relatives. If you don't make the deadline of three months, you will have to fulfil additional requirements for your application to be accepted. The procedure then becomes more complicated and takes more time.

For further information about this, see:

<https://fap.diplo.de/webportal/desktop/index.html#start> (also available in English and Arabic)

For a detailed assessment of your requirements, you should turn to a lawyer or to a counselling facility for refugees ([Flüchtlingsberatung](#)).

- **Who can I bring to Germany by family reunification?**

If you are entitled to family reunification, you can bring your so-called „core family“, that means your closest family members, to Germany. This comprises your spouse, minor unmarried children and parents of minor children. Other relatives are only allowed to enter the country in the context of family reunification in cases of severe hardship.

- **Who is responsible for the procedure of family reunification?**

The application for visa in the context of family reunification can be filed with the German embassies in other countries. For this application, you (or your relatives) need to submit different documents. For further information, see the websites of the German embassy in the country where your relatives currently live. The family reunification procedure is carried out by the German embassies in cooperation with Ausländerbehörden in Germany. For questions regarding the procedure, you can turn to Ausländerbehörde Essen:

[https://www.essen.de/leben/migration\\_und\\_integration/staatsangehoerigkeits\\_und\\_auslaenderangelegenheiten/startseite\\_auslaenderbehoerde.de.html](https://www.essen.de/leben/migration_und_integration/staatsangehoerigkeits_und_auslaenderangelegenheiten/startseite_auslaenderbehoerde.de.html)

- **Where can I get more information on the family reunification procedure?**

Further information is available on the website of **Auswärtiges Amt**.

English: <https://fap.diplo.de/webportal/desktop/index.html#start>

Arabic: <https://fap.diplo.de/webportal/desktop/index.html#start>

Also, **Handbook Germany** provides information in several languages.

Arabic: <https://handbookgermany.de/ar/rights-laws/asylum/family-reunification.html>

Turkish: <https://handbookgermany.de/tr/rights-laws/asylum/family-reunification.html>

French: <https://handbookgermany.de/fr/rights-laws/asylum/family-reunification.html>

Farsi: <https://handbookgermany.de/fa/rights-laws/asylum/family-reunification.html>

English: <https://handbookgermany.de/en/rights-laws/asylum/family-reunification.html>

**Refugee Counselling:** That is a special counselling for people who are undergoing the asylum procedure or who have other questions concerning residence in Germany. You can also address this type of counselling if you have questions about your everyday life, e.g. if you have an appointment with a state authority and you need support because you don't speak German yet.

- **Which counselling facilities are there in Essen?**

**ProAsyl/Flüchtlingsrat Essen e.V.** offers you counselling and support in many languages.

Contact: <https://www.proasylessen.de>. You can also turn to **PLANB Ruhr e. V.** with

questions about your residence and legal status. Contact: <https://www.planb-ruhr.de/migration-integration/essen/regionale-fluechtlingsberatung-essen>

Also, there is **AWO Essen**, contact: <https://www.awo-essen.de/rat-hilfe/hilfe-fuer-fluechtlinge/fluechtlingsberatung/#a-3861-2>

You can also go to **Caritas** in Essen with your questions: <https://www.cse.ruhr/soziale-dienste-gefaehrdetenhilfe-quartierentwicklung/integration-migration/>

You may need counselling and advice about different subjects. Many counselling facilities are specialised in different fields, some facilities offer rather general support. But if you approach one of the facilities mentioned above, they will surely be able to give you the address of an organisation that specialises in your problem.

**International Protection:** That is the broader term for both refugee status and the status of subsidiary protection. When you file your application for asylum, BAMF examines your application whether you are eligible for international protection and – if yes – what kind of status you get.

- **What does refugee status mean? Which rights do I have with this status?**

You are granted refugee status if you were persecuted for instance for religious or political reasons in your country of origin. This status gives you Aufenthaltserlaubnis for three years. Your Aufenthaltserlaubnis will be prolonged for three years under the condition that the situation in your country of origin does not change for you. After this, you may get an indefinite residence title. As a refugee, you can work in Germany, go to school or study and you are entitled to family reunification ([Familiennachzug](#)).

For further information, see **Handbook Germany**

Arabic: <https://handbookgermany.de/ar/rights-laws/asylum/right-of-residence.html>,

Farsi: <https://handbookgermany.de/fa/rights-laws/asylum/right-of-residence.html>

- **What does subsidiary protection mean? What rights do I have?**

Subsidiary protection is a status that you get if you are not persecuted in your country of origin, but you are in serious danger for your life or your human rights there (e.g. due to war, torture, death penalty). With the subsidiary protection status, you get Aufenthaltserlaubnis in Germany for one year. If the situation in your country of origin does not change after this, your Aufenthaltserlaubnis is prolonged for two years. After a minimum of five years, you may get an indefinite residence title. People who get the subsidiary protection status only have a limited right to family reunification (see [Familiennachzug](#)). If you think that you should have refugee status instead of subsidiary protection status, you should turn to a lawyer and try to have the decision of BAMF changed before a court.

Further information is provided by **Handbook Germany** in several languages.

Arabic: <https://handbookgermany.de/ar/rights-laws/asylum/right-of-residence.html>,

English: <https://handbookgermany.de/en/rights-laws/asylum/right-of-residence.html>,

French: <https://handbookgermany.de/fr/rights-laws/asylum/right-of-residence.html>,

Pashto: <https://handbookgermany.de/ps/rights-laws/asylum/right-of-residence.html>

- **What is a deportation ban?**

A deportation ban (**Abschiebeverbot**) is the status you get in case you are not granted refugee status or subsidiary protection. Even though you did not get one of these two statuses, BAMF thinks that you cannot be deported to your country of origin because this would be dangerous to your life or freedom. This might be the case, for instance, if you have a severe disease that cannot be treated accurately in your country of origin. A deportation ban gives you Aufenthaltserlaubnis for one year. It can be prolonged for two

years if your situation has not changed in the meantime. After a minimum of five years, you can try and get an indefinite residence title. You should turn to a lawyer if you want to try and get a better protection status.

For further information, see **Handbook Germany**

English: <https://handbookgermany.de/en/rights-laws/asylum/right-of-residence.html>,

Pashto: <https://handbookgermany.de/ps/rights-laws/asylum/right-of-residence.html>

- **What can I do if BAMF rejects my application for asylum?**

Then, you should talk to a lawyer or a refugee counselling organisation

([Flüchtlingsberatung](#)). It is possible to challenge BAMF's decision before a court if you file the motion within a certain period after you have received the rejection letter.

**Landeserstaufnahmeeinrichtung (LEA)**: This is the place that asylum seekers have to go to first after they have submitted their application for asylum in NRW. There, asylum seekers have to give their fingerprints and photos are taken of them. They also have to show their papers, if they have any. From LEA, they will be assigned to Erstaufnahmeeinrichtungen (EAE) in NRW or in another state, such as Bremen or Hamburg.

- **Where is the LEA in NRW?**

LEA NRW is at Gersteinring 50a, 44791 Bochum. You can find directions from Essen here: [https://www.proasylessen.de/fileadmin/documents/Wegbeschreibung\\_LEA\\_Bochum.pdf](https://www.proasylessen.de/fileadmin/documents/Wegbeschreibung_LEA_Bochum.pdf)

- **How can I reach LEA NRW by phone?**

The central phone number of LEA is: 02931-826600. A hotline run by BAMF can be reached at: 0911-94347780.

**Resettlement**: This means that persons who have fled their country of origin and came to another country can be transferred to Germany or another state of the European Union if they are not safe in the country they fled to either. This procedure applies to persons that are very vulnerable and that already have got a status of international protection.

**Language Course**: In a language course you learn the German language together with other people. There are courses with different difficulty levels, that is to say for beginners or people who already speak some German.

- **Who offers language courses?**

There are language courses in German at **Volkshochschule** (VHS) Essen. Contact: <https://www.vhs-essen.de/kurse/sprachen>. Many **private companies** offer language courses in Essen, too. You can search them on the internet.

- **How much does it cost to book a language course?**

That is different for every language course. If you are interested in a language course, you should check the company's website for the prices.

**Asylum Procedure Counselling:** In this counselling, you get information on what happens after you have submitted your application for asylum and what you have to do next. The asylum procedure in Germany is quite complex and it can take some time until you receive the decision about your application. Counselling facilities can support you during this procedure.

- **Which counselling organisations are there?**

As an inhabitant of EAE (Erstaufnahmeeinrichtung) Essen, you can get counselling there. For more organisations that offer support, see [Flüchtlingsberatung](#).

**Volkshochschule (VHS):** This is an institution that offers courses for people of all ages. You can find courses for your free time, e.g. sports or art, or you can upgrade your education in the context of your work.

- **How can I reach VHS Essen?**

Volkshochschule Essen, Burgplatz 1, 45127 Essen. Contact: <https://www.vhs-essen.de>

- **Are the courses for free?**

No, you have to pay most of the courses that VHS offers. On the VHS website, you can check the prices for each course.

## 4. Transport

### **What do I need to know about public transport?**

If you want to take a **bus, tram or train**, you need to have a valid ticket. You can use the same ticket for a certain period of time within a certain region. Depending on the type of ticket, you can also travel to other cities. You can buy tickets at the **ticket machines** that can be found at tram and train stations or at **Ruhrbahn-Centers** which offer tickets at the main station, at Limbecker Platz and at Essen town hall. If you travel by bus, you can also buy a ticket with the driver (although this possibility may be limited due to the COVID-19 restrictions). It is not possible to buy a ticket when you are in a train or tram, you need to buy the ticket beforehand. The ticket you need to travel by train and tram has to be stamped in order to be valid – you can do this at the station or in the tram. If you travel without a valid ticket and get caught, you have to pay a 60 € fine. There are different kinds of tickets, for instance for a single journey within Essen, for several journeys within Essen or for the whole month with as many rides as you want.

### **Can I take a bus or tram if I don't have much money?**

People who get financial support from the state can apply for „**SozialTicket**“, a cheaper ticket which is offered by Ruhrbahn. Ruhrbahn is the undertaking that runs buses and trams in Essen. You can get the relevant document for the application for SozialTicket at Jobcenter, Jugendamt and Sozialamt. The ticket costs 39,95 € per month and is valid for all parts of Essen.

For further information, see

[https://www.essen.de/leben/soziales\\_und\\_arbeit/jobcenter/das\\_sozialticket.de.html](https://www.essen.de/leben/soziales_und_arbeit/jobcenter/das_sozialticket.de.html)

and

<https://service.essen.de/detail/-/vr-bis-detail/dienstleistung/42163/show>

### **Under which conditions am I allowed to drive a car in Germany?**

If you want to drive a car or motorcycle, you need to have a driver licence for this kind of vehicle. If you drive without a licence, you will be accused before a court. A driver licence from another country (outside the EU) is only valid for six months after your arrival in Germany. After that, you need to apply for a new driver licence.

[https://www.bmvi.de/SharedDocs/DE/Anlage/StV/auslaendische-fahrerlaubnisse-merkblatt-ausserhalb-eu-und-ewr-staaten.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.bmvi.de/SharedDocs/DE/Anlage/StV/auslaendische-fahrerlaubnisse-merkblatt-ausserhalb-eu-und-ewr-staaten.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

A German driver licence can be obtained at a driving school. There, you get theoretical

lessons about laws and traffic rules and driving lessons. After some months, you have to take an exam with theoretical and practical parts. The theoretical part during which you answer questions about driving can be taken in different languages.

### **What do I need to know about cycling?**

You don't need a driver licence in order to ride a bike. Riding a bike is one of the cheapest forms of mobility in the city. You can buy used bikes at a reduced price, e.g. at „Freilauf“, Langemarckstraße 28, 45141 Essen; Tel.: 0201 52326-420; Mail: freilauf@neue-arbeit-essen.de.

Also, you can check online offers for used bikes, for instance at Ebay Kleinanzeigen or similar websites.

You can take your bike with you in a bus or tram if you want to. Then, you need to buy an additional ticket that costs 3,60 €. When riding your bike, you should wear a helmet for your personal safety in case of an accident.

## 5. Work

**Agentur für Arbeit:** is also called Arbeitsamt. This agency is responsible for people who are looking for work or Ausbildung. Agentur für Arbeit also pays money to people who do not have work currently and therefore need support from the state (Arbeitslosengeld). If you have lost your job, you should report this to Agentur für Arbeit immediately.

In case you quit your old job voluntarily without having a new job, you are not entitled to Arbeitslosengeld for three months.

Most applications to Agentur für Arbeit are filed online. If you have questions about this or don't know how to fill one of the forms, you can turn to Arbeitsamt Essen with your questions: <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/vor-ort/essen/content/1533714646961>

**Jobcenter:** This is an agency that is responsible for people who get Arbeitslosengeld II (also called Hartz IV), these are mostly people who have been without a job for a long period of time but have a working permit (and residence title) and are now looking for work. Jobcenter supports these job seekers financially and helps them with their job search by offering training and mediating job offers.

### How can I get financial support from Jobcenter?

If you want financial support, you need to apply for it. You can get the application forms at Jobcenter or online:

[https://www.essen.de/leben/soziales\\_und\\_arbeit/jobcenter/arbeitslosengeld\\_ii/prov\\_download.de.html](https://www.essen.de/leben/soziales_und_arbeit/jobcenter/arbeitslosengeld_ii/prov_download.de.html) .

### How do I get an appointment at Jobcenter?

For your first contact to Jobcenter, you can reach the staff at:

Jobcenter  
Berliner Platz 10,  
45127 Essen,  
Phone: 0201 88 57 985;  
E-Mail: [Bereich-NKB@jobcenter.essen.de](mailto:Bereich-NKB@jobcenter.essen.de)

### Can someone help me with the application forms?

There are counselling facilities that can help you with filling out the forms and filing applications to Jobcenter. You find an overview of the relevant organisations in Essen here: <http://www.bg45.de/>

If you want to know more about the contact with Jobcenter and letters you may receive from Jobcenter, you can watch this explanatory video (in German):

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eW64\\_aEbfhM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eW64_aEbfhM)

**Placement Service:** This is a service offered by Jobcenter. Job offers are sent to you by post. In reaction to these job offers you are supposed to apply for jobs. If you don't apply, you have to explain to Jobcenter in writing why you did not want to take this job. Regularly not applying to jobs or not taking job offers may have the consequence that Jobcenter reduces your financial support.

### **When am I allowed to work?**

You can work if you have a **work permit** (Arbeitserlaubnis). A work permit is needed for people who don't have German or EU papers and want to work in Germany. A work permit is part of your residence document if you have a residence title. Without a residence title, e.g. if you have Duldung, you have to apply for a work permit at Ausländerbehörde. People who are undergoing the asylum procedure can receive a work permit after three months of residence in Germany at the earliest – if they fulfil certain conditions.

A work permit is granted by Ausländerbehörde, reachable at:

Ausländerbehörde Essen,  
Schederhofstr. 45,  
45145 Essen  
Phone: +49 201 8838883;  
E-Mail: abh@essen.de

You need to make an appointment by phone before you go there.

### **Who can give me advice concerning job search and applications?**

You can turn to Jobcenter or to one of the counselling facilities in Essen.

**Temporary Employment Agency:** This is an undertaking that hires you and then places you as a worker for different firms for a certain period of time. These undertakings can be helpful for you if you look for a job because they hire new employees very regularly. The jobs temporary employment agencies place you at are often rather low-paid and do not have high entry requirements.

**Labour Conditions:** In Germany, the law and collective agreements (Tarif) fix under which conditions people work. There may be additional rules in your company, but only under the condition that these rules are compatible with the law.

### **What are the average working hours?**

The working hours are set by law and collective agreements. Most people work eight hours a day five days a week, meaning they have two days off (which is usually Saturday and Sunday). You are entitled to a minimum of four weeks of vacation every year.

### **How much wage am I entitled to get?**

Your income of course depends on the type of work you do. The minimum wage you are entitled to is currently 9,50 € per working hour. Paying you less is against the law. There are only few exceptions to this rule.

### **What are taxes, what are social security contributions?**

If you work, your employer pays a contribution to your health insurance and pension insurance, this is called social security contributions.

People who earn money are required to pay taxes to the state. The more money you earn, the more taxes you have to pay. If you are married or have children, you have to pay less taxes because you are taking care of other persons. At the end of the year, you get a transcript of the wages you got and the taxes you paid. If you send this transcript to Finanzamt, you can get a share of your tax money back.

### **What do I do in case of sickness?**

When you are sick, you have to call your employer and tell him/her that you cannot come to work today. If you are sick for some days or even weeks, you keep getting your wage under the condition that you go to a doctor who certifies that you are sick (**Krankenschein**) – you then need to send this certificate to your employer and health insurance. You should get this certificate immediately at the first day of your sickness. Being sick is not a lawful reason for your employer to terminate your labour agreement. But it is important that you are not absent at work without an excuse.

## 6. Personal Crises (Violence, Drugs, Racism)

**Discrimination:** That means that you are treated in a mean or unfair way because of characteristics such as your colour of skin, sex or origin.

- **Who can help me if I feel discriminated against?**

Anti-Rassismus Informations-Centrum (**ARIC**) NRW in Duisburg offers counselling for people who have experienced discrimination. You can reach them by phone at 0203 284873 or by e-mail: [beratung@aric-nrw.de](mailto:beratung@aric-nrw.de).

You can also get support from **Opferberatung Rheinland**: <https://www.opferberatung-rheinland.de/beratung>

**Marriage Counselling:** This is the same counselling as **Beziehungsberatung**, but the people who have problems in their relationship are married.

- **Who offers marriage counselling in Essen?**

For a list of counselling facilities, see **Beziehungsberatung**.

- **How can I end a marriage?**

Ending a marriage is called **Scheidung** (divorce). You have to file for divorce before a court. Before that, you should talk to a lawyer. City of Essen has got a counselling facility concerning divorce and relationships: Stadt Essen, Soziale Dienste, Vereinstr. 2, 45127 Essen. Contact:

[https://www.essen.de/leben/soziales\\_und\\_arbeit/soziale\\_dienste/soziale\\_dienste\\_.de.html](https://www.essen.de/leben/soziales_und_arbeit/soziale_dienste/soziale_dienste_.de.html)

**Violence against Women:** That means that a person is affected by violence because she is a woman. The perpetrator can be the woman's partner, a male relative or a stranger.

- **Who can I talk to if I am affected by violence against women?**

There is a **support hotline** for violence against women that can be reached at 08000 116 016. The hotline offers counselling and moral support to women in 17 languages.

For further information, see:

[https://www.hilfetelefon.de/fileadmin/content/04\\_Materialien/1\\_Materialien\\_Bestellen/Flyer/100x210\\_mehrsprachiger\\_Informationsflyer\\_barrierefrei\\_2019.pdf](https://www.hilfetelefon.de/fileadmin/content/04_Materialien/1_Materialien_Bestellen/Flyer/100x210_mehrsprachiger_Informationsflyer_barrierefrei_2019.pdf)

Victims of violence can also call the hotline of the organisation **Weißer Ring** at: 08000 116 006.

- **Which counselling facilities are there in Essen?**

There are several counselling facilities in Essen, for instance **Frauenberatung Essen**.

Contact: [https://www.frauenberatung-essen.de/cms/front\\_content.php?idart=13](https://www.frauenberatung-essen.de/cms/front_content.php?idart=13)

Also, there is the organisation **Distel e.V.** that supports women in distress. Contact:

<https://www.distel-ev.de/frauenberatung-essen.html>

- **What can I do if my partner violent and I am afraid of going home?**

**Frauenhaus Essen** is a women's refuge where women in danger are safe and can stay for some time. They can be reached at <https://www.frauenhaus-essen.de>. At the women's refuge, you can also get counselling in several languages.

**Diakonie** offers a safe space for women and women with kids. Contact:

[https://www.diakoniewerk-](https://www.diakoniewerk-essen.de/de/Jugend%20und%20Familie/Aufnahmeheim/Frauengruppe/281,22.143)

[essen.de/de/Jugend%20und%20Familie/Aufnahmeheim/Frauengruppe/281,22.143](https://www.diakoniewerk-essen.de/de/Jugend%20und%20Familie/Aufnahmeheim/Frauengruppe/281,22.143)

**LGBTIQ** – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersexual, Queer: This is a collective term for people whose sexual orientation or identity differs from the ideas of mainstream society. This comprises e.g. men who love men or a person who was born as a female but identifies as male and wants to live as a man.

- **What rights do LGBTIQ persons have in Germany?**

These people have the right to live the way they want to live. Society and the German state are not allowed to discriminate against them just because they do not meet the ideas the mainstream has of relationships or sexuality.

- **Where do I get further information as a LGBTIQ person who has fled their country of origin?**

There is a **manual for LGBTIQ persons** who have come to Germany in several languages. It is available here:

French: <https://www.queer-refugees.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/flyer-franzoesisch-april-2020.pdf>

Turkish: <https://www.queer-refugees.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/flyer-tuerkisch-april-2020.pdf>

- **Where can I get help if I am discriminated against as a LGBTIQ person? Where can I meet other LGBTIQ persons?**

**AWO** offers counselling and support to LGBTIQ persons at Lore-Agnes-Haus. Contact: <https://www.lore-agnes-haus.de>

Queer refugees can also get counselling at **Aidshilfe Essen**. Contact: <https://aidshilfe-essen.de/kontakt/>

**TOGETHER Essen** is a gathering place for LGBTIQ teenagers and young adults. The address is Kleine Stoppenberger Straße 13-15, 45141 Essen.

Contact: <https://queere-jugend-nrw.de/projekte/together-essen/>

**Prostitution:** this means that you are forced to carry out sexual acts with others in exchange for money.

- **Are there counselling facilities in Essen?**

**Nachtfalter** is a counselling facility for prostitutes and victims of human trafficking.

Contact: <https://www.caritas.de/adressen/caritasverband-fuer-die-stadt-essen-e.v.fach-und-b/45141-essen/104553>

- **What can I do if I have experienced violence in this context?**

For men, **Männerhilfe-Telefon** can be reached at 0800 123 99 00. The website is available at <https://www.maennerhilfetelefon.de/>

Also, there is a **hotline** of the organisation **Weißer Ring** which supports victims of violence: 08000 116 006.

Women who have suffered sexual violence can turn to **Frauenberatung Essen**.

Contact: [https://www.frauenberatung-essen.de/cms/front\\_content.php?idcat=18](https://www.frauenberatung-essen.de/cms/front_content.php?idcat=18) ; for further addresses and organisations, see [Gewalt gegen Frauen](#)

**Pregnancy Counselling:** You can turn to these counselling facilities if you are pregnant and are not sure whether you can or want to have the baby. If you don't want to have the baby, you need to have an **abortion**. This means that the embryo is removed from the uterus by a doctor. Before the abortion, you are required to get counselling about the surgery and receive more information to make sure that you take your decision thoroughly.

- **Which counselling facilities are in Essen?**

**Diakonie** offers counselling to women who are pregnant involuntarily. The counselling can be conducted in German and English. Contact: <https://www.diakoniewerk-essen.de/de/Jugend%20und%20Familie/Schwangerschaftsberatung/281.1694>

**AWO** offers pregnancy counselling, too. The counselling is possible in German, English, Turkish, French and Spanish. Contact: AWO, Lore- Agnes- Haus, <https://www.lore-agnes-haus.de>

- **Is there a safe place for me if I don't want to go home anymore?**

**Frauenhaus Essen** is a women's refuge and can be reached at: <https://www.frauenhaus-essen.de>. You can also get counselling in several languages there.

**Diakonie** offers a safe space for women and women with kids. Contact:

<https://www.diakoniewerk-essen.de/de/Jugend%20und%20Familie/Aufnahmeheim/Frauengruppe/281,22.143>

**Sexual Violence:** This is every kind of violence that constitutes a sexual assault. This can be rape or harassment.

- **Which counselling facilities are there in Essen?**

There is an **emergency number** for women who have suffered sexual violence: 0201 - 78 65 68.

Also, there is a **support hotline for violence against women**, reachable at 08000 116 016, where counselling is offered in 17 languages.

**Frauenberatung Essen** supports women who have experienced sexual violence. Contact:

[https://www.frauenberatung-essen.de/cms/front\\_content.php?idcat=18](https://www.frauenberatung-essen.de/cms/front_content.php?idcat=18)

Counselling for women after a sexual assault is also offered by the organisation

**Distel e.V.** Contact: <https://www.distel-ev.de/frauenberatung-essen.html>

For men, there is **Männerhilfe-Telefon** which can be reached at 0800 123 99 00,

<https://www.maennerhilfetelefon.de/>. The organisation **Weißer Ring** has got a **support hotline** for victims of violence: 08000 116 006.

You can also get help and moral support from **Frauenverband Courage**, contact:

<https://couragezentrum-essen.de/kontakt/>

In Cologne, the organisation **agisra** offers counselling to women:

<https://agisra.org/beratung/>

**Forced Marriage:** This means that a person has to marry another person even if he/she does not really want that. He/She may be pressured by family members or other close persons.

- **Who can I turn to if I am affected by forced marriage and need help?**

**AWO** offers counselling about forced marriage. Contact: AWO, Lore- Agnes- Haus, <https://www.lore-agnes-haus.de>. **Kinderschutzbund**, an organisation that specialises in rights of minors, also offers counselling with regard to forced marriages. Contact: <https://www.dksb-essen.de/kinderschutz/kinderschutz-zentrum>.

**City of Essen** also has a counselling facility that deals with relationships and divorce: Stadt Essen, Soziale Dienste, Vereinstr. 2, 45127 Essen. Contact: [https://www.essen.de/leben/soziales\\_und\\_arbeit/soziale\\_dienste/soziale\\_dienste\\_.de.html](https://www.essen.de/leben/soziales_und_arbeit/soziale_dienste/soziale_dienste_.de.html)

## 7. Accommodation

In Germany, your **living space** is protected by the Constitution. Your house or flat cannot be accessed by the state (e.g. police) with no reason – this is due to your privacy and basic rights. Police can only enter your living space without your consent in case of distress or if that has been allowed by a judge.

- **How do I find an apartment?**

If you look for an apartment, you can find offers in the newspaper or online. You can also turn to a real estate agent who can help you with the search in exchange for a fee. The fee mostly comprises one or two monthly rents. Online, you will find many websites that deal with accommodation if you search for the key terms **Wohnungsbörse**, **Immobilien** or **Mietwohnungen**. Some examples of such websites are:

<https://www.wohnungsboerse.net/>

<http://www.essener-wohnungsboerse.de/>

<https://www.immobilienscout24.de/>

<https://www.immowelt.de/>

- **Where can I find inexpensive furniture?**

**Diakoniewerk** offers used furniture that is not too expensive and that is still in a good state. If you decide to buy something, you can have it delivered to your address in exchange for a fee.

[https://www.diakoniewerk-](https://www.diakoniewerk-essen.de/de/M%C3%B6bel%20und%20Kleidung/M%C3%B6belb%C3%B6rse/110.111)

[essen.de/de/M%C3%B6bel%20und%20Kleidung/M%C3%B6belb%C3%B6rse/110.111](https://www.diakoniewerk-essen.de/de/M%C3%B6bel%20und%20Kleidung/M%C3%B6belb%C3%B6rse/110.111)

In the Diakonie stores (Diakonieläden), you can also buy second hand clothes. Here is a list of Diakonieläden in Essen:

<https://www.diakoniewerk-essen.de/de/M%C3%B6bel%20und%20Kleidung/.110>

- **How can I pay the rent for my flat?**

Rent is the money you pay in order to live in a flat. In addition to the rent your lessor asks you to pay, you will also be required to take on other costs, such as for garbage removal and for heating and electricity.

People who are unemployed and get financial support from Jobcenter or Amt für Wohnen are entitled to support for the costs of rent and heating. This support is only paid if the flat is

not too expensive in relation to the number of people living there. You can learn about how much the rent of your flat can be in order for you to get financial support here:

[https://www.essen.de/meldungen/pressemeldung\\_1391462.de.html](https://www.essen.de/meldungen/pressemeldung_1391462.de.html)

- **Is there a government grant concerning rent?**

Yes. A government grant for your rent (**Wohngeld**) is available for people who have a low income and therefore cannot pay the rent on their own. The amount of the grant depends on factors such as the income and the number of persons living together. For further information, see:

<https://www.bmi.bund.de/DE/themen/bauen-wohnen/stadt-wohnen/wohnraumfoerderung/wohngeld/wohngeld-node.html>

In Essen, Wohngeld can be requested in writing to the City of Essen, Klinkenstr. 29 - 31, 45136 Essen. For more information, see:

<https://service.essen.de/detail/-/vr-bis-detail/dienstleistung/42883/show>

- **What are corporation flats (Sozialwohnungen)?**

The German state financially backed the construction of some apartments in the past. These apartments are called Sozialwohnungen and normally have a low rent. In order to get Sozialwohnung, you need a so-called **Wohnberechtigungsschein** which proves that you are in a situation of financial hardship and are eligible to live in Sozialwohnung.

For more information on Wohnberechtigungsschein and how to get it, see:

[https://media.essen.de/media/wwwessende/aemter/33/wohnungsangelegenheiten\\_1/downloads\\_1/Infoblatt\\_WBS.pdf](https://media.essen.de/media/wwwessende/aemter/33/wohnungsangelegenheiten_1/downloads_1/Infoblatt_WBS.pdf)

Here you find free Sozialwohnung as well as a calculator for you to find out whether you could get Wohnberechtigungsschein:

<https://wbs-rechner.de/wohnberechtigungsschein-essen#wbs-wohnungen-essen>

- **What is a rental agreement?**

The rental agreement (**Mietvertrag**) regulates the relation between you (as the tenant) and the lessor. You need to sign a rental agreement if you want to rent a flat. Before signing the agreement, the lessor will ask you to show some proof about your income and whether you are a credible person. Therefore, the lessor may get information about you from **Schufa**.

That is an agency that collects information about the financial situation of people and with your consent, the lessor can get this information about you from Schufa.

- **What is protection of tenants?**

The relation between tenants and lessors is not always easy. There can be disputes about topics such as moving in or out and payment of certain costs. Organisations that specialise in the protection of tenants (**Mieterschutz**) can help with these situations. You have to become a member of such an organisation in order to get support from it. If you become a member, these organisations offer legal counselling and help you with the correspondence with your lessor. Becoming a member costs between 50 and 100 € a year, that depends on the organisation. You can find several organisations of Mieterschutz in Essen online.

## 8. Finance

### Money and Financial Support

If you work, you earn money. In case the money is not sufficient to provide for yourself or your family, you can apply for additional support with Jobcenter.

**Sozialamt:** This is an agency that is responsible for persons who are not allowed to work, e.g. because they do not have a work permit, or who no longer work. Sozialamt pays out financial support to these persons and thereby secures their living. This is called “Hilfe zum Lebensunterhalt”. Every person in Germany who does not earn enough money for food or to pay the rent is entitled to such support. People who are undergoing the asylum procedure also receive money from Sozialamt, according to Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz (ALG).

If you need help, you should approach Sozialamt. You can make contact and book an appointment at:

[https://www.essen.de/formular/amt\\_fuer\\_soziales\\_und\\_wohnen/amt\\_fuer\\_soziales\\_und\\_wohnen\\_mitteilung\\_an.de.html](https://www.essen.de/formular/amt_fuer_soziales_und_wohnen/amt_fuer_soziales_und_wohnen_mitteilung_an.de.html)

Sozialamt  
Steubenstraße 53,  
45138 Essen,  
Phone: 0201 8850555;  
E-Mail: [sozialamt@essen.de](mailto:sozialamt@essen.de)

### Buying Things

If you want to buy something, you need money. Normally, the prices are on the goods. It is not common to negotiate a price, most prices are fixed. However, if you buy many things or something that is especially expensive, the salesperson may offer you a reduced price. Electricity, heating and mobile phone costs are not one-time-payments. You need to sign agreements / contract that force you to pay money regularly in the future. It is important that you understand how much you will have to pay and think about whether you will be able to pay this in the next weeks or months. Therefore, you should read the agreement / contract carefully and pay attention to what is written there. In case of a dispute, what is crucial is what is said in the agreement – not what the salesperson may have told you.

You can go through the following **checklist** in your head when you are supposed to sign a contract:

- Do I really need what is offered in this contract?

- Am I only paying for a thing once or will I have to pay for something regularly as a subscription (**Abonnement**)?
- For how long does the agreement bind me?
- Is the agreement prolonged automatically?
- Do the costs change in case of a prolongation/after some time?

## **Debt**

Mobile phone contracts, electricity costs, subscriptions etc. can cause great cost within a short period of time. If you get a bill and you cannot pay it, you will get a reminder of the remaining costs (**Mahnung**) which can cause additional costs.

At this point, you should turn to counselling facilities in Essen, such as:

**Verbraucherzentrale:** <https://www.verbraucherzentrale.nrw/beratungsstellen/537/kontakt/Schuldner-%20und%20Verbraucherinsolvenz%C2%ADberatung/1294>

**Schuldnerhilfe:** <https://www.schuldnerhilfe.de/>

**Caritas:** <https://www.caritas.de/hilfeundberatung/onlineberatung/schuldnerberatung/start>

**AWO:** <https://www.awo-essen.de/rat-hilfe/schuldnerberatung>

It is important that you keep all the letters that you got and bring them with you to the counselling facility. The counselling is for free in most cases.

**Schufa:** This is an agency that collects information about people concerning debts and loans. You can approach Schufa if you want to find out the number of debts you have. You can also file a request to Schufa to tell you what information they have been collecting about you:

[https://www.meineschufa.de/index.php?site=11\\_3&via=menu](https://www.meineschufa.de/index.php?site=11_3&via=menu)

9. Keywords – I want to look up a German word

<u>Keyword</u>	<u>German word</u>	Explanation
<u>Abonnement</u>		<u>Subscription. This is an agreement that binds you over a period of time and you have to pay money regularly.</u>
<u>Abortion.</u>	<u>abortion</u>	This is a medical treatment during which the embryo is removed from the uterus so that the pregnancy is terminated.
<u>Agentur für Arbeit</u>		Agency that supports job seekers.
<u>Anhörung</u>	<u>Interview at BAMF</u>	<u>_(Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge) about your country of origin and why you had to leave it.</u>
<u>Apartment/Flat.</u>	<u>Wohnung</u>	
<u>Application for Asylum.</u>	<u>Asylantrag</u>	
<u>Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz</u>		A law that deals with material support of asylum seekers.
<u>Asylum Procedure Counselling</u>	<u>Verfahrensberatung (Asylverfahrensberatung)</u>	
<u>Asylum Procedure.</u>	<u>Asylverfahren</u>	This is the procedure in the course of which your application for asylum is examined by BAMF.
<u>Asylum.</u>	<u>Asyl</u>	
<u>Aufenthaltsgestattung</u>		This is the residence status you have during your asylum procedure.
<u>Ausländerbehörde</u>		Authority that deals with the status of persons who live in Germany but don't have German papers.
<u>BAMF</u>		Authority that deals with the asylum procedure and issues such as migration and integration.
<u>Behandlungsschein</u>		This is a document you need during the asylum procedure if you want to visit a doctor. The costs will then be taken over by the state in most cases.
<u>Bicycle/Bike.</u>	<u>Fahrrad</u>	
<u>Bus.</u>	<u>Bus</u>	

<a href="#"><u>Certificate of Illness..</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Krankenschein</u></a>	This is the document you need to send to your employer and health insurance to prove that you were sick and couldn't work
<a href="#"><u>Contract</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Vertrag</u></a>	. This is a binding agreement between several parties. It can be concluded verbally or in writing.
<b>Counselling Facility</b>	<b>Beratungsstelle</b>	
<a href="#"><u>Couple Counselling</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Beziehungsberatung</u></a>	
<b>COVID</b>	<b>Corona / covid19</b>	Short for the coronavirus "Sars cov 2" from 2019
<b>Debt</b>	<a href="#"><u>Schulden</u></a>	
<b>Deportation Ban</b>	<a href="#"><u>Abschiebeverbot</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>Determination of age</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Altersfeststellung</u></a>	Mostly to proof, if you are minor and therefore depend on additional support and help
<a href="#"><u>Disability</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Behinderung</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>Discrimination.</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Diskriminierung</u></a>	That means that you are being treated worse than others or being excluded due to a characteristic, such as your colour of skin.
<a href="#"><u>Divorce</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Scheidung</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>Driver Licence</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Fahrerlaubnis / Führerschein</u></a>	this is the document to proof the legal status that allows you to drive a vehicle
<a href="#"><u>Duldung</u></a>		That is a legal status which means that you would have to leave Germany according to the law, but you cannot be deported because of practical reasons (e.g. no papers).
<a href="#"><u>Familienpunkt</u></a>		<u>This a facility with City of Essen that deals with everything concerning family and children.</u>
<a href="#"><u>Family Reunification</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Familiennachzug</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>weibliche Genitalverstümmelung</u></a>	This is a very grave form of violence against women.
<a href="#"><u>Forced Marriage</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Zwangsheirat</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>Gesundheitskarte</u></a>		Proof of your health insurance.
<a href="#"><u>Health Insurance</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Krankenversicherung</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>Health System</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Gesundheitssystem</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>Hilfe zum Lebensunterhalt</u></a>		Financial support from the state to people who cannot provide for themselves or their family.
<a href="#"><u>International Protection</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>internationaler Schutz</u></a>	This is the general term for refugee status and subsidiary protection status.

<a href="#"><u>Jobcenter</u></a>		This is the authority that is responsible for people who are looking for work.
<a href="#"><u>Jugendamt</u></a>		This is an agency that takes care of children and teenagers and safeguards their rights.
<a href="#"><u>Kindergarten</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Kita / Kindergarten</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>Labour Conditions</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Arbeitsbedingungen</u></a>	This comprises rules about working hours, wages etc.
<a href="#"><u>Landeserstaufnahm einrichtung (LEA)</u></a>		This is the first place asylum seekers go to after they have filed their asylum application. At LEA, they are registered and sent to a city where they will live for the time coming.
<a href="#"><u>Language Course.</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Sprachkurs</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>Leistungen</u></a>		Financial support by the state.
<a href="#"><u>LGBTIQ</u></a> = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersexual, Queer	<a href="#"><u>LSBTIQ</u></a>	This is a general term for people whose sexual orientation or identity differs from the majority of people.
<a href="#"><u>Marriage Counselling.</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Eheberatung</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>Minimum Wage</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Mindestlohn</u></a>	This is the minimum amount of money you are entitled to get for an hour of work in Germany.
<a href="#"><u>Niederlassungserlau bnis</u></a>		Residence title which gives you the right to stay in Germany for an indefinite period of time.
<a href="#"><u>Placement Service</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Arbeitsvermittlung</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>Pregnancy Counselling.</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Schwangerschaftsbe ratung</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>ProAsyl Essen</u></a>		NGO that helps asylum seekers with the enforcement of their rights.
<a href="#"><u>Prostitution.</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Prostitution</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>Refugee Counselling.</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Flüchtlingsberatung</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>Refugee Status.</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Flüchtlingsstatus</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>Reminder</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Mahnung</u></a>	This is a letter that tells you that you have to pay a certain bill.
<a href="#"><u>Rent</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Miete</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>Resettlement</u></a>		This is a procedure during which very vulnerable refugees, e.g. women or kids, who have already been granted a protection status are transferred from one country (e.g. Lebanon) to a European country because it is safer for them there.

<b>Residence Permit</b>	<b><u>Aufenthaltserlaubni s</u></b>	This is the temporary residence title you get if BAMF decides that you get a protection status.
<b><u>Residence Title</u></b>	<b><u>Aufenthaltstitel</u></b>	
<b>Residence</b>	<b>Aufenthalt</b>	
<b><u>School</u></b>	<b><u>Schule</u></b>	
<b><u>Schufa</u></b>		Agency that collects data about the financial situation of people, for instance debts and loans.
<b><u>Schutzstatus</u></b>		This means the type of protection which allows you to stay in Germany.
<b><u>Sexual Violence</u></b>	<b><u>Sexuelle/sexualisier te Gewalt</u></b>	
<b><u>Sozialamt</u></b>		Agency that secures the living of people in need by monthly payments, especially for elderly and poor people.
<b><u>Sozialticket</u></b>		Special ticket for people who receive financial support from the state.
<b><u>Sozialwohnung</u></b>		Apartments that were built with financial backing from the state. The rent is often cheaper than usually, but you need to show that you are in financial hardship in order to live there.
<b>Subsidiary Protection</b>	<b><u>subsidiärer Schutz</u></b>	This is a status you can get in response to your application for asylum. This status gives you the right to stay in Germany for at least one year with the possibility of extension.
<b><u>Tarif</u></b>		Collective Agreement that regulates labour conditions for a certain professional group.
<b><u>Tax</u></b>	<b><u>Steuer</u></b>	This is a share of your income that you are required to give to the state for public purposes.
<b><u>Temporary Employment</u></b>	<b><u>Zeitarbeit</u></b>	
<b>Ticket</b>	<b>Fahrkarten Fahrscheine</b>	
<b>Tram</b>	<b>Straßenbahn</b>	
<b>Trauma</b>	<b>Trauma</b>	This is a dramatic and horrifying experience that can have as a consequence physical or mental symptoms.
<b>Vacation</b>	<b><u>Urlaub</u></b>	

<a href="#">Violence against Women</a>	<a href="#">Gewalt gegen Frauen</a>	
<a href="#">Violence</a>	<a href="#">Gewalt</a>	
<a href="#">Volkshochschule</a>		This is a place where different courses, e.g. language courses or cooking classes, are offered for everyone.
<a href="#">Wohngeld</a>		State grant for you to pay your rent
<a href="#">Wohnungsbörse</a>		Website that presents free flats and houses you can apply for.
<b>Women's Counselling</b>	<a href="#">Frauenberatung</a>	
<b>Women's Refuge</b>	<a href="#">Frauenhaus</a>	That is a place where women are safe if they experience violence or difficult situations at home.
<b>Work Permit</b>	<a href="#">Arbeitserlaubnis</a>	
<b>Work</b>	<b>Arbeit</b>	
<a href="#">Working Hours</a>	<a href="#">Arbeitszeit</a>	