

Information for Minors in CAOMI

You have been sent to a housing center called a CAOMI where you can stay for a few months (3 months maximum according to the French authorities).

You are free to leave, but you have good reasons to stay at this center in order to rest and begin the procedures to go the United Kingdom (UK) or to stay in France.

France will examine the requests of anyone who wants to go to the UK. The British authorities will make the final decision. Your situation will be studied in the centers where you are staying, in France. But not all of the requests to go to the UK will be accepted.

Those who wish to live in France (or are not allowed to leave for the UK) can benefit from the protection given by the French authorities to young people under the age of 18 in situations of danger (in particular, to young people who are no longer under the protection of their parents). This is called « child protection ».

To benefit from this protection for children under 18, you will have to answer the questions from the child protective services (« Aide sociale à l'enfance », ASE) or associations working for the ASE.

The ASE is not part of the French state, but of the *département* (one of the 100 small territories that make up France). The ASE is going to make sure that you are less than 18 years old and that you are alone in France. If you have any identification or a birth certificate that shows your age, you should show it to the ASE. But be aware, the ASE can check that these are real papers that really come from your country!

If you don't have any papers (or if you lost them), it is not a problem. The ASE will ask you your age, ask you questions about your family (if your parents are still alive, where they live, if you have brothers and sisters, their ages), about your life in your country (school, work), and the reasons why you left (danger, family problems, in order to have a better life). You should respond to these questions as well as you can, with as much information as possible.

If the ASE recognizes you as a minor, your case will be sent to the judge for children (« *juge des enfants* ») who will decide where you will live and be taken care of until you turn 18. You will not stay in the CAOMI. You will be sent to an ASE shelter which will probably be located in a different *département* from the one where you are right now. This can take several months.

If the ASE does not believe that you are under 18.

It is possible that the ASE may doubt your age and think that you are older than 18. They will probably suggest to you at this point that you go to a center for adults. If this happens, you must ask that they give you a written decision signed by an employee of the ASE. This is because, if you think that the ASE has made a mistake about your age, it is possible to appeal before a special judge called a judge for children (« *juge des enfants* »). This is a judge who works only on child protection. He can help you and he is not there to punish you, so you shouldn't hesitate to write to him to say that the ASE made a mistake and that you are really under 18 years old.

You can ask your *éducateur* or *éducatrice* for help writing this letter to the judge. If the *éducateur* or *éducatrice* does not want to help you, call us at **07.62.48.22.07**. We will try to find you someone to help you write this letter. Afterward the « *juge des enfants* » will invite you to come and see him.

You can explain your situation to him. You have the right to free help from a lawyer when you go to see the judge.

If you left your country because of danger (a risk of persecution, a war, threats or any other reason) it is possible to request asylum in France. The asylum request is different from child protection, but it is possible to benefit from child protection and from asylum at the same time. To make an asylum request, you have to go to a reception platform for asylum-seekers (« *plateforme d'accueil pour demandeurs d'asile* »). There is a reception platform in every *département*. You need to tell your *éducateurs* or *éducatrices* that you want to ask for asylum. If no one in your center wants to help you, you can call us at **07.62.48.22.07**.

Your asylum request will be examined by the French authorities, but if you have any family in the UK you should say so. France will then have to ask to the UK to let you come to its territory and examine your asylum request there.

For more information, you can read the information sheets on the asylum process, translated into 6 languages, online at this address: www.gisti.org/asile-en-france

When the buses left Calais, the associations that helped you in the camp gave you a paper with the telephone number **07.62.48.22.07**. This telephone number is managed by the association InfoMIE, which is in contact with the associations which helped you in Calais, but also with other associations, legal experts and lawyers in France. You can use this telephone number to let us know where you are, ask us a question, or talk with us about any problems you have. To do this, **please send us a text message (SMS) with your first name, last name, nationality, the city where you are, your age, and the language you speak.**