

# Seeking Refuge? Women, families and Article 8



## Introduction

This legal guide explains the immigration laws and policies relevant to women from abroad who have a family and/or private life in the UK. It also explains some of the options that may be available to a woman who wishes to make an immigration application on that basis. This guide does not look at the rights of somebody who has committed a criminal offence and wishes to challenge their deportation or those who are seeking to remain in the UK on health grounds. This guide is not legal advice. Rights of Women has produced other legal guides for women who are victims of domestic violence or human trafficking which can be downloaded at [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk).

Family and private life cases can be extremely complicated and they are fact-specific. That means that each individual case needs to be assessed on its merits and on the evidence available. You should always seek legal advice about your specific case.

You can contact one of Rights of Women's legal advice lines for free, confidential legal advice. Details of our advice lines and their opening times are given at the end of this legal guide.

You can also contact a solicitor or immigration advisor in your area for advice.

### Legal aid

There is no legal aid available to assist you with an Article 8 application. Legal aid is only available for people who are seeking asylum (see Rights of Women's **Seeking Refuge? A handbook for asylum seeking women**), for people who have experienced domestic violence and can make an application under the Domestic Violence Rule (See Rights of Women's legal guide, **Domestic violence, immigration law and "no recourse to public funds"**) or people who are victims of human trafficking (see the Rights of Women legal guide, **Trafficking and the law**)

If you are making any of the above applications, then you may still wish to include information about your Article 8 rights. You will need to discuss with your legal advisor how you will fund this part of your case. A solicitor should always discuss your payment options with you, including whether you are eligible for public funding.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Solicitors' Code of Conduct 2011, IB (1.16)

You should always make sure that the person you see to get immigration law advice is professionally qualified and allowed to help you. You can get immigration advice from a **solicitor** or from an **immigration advisor**.

A **solicitor** is a qualified lawyer who is responsible for dealing with the preparation of cases. Some solicitors may also represent their clients in courts or tribunals. Solicitors are represented by the Law Society [www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk) and are regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority [www.sra.org.uk](http://www.sra.org.uk).

An **immigration advisor** is someone who is not a lawyer but who has the knowledge and skills necessary to give advice on immigration law. For information about immigration advisors contact the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner [www.oisc.gov.uk](http://www.oisc.gov.uk)

## What is Article 8?

*"1. Everyone has the right to respect for his or her private and family life, his home and his correspondence.*

*2. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others."*

Article 8 of the **European Convention on Human Rights** guarantees a right to respect for your family and private life. This right can include all of your family, not just your partner or children and is a right to live with them and spend time with them. Your private life means the activities that you engage in, including work, religious groups, or education. Your private life also includes your sexual orientation, relationships that fall short of a family life, your right to your home and also to make decisions about your health.

However, Article 8 is what is known as a **qualified right**. This means that the Government, particularly the Home Office, is allowed to limit your right and to interfere with it. The Government should only interfere with these rights when it is necessary to achieve a legitimate aim. The interference should be the least possible to achieve this aim. A legitimate aim is set out in Article 8(2) above. Each state is allowed to set out in law when it will be necessary to interfere with someone's Article 8 rights. Courts and tribunals can also interpret what is meant by necessary. The Government can interfere with your rights for certain reasons, which can be very broad. These include: enforcing border-control, being certain about what the law means and the economic well-being of the UK.

### The European Convention on Human Rights

The European Convention on Human Rights (known as the ECHR) is a Convention from 1951 that a number of countries in Europe agreed to. The Convention is not the same as the European Union. Some countries are signed up to the Convention but are not part of the European Union, for example, Russia and Turkey. The Convention has its own court, the European Court of Human Rights, where cases concerning the Convention are decided.

In 2000, the **Human Rights Act 1998** came into force in the UK. This means that all judges, caseworkers and any other public officials in their work capacity, have to consider the Convention when making decisions that affect people. If you want to rely on your human rights, or your Article 8 rights, you can do so in a court in the UK without having to go the European Court of Human Rights.

## How is this decided?

An assessment of your family and private life should be looked at every time an immigration decision is made about you. This means that it should be considered as part of your asylum application, fresh claim, or any other application. You can also make an application based just on your family or private life.

The **Immigration Rules** set out what the Home Office will consider as someone's family and private life. However, in some cases Article 8 is more than what is set out in the immigration rules, which unfortunately makes it difficult to understand. The Court of Appeal has said that only some of the rules are a complete code for deciding family and private life. When looking at your case, a case-worker must decide if it is **proportionate** to interfere with your right to family and private life. This means that a case-worker must balance your rights to your family and private life carefully against other concerns. If a case-worker does not do this, then you may be able to appeal a decision that has not fully considered your Article 8 rights.



## Women alone

### Do I have a private life?

A private life means how you interact with the world. It refers to your relationships with those around you, including sexual activity. It can include your mental or physical health and wellbeing.<sup>2</sup>

Everyone has a private life wherever they are, but just being present in the UK is not enough to establish that it would be disproportionate to refuse to let you stay. The longer you have been in the UK, the more likely it will be disproportionate to require you to leave. A decision is disproportionate when it would have a profound impact on your life and the steps to be taken are more than are necessary or appropriate, taking into account all of the circumstances. When applying on the basis of your private life you must always show that it would be disproportionate to interfere with your life by making you go to another country. Although your life in the UK is important to you, there are a number of reasons why it may be interfered with.

### Immigration rules

The Immigration Rules are made by the Home Office and set out what criteria you must fulfil in order to be given leave in the UK. The Immigration Rules set out when you can make an application because of your private life. These are:

- You have spent **10 years lawfully** in the UK and there is no reason why you should not remain (see suitability and eligibility criteria below). The Rules require a caseworker to look at your age, strength of connections to the UK, personal history, domestic circumstances and compassionate circumstances.

During this time, you must have been in the UK continuously. Continuous residence is broken if you have spent longer than 180 days outside the UK at any one time, or you have spent a total of 540 days outside the UK in the ten years.

<sup>2</sup> Bensaid v UK (2001) App No. 44599/98 ECHR 82

Anyone who applies under this rule may be given indefinite leave to remain (ILR)<sup>3</sup>; periods where you have overstayed of up to 28 days will be discounted.

You can also apply under **Immigration Rule 276ADE** where:

- You have spent **20 years in the UK**. This does not have to be lawful, although any time spent in prison does not count.<sup>4</sup>
- You are **under 18 years old and have been in the UK for 7 years** and **it would not be reasonable** to expect you to leave.<sup>5</sup>
- You are **between 18 and under 25 years old and have been in the UK for half your life**.<sup>6</sup>
- You have been in the UK for less than 20 years, but you have **no social, cultural or family ties to the country you would go to if you left the UK**.

Anyone who applies under these rules may be given leave to remain for 30 months (see below). An assessment of whether you have ties must look at all the links you have to your country of origin in the round. This means that the case-worker or immigration judge should look at how long you have spent in your country of origin, whether you speak the language or understand the culture and the extent of your family and friendship links there.<sup>7</sup>



### How do I evidence my Article 8 rights?

There is no list of required evidence to demonstrate that you have a family or private life. However, you should try and obtain information about the length of time you have been in the UK, including tenancy agreements and household bills. You can also ask your GP to confirm how long you have been a patient, and your children's schools to write to confirm that they attend class and the role you play in looking after them. Other sources of evidence can include statements from friends, family and neighbours which all establish your connection to the UK.

### Example

Maria first came to the UK from St Lucia with her father in 2002. She was 13 at the time. She came on a visitor's visa and her father worked in both St Lucia and the UK, she is not sure what happened to her Mother and they did not stay in contact. She went to school in the UK. She is now 25 years old and looks after her father here. She has spent 13 years in the UK and 13 years outside. She applies for leave because she has been here half her life (rule 276ADE(1)(v)) and includes information about her links to her country of origin as her Father has remained in the UK and she has no contact with her Mother and no other family in St Lucia. A case-worker will consider the length of time she has been in the UK, her ties to her country of origin and whether it is proportionate to require her to return to St Lucia.

<sup>3</sup> [Immigration Rule 276B](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Rule 276ADE\(1\)\(iii\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Rule 276ADE\(1\)\(iv\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Rule 276ADE\(1\)\(v\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Ogundimu \(Article 8 – new rules\) Nigeria \[2013\] UKUT 00060 \(IAC\)](#)

## Family Life: women in a relationship

Some women form relationships and come to the UK with British or settled spouses. These women can apply for a partner visa. This application is normally made from outside the UK and in some cases it can be made from inside the UK. This application is made under Appendix FM and is outside the scope of this legal guide.

However, if you are not lawfully in the UK then you can also apply because of your family life with a spouse or partner who is a British citizen or settled in the UK. This is on the basis of your relationship. You do not have to apply from outside the UK to make this application.<sup>8</sup>

The Immigration Rules allow you to apply for leave to remain where<sup>9</sup>:

- You have a **genuine and subsisting relationship** with a partner who is in the UK as a British citizen, settled person, or someone with refugee leave or humanitarian protection and there are **insurmountable obstacles** to family life continuing with that partner outside the UK.

A partner is someone who you are married or engaged to, or someone you have lived with in a relationship similar to marriage for at least two years.

Whether your relationship is genuine and subsisting, will be looked at by a case-worker objectively based on the evidence you provide. Factors that mean a relationship is genuine and subsisting include: that you are in a long-term relationship and can provide evidence of this, such as you live together with your partner, or have done; you have children together and both take care of them; you have a joint bank account or share financial responsibilities; you have visited each other's home countries, or met each other's families; you or your families have made definite

plans about living or marrying in the UK. A relationship which is subsisting is one which is ongoing. You will need to think about how you can provide evidence of this with your application, including photographs, household bills and statements from friends and family. If the Home Office are unsure whether your marriage is genuine and subsisting, they are permitted to undertake further investigations. This may include an invitation for you and your partner to attend for interview before deciding your application. **It is very important that you both attend this appointment.**

You must also show that there are **insurmountable obstacles** to your relationship continuing somewhere else. Insurmountable obstacles does not mean the same as impossible. The courts have said that it means whether something is reasonable.<sup>10</sup> This may mean that you are both from different countries and it is not possible to return to each other's country. It may also mean that your partner has lived here a long time and does not want to go anywhere else because of work, or their other family in the UK. Your partner might have other children settled in the UK who they regularly spend time with or support financially.

If you can both move somewhere else where you have connections and remain in a relationship, then you may not be given leave.<sup>11</sup> There is no right to choose to remain in the UK if your family life can continue elsewhere. However, the Home Office must consider the rights of all members of your family before making a decision about whether to grant you leave in the UK.<sup>12</sup> If you are already in the UK, they will need to consider whether it is proportionate to require you to return to your country of origin and make an application as a spouse from there.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> MA (Pakistan) v SSHD [2009] EWCA Civ 953 <http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2009/953.html>

<sup>9</sup> EX.1(b)

<sup>10</sup> LM (DRC) v SSHD [2008] EWCA Civ 325 <http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2008/325.html>

<sup>11</sup> Izuazu (Article 8; new rules) [2013] UKUT 00045 (IAC)

<sup>12</sup> Beoku-Betts v SSHD [2008] UKHL 39

<sup>13</sup> Chikwamba v SSHD [2008] UKHL 40

## Women with children

If you have children under 18 who live with you or who you see regularly, then you may also apply to remain in the UK with them. There are different rules depending on whether your children live full time with you or if you have contact with them while they live somewhere else.

Some children may be British citizens or entitled to registration. Nationality law is a complex area and you should seek legal advice if you think your child may be entitled to citizenship. It is important to note that a child does not become British just by being born in the UK.

The Immigration Rules set out that you can apply for **leave as the parent of a child**<sup>14</sup> where:

1. Your child is in the UK and under 18.
2. Your child is a British citizen, settled or has lived in the UK continuously for the last 7 years and it is not reasonable to expect your child to leave.

The second part of the Rules sets out that:

3. You must be taking an active role in your child's upbringing and intend to continue to do so because either:
  - You have sole parental responsibility for your child or your child normally lives with you and not the other parent who is British or has ILR, or
  - Your child lives with their other parent who is British or has ILR. You must not be in a relationship with the other parent, and you must have face-to-face contact with your child.
4. You must be able to support yourself financially.
5. You must have valid leave when you make your application (for example if you were previously on a partner visa and your relationship ended).
6. You meet the suitability and eligibility criteria (see below).

If you meet points 1-6, you may be eligible for the **5 year route to settlement**. This is made up of 2 periods of leave of 30 months limited leave.

### EX1

If you cannot meet all of points 1-6 above, then you can still apply for leave because of your family life with your children as long as you can meet points 1 and 2. You must also have a genuine and subsisting parental relationship with your children (for the meaning of genuine and subsisting, see below). This is because there is an exception to the rules. This exception means that you do not need to show that you can support yourself, or that you, your child or your child's father has valid leave to remain. If you rely on the exception, then you will be put on the **ten year route to settlement** if you are successful.

### Genuine and subsisting parental relationship

A parental relationship with your child is assessed as a matter of fact. When looking at your relationship with your child, a case-worker will look at your actual connection with your child (whether you are a parent, step-parent or someone who is looking after another family member's child) and whether you are willing and able to look after them. They will then look at whether you live with your child. If you do not live with your child, a case-worker will consider the reasons why not, how far away you are from your child and how often you see them. This is about looking at whether you play an active part in your child's life. Letters from other friends and family, as well as any social workers or teachers may be helpful in showing that you have a genuine and subsisting relationship with your child.

### Your child's best interests

Whenever a decision is taken regarding your family where there are children under 18, **their best interests** must be considered.<sup>15</sup> These best interests are a very important consideration and your child's best interests must be looked at first by a case-worker or a judge.<sup>16</sup> However, your

<sup>14</sup> Immigration Rule R-LTRPT.1.1 and E-LTRPT.2.2-E-LTRPT.2.4

<sup>15</sup> Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act section 55

<sup>16</sup> ZH (Tanzania) v SSHD [2011] UKSC 4

children's rights are not the only consideration. If your children are British citizens, that is of particular importance.<sup>17</sup> Normally, British citizen children cannot be required to leave the UK in order to stay with their family or main carer.<sup>18</sup>

## Non-British children

If your children are not British, then the Home Office will generally accept that after **7 years** they will be more connected to the UK than to your country of origin. However, a case-worker or immigration judge will then look at whether it is reasonable for your child to leave the UK.

When looking at whether it is reasonable, a case-worker or judge will examine whether your child is in school in the UK, or is receiving health-care here, they will look at the friends and social activities that your children participate in and how settled they are in the UK. A case-worker or immigration judge will balance this against where your child's family members and extended family are. If you have a lot of family in your country of origin and your children have strong links to family members there, then it may be considered reasonable for them to leave with you and not to remain in the UK.



## Zambrano and EEA rights

Following a case called **Ruiz Zambrano**, you can now make an application under EEA law if you are the sole carer of a British child. This may give you a derivative right of residence in the UK. Derivative means that your right to stay in the UK comes from your child. Where you make an application under Article 8 because of your relationship with your children, the case-worker must consider whether to grant you a derivative right of residence. Applying for EEA residence rights is outside the scope of this legal guide and you should seek legal advice. For advice on your rights under European law, you can contact the Aire Centre at [www.airecentre.org](http://www.airecentre.org)

## Applying under Article 8

If your application can be considered under the Immigration Rules then it should be made on an application form **FLR(FP)**. If your application is outside the Immigration Rules, then you will need to apply on the application form **FLR(O)**. If you use FLR(O) where you should have used FLR(FP) a case-worker in the Home Office will contact you and give you 7 days to complete the correct form. You should always download the form from the Home Office website at [www.gov.uk/visas-immigration](http://www.gov.uk/visas-immigration) and make sure that you are using the most recent form. An application made on the wrong form is not considered valid.

For both FLR(O) and FLR(FP) forms, there is a fee-waiver application, **Appendix 1 FLR(FP) FLR(O)** which is also available on the Home Office website. The Home Office does not require you to pay the application fee if you are destitute. You can be considered destitute if:

- you do not have adequate accommodation and have no means of obtaining it, or
- you have adequate accommodation, but you cannot meet the costs of your essential living needs.

<sup>17</sup> ZH (Tanzania) v SSHD [2011] UKSC 4

<sup>18</sup> Sanade (British Children – Zambrano – Dereci) [2012] UKUT 00048 IAC

## Application if you have made an asylum application

If you have made an asylum application, then your Article 8 rights to family and private life will be considered as part of this application. A case-worker will also consider the best interests of any children. If your asylum application is refused and you are appeal rights exhausted (ARE) meaning there is no further route of appeal available to you, but you are still in the UK, then you may make further submissions at any time based on your family and private life (for more information about asylum, further submissions and fresh claims, please see **Seeking Refuge? A handbook for asylum seeking women**).

## Application if you have previously had leave to remain because of your family life

If you applied for leave to remain because of your family life before 9 July 2012, then the new family life immigration rules may not apply to your case. If you have discretionary leave then you can apply to extend this. If you have never applied for asylum and you had discretionary leave then you are entitled to apply for a further period of discretionary leave for 3 years. At the end of 6 years discretionary leave, you may apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain. A further application should be made using application form **FLR(O)**.<sup>19</sup> Your application will be considered under the old rules if your circumstances have not changed. If you applied for asylum but were given discretionary leave because of your family life, then you can apply for further leave using the **HPDL** form.

## How your application is considered

When a case-worker or judge considers your family and private life, they look at your application in a number of steps.<sup>20</sup> First a case-worker or a judge will have to decide whether you have a family or private life. This is a matter of fact and depends on the evidence you provide. Then they must consider whether the removal, or refusal to grant you leave, will be an interference with that family or private life. An interference means breaking down or separating your family, or removing you from your current life. They must consider whether the interference means that they will need to look at Article 8 and in particular, whether it is in accordance with the law, necessary and proportionate.<sup>21</sup> This decision is reached on the **balance of probabilities** this means whether something is more likely than not.

In accordance with the law refers to the reasons that are set out in Article 8(2) (above) why your right to family and private life can be interfered with. It is generally accepted that having good immigration control is a legitimate aim. It is seen to safeguard the UK economy and prevent crime and disorder.<sup>22</sup> The legitimate aim must still be necessary and must be balanced against your rights.

Even where removing you, or not granting you leave to remain would interfere with your family life, a case-worker may still refuse your application if the interference is proportionate. It may be proportionate even if it means you will be separated from your family, particularly if you have started a relationship, or had children when you did not have valid leave to remain in the UK.<sup>23</sup> This is a balancing exercise, which must look at not just the Immigration Rules, but also previous cases that have been decided.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Home Office published guidance [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/274336/specified-formsprocedures.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/274336/specified-formsprocedures.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> R v SSHD (ex parte Razgar) [2004] UKHL 27

<sup>21</sup> R v SSHD (ex parte Razgar)

<sup>22</sup> Shahzad (article 8; proportionate aim) [2014] UKUT 00085 IAC

<sup>23</sup> JO (Uganda) and JT (Ivory Coast) [2010] EWCA Civ 10

<sup>24</sup> R (Nagre) v SSHD [2013] EWHC 720; Gulshan (Article 8 – new rules – correct approach) v SSHD [2013] UKUT 640 (IAC)



### Case example: Shahzad [2014]

Mr Shahzad initially came to the UK as a student and was granted further leave to continue his studies. There were problems with the institution where he was studying, which meant that he lost his student visa. He relied on a number of different grounds, including his private life and was successful under article 8 in the first tier tribunal. The Secretary of State appealed this finding. The Upper Tier Tribunal confirmed that there was no such thing as a “near miss” for someone who almost met the immigration rules. However, the court held that when looking at Article 8, they must consider the Immigration Rules and also the issue of proportionality. Proportionality means whether the legitimate aim of the Home Office was fairly balanced against the effect on an individual of requiring them to leave the UK. As long as the Home Office had conducted a proportionality assessment and it was for a legitimate aim under article 8(2) then the tribunal did not need to interfere with the decision. If the Home Office did not do so, then the court could make a decision about proportionality based on the information that they had. However, Mr Shahzad lost his appeal because he had only been in the UK temporarily to complete his studies and his other links here were very weak.



### If your application is successful

If you apply for leave based on your Article 8 rights to stay in the UK, or a judge grants you leave because of your family or private life, then you will be given leave to remain for **30 months**. You must complete 10 years of lawful residence before you can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR). It is very important that you apply in time at the end of each visa you are granted. If you do not, then you will lose your lawful residence.

Article 8 leave is leave with **“no recourse to public funds”** and therefore you will not be able to claim any welfare benefits. This includes child tax credit and child benefit even if your child is British. In exceptional circumstances, the Home Office can give you access to public funds. Exceptional circumstances mean that:

- you are destitute or you are supported by a Local Authority,
- there are compelling reasons because of your children,
- you are a parent in receipt of a low income.

When you make an application for Article 8 leave and you are destitute, you should include this information in your application as a case-worker deciding your application can lift the No Recourse to Public Funds rule. If you fall into these categories, but have still been given leave with no recourse to public funds, you may wish to seek legal advice in challenging the decision of the Home Office.

### If your application is refused

If you make an application or further submission based on your private and family life which is refused, then you may have a right of appeal to the **First Tier Tribunal (FtT)**. However, you will only be given a right of appeal where:

- You made further representations as an asylum seeker who is appeal rights exhausted and these were accepted as a fresh claim (see Seeking Refuge? For more information), or your family life was considered as part of your asylum application.

- You had valid leave at the time of your application which you lost as a result of your application being refused.

Regardless of the application that you made to remain or enter the UK, you may include information about your private and family life in an appeal, and in some cases you must include this information or you will not be able to raise it at a later stage.

You will not be given a right of appeal if you did not have valid leave when you made the application (for example, you were an over-stayer or you were appeal rights exhausted) and your only remedy is judicial review.

If your application is refused then you are **strongly advised** to seek legal advice as soon as possible. There are strict time limits for both appeals to the Tribunal and judicial review.

## Suitability and eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria will depend on the application you make. If you are relying on the exception EX1 then you may not be required to meet all the eligibility criteria. In general, the eligibility criteria will require you to have current leave, or have not overstayed in the UK by more than 28 days (unless the exception applies). To be eligible you must also be able to support yourself financially and live somewhere that is big enough for you and your family, although you do not have to show this if the exception applies.

You will not be considered **suitable** for leave to remain if:

- You have been given a deportation order (this means that you have been told you are to be removed from the UK as a result of criminal offences you have committed).
- It can be considered that because you have committed criminal offences and been in prison for at least 12 months that your presence is not conducive to the public good. The longer the sentence you are given, the more likely it is that your presence is not conducive to the public good.
- You have committed more than one offence and can be considered a persistent offender, or that offence has caused serious harm.

- You could otherwise be considered to be of bad character because of your associations, criminal conduct or links to organisations.
- You have failed to provide information when asked, including failing to go to an interview or medical examination without reasonable excuse, or you have not provided information to the Home Office.
- You have submitted false documents or made false representations in support of any application for entry or leave to remain, or someone has done this on your behalf.
- You owe £1000 or more to the NHS for medical treatment.

You must always meet the suitability criteria for a successful application under the Immigration Rules.

## Applying for indefinite leave to remain

After 10 years of lawful residence in the UK (5 years for some people), you can apply for **Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)**. There is no fee-waiver for this application, so you must pay the fee. You must also show that you have passed the Knowledge of Life and Language test (KoLL). For more information about the English language requirements see [www.gov.uk/remain-in-uk-family/knowledge-of-english](http://www.gov.uk/remain-in-uk-family/knowledge-of-english). You must also meet the suitability requirements above in order to be given ILR. However if you have committed a criminal offence and been sentenced to less than four years in prison, then after a certain period of time you may still be eligible for ILR.



The law relating to Article 8 family and private life is complex; in this legal guide we have only provided a basic overview of some of the relevant law and procedure. We would strongly advise you to seek legal advice.

The law explained in this legal guide is as it stood at the date of publication. The law may have changed since then so you are advised to take up to date legal advice. **Rights of Women cannot accept responsibility for any reliance placed on the legal information contained in this legal guide. This legal guide is designed to give general information only.**

For free, confidential, legal advice on family life or other immigration and asylum issues call **020 7251 8887 (telephone) or 020 7490 2562 (textphone)**. The advice line is open on **Mondays 12pm – 3pm and Thursdays 10am – 1pm**. For further details of Rights of Women's advice lines on family or criminal law see [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk).



## Other useful contacts

### AIRE Centre

**020 7831 3850**

(the legal advice line is open between 2pm-5pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays)

[www.airecentre.org](http://www.airecentre.org)

### Immigration Lawyers Practitioners Association

(for information about immigration and asylum law through their 'Info Service' and to find an immigration lawyer)

[www.ilpa.org.uk](http://www.ilpa.org.uk)

### Migrant Helpline

(support for migrants)

**01304 203977**

[www.migranthepline.org.uk](http://www.migranthepline.org.uk)

### Office for the Immigration Services Commissioner

(for finding an immigration advisor)

[www.oisc.gov.uk](http://www.oisc.gov.uk)

### Coram Children's Legal Centre

[www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)

Rights of Women  
52-54 Featherstone Street  
London EC1Y 8RT  
Office: 020 7251 6575  
Email: [info@row.org.uk](mailto:info@row.org.uk)  
Website: [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk)

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helping women through the law

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