



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities



Home Office

Welcome Workshops

Cultural Orientation Programme

Life in the UK

With thanks to contributions from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, and Morley College

? What do you already know about life in the UK?

What have you noticed so far about British culture, the weather, the people, food?

How is life in the UK different to life in Afghanistan?

? What do you want to learn more about?



1. To consider differences between life in Afghanistan and life in the UK.
2. To help you think about culture and stereotypes as you adjust to life in the UK.
3. To gain an understanding of life in the UK, including its geography, weather, language, religion, currency, the political system and monarchy.
4. To learn about local communities, including services, places of worship and public transport.

Learning Objectives

Contents

1. Adapting to life in the UK and British stereotypes

2. Geography, population, heritage, and the weather

3. Language

4. Religion and places of worship

5. Your local council and local services

6. Local public transport

7. Weekends and public holidays

8. Shopping, the post office, banking and currency

9. The police and hate crime

10. Political system, voting, and the monarchy

11. Coronavirus in the UK

12. True or false activity



Tips to help you settle you in the UK



Learn English by attending ESOL classes through your local council and using other channels for learning e.g., TV, Radio, YouTube

Take further studies or learn something new

Make friends or engage with your local community

Take up an activity, sports, hobby or volunteering

Help each other within your family and group of friends – share and discuss your feelings

Learn about your new town or city

Share food with others – food can be a great way to learn about new people and their cultures

Support your child's education – join a parent group and attend parent's meetings



Can you think of any others?

Stereotypes about British people



British people are varied and diverse because of the mix of cultures.

Behaviours

- The British are quite reserved, which may cause them to appear cool or overly formal. In fact, they are very **friendly and helpful!**
- The British are **punctual**. Being **late** is considered to be rude and unprofessional at work.
- In the UK, people stand at a distance and any closer could be assumed to be aggressive and can be uncomfortable.

Stereotypes about British people



Families and equality

- The British have a high amount of **respect for older adults and the disabled**. If you are on public transport, you are expected to give up your seat if someone who is disabled or older comes onto the tram (or whatever vehicle you are in) and there is no other seat. If an older adult or someone who is disabled seems to be struggling with something, you are also expected to ask the person if they need your assistance.
- **Women considered equally to men**, both at work and daily life.
- Many families are single parent families, and many couples live together but are not married. We respect same-sex couples and same-sex marriage.
- Many young people live a distance from their family members.

Stereotypes about British people



Social behaviours

- Cigarette smoking is fairly common in the UK. It is estimated around one in six British adults smoke. **Smoking is banned in all enclosed public areas** in England. This includes bars, restaurants and public transport.
- In the UK, **tipping** is common and is the norm when it comes to eating in restaurants.
- The majority of adults in the UK have a mobile phone and social media. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are very popular and many people use WhatsApp to communicate by text message. However, it's advisable to put your phone away during work, or when you are talking to someone or eating.

The United Kingdom



← The Union Jack is the official flag for the UK

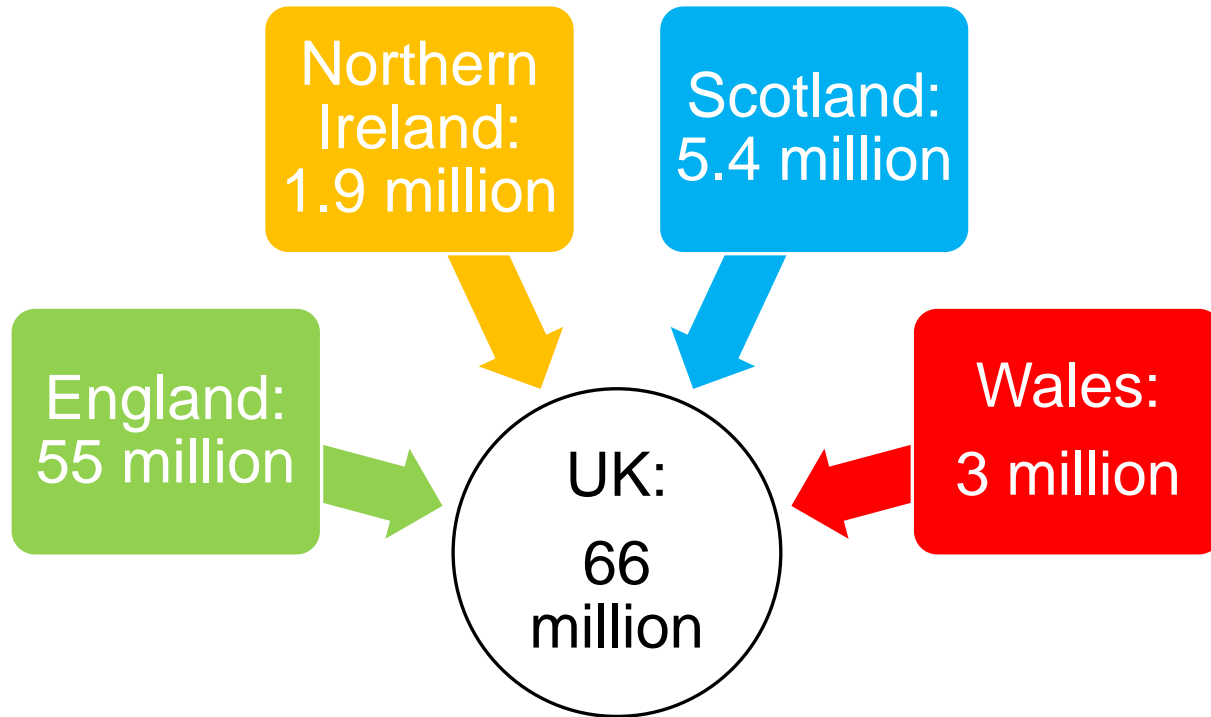


The United Kingdom (UK) is made up of 4 countries:



Population

Around 66 million people live in the UK:

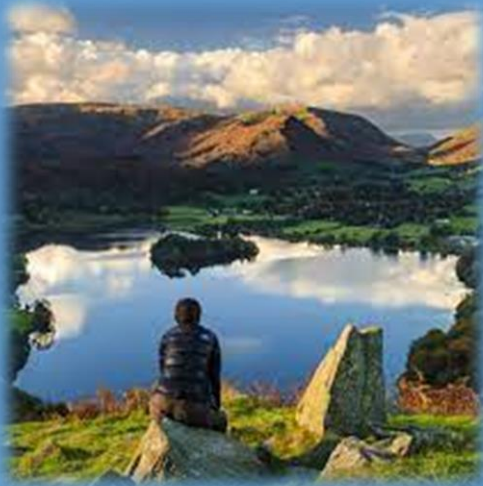


- The UK is a country committed to mutual respect, freedom, liberty and tolerance, where people from all backgrounds live and work together.
- The UK is ethnically diverse with a multi-cultural and multi-faith society.
- Some areas of the UK are more diverse than others, especially larger cities.
- In 2011, at the time of the last census, over 14% of the population identified themselves as being part of an ethnic group other than white.

Geography



Swansea, Wales



Lake District, England

- The UK landscape is a mixture of busy urban areas and rural countryside.
- England is the most densely populated (particularly, the South East).
- Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are less densely populated and have more rural areas.
- The UK has a varied geography, meaning there are many different landscapes and habitats for animal and plant life.
- A lot of the landscape in the north and west of the U.K. is high ground, mountain ridges and valleys.
- In northwest England, Wales and the Scottish Highlands, there are many lakes.
- In the south of England, the countryside is mostly rolling hills.



Belfast, Northern Ireland



Dundee, Scotland

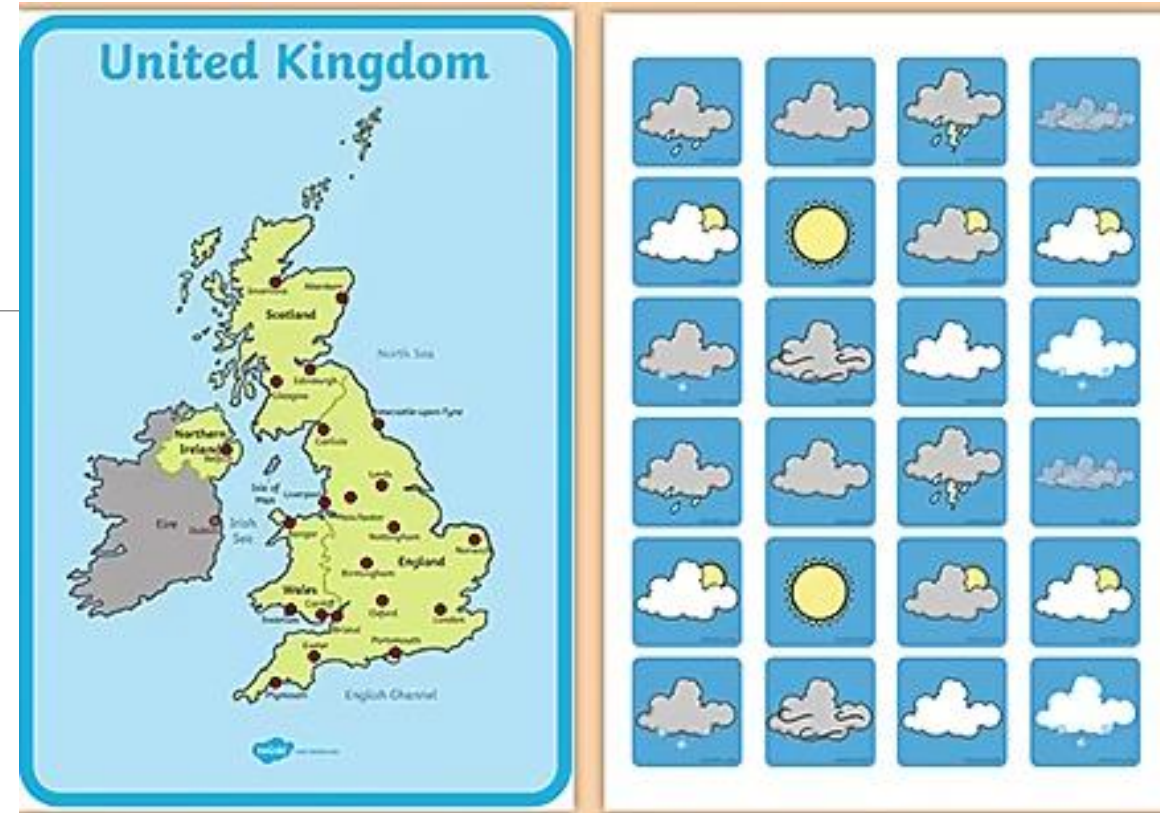
Weather

Weather in the UK can be unpredictable. It typically varies season by season and depending on the region.

The climate is generally mild. This means that the UK gets cool, wet winters and warm, wet summers.

The southern and eastern parts of the UK tend to be drier, warmer, sunnier, and less windy than those that are further north and west.

The Met Office website and phone app have weather forecasts and more information about regional and seasonal differences in weather.



 **Met Office**

Heritage

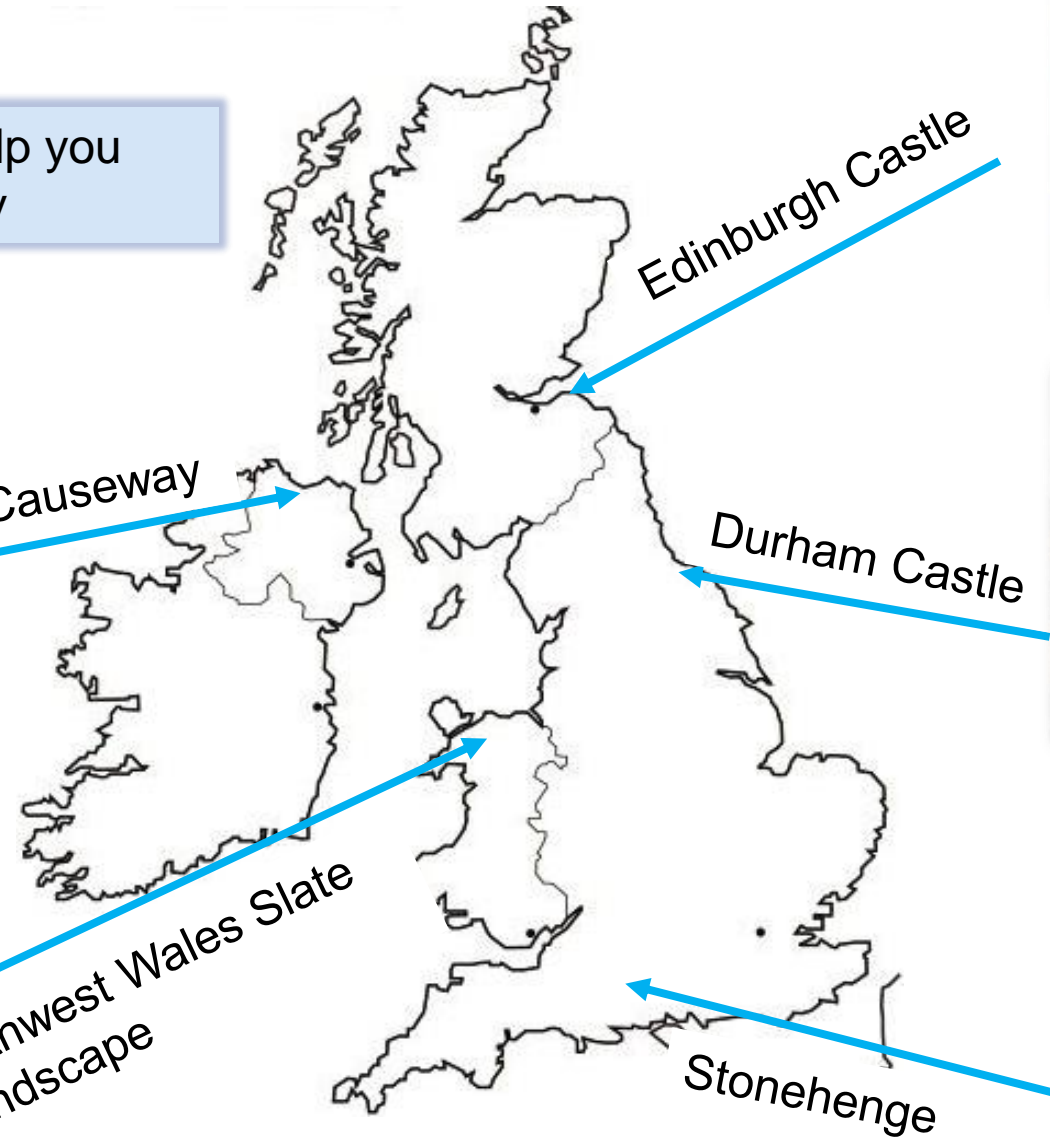
Exploring areas of the UK will help you understand its culture and history



Giant's Causeway



Northwest Wales Slate Landscape



Edinburgh Castle

Durham Castle

Stonehenge



Regions of the UK

There are a number of different regions across the UK, each with a **unique geography, history, identity and culture.**

The different regions of the UK are home to different industries and strengths and brilliant job opportunities.

The UK has a variety of job opportunities across a range of industries and to suit different skills. Some regions will support different skills, for example more rural areas will have farming jobs.

You can find out more information on the Skills Advisory Panel webpage for the area you are interested in: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-advisory-panels/skills-advisory-panels-list>





Language



The main language in the UK is English.

Welsh is also widely used and taught in Wales and there are other recognised regional languages such as Scots Gaelic, Scots, Irish/Gaelic and Cornish.

The UK uses British spelling, which is slightly different to American English. For example, colour/strategise (British spelling) vs color/strategize (American spelling).

Improving your English skills will allow you to communicate with your community, make friends, and help you find a job and settle into the UK.

You can use a range of websites or phone apps (such as Duolingo) to improve your language skills for free.

You are also eligible for English language lessons from your local council.



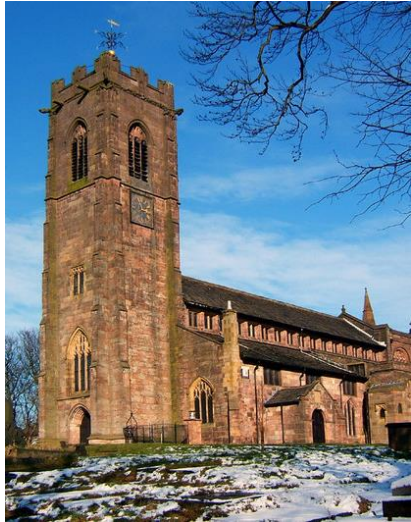
Religion

The UK is a multi-faith society.

There are temples, churches, mosques and synagogues and other places of worship across the UK.

1. The largest religion in the UK is Christianity - 33.2 million people (59% of the population).
2. The second largest religion is Islam - 2.7 million people (5% of the population).
3. Around a quarter of the UK population practise no religion.





Places of Worship

- In the UK there are mosques churches, synagogues and other places of worship in most towns and cities.
- A place of worship can support and help you as you adapt to life in the UK, and provide an opportunity to make friends.

Finding a place of worship

There are groups like the Inter Faith Network for the UK (<https://www.interfaith.org.uk>) which may help you to find a place of worship.

There are websites including 'Visit my Mosque' <https://www.visitmymosque.org/> and 'A Church near you' <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/>

You can also speak to a member of your local council or someone from your local community (for example, in a local school, shop or community centre) for information.



National Health Service

- The NHS is a public healthcare service, funded by taxes
- The NHS includes GP services, mental health, ambulance, social care and hospital services
- Most health services are free
- The NHS provides everyone in the UK with free healthcare based on their need



Your rights to services

The following services are free to everyone:

- GP (doctor) advice and treatment (for both physical health and mental health)
- Services that are provided as part of the NHS 111 telephone advice line
- Accident and Emergency services provided at A&E departments, walk-in centres, minor injuries units or urgent care centres
- Diagnosis and treatment of some infectious and sexually transmitted diseases
- NHS services provided for COVID-19 investigation, diagnosis, treatment and vaccination
- Family planning services (contraception)
- Treatment for a physical or mental condition caused by torture, female genital mutilation, domestic violence or sexual violence

Prescription medicines, dental and eye care are not normally free in England

Our NHS is
#HERE FOR
you.



Coronavirus

You should follow the latest guidance on the Coronavirus - <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>, in Scotland <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>, in Wales <https://gov.wales/coronavirus> and in Northern Ireland www.nidirect.gov.uk

This includes information on **symptoms, how to stay safe, international travel, and support.**

You should stay up to date on the latest guidance and regulations.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) **vaccines are safe and effective.** COVID-19 vaccines have shown to **reduce the chance of you suffering** and **the vaccine cannot give you COVID-19 infection.**

You may have already received support in booking and receiving a vaccination. If not you can:

- book your COVID-19 vaccination appointments online for an appointment at a vaccination centre or pharmacy
- find a walk-in COVID-19 vaccination site to get vaccinated without needing an appointment
- wait to be contacted by your GP surgery and book your appointments with them
- If you cannot book appointments online, you can call 119 free of charge. You can speak to a translator if you need to.

Your Local Council

A local council (or local authority) is a governing body of an area of the UK.

Councils are independently elected in local council elections.

Local councils work towards improving community well-being and providing better local services. They:

1. Represent the local community
2. Deliver services to meet local needs
3. Work to improve the quality of life and community well-being.

Local councils are responsible for a range of local services including allotments, bus shelters, car parks, open spaces, community transport schemes, community safety and crime reduction measures, leisure and sports facilities, litter bins, public toilets, planning, street cleaning and lighting, tourism activities and youth projects.



Find your local council

Find the website for your local council.

Enter a postcode

For example SW1A 2AA

Find

To find out more information about your local council visit <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

What support can you expect from your local council?

Your local council will support you and your family as you settle and start your new life in the UK.

Regardless of whether you are in temporary or permanent housing, your local council will provide you with a package of advice and assistance covering employment, welfare benefits, housing, health, and education.

Your local authority (or their partners) will provide you with caseworker support to:

- Help you to register with your local general practitioner (GP) surgery (who will provide medical advice and a wide range of health services) and other healthcare services, including mental health services.
- Help you to register with your local Jobcentre Plus, where necessary (who will be able to provide you with a National Insurance Number, help you find a job and where appropriate, apply for Universal Credit).
- Secure school places for the school aged children you may have with you in the UK, or access to language and literacy classes for adults.



Local services

Libraries

Your local area should have a library, where you can loan books, access the internet and print. Many libraries have areas for children to read and play, and quiet spaces for working. Some libraries will run educational and language support sessions for adults and children. The librarian will be happy to introduce you to the services and answer any questions.

Leisure centres

Most towns in the UK will have a leisure centre. This is a building for sports and activities, including swimming, gyms and football pitches. Your leisure centre is a great place to take children and meet people. They are safe, comfortable, and affordable.

Community centres and halls

Community centres or community halls are public locations where members of a community gather for group activities, social support, public information, and community purposes. They run events, programs, courses, and general information about the community. They are great places for children and adults to meet people.

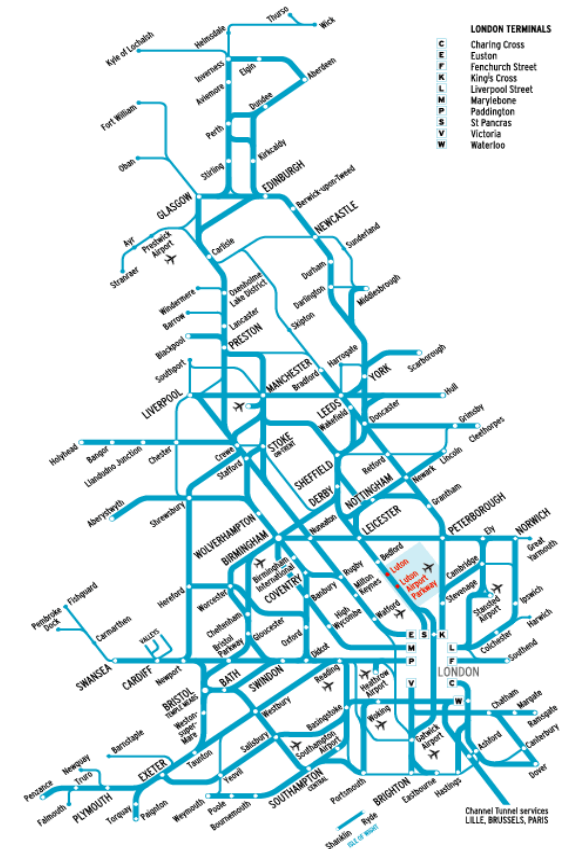


Public Transport

There are a range of options to travel around the UK including buses, tram, trains and the underground. You can familiarise yourself with your options using apps such as Google Maps, City Mapper, or your local government website.

Top Tips:

- ✓ Check if you need to buy a ticket before travelling – otherwise, you may face a fine. Leave yourself enough time to buy tickets.
- ✓ Certain people qualify for discounted travel. Check before travelling.
- ✓ Check to ensure the route is running and without delays or disruptions. Remember, you can't use cash on some modes of transports, such as buses in London. Instead, you will need an Oyster card, Travelcard or contactless payment.
- ✓ If you have accessibility issues, you can ask staff for help (on the day or when planning your journey).
- ✓ Remember, there are different companies for trains and buses – make sure your ticket is valid.
- ✓ You do not need to show identification when travelling between England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland (unless you are travelling by plane or ferry).



Other Transport Options



For shorter distances, you might want to walk or cycle. In some towns and cities, you can hire bikes.



Your local council can provide you with information on how to cycle safely.



It is recommended that you use a helmet, reflective clothing and bike lights to keep you safe.



You should research your route before departing, to make sure you are using available cycle lanes.



Taxis:

- You can also choose to use a taxi service.
- In major cities, people tend to use apps to book taxis.
- In more rural places, you may need to contact your local taxi company to book a taxi, or wait at a taxi rank.

Useful Apps and Websites for Travel:

There are a range of free apps which you can download to your phone to help you with travel, including:



UK Bus Checker –
Information about bus routes
and timetables across
England, Scotland and
Wales.



Translink Website:
Information about bus
services Northern
Ireland: www.translink.co.uk



Tube Map London Underground -
Timetables, updates and a journey
planner for the London
Underground.



National Rail –
Journey planning, ticket
booking and live updates for
trains across the UK.

You can search online for further information about your local transport options.

Weekends and Public Holidays

The UK weekend falls on Saturday and Sunday, when most offices close.

Banks and post offices are usually open Monday-Friday and on Saturday morning, but close on Saturday afternoon and Sunday.

Most shops and restaurants are open on Saturday and for most of Sunday.

There are public holidays throughout the year. These are different depending on where you live in the UK. Most businesses close, but shops, restaurants and leisure facilities usually remain open.

Public Holidays - note there are small differences across the UK

New Year's Day

St. Patricks Day (Northern Ireland)

Good Friday

Easter Monday

Early May Bank Holiday

Spring Bank Holiday

Battle of the Boyne/Orangemen's Day
(Northern Ireland)

Summer Bank Holiday

St. Andrews Day (Scotland)

Christmas Day

Boxing Day

Shopping

In the UK, there are a range places you can buy food:

- There are major supermarkets, which stock a variety of fresh meat, dairy and produce, fruit and vegetables and dried groceries. You can also purchase essential items at local shops.
- **Opening times of shops vary.** Some larger supermarkets may operate 24-hours, other supermarkets shut at 23:00, and smaller shops in towns and villages generally close earlier.
- Many major supermarkets offer a home delivery service where you can book delivery slots in advance.
- Shops have **reduced hours on Sundays and Public holidays**, and many close.
- You can buy **fresh produce at local food markets**, which usually offer cheaper prices.
- **All towns and cities will have places to buy Halal food.**
- You can also buy food from restaurants and takeaways.

- All towns and cities in the UK will have a major shopping area where you can buy clothes.
- Shops will be a mix of international brands or independent shops.
- Charity shops provide a cheaper option to buy clothes and furniture.



Remember when shopping:

Queuing:

In the UK, it is very important to wait your turn in a queue. It is considered rude to jump in front, even if you are in a rush.

Haggling:

It is not common in the UK to try to negotiate prices. Sometimes at local food markets, you may be able to negotiate a discount.



The Post Office



Post offices are found in every town and city, and most villages across the UK.

At a post office, you can send letters, parcels, documents and packages across the UK and the internationally.

Post offices offer many other services. For example, you can pay your rent, council tax, apply for a passport or driving licence.

You can use the Post Office's [store locator](#) to find your nearest Post Office and the services it offers.

You can find post boxes on many streets of the UK; you can use these to post letters and small parcels which already have a stamp on them.

Currency and banking



- Britain's national currency is the pound sterling (symbol: £), which is sub-divided into 100 pence (symbol: p).
- Most UK banks provide 'contactless cards' and people use contactless payments on their phones
- Most roads with shops, even in more rural areas, will have a cash machine where you can withdraw money. You can also find cash machines inside supermarkets
- For international transactions you can use services such as Money Gram and Western Union. You can go to a registered office or you can use an online site. You should receive a transfer reference (MTCN) which you provide to family or friends in Afghanistan for them to collect the money at a registered office.

How to open a bank account

- Opening a bank account is important. It allows you to keep your money safe. Usually, benefit payments will be paid directly into your bank account and it is the easiest way for employers to pay you when you get a job.
- There are many different banks to choose from.
- To open a bank account, you will usually need to show a form of identification such as your passport, BRP, driver's licence or a recognised identity card as well as proof of your address, such as your tenancy agreement or a gas, electric or phone bill.
- You should ask about any charges when you open a bank account, however once the process is complete, it is usual that a debit card will be issued.
- You can also arrange for bills to be paid directly from your account using 'direct debit' - ask your bank about this.
- You may have been assisted in opening a bank account already. If not further information on how to open a bank account is available at: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/banking/getting-a-bank-account/>



Banking security

Your bank card will have a 4 digit pin. You should never share your pin with anyone. You should always cover your PIN with one hand as you enter it.

If you are worried someone might have access to your bank account, you should contact your bank or building society straight away . For example, if your:

- card or security details have been lost or stolen
- statement shows payments you don't recognise
- card has reached its limit or account has gone into overdraft - and you weren't expecting it

Check your bank statement or the bank's website for the phone number to call for reporting security issues - or go to their branch in person.

If you haven't had money taken from your account, your bank or building society will still take action to protect your account, for example by cancelling your card or changing your security details.



Currency

There is also:



1p



$100 \times 1p = \text{£}1$



2p



5p



10p



20p



50p



£2



Whilst the notes look different, all are Pound Sterling, can be used across the UK and have the same value

England and Wales





Whilst the notes look different, all are Pound Sterling, can be used across the UK and have the same value

Scotland

Whilst the notes look different, all are Pound Sterling, can be used across the UK and have the same value



Northern Ireland

The Police

- The law is enforced by the police, who treat everyone fairly and ensure the safety of all citizens. Police officers have powers to detect, prevent and investigate crime.
- You can complain if you are not satisfied with the service you have received from the police.
- If you are the victim of a crime or suspect a crime, you should contact the police immediately.
- To report an emergency- call 999
- To report a non-emergency - call 101 or Report crimes online
- If you cannot speak English, tell the police which language you speak, and they will always find an interpreter
- You can also call 101 to give information to the police or make an enquiry

Reporting terrorist activity

Call 999 or the police anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 to report an immediate terrorist threat

To see: <https://www.met.police.uk/tua/tell-us-about/ath/possible-terrorist-activity/>



Your Rights and Freedoms

Every person in the UK has the same basic **human rights** and freedoms, which are **protected in law**. These underpin how people live in the UK. For example:

Freedom of thought and the right to practise their religion. However, it is illegal if, as part of this, you take part in activities which break UK laws. It is illegal to discriminate against or persecute someone because of their beliefs.

Right to liberty - you cannot be unlawfully detained. You also have a right to a fair trial. Everyone must be treated fairly and equally under the law.

Right to marry who you want - regardless of race, or religion. There are exceptions, including - you cannot be married to more than one person at one time, or marry certain relatives, or those under a certain age (under 16). If you got married to someone aged under 16 before coming to the UK – the marriage will be not be recognised by UK law.

Values and Responsibilities in the UK

Based on the rights and freedoms protected in law, everyone living in or visiting the UK is expected to respect a set of shared values and responsibilities.

Core values include:

- Respect and obey the law
- Respect the rights of others, including their right to their own opinions
- Treat others with fairness



Hate Crime

In the UK, Hate crimes are any crimes that are targeted at a person because of hostility or prejudice towards that person's:

1. Race or Ethnicity
2. Religion or Belief
3. Disability
4. Sexual Orientation
5. Transgender Identity

A victim does not have to be a member of the group at which the hostility is targeted. In fact, anyone could be a victim of a hate crime.

(For example, you may not be part of a particular religion and still have someone target you because they think you are)



Examples of Hate Crime include:

- Physical assault
- Verbal abuse (threats, name calling)
- Harassment
- Sexual assault
- Online abuse
- Criminal damage to a property

Why should I report Hate Crime?

Hate crimes and incidents hurt; they can be confusing and frightening. It is very important to report hate crime.

You should report isolated events (one experience) and repeated harassment (e.g. by the same group of people)

When reporting you must say whether you think it was because of either your race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, transgender identity or a combination. This is important because it makes sure the police record it as a hate incident or crime.

By reporting incidents , you may be able to prevent these incidents from happening to someone else, including those within your own community.

You will also help the police understand the extent of hate crime in your local area so they can better respond to it.



Ways I can report a hate crime

We encourage anyone who suffers hate crime, or receives a serious threat against them to report it to the police, either by calling 101 (or 999 in an emergency)

You can also report hate crime online:

If you live in England, you can use True Vision: www.report-it.org.uk

If you live in Northern Ireland, you can use:

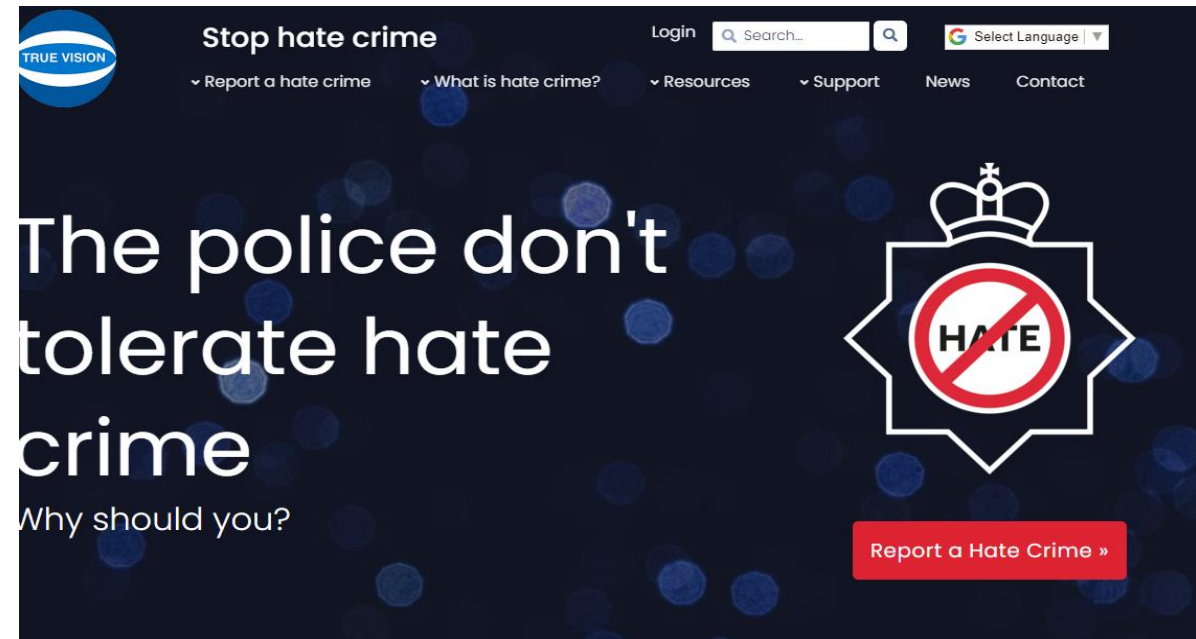
www.psnipolice.uk/crime/hate-crime

If you live in Wales, you can use – www.gov.wales/hate-hurts-wales

In Scotland, you can use - www.scotland.police.uk/advice-and-information/hate-crime

True Vision has been developed with the police so that you can report hate crime as a victim or witness online - you do not have to visit a police station to report.

You can read information on the website online in Pashto or Persian by clicking on the top right google translate button shown:



Victim Support

Victim Support is an independent charity which provides free and confidential support 24 hours a day for people affected by crime, including hate crime— regardless of whether you have reported the crime to the police.

Victim Support’s support line can provide support in Pashto or Dari languages.

The support services Victim Support offer include both immediate and longer term emotional and practical help.

If an interpreter who speaks Pashto or Dari isn’t immediately available, then the person seeking support may be asked to call back at a particular time or we will make an appointment for them to resume their conversation with an interpreter.

Victim Support line is free and can be reached 24/7/365 on 08 08 16 89 111 or via live chat on its www.victimsupport.org.uk or in Scotland: <https://victimsupport.scot/>



Please note: Victim Support is not meant to be a replacement for the Police Service. In an emergency where you are in immediate danger, please call 999.

Anti Muslim Hate Crime Service – Tell MAMA

Tell MAMA - Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks (MAMA) is another secure and reliable service that allows people from across the UK to report any form of Anti-Muslim abuse

By using Tell MAMA's 'Submit a Report' section on its website, you can describe the details of the abuse you suffered, whether verbal or physical, and then add in the location of the attack so that we can effectively map incidents across England.

Tell MAMA can also refer you for support through partner agencies if you have been a victim of an Anti-Muslim incident.

Tell MAMA supports victims of anti-Muslim hate and is not meant to be a replacement for the Police Service. In an emergency where you are in immediate danger, please call 999.





Political system and law

The UK is a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary democracy:

- A constitutional monarchy means that the king or queen is head of the state
- Parliamentary democracy means that an elected government holds power

Voting is important in the UK as it is a way for the public to decide who makes the decisions on issues that are important and issues that you care about, including education, health and housing.

General elections (elections to the UK Parliament) usually take place every 5 years.

Local government elections take place at least every 4 years, in which we elect who represents your local area.





Political System and the Law

- The Prime Minister leads the government. The government is usually formed by the largest political party who are elected through free and fair elections.
- The power to make laws rests in the two Houses of Parliament, The House of Commons and House of Lords:
 1. The House of Commons is made up of 650 representatives (Members of Parliament or MPs) elected every five years by the general public.
 2. The House of Lords is made up of appointed members.



Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland also each have their own government. Typically they have responsibility for issues such as healthcare and education.

Scottish parliament



Northern Ireland Assembly



National Assembly for Wales



Westminster- the Parliament of the United Kingdom



Freedom of expression



In the UK, you have a right to hold your own opinions and to express them freely without government interference.

This includes the right to express your views aloud (for example through public protest and demonstrations) or through:

- published articles, books or leaflets
- television or radio broadcasting
- works of art
- the internet and social media



Although you have freedom of expression, you also have a duty to behave responsibly and to respect other people's rights.

Public authorities may restrict this right if they can show that their action is lawful, in order to protect public safety, national security, prevent crime and protect the rights of other people.

Monarchy



- King Charles III was proclaimed as the new monarch in September 2022 following the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. The monarch is the UK's head of state and is also the head of state for 14 other Commonwealth countries.
- The King has two children and 5 grandchildren. His spouse, Camilla, is the Queen Consort.
- The coronation of His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort in May 2023, is a traditional ceremony for the crowning of a sovereign upon the monarch's head.
- In a monarchy, a king or queen (the monarch) is the head of state, but does not get involved in politics, and laws are made by the Houses of Parliament.
- Although the United Kingdom is a monarchy, the monarch's power is strictly symbolic and ceremonial, and they are expected to remain politically neutral.
- The monarch and other senior royals carry out official engagements and including visits to other countries and doing charity work.
- The monarch's official home in London is Buckingham Palace.



Activity – **true** or **false** about life in the UK?



1. To adjust to life in the UK, you must give up all aspects of your culture
2. It is normal to have anxiety or frustration in a new country
3. Language classes will make you feel more settled and they may help you meet new people
4. It may take some time to find a job in a new country
5. Men and women are considered equal
6. You can not contact the police if you witness or experience a crime
7. Your mental health is important and there are lots of services available

Activity answers – true or false?

1. To adjust to life in the UK, you must give up all aspects of your culture = **FALSE**
2. It is normal to have anxiety or frustration in a new country = **TRUE**
3. Language classes will make you feel more settled and they may help you meet new people = **TRUE**
4. It may take some time to find a job in a new country = **TRUE**
5. Men and women are considered equal = **TRUE**
6. You can not contact the police if you witness or experience a crime = **FALSE**
7. Your mental health is important and there are lots of services available = **TRUE**

Thank you

Any questions?



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities



Home Office

With thanks to contributions from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, and Morley College