






Who should I contact...

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a. to ask for support or raise an issue during my placement?

From the point of application to completing your contract in the UK, you will have access to three official support functions; your host institution where you are working, the British Council Language Assistants UK-based team and our official programme partner: the organisation you applied to within your home country. The table below will help you determine which is the most appropriate support function to contact first when you come across an issue you would like support with, and then who and when to escalate your issue to if not resolvable by the first contact.

 1. Mentor teacher Your first point of contact for most issues should be your mentor teacher.		
What their role is	What they can usually help with	What they can't usually help with
<p>Your workplace should identify a colleague as your mentor teacher. They are your first point of contact and provide valuable pastoral support and general advice for most issues you come across during your placement.</p> <p>Due to their proximity to you and general local and workplace knowledge, your mentor teacher can be an integral part of your support network while in the UK. You are recommended to approach them for most issues or questions as from experience this is the quickest and often most effective route to resolving many issues.</p>	<p>General advice for living and working in your placement location as well as help with issues regarding your:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • timetable • contract • salary • holidays / absences • accommodation • commute • school administration • everyday safety, health and wellbeing 	<p>Emergencies out of school hours.</p>

 2. Head of department / headteacher Your second contact, after your mentor teacher, is another member of staff in your workplace with more authority.		
What their role is Depending on your workplace, this might be the head of the Modern Languages department or headteacher. They can support you if your mentor teacher is unavailable or not supporting you with issues experienced within the workplace and your local area.	What they can usually help with All the issues a mentor teacher should be able to help with, as well as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> disciplinary concerns with other colleagues or students within the workplace professional development advice 	What they can't usually help with Everyday queries when your mentor teacher is available to provide you with this support
 3. British Council Language Assistants team (UK-based) Your third contact is the British Council, as we are the official Language Assistants programme partner in the UK.		
 All members of the Language Assistants team are best contacted at LanguageAssistants.UK@BritishCouncil.org . For best results, include your application ID in the subject line, outline the issue and any steps you have already taken to resolve it. An appropriate member of the team will respond to your email within 3 working days (Monday to Friday).		
 The Language Assistants team do not have a direct phone line, instead our colleagues on the British Council Customer Service answer calls on our behalf. Customer Service advisors can help with general information enquiries but not those of a more specific nature. For enquiries specific to your circumstances, it is best to email the team who will respond as appropriate from there.		
What their role is As the official Language Assistants programme partner in the UK, the British Council UK Language Assistants team manage relations with all employing schools, colleges, universities and local authorities on the programme within the UK. We have direct contact with all programme schools can therefore support you in contacting and resolving issues in your workplace. We work closely with the official programme partner in your home country (the organisation you applied through) to help coordinate and deliver the programme each year.	What they can usually help with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> issues that cannot be resolved through discussion with your host institution. issues experienced in your workplace that you do not feel comfortable talking to your employer about. non-emergency issues affecting your safety, health or wellbeing. visa information and advice If you need to leave the UK and terminate your placement. Experiences of discrimination or harassment of any kind (see page 4 of this document) 	What they can't usually help with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> issues that can be resolved by your host institution personal finance advice or queries relating to tax, including any National Insurance questions emergencies or immediate support required (due to distance and Monday-Friday office working hours) medical support and advice



4. Official programme partner organisation in your home country

If your workplace and the British Council cannot help or you do not feel comfortable raising a sensitive issue with them, your final contact is the partner organisation in your home country – this is usually the organisation to which you applied.

What their role is	What they can usually help with	What they can't usually help with
<p>The partner organisation in your home country coordinates the hiring, assessment and pre-departure training and administrative support for Modern Language Assistants before beginning their placements in the UK.</p> <p>Once your placement starts, you may hear less frequently from them as your UK-based country support functions become more relevant for support with most issues i.e. your workplace employer and the British Council Language Assistants team.</p> <p>However, your home country official programme organisation is still available to support you if you experience more sensitive or serious issues throughout your placement that are not or cannot be resolved by your workplace or the British Council, or that you do not feel comfortable raising with the aforementioned organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any non-emergency issues affecting your safety, health or wellbeing • If you need to leave the UK and terminate your placement • Information on applying for a consecutive year on the programme • Any questions you may have before departing for your placement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • urgent support in the UK (due to distance, time difference and limited office working hours) • professional medical/health advice • support in contacting your employer school directly. The British Council manage all communications with your employing host institutions. • personal financial support or advice

b. in an emergency?

Emergencies are urgent and serious issues affecting your immediate personal safety, health, or wellbeing e.g. if you are significantly ill or are a victim of crime. In an immediate emergency you should contact **the embassy of your home country within the UK** and/or **the emergency services in the UK** for assistance. You should also alert the British Council UK as well as the programme organisation in your home country of the emergency, after you have taken steps in response to the immediate emergency.

- **Contact your embassy for:** any urgent and serious issues affecting your personal safety, health, or wellbeing. E.g. If you have suffered sexual or physical assault, are a victim of crime, or ill or in hospital; if you have been affected by terrorism, civil unrest or natural disasters; replacement emergency travel documents, details of local lawyers, interpreters etc., details of organisations that can provide specialist support where your home embassy is unable to.

- **The embassy will not do the following:** get involved in issues your school, British Council UK or the programme partner organisation in your home country can resolve; help you enter a country if you don't have a visa or your passport is invalid; ensure your everyday safety and security, investigate crimes, get you out of prison, prevent deportation or interfere in criminal or civil court proceedings, get you better treatment in prison, get you better treatment in hospital, pay any bills or give you money from public funds.
- **To contact the emergency services in the UK, use the UK-wide emergency number: 999.** The UK emergency services include the police, ambulance service, fire service and coastguard service – all can be contacted by dialling 999 on any phone. For situations that require police assistance but do not require an immediate response you can call the police service's non-emergency number 101. For situations where you require non-emergency medical advice, you can call the NHS helpline on 111.

c. if I experience discrimination or harassment of any kind?

The British Council has a zero-tolerance policy approach to discrimination or harassment of any kind. You are encouraged to report discrimination or harassment directly with your workplace, our partners and to the British Council Language Assistants team LanguageAssistants.UK@BritishCouncil.org if you feel comfortable doing so.

In the event you report discrimination or harassment within the workplace to the British Council we will work with you to support you and take action to address the abuse on a case-by-case basis. In the past we have barred institutions from taking part in the programme if they have failed to support assistants sufficiently when they experienced harassment or discrimination in the workplace, or we have been able to find assistants a new placement to transfer to (please note this is not always possible).

Where you are a victim of harassment or discrimination either within the workplace or outside of the workplace, we also encourage you to report it to the UK authorities if you are comfortable doing so but also to contact your embassy within the UK. There is information and guidance on how to approach different emergency scenarios including reporting hate crime in the UK: [Report hate crime - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/police). Hate crimes are crimes committed against someone because of their disability, transgender-identity, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation. Hate crimes should be reported to the police and can include: threatening behaviour, assault, robbery, damage to property, inciting others to commit hate crimes, harassment and online abuse.

If you experience discrimination or harassment of any kind and want to withdraw from the programme and/or return to the UK without disclosing particular details, the British Council Language Assistants team will also support you in doing so.