

Services and support for disabled refugees in Hamburg

People with disabilities have a right to support and can apply for certain benefits in Germany. In general, these are non-cash benefits and services. So, people with disabilities do not receive more money, but they can get support with day-to-day activities so that they can live as normal a life as possible.

In Germany, the law defines what it means to be disabled and who is deemed to have a disability (see German Social Code *Sozialgesetzbuch IX*). The law distinguishes between people with physical disabilities, people with mental disabilities and people with psychological disabilities.

In order to get benefits, these need to be applied for at the respective administrative bodies. Disabled refugees are also entitled to these benefits.

Steps to receive benefits:

1. A **specialist doctor** needs to **diagnose a disability**.
2. If necessary, **legal support** may also be involved.
3. The affected person or his/her guardian can file an application for an initial recognition of the (severe) disability in accordance with the Severely Handicapped Persons Act (*Schwerbehindertenrecht*, SGB IX) to **verify the disability** with the **social security office** (*Versorgungsamt*).
4. If a disability with a severity of GdB 50 has been ascertained, you can apply for a **pass for severely handicapped people**.
5. You can apply for additional support – e.g. **integration assistance**, **Hilfe zur Pflege** or **accessible housing** – at the respective offices.
6. Self help for disabled people

Steps and benefits explained:

1. Diagnosis from a specialist doctor:

In Hamburg, every person in possession of a health insurance card can go to any specialist doctor he chooses. A GP – also one in your refugee accommodation – can refer you to a suitable specialist doctor (e.g. neurologist, orthopaedist, ophthalmologist).

Information and medical consultation:

- **Finding a specialist doctor in Hamburg**
<http://www.kvhh.net/kvhh/arztsuche/index/p/274>
- **Pflegestützpunkte Hamburg (care providers)**
<http://www.hamburg.de/pflegestuetzpunkte/>
- **Dialogforum Geflüchtete mit Behinderung (forum for refugees with disabilities)**
<http://www.hamburg.de/forum-fluechtlingshilfe/4974700/gefluechtete-mit-behinderung/>
- **SeGeMi e.V. (mental health advice for refugees and migrants)**
<http://www.segemi.org/beratung.html>
- **Medibüro Hamburg (medical counselling for refugees and migrants)**
<http://www.medibuero-hamburg.org/de>
- **Kinderkompass (advice for parents with disabled children)**
www.kinderkompass-hamburg.de
www.medibuero-hamburg.org

2. Legal guardianship:

If an adult is physically or mentally unable to take care of his own affairs, a legal guardian may be appointed. This person takes on all legal affairs of the handicapped person, e.g. taking care of financial and health care matters or representing his interests at the authorities. Relatives, friends, acquaintances, but also third parties can take on this voluntary task.

Information and advice on the topic of legal guardianship:

- **Office for help in accordance with the laws on guardianship**
<http://www.hamburg.de/betreuungsstellen>
- **Questions and answers on legal guardianship**
<http://www.hamburg.de/fragen-zur-betreuung/>

3. Assessing a disability:

The social security office (*Versorgungsamt*) ascertains whether or not someone has a disability and determines the level of severity (*Grad der Behinderung*, GdB) of said disability. The level of severity of a disability can lie between 20 and 100. The higher the level of severity of a disability, the more benefits a person is entitled to. In Germany, a disability is classed as severe from a level of GdB 50. However, the level of disability does not necessarily correlate with a person's performance capacity or quality of life. It only refers to the level of how much the person is disadvantaged in day-to-day life. You can only apply for getting your level of disability assessed once you have applied for asylum and received a **temporary permit to stay** (*Aufenthaltsgestattung*) in Germany. The social security office needs to be notified immediately of every temporary permit renewal.

- **Initial recognition of the (severe) disability in accordance with the Severely Handicapped Persons Act** (*Schwerbehindertenrecht*, SGB IX) online:
www.hamburg.de/antrag-merkblaetter/83238/start

4. Pass for severely handicapped people:

From a level of disability (*Grad der Behinderung*, GdB) of 50, the social security office (*Versorgungsamt*) will issue a pass for a severely disabled person. With this pass, people can claim **disadvantage compensations**, e.g. discounted/free rides on public transport in Hamburg (bus and train), tax relief, discounts at the cinema, theatre, museum and much more. The pass is available to all severely disabled people who are resident in Germany. Every pass features certain letters, so-called **markers**. The disadvantage compensations available depend on these markers. More information:

- www.hamburg.de/antrag-merkblaetter/115696/faltblatt-schwerbehindertenausweis
- In easy German:
<http://www.hamburg.de/contentblob/7430746/0508c390262e3e7456f08255936feeae/data/broschuere-schweba-leichte-sprache.pdf>

The different markers

G: Severe mobility problems
H: Helplessness
Bl: Blind
RF: Exempt from licence fees

aG: Exceptionally severe mobility problems
B: Entitled to one accompanying person
Gl: Deaf

5. Integration assistance (*Eingliederungshilfe*, EGH)

Disabled people who need **support in day-to-day life** can apply for integration assistance. Help with integration is available for different age groups and various types of disability. The disabled people eligible for integration assistance live in their own homes and receive care and guidance at school, during leisure activities and at work. In addition to these outpatient offers, there is also assisted living and working for people with disabilities. Help with integration can be requested at your local **social service centre** (*Soziales Dienstleistungszentrum*). After the application, a special medical service checks whether the applicant is eligible to receive support (verification of eligibility, see §53 SGB XII).

- **Help for families with disabled children (*Hilfen für Familien mit behinderten Kindern*, HfbK)**
Disabled children between three and 18 years of age and their families receive consultation and guidance, leisure activities support, help with building friendships and with furthering autonomy.
- **Educational support in your own home (*Pädagogische Betreuung im eigenen Wohnraum*, PBW)**
Adults with mental and/or physical disabilities receive support from education experts. Here, the focus lies on furthering autonomy and self-reliant living.
- **Living assistance (*Wohnassistenz*, WA)**
Adults with mental and/or physical disabilities living on their own home can receive assistance with their day-to-day lives, e.g. with shopping or household chores.
- **Outpatient social psychiatry (*Ambulante Sozialpsychiatrie*, ASP)**
Psychologically handicapped adults living in their own home can receive assistance with their day-to-day lives, e.g. with shopping or household chores.
- **Early support / integrated kindergarten**
Disabled children under the age of six can receive special support at an integrated kindergarten.
- **School companion** (apply at the school board)
In Germany, school attendance is compulsory, also for disabled children. You can apply for a school companion, who will give individual support to your child at school.

Information and advice on the topic of integration assistance:

- **City of Hamburg**
www.hamburg.de/wandsbek/behinderung-eingliederungshilfe
- **Lebenshilfe Hamburg**
Support and care for disabled people
www.lebenshilfe-hamburg.de
Lebenshilfe Hamburg is offering socio-pedagogical consultation, tracks down available assistance and helps with application processes where necessary.

5.1. Social care fund *Hilfe zur Pflege*:

Disabled people who need help with personal hygiene, medical care, eating and drinking etc. can apply for help through the social care fund *Hilfe zur Pflege*. A mobile nursing service may be employed. Once a residence permit has been issued, you can also apply for a care allowance for caretaking relatives. If greater support is needed, semi-residential or fully inpatient care homes may also be an option. You can apply for support from *Hilfe zur Pflege* at your local social service centre or contact your health insurance (e.g. AOK).

Should you need aids such as an (electric) wheelchair, a prosthesis, a hearing aid or medical rehab (e.g. physiotherapy or psychotherapy), you can contact your health insurance to apply for them – provided a doctor has issued a corresponding prescription.

Information and advice on the topic of care:

- **City of Hamburg:**
www.hamburg.de/behinderung/pflege
- **Pflegestützpunkte Hamburg (care providers)**
Offering advice on help and care to people in need and their relatives
www.hamburg.de/pflegestuuetzpunkte

5.2. Proof of eligibility to get social housing/proof of urgency (Wohnberechtigungsschein/Dringlichkeitsschein):

Refugees with a residence permit and low income can go to their local social service centre – office for housing matters – and apply for proof of eligibility to get social housing (the so-called §5-Schein) with which they then have the right to get affordable social housing. People who need accessible housing because they are wheelchair users can also apply for proof of urgency (Dringlichkeitsschein) to get support from the central agency in charge of wheelchair accessible housing.

Information and advice on the topic of housing:

- **Central agency in charge of wheelchair accessible housing**
<https://www.hamburg.de/behoerdenfinder/hamburg/11268098/>
- **Dialogforum Wohnen (housing forum)**
<http://www.hamburg.de/forum-fluechtlingshilfe/7686866/dialogforum-wohnen/>

6. Self help for disabled people:

You do not need to apply for self help. If disabled people want to swap ideas with other disabled people, organise joint leisure activities or have specific questions, they can contact the existing self help organisations and associations.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonom Leben e.V. (autonomous living)
Self help for disabled people in Hamburg
www.autonomleben.de • Deaf Refugees Welcome Hamburg/Gehörlosenverband Hamburg (association of deaf people)
Support for deaf refugees in Hamburg
www.facebook.com/deafrefugeeswelcome • Blinden und Sehbehindertenverein Hamburg (association of blind and visually impaired people)
Advice, exchange of experiences and more for blind and visually impaired people in Hamburg | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.bsvh.org • IRIs e.V. (association of blind and visually impaired people)
Rehab measures for blind and visually impaired people
www.iris-hamburg.org • KISS Hamburg (self help groups)
Information, advice and liaisons with self help groups in Hamburg
www.kiss-hh.de • Lebenshilfe Hamburg (self help groups)
Various self help groups with a focus on mentally disabled people
www.lhhh.de |
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More questions?

Project ZuFlucht Lebenshilfe

A Lebenshilfe Hamburg project for refugees with disabilities



www.zuflucht.lhhh.de