First steps in Bocholt

Welcome to Bocholt! This website is a digital guide for you. The information and texts provided here will help you find your way around our town quickly and feel at home here right from the start. Our service is aimed at everyone: new arrivals as well as those who have been living in Bocholt for some time. We are here to support you.

Do you have any questions or feedback regarding the content? You can contact Mr Bengfort from the Municipal Integration Management team.

- **Email:** lennart.bengfort(at)bocholt(dot)de
- **Further information:** You can find further details on the Municipal Integration Management scheme in North Rhine-Westphalia at www.kim.nrw.



Your first point of contact

Upon your arrival in Bocholt, this is the first place you should go: **Central Reception Centre** at Theodor-Heuss-Ring 19-23, 46395 Bocholt

You will be welcomed there by staff members. You will then be accompanied to your first place of accommodation. This accommodation will then be your permanent official address.

Your social care

During the initial period, you will be supported by a dedicated social support worker. This person is your first and most important point of contact for any questions you may have about life in Bocholt. They will help you with everyday challenges and work with you to find solutions.

Your social support worker will assist you with these important steps, amongst others:

- **Registration:** They will officially register you with the City of Bocholt.
- **Appointment at the social services office:** They will arrange an appointment for you with the Social Services Department of the City of Bocholt.
- **Appointment at the Immigration Office:** They will arrange an appointment for you at the City of Bocholt's Immigration Office.

Initial accommodation and shared accommodation

Whilst your asylum application is still being processed, you will usually be staying in shared accommodation provided by the city of Bocholt. During this time, you are not legally permitted to rent your own flat or to live with friends or relatives on a long-term basis.

Every accommodation centre has rules governing daily life there. These rules are set out in the **house rules**. Please read and follow these house rules carefully and be considerate of the other residents. If you have any questions, your social support worker will be happy to help.

The resident card

As a refugee allocated by the local authority, you will be issued with a so-called resident card. This card is your official proof that you are authorised to live in the accommodation allocated to you.

- The card shows your **photograph** and your **name**.
- It also contains the **contact details** of your designated social support officer.

Important: Please carry your resident card with you at all times. Please show the card if the centre management or security staff ask you to do so.

Food and Cooking

Kitchens are available in the shared accommodation. You can prepare and cook your own meals there.

Health Insurance & Health

The Health Card

If you receive financial assistance from the Social Services Department (Sozialamt) of the City of Bocholt, you are usually covered by health insurance. If you are ill, you can consult a doctor. In Germany, you normally have the right to choose your own doctor.

Once you are officially registered in Bocholt, you will receive an **electronic health card** from your health insurance provider after a short while. When

you have an appointment with a doctor, please show this card at reception.

What should I do if I don't have a card yet?

If you are new to Bocholt and need to see a doctor urgently but do not yet have a health card, the Social Services Department will help you. The department will issue you with a document for the doctor's surgery. This document is called **a 'replacement certificate**'. With this, the doctor can treat you immediately.

Important: If you are no longer receiving financial support from the Social Services Department (for example, because assistance under the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act has ended), this form of health insurance will often cease as well. You must then return the health card to the Social Services Department.

Financial assistance / Money

At your first appointment at the Social Services Department, your details will be checked. The department will then decide how much financial support you will receive each month.

The payment card

You will usually be issued with a so-called **payment card**. The City of Bocholt will transfer your financial assistance to this card every month. You can use this card to make cashless payments in shops. At cash machines, you can usually withdraw up to €50.00 in cash per person per month. To ensure you have money for food and everyday expenses in the first few days after your arrival, you will receive an initial cash advance.

Opening your own bank account when you start work

As soon as you start work and earn your own money, you should open your own bank account with a bank or savings bank. Your employer can then pay your wages directly into this account. If you need help opening an account, ask your social services advisor.

What should you do if there is no money on your card at the start of the month?

If you have not received any money at the start of the month, this is usually because the authorities are missing important documents.

Please always remember: if you receive new residence permits or documents from the authorities, you must submit a copy of these to the Social Services Department immediately. Only then can your benefits continue to be paid. In this case, check your post straight away: are there any documents still missing from the office's records? Take the missing documents to the office as soon as possible.

Clothing

Once you have received your money, you should buy your own clothes. In Bocholt, there are specialist shops and charity clothing banks where you can buy clothes very cheaply. Ask your social worker about these shops.

Dates and documents

Attending appointments

Once you arrive in Germany, you will have many appointments with government departments and agencies. These appointments are very important for your future.

Please always book appointments with doctors or government departments in advance (by telephone or online). Please make sure you arrive on time for your appointments. If you are unable to attend an appointment, please cancel it in good time.

Keep your documents safe

Documents and letters are very important in Germany. Please keep all documents in a safe place. Important documents include, for example: letters from government departments, certificates and post from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF).

Important everyday tip: Always open and read your post on the same day it arrives. If you do not understand a letter, ask your social worker or use a translation app.

Please **never** hand over **your original documents** to government departments; always provide copies instead. You must always keep the originals in your possession.

You should always carry these three documents with you in your day-to-day life:

1. Your **residence permit** (or your temporary residence permit / toleration status)
2. Your **health card**
3. Your **resident card** (if you are living in municipal accommodation)

Mobility: Getting around in Bocholt

Cycling

In Bocholt, the bicycle is the main mode of transport. A great many people use it every day. If you'd like to buy a bike or are looking for a cycling course to help you ride safely in traffic, ask your social services team about what's available.

Travelling by bus

The main bus station in Bocholt is called **Bustreff** (right in the city centre). From there, buses run to all parts of the town and to the neighbouring villages.

- **Important:** You must buy your ticket **before** boarding the bus (from the driver or via an app).
- If you receive financial assistance from the local authority, you may sometimes be eligible for a reduced-fare ticket (social ticket). Ask your social services team about this.

Travelling by train

Bocholt has a railway station. Trains run regularly from there towards the Ruhr region and as far as Düsseldorf. From there, you can connect to many other trains. Please buy your ticket from the ticket machine on the platform or in the station shop **before** boarding the train.

Driving and driving licences

If you wish to drive a car in Germany, you will need a valid driving licence. If you already hold a driving licence from your home country, you must

check with the **Borken District Vehicle Registration Office** to see whether and for how long it is valid in Germany. You can book an appointment at the Vehicle Registration Office online.

If you own your own car, there are two things you need to bear in mind:

1. You must take out statutory **third-party motor insurance** for the car.
2. You must pay **motor vehicle tax** on the vehicle.

Address of the vehicle registration office in Bocholt: Borken District - Bocholt Branch, Kaiser-Wilhelm-Straße 52-58, 46395 Bocholt

Pedelecs, e-bikes and e-scooters

- **Pedelec (often referred to as an "E-bike"):** The electric motor only assists you if you are pedalling at the same time. You do not need a driving licence or a number plate for this.
- **E-bike (genuine e-bike):** This vehicle moves under its own power at the touch of a button, without you having to pedal. Legally, it is classified as a moped. You will need at least a moped test certificate (driving licence) and a small insurance plate (number plate).
- **E-scooter (electric kick scooter):** To ride an e-scooter, you need a road licence and insurance (a small sticker licence plate on the rear). A driving licence is not required.

Emergency call

In Germany, there are two key emergency numbers. Calls to these numbers are **always free of charge** from all telephone networks and can be made even if you have no credit on your mobile phone.

- **110** - Police (in the event of danger, accidents or criminal offences)
- **112** - Fire brigade and ambulance service (in the event of a fire or medical emergency)

Important for every emergency call: Stay calm on the phone and do not simply hang up. Answer the control centre's questions carefully. Do not end the call until the person on the phone tells you that they have all the information they need.

When should I call 110 (police)?

Dial 110 if a crime is taking place or there is an immediate threat of danger. For example, in the event of a burglary, theft, assault or if you are being threatened.

Address of the police station in Bocholt: Bocholt Police Station, Dinxperloer Straße 54, 46399 Bocholt

When should I call 112 (ambulance and fire service)?

Dial 112 in the event of a fire or if someone is in an acute medical emergency (e.g. severe breathing difficulties, a serious accident, a suspected heart attack or sudden loss of consciousness) where immediate medical assistance is required.

Security staff and the police

Security staff are on duty at the municipal shared accommodation centres. They are there to ensure your personal safety and the security of the accommodation. In the event of disputes or problems, the security staff will help to find a peaceful solution. Please show your resident card if the staff ask you to do so.

In the event of serious problems or criminal offences, the police will assist you. Call the police if someone breaks the law. For example, in cases of theft, assault, drug-related offences, or if someone threatens you. In these cases, dial **110**. The call is free of charge.

On-site assistance

In Bocholt, you will receive support from various authorities and organisations. The three most important offices for you are:

The Immigration Office: This office will assist you with your residence permit application. It issues your official documents (such as a residence permit or temporary leave to remain) and advises you on your current residence status.

The Social Services Department (Sozialamt): This department calculates and pays your financial support and helps with questions regarding health insurance or accommodation costs.

EWIBO GmbH: EWIBO staff provide personalised support and advice on day-to-day matters whilst you are living in council accommodation.

In Bocholt, there are also many voluntary organisations where people work on a voluntary basis to help you settle in well. If you are unsure which department is responsible for your issue, please ask your social worker.

Important addresses and telephone numbers in Bocholt

- **City of Bocholt - Foreigners' Registration Office**, Neutorplatz 2-4, 46395 Bocholt | Telephone: 02871 / 953-2132
- **City of Bocholt - Social Services Department**, Berliner Platz 2, 46395 Bocholt | Telephone: 02871 / 953-2336
- **City of Bocholt - Jobcentre**, Berliner Platz 2, 46395 Bocholt | Telephone: 02871 / 953-2310
- **EWIBO GmbH**, Theodor-Heuss-Ring 23, 46395 Bocholt | Telephone: 02871 / 21765-219
- **Employment Agency - Bocholt Branch** Hindenburgstraße 10, 46395 Bocholt | Telephone: 0800 / 4 5555 00
- **Klausenhof Academy** Klausenhofstraße 100, 46499 Hamminkeln-Dingden | Telephone: 02852 / 89-0
- **Workers' Welfare Organisation (AWO) - Youth Migration Service** Wiesenstraße 55, 46395 Bocholt | Telephone: 02871 / 222849
- **Workers' Welfare Association (AWO) - Departure and Future Prospects Advice** Wiesenstraße 55, 46395 Bocholt | Telephone: 02871 / 222847
- **Asylum Working Group of the Catholic Church in Bocholt** Contact person: Maria Hagemann-Wissing | Telephone: 0177 / 7540544
- **Caritas Association, Bocholt Deanery** Nordwall 44-46, 46399 Bocholt | Telephone: 02871 / 2513-0
- **German Red Cross (DRK) - Bocholt City Branch** Goerdelerstraße 15, 46397 Bocholt | Telephone: 02871 / 24116-0
- **Diakonie - Protestant Counselling Service** Dinxperloer Straße 173, 46399 Bocholt | Telephone: 02871 / 222841
- **Family Education Centre (Fabi) Bocholt** Ostwall 39, 46397 Bocholt | Telephone: 02871 / 23948-0
- **Youth Welfare and Social Integration Association (jusina)** Adenauerallee 59, 46399 Bocholt | Telephone: 02871 / 217657-15
- **SKM - Catholic Association for Social Services Bocholt e.V.** Friesenstraße 5, 46395 Bocholt | Telephone: 02871 / 8891

- **Leben im Alter e.V. (L-i-A)** Adenauerallee 59, 46399 Bocholt | Telephone: 02871 / 217656-91
- **Catholic Women's Social Service (SkF)** Langenbergstraße 18, 46397 Bocholt | Telephone: 02871 / 25182-0

Please note: This list is not exhaustive. Do you have any suggestions for other important addresses? Please feel free to send an email to the Bocholt City Council Press Office: pressestelle(at)bocholt(dot)de or call: 02871 / 953-1289.

Open-access activities & meeting places in Bocholt

There are plenty of open-access services in Bocholt. Here you can meet other people, have a coffee together or get advice.

Café International

This café is an open meeting place, particularly for refugees from Persian-speaking countries (e.g. from Iran or Afghanistan). Here you'll find a space for conversation and support.

- **When:** Every Friday from 4.30 pm to 6.00 pm *(please note: closed during school holidays)*.
- **Where:** Parish hall of the Evangelical Apostolic Church, Biemenhorster Weg 15, 46395 Bocholt.
- **Contact:** Vicar Christian Wahl | Telephone: 02871 / 13581 | Email: pfarrer(at)apostelkirche(dot)com

Asylum Working Group of the Catholic Church in Bocholt

People volunteer their time in the Asylum Working Group. They support refugees in their daily lives and answer practical questions.

- **When:** Every second Tuesday of the month from 5.30 pm to 7.30 pm.
- **Where:** Treff 21, Theodor-Heuss-Ring 21, 46395 Bocholt.
- **Contact:** Ms Remest | Telephone: 0151 / 28848496

Intercultural Café at Fabi Bocholt

This café is aimed at anyone interested in other cultures. Here, people discuss everyday topics in Germany. The initiative promotes harmonious

coexistence in the town and is organised by the Integration Council and the Integration Office.

- **When:** Every third Monday of the month from 6.00 pm to 8.15 pm *(Please note: Closed during school holidays)*.
- **Where:** Family Education Centre (Fabi) Bocholt, Ostwall 39, 46397 Bocholt.
- **Contact:** Mr Wansing | Telephone: 02871 / 217656-12 | Email: bruno.wansing(at)bocholt(dot)de

Municipal Integration Management (KIM)

KIM supports people who have recently arrived in Germany. Staff from the Workers' Welfare Association (AWO) will support you with your integration in Bocholt. The advice is tailored to your personal situation, is free of charge and voluntary.

- **Where:** Municipal Integration Management Bocholt, Berliner Platz 2, 46395 Bocholt.
- **Contact:** Lennart Bengfort | Telephone: 02871 / 953-2700 | Email: lennart.bengfort(at)bocholt(dot)de

Contact person

Herr Bengfort

Soziale Leistungen und Wohnen

Soziales

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