

# Welcome



to



## First steps

Introduction into life in Wennigsen

English

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## **Welcome to Wennigsen.**

We are very pleased about your safe arrival in Wennigsen and would like to give you some important pieces of information concerning your stay here.

Refugee accommodation matters are taken care of by the city council (Gemeindeverwaltung - Mrs. Schubert and Mrs. Duhnsen) and Mrs. Kirli (Integrationsbeauftragte) - in an advisory capacity. There are also several voluntary integration assistants and some interpreters who support the city council of Wennigsen.

Because of the high number of refugees arriving here at present we regret having to admit that not every refugee can be looked after as we consider it desirable. Therefore we often have to improvise. However we do try hard to establish contact with at least one local person who can help you with authority matters and in case of emergency. If possible we will encourage fellow refugees from your home countries who have lived here for some time already to get in touch with you.

Here's a list of topics informing you about:

1. Wennigsen
2. Contact with authorities
3. Registration (immigration authorities/Ausländerbehörde/BAMF)
4. Public transport
5. Free food
6. Medical care
7. Supply of clothes and furniture (Soziales Kaufhaus)
8. Shopping, post office, photocopying, schooling material
9. Accommodation equipment and repairs
10. Waste disposal/separation
11. German language courses, events
12. School, nursery school (kindergarten)
13. Further information

**Enclosure 1:** map of Wennigsen with important places. The numbers included in the text can be found on the map, too. For example: (1) = Wennigsen station.

**Enclosure 2:** addresses and opening times of important institutions/organisations

## 1. Wennigsen

You are here in the small town of Wennigsen, which is situated approximately 30 km south-west of Hannover. Wennigsen has about 14.000 inhabitants and consists of the following parts/villages: Wennigsen, Wennigser Mark, Holtensen, Bredenbeck, Steinkrug, Degersen, Sorsum, Argestorf and Evestorf. The nearest neighbouring towns are Barsinghausen and Gehrden.

## 2. Contact with authorities

A very important fact during your stay here is that authorities must be able to directly contact you by mail. This first contact has to be answered **without delay**. So make sure that you've got a postbox showing your name(s) and immediately get in touch with somebody helping you concerning integration matters (a voluntary integration assistant). Sometimes there are time limits that have to be obeyed in order to prevent trouble.

## 3. Registration (immigration authorities/Ausländerbehörde/BAMF)

**As soon as you've settled down** you are obliged to inform the immigration authorities (BAMF) by mail about your address so that the BAMF will be able to contact you later in order to arrange an interview with you. In addition to this you and each member of your family will have to go to Hannover to register personally at the BAMF. So go together. Everybody must take with them any available official documents (identity card, passport, registration document of the local authorities of Wennigsen (Meldebescheinigung)) as well as one passport photo each, even of babies and small children. Passport photos can be taken either at the optician's in the building of the local administration (Gemeindeverwaltung) or at the optician's diagonally opposite of the EDEKA supermarket.

## 4. Public transport

There is a very good public transport system in Wennigsen and all over Germany. Buses, trains, underground etc. are usually on time. When riding buses or trains, it is highly important for you to know how it works.

Passengers are regularly asked by inspectors to produce their tickets. So make sure you have a valid ticket, because otherwise you'll be charged **a fine of 40 Euros. That means 160 Euros for a family or a group of 4 persons**. Being caught riding buses or trains without ticket means that your personal data will be taken and some time later you'll be sent a request for payment. Payment has to be made either by credit transfer or in cash in Hannover at the office of the public transport company (Verkehrsgesellschaft Üstra) **before the date requested**. If you don't pay on time the fine will be increased step by step.

In Germany we distinguish between - on one hand - public transport buses and suburban trains, which go to Hannover and some smaller places in the surrounding and – on the other hand – trains run by Deutsche Bahn, which you can use if you want to go to Bramsche, Friedland or other places in Germany for your appointments. Timetables can be found on information boards at the stations. But you can also buy a small booklet at Heitmüller's (small department store opposite the local administration building/Gemeindeverwaltung) informing you about the timetables (2 Euros). Furthermore, a free app (GVH Fahrplan) can be downloaded.

There are several bus stops in Wennigsen. The most important stations probably are Wennigsen (1) and Egestorf (2) – for those of you who stay at Wennigser Mark.

### **Ticket prices/fares:**

The fares are different depending on how many zones (Zonen) you want to travel – the more zones the higher the fare. You can either buy day tickets or monthly season tickets.

As refugees you are entitled to take advantage of reduced fares. We advise you to take note of the following information:

### **Day tickets**

In order to prevent you from having to pay a fine, you are obliged to carry the following items **for every day trip and for every person** with you.

1. Your **identity card** (Ausweis)
2. Your **blue Regio-S-Ausweis** (permit of the public transport company) which is provided by the social security office (Sozialamt). This card is valid from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016. If you got your card before September 2015 you must possibly apply for a new one. Every person going by train or bus must be able to produce this card.
3. One **TagesEinzelTicket S (day ticket)** corresponding to the number of zones you want to travel. With such a ticket, you can ride a bus or train as often as you wish within the chosen zones.

Children under the age of 6 travel for free, children between 6 and 14 years need a reduced

### **KinderTagesTicket S.**

Day tickets can be purchased at the ticket machines on the platforms or from the bus driver.

**Important:** The day tickets have to be stamped **before travelling**. For stamping use the small blue box next to the ticket machine.

If you do not stamp your ticket, it will not be valid and you will have to pay the fine described above.

### **Monthly season tickets**

It might be a good idea to buy a monthly season ticket if you regularly go by bus or train. Make your own calculation. The monthly season tickets can be purchased from the bus driver or at the ticket machines at the stations. The monthly season ticket is called **MobilCard S**. As it is restricted to personal use only, you must write your full name on it before using it for the first time. To do so, use a permanent marker.

Monthly season tickets allow the holder to take with him 1 adult and up to 3 children after (!) 7 pm Mondays to Fridays and all day long on Saturdays and Sundays and on public holidays. However, each of the accompanying persons must carry with them a **blue Regio-S-Ausweis** issued by the social security office (Sozialamt).

### **Ticket fares, examples 2016**

#### **Day tickets (3 zones)**

- TagesEinzelTicket S Zone 1 (Barsinghausen, Bredenbeck) Euro 2.50
- TagesEinzelTicket S Zone 2 (Gehrden, Ronnenberg) Euro 3.30
- TagesEinzelTicket S Zone 3 (Hannover City) Euro 4.10

Children's tickets (6 – 14 years) cost Euro 1.30 for all zones.

#### **Monthly season tickets**

In contrast to day tickets (TagesTicket, 3 zones), monthly tickets (**MobilCard S**) are based on 4 zones .

- Zone 1 (Barsinghausen, Bredenbeck) Euro 34.60
- Zone 2 (Gehrden, Ronnenberg) Euro 38.30
- Zone 3 (Hannover-Bornum, H.-Linden-Fischerhof) Euro 50.20
- Zone 4 (Hannover City and Region) Euro 61.40

**Please ask a voluntary integration assistant to show you how the ticket machines work before buying a ticket one on your own.**

## **5. Free food**

In Germany volunteers working for the so called 'Tafel' collect free food from shops etc. in order to pass it on to persons who can't afford (expensive) food. The nearest distribution point for refugees living in Wennigsen is in Barsinghausen within 10 minutes walking distance from Barsinghausen station at Langenäcker 46 (name of street).

**If you would like to take advantage of the distribution of free food you have register first.** The registration is done every first Wednesday of a month from 3 to 4 pm at Langenäcker 46. There you have to show your identity card and a certificate issued by the authorities of Wennigsen entitling you to receive free food from the 'Tafel'. You will then be given a voucher (card) by the 'Tafel', allowing you to receive free food **at a given day and given time** (some time between Monday and Thursday from 3 to 6 pm). It is highly important to **keep the appointment**. Other dates will not be accepted.

**Please note: Because of the high number of people asking for free food at Langenäcker, the 'Tafel' recently announced a stop of registration and consequently a stop of distribution to newcomers. So please contact a voluntary integration assistant to find out if the registration is possible.**

## **6. Medical care**

After having arrived in Wennigsen, every member of a family will be given a health insurance voucher (Krankenschein) for a general practitioner and a dentist entitling everybody to have free medical treatment. As a voucher is only valid for one quarter of a year, you have to apply for a new voucher at the beginning of the following quarter. In case of illness contact an integration assistant and ask for the arrangement of a doctor's appointment. If you think you need an interpreter, make sure that you are accompanied by one or that there is somebody who can do the interpreting on the telephone. In case of a special disease, the general practitioner will send you to a specialist or a hospital. The necessary special medical treatment voucher (Überweisungsschein) will have to be approved and signed by Mrs. Schubert (city council/Gemeinderverwaltung) or – in some cases – by the immigration authorities (Ausländerbehörde) in Hannover. Only after this step you can make an appointment with a specialist. Please note that specialists often have a long waiting list and can only treat a patient in - from a medical point of view - absolutely urgent cases.

## **7. Supply of clothes and furniture (Soziales Kaufhaus)**

Not far from EDEKA (just around the corner of Hauptstraße) Wennigsen provides a shop called 'Soziales Kaufhaus' (3) where you can buy clothes, furniture, household items and other things at a good price.

Opening times are:

Mondays to Fridays: from 10 am to 12 am and from 4 pm to 7 pm

On Saturdays: from 10 am to 1 pm.

In Barsinghausen directly next to the station there is a sort of Oxfam shop (Kleiderkammer) where you can buy good clothes at a reasonable price if you can produce an income support document issued by Wennigsen city council (Sozialhilfebescheinigung) and your identity card.

Opening times:

Mondays to Thursdays: from 9 am to 12 am

Tuesdays and Thursdays: from 3 pm to 5 pm.

Starting in March or April 2016, there will be a similar 'shop' (Kleider-kammer) in Wennigsen. You will be informed as soon as it will have opened.

## **8. Shopping, post office, photocopying, schooling material**

There are lots of shops in Wennigsen, most of them being situated near the station or along Hauptstraße. Contact a voluntary integration assistant. He or she will be able to tell you where best to buy what.

Photocopies can be made at the post office (4) next to the EDEKA super market in Hauptstraße, at the stationary opposite Wennigsen city council (5) or at the stationary Papierlädchen (6) in 22 Neustadtstraße between the city council (Gemeindeverwaltung) and the station.

For school books and exercise books go to the local bookshop 'Das Buch' (7) in 11A Hauptstraße or to the stationary Papierlädchen (6). There you can make an order according to the list given to you by the school. Orders will usually be processed within 24 hours and can be collected the next working day. Other schooling material such as pens, pencils, rubbers, rulers etc. is sold at the Papierlädchen's, at Heitmüller's (department store opposite the city council) or in some cases at the local supermarkets.

## 9. Accommodation equipment and repairs

In Germany the equipment of first accommodation is laid down by law according to a given minimum standard. If anything important is missing, contact your integration assistant or the city council. Things not belonging to the basic equipment can be purchased at a good price either at Soziales Kaufhaus (3) or at other local shops. Other missing items might be donated. In this case the missing thing must be entered into our donation list.

If the accommodation or a piece of equipment is defective, contact the city council. Smaller problems sometimes can be solved by a voluntary integration assistant. We own a well-equipped toolbox which can be borrowed against a deposit. The voluntary integration assistants know where to fetch the toolbox from.

## 10. Waste disposal

There is a strict waste sorting system in Germany, most waste being recycled. The waste has to be separated and disposed in 4 different containers:

- **Paper, cardboard** (blue plastic sack – free of charge at cash desks of every shop - or blue bin)
- **Metal, synthetic material, plastic film, foil, polystyrene** (yellow plastic sack – free of charge at cash desks, too) - or orange bin)
- **Degradable leftovers of food, eggshells etc.** (expensive sacks – must be bought at cash desks)
- **All other waste material** (grey sack – is provided to you by the social security office/Sozialamt)

**Important:** The sacks must be filled according to the regulations and deposited at the roadside in front of your residential building. The dust carts only accept waste sacks with an imprint of the current year. That means sacks with the imprint '2015' will not be collected in 2016.

Please contact a voluntary integration assistant for the collection dates concerning the part of Wennigsen where you live.

## **11. German language courses, events**

We regret having to say that German courses sponsored by the government are only for persons being accepted as asylum seekers. Therefore this can only be offered after your first interview with the immigration authorities (BAMF). However there are several language courses being organized by the local administration or by volunteers. In addition, activities for children, sports and other leisure activities are offered in Wennigsen. Contact a voluntary integration assistant to obtain more information.

## **12. School and nursery school (kindergarten)**

School attendance is compulsory for children from the age of 6 years.

At first children have to pass a medical examination by a general practitioner (make an appointment beforehand). Only after that your child can be enrolled at one of the local schools taking for granted that you carry with you the doctor's certificate, your registration certificate of the local administration (Meldebescheinigung) and your child's identity card. It would be very helpful if one of the voluntary assistants accompanied you to the school enrolment.

Children over 3 years are offered the chance to attend nursery school, but only if there is enough capacity. Enrolment can be done at '**Familienbüro**' in the local administration building.

## **13. Further information**

Don't ever sign a contract written in German, even in case it has apparently been well explained. Contact a voluntary integration assistant to check the contract.