

# Migrant Help Asylum Services

## AIRE Service Overview

May 2019

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## Migrant Help Asylum Services

### Overview of Migrant Help Model

Our new service combines the strength of our existing comprehensive, Advice, Guidance and Eligibility service with a new Issue Reporting service, a digital service delivery platform and an intelligent, two-tier single point of contact, centre. We have enhanced the Move On and Outreach support delivered through new strategic partnerships across England and the Devolved Administrations.

All service users will be provided with our single point of contact number which will be delivered by our First Response Centre (FRC). FRC will process all Issue Reporting calls and will triage all other calls requiring OISC-registered advice to our Eligibility, Advice and Guidance Line (EAGL). FRC and EAGL will both have access to interpreters, our new service delivery platform ELLIS and will be able to communicate directly as and when needed.

We have advanced our digital capabilities through AIRE with the development of our new service delivery platform ELLIS, which will be introduced in stages throughout mobilisation and transition. For AIRE, service users will be able to contact us via telephone, email and webchat. With appropriate security measures in place, service users will be able to access their record to complete and submit support applications, check the status, update their contact details and upload documents via our self-service portal as well as raise Issue Reporting incidents, e.g. maintenance issues and complaints. When on the portal, service users can contact our advisers via webchat for any support needed in the process and we can call them to assist and talk them through what they need to do if required. All applications submitted via the portal will be quality checked by our compliance team.

All inbound contact will initially go through our First Response Centre (FRC) and will be triaged to the relevant teams for processing. Our Knowledge and Compliance Team will continue to process documents coming via post, email and fax including the Home Office Correspondence routes (PO Box and ASCorrespondence) and will quality check all documents and applications to ensure they meet the Home Office requirements. For phase one of transition in May, FRC will process all Issue Reporting calls coming through and will triage all other calls from AASC/AIRE service users to our EAGL team. Service users can make complaints and provide feedback via our website, telephone, email or post, in any language. Webchat and our self-serve portal will be available with our full service in September, at the same time as the full roll out of ELLIS.

Our enhanced outreach provision enables us to provide specific outreach appointments in conjunction with our surgeries and drop-in sessions, allowing us to develop partnerships with small and large organisations across the UK. We will be able to assist those with needs that cannot be met by FRC and EAGL. It allows the service to reach those who, otherwise, may not be able to access the support they need. We consult with our service users and the accommodation providers to ensure the location of the appointment and support provided fits their needs. We have expanded our face to face provision through the use of delivery partners, a commissioning network and specialist organisations. This wider network brings specialist support, flexibility to manage demand and greater geographic reach.

Our Move On service will be provided to service users during the 28-day post decision period. Copies of Home Office decision letters will be sent to Migrant Help and our First Response Centre will contact

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the service user within one working day of the letter being received to advise them of the support offered and make an appointment with the relevant team, if requested. Positive Move On support will be provided by Reed in Partnership and Migrant Help in England, Scottish Refugee Council in Scotland, Welsh Refugee Council in Wales and Bryson Intercultural in Northern Ireland. There will be three touch points during the period. Negative Move On support will be provided by Migrant Help staff via telephone or by our outreach advisers.

Issue Reporting is the first phase of AIRE to go live and this will begin in May. Those service users who are transitioning across to AIRE/AASC from May will be provided with contact details for our First Response Centre, whose staff are trained to identify the service user's query and triage to the correct team. FRC will process all Issue Reporting calls and will triage all Eligibility, Advice and Guidance calls to our EAGL team. Between May and September, our existing system will be used to record the Eligibility, Advice and Guidance calls and from September this will move to ELLIS.

### First Response Centre and Eligibility, Advice and Guidance Line

#### First Response Centre (FRC) – key features

- Open 24/7/365
- Via telephone from 1 May 2019 (email and webchat will be available from September 2019)
- Deals with transactional requests, e.g. signposting and Issue Reporting
- Intelligent triage service – allowing complex requests to be directed swiftly to OISC-registered staff with the most appropriate skillset and knowledge

#### Eligibility, Advice and Guidance Line (EAGL) – key features

- Via telephone from 1 May 2019 (email and webchat will be available from September 2019)  
Please note that for all non-AIRE/AASC service users, the current methods for contacting our helpline remain in place.
- Extended hours Monday to Friday from 1 September (8:30am to 6pm until that date)
- Specialist OISC-registered advisers
- On call OISC-registered advisers 24/7/365
- On call Migrant Help senior managers 24/7/365 for escalation and point of referral
- Availability of booked appointments for more complex cases
- 2 Tiers
  - Tier 1 – for shorter more simple queries
  - Tier 2 – for longer more complex queries

#### Knowledge and Compliance Team

Our Knowledge and Compliance team will process all correspondence received by post, email and fax and pass cases on to the relevant staff for action. In addition, the team will quality check all supporting documents, RFI responses and support applications against Home Office requirements before submission, whether received by post, via self-service portal, email or completed internally. We will contact the service user if additional information is needed prior to submission and will submit the application via ATLAS once complete.

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### Triage

With the increase in the digital capabilities of our service users and the introduction of our self-serve portal, webchat and email service along with our First Response Centre, we expect to see a reduction in the number of calls coming through. This decrease, together with the FRC triage system will also reduce call waiting times. Calls that require support from our OISC-registered advisers in normal working hours will be transferred to EAGL (Tier 1 or Tier 2 depending on the query). Our EAGL team will also have dedicated time slots during the day for appointments to be made for call backs. These will be used for complex queries, support applications and negative move on appointments.

### Out of Hours

We recognise the importance of not only having a manned support line 24/7/365 (FRC) but also an OISC-qualified, experienced adviser capable of responding to urgent calls outside of normal working hours. Our out of hours team will have access to ELLIS and to our Emergency Accommodation inbox to ensure they have all available resources needed to assist with service user queries. We have established relationships with the appropriate Home Office team, local police stations and safeguarding teams, which help us to deal with queries in the evenings and weekends when contacting the relevant departments is not possible.

### Eligibility, Advice and Guidance

Through AIRE, our existing advice line is being enhanced to provide specialised support to service users with calls being triaged to the appropriate, OISC-trained, specialist advisers. Our Eligibility, Advice and Guidance line will have two tiers of advisers, with Tier 1 dealing with short, simple queries and Tier 2 dealing with more complex requests. We learned through experience that not all service users require our assistance to complete application forms over the phone and will offer the option to use our self-serve portal. Applicants will be able to complete IA referrals on the portal and upload required supporting evidence. These will be passed onto our IA team who will check all required information has been included prior to submitting to the Home Office for their assessment. We will ensure the applicant is kept up to date on their support application. We will also share expected timescales for the Home Office decisions with the applicants.

### Outreach

Our outreach service will work to provide further support to those in need. We will continue to hold our drop-in sessions and surgeries but will focus on identifying vulnerable service users needing additional face to face support.

Our enhanced face to face service will enable us to assist those with needs that cannot be met via other methods and reach those service users who, otherwise, may not be able to access the support they need. This may be linked with a vulnerability or a safeguarding concern. An adult at risk or with special need may be identified by a number of indicators, such as (not a full list):

- Threat of suicide/self-harm
- Domestic violence/gender-based violence

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- Victims of modern slavery
- Female genital mutilation
- Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trans and Intersex
- Mental health conditions
- Physical disability
- Victims of torture or degrading and inhumane treatment

In cases where one of the above is identified, we will consider if a face to face appointment is necessary to ensure the service user is helped effectively by the service. Our advisers are experienced in active listening and trained to sensitively ask probing questions to identify needs, as well as recognise signs of when details of a vulnerability are not openly disclosed. Every time we have contact with a service user, we will assess whether there are vulnerabilities either emerging or decreasing and adapt our delivery method accordingly.

We are expanding our face to face provision through the use of delivery partners (across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) and a commissioning network. This wider network brings specialist support, flexibility to manage demand and greater geographic reach, ensuring our face to face locations will be no more than 30 minutes travel time for service users when possible, and usually much less. We support service users to access additional asylum support payments (if eligible) if travel via public transport is required, so that they are able to attend their appointment.

We determine the most appropriate location for face to face support through consultations with the accommodation providers and the service users. We take into account issues within accommodation including conflict with other residents and safeguarding concerns, including domestic violence, which mean that holding the session in the dispersal accommodation is likely not appropriate. For residents of Initial Accommodations, appointments will be held within Migrant Help offices at the accommodation and, once dispersed, other appropriate locations will be used in order to deliver the face to face service.

All locations used for face to face support are risk assessed, health and safety compliant and appropriate for SU needs. We assess all locations for accessibility, hearing loop ability, availability of private space, Wi-Fi, cleanliness and comfort. We ensure appropriate privacy for confidential conversations and safety of both SU and staff to use a location.

## Issue Reporting

FRC will process all calls regarding the five areas of Issue Reporting. Once an activity is recorded on our system, an alert will be automatically sent to the relevant provider by email. FRC can also accept calls from individuals who are not the main applicant, including under 18 dependants. From September 2019 it will be able to process contact by phone, email, web chat and our self-service

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portal. The details of the call will be recorded under the caller's name and the record will be linked to the main applicant's file on our system.

### 1. Maintenance issues

- a. We have an agreed fault matrix with the three AASC providers which enables us to categorise all maintenance issues and allocate a time frame for resolution. The time frame will be relayed to the service user to manage their expectations; if the expected timescales change, we will contact the service user to notify them and we will contact them again once the issue has been resolved to confirm this.
- b. The AASC providers will have a secure log in to our system which will enable them to see all new incidents that have been raised for them to resolve. They will also be able to amend urgency for completion, in line with their SORs, and will make notes and close cases once the issue has been resolved.
- c. When a call comes through to FRC and an incident is raised, an email notification is sent to the provider. The option for data transfer is also being considered.
- d. If a maintenance issue is not resolved within the required time frame it will be treated as a complaint as per point 4 in this section.
- e. Maintenance issues will not be reported twice, a lot of our service users are in shared properties and so it is expected that residents in the property may highlight an issue individually. We will be able search for issues raised against properties to prevent duplication of work for the AASC providers.

### 2. Payment issues

- a. Our current processes are continuing regarding payment issues for the time being. Further discussions will take place about automating these processes during the mobilisation process.

### 3. Feedback

- a. We will record all feedback, positive and negative, on the AASC providers, the Home Office, the Payment Provider and ourselves and will send alerts to the relevant organisation to notify them.

### 4. Complaints

- a. We will record complaints received about the AASC providers, the Home Office, the Payment Providers and ourselves. Complaints will be recorded on our system and assigned to the appropriate responding organisation.
- b. The provider will receive a secure log in to the system via email, similar to the way maintenance issues are received, for them to investigate and respond to.
- c. Once the provider has responded, an alert will be sent to Migrant Help.
  - i. If it is felt the response is insufficient or inappropriate we will notify the Home Office.
  - ii. On receipt of the provider response we will contact the service user, if they are satisfied with the outcome we will close the case. If they are not satisfied with the response a notification will be sent to the Home Office.

### 5. Requests for Assistance



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- a. Requests for assistance cover a range of issues, such as service users facing homelessness, domestic violence and healthcare needs.
- b. If there is a health, child welfare risk or a service user has been a victim of crime, we will notify the emergency services if they have not already been made aware. We will also notify the AASC provider including details on urgency and the Home Office may also be made aware depending on severity of circumstances.
- c. For cases where an applicant needs to explore support options, FRC will transfer the call to our EAGL team for them to further advise the service users. Such cases include service users facing street homelessness and those facing domestic violence.

### Move On

Move On is another enhanced area of our service. We are partnering with a number of organisations to provide informative and valuable support to service users following a decision on their asylum case and notification that their support will be ending. Once we are notified of the decision on a claim, via a copy of the asylum support termination letter being sent to us by the Home Office, we will contact the service user within one working day to advise on the next steps. We will offer the option of whether they wish to utilise our Move On service and make an appointment with one of our advisers. All advisers providing Move On advice will record notes from appointments within ELLIS. This includes partner organisations who will have restricted access to the database and information required in order for them to fulfil their responsibilities. Positive Move On advice is being mainly provided by external advisers and negative Move On support is being carried out by Migrant Help.

### Positive

Positive Move On support will be predominately provided by Reed in Partnership in England, with some face to face Move On support provided by Migrant Help in geographic areas not covered by Reed in Partnership. Welsh Refugee Council will provide this service in Wales, Scottish Refugee Council in Scotland and Bryson Intercultural in Northern Ireland. When face to face appointments are required, they will be held in appropriate locations, taking into consideration any vulnerabilities and service user needs. Appointments can take place over the phone, in one of their offices or, in certain circumstances, other locations including, with the permission of the accommodation provider, in the dispersal accommodation.

For positive Move On support there will be three key touch points with the service user:

- First Contact

In the first appointment, the relevant regional partner will make contact and provide an overview of the Move On support as well as advice and guidance on the following areas:

**Grace period:** The adviser will explain the length of the grace period and that on expiration of grace period, the entitlement to accommodation and/or subsistence payments will end.

**Housing and welfare:** The adviser will explain the importance of securing housing and welfare payments prior to the end of grace period to avoid destitution and will explain how we can help.



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**National Insurance:** The adviser will explain the purpose of and how to apply for a NI Number.

**Mainstream welfare and labour market:** The adviser will go through the available benefits that the individual may be eligible for and will explain the role of the Jobcentre Plus and other local employment services involved in assisting service users to secure employment.

The adviser will conclude the call by summarising the advice given, email/post any guidance materials, and schedule a second appointment.

- Second Contact

During this call a work-focused interview will be arranged at the local Jobcentre Plus at a time and date agreed with the service user. The purpose and location of the interview will be explained, and the final details will be sent to the service user by letter along with details for the third and final appointment. The adviser will follow up with the local Jobcentre Plus to ensure that the service user attended the interview.

- Third Contact

If housing support is required, the adviser will signpost or contact a named housing officer within the relevant local authority housing team. They will provide an overview of rights and priority level based on circumstances, e.g. dependent children or mental health needs and will ensure the service user knows where the local housing office is. Furthermore, they will help populate a 'homelessness application letter' outlining the circumstances and required supporting evidence (e.g. the date their grace period and accommodation support will cease), so this can be given to the housing officer.

They will also be able to signpost to local support services to help the user to settle into their local area, including faith/community groups; colleges providing ESOL/basic skills training; employment support services; and relevant health services.

### Negative

Negative Move On support will be provided by OISC-registered Migrant Help staff from our EAGL team or, if face to face support is needed, by one of our outreach advisers. The purpose of this service is to offer support and guidance through the 21-day notice period after which the entitlement to support will end and accommodation and/or subsistence payments will stop.

The adviser will provide advice on the appeal process, completion of Section 4 applications and the Voluntary Return Service, where applicable. In addition, they can assist the service user to find legal representation in the local area and signpost to organisations from within our network of established asylum sector organisations that will be able to provide further advice and guidance on the appeal options and evidence requirements.

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### Communications

#### Booklet

Our asylum advice booklet, currently issued to service users in briefings and available on our website, is being updated in line with AIRE and will reflect the services being provided. This will be approved by the Home Office, prior to distribution, and will be available in the top 10 languages. Our booklet can be found by following the link below and covers **Claiming Asylum, Prior to Screening Interview, Prior to Substantive Interview, Post Decision, Specialist Support and Useful Contacts.**

<https://www.migranhelpuk.org/advice-and-guidance>

#### Website

The Asylum Services section of our website is being refreshed and developed to reflect the services we will be providing under AIRE. We will be updating the website with information at each stage of mobilisation. Our updated booklets, video library, webchat and access to our self-serve portal (including complaint/feedback forms, ASF1s etc.) will be available on the website.

#### IA and Dispersal Briefings

We currently provide briefings for all service users on their arrival to IA and before their dispersal. With AIRE our initial briefings will be done within one calendar day of their arrival to the accommodation. Where this is over the weekend, we will be piloting other delivery methods including Skype and telephone briefings from on-call advisers. Our briefings will include topics such as an asylum overview, details on asylum support and eligibility, changes in circumstances, issue reporting and ASPEN along with details on the area, services available including healthcare and how to access it.

We are putting together a general briefing to be given from all IAs to ensure all service users are receiving consistent information at the same level and standard on their arrival to IA and on dispersal. Additions will then be made by our regional offices to include regional specific material to help service users settle in their new accommodation. These briefings will be approved by the Home Office and cross checked with the AASC providers to ensure comprehensive and consistent information is being provided.

### Subcontractors

#### Connect Assist

Connect Assist is our key subcontractor involved in the development of our new service delivery platform, ELLIS, via Oracle Service Cloud, and the delivery of our First Response Centre. Connect Assist have provided helpline services to vulnerable groups for over 16 years and their mission is to make a positive difference to service users' lives.

#### Reed in Partnership

Reed in Partnership provide employment and training support to many of the most vulnerable members of society. Through AIRE they will provide positive move on advice to service users in

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England during the 28-day post decision period via telephone and face to face in their offices and in outreach locations.

### Scottish Refugee Council (SRC)

SRC currently offer support and advice to asylum seekers and refugees. Through AIRE they will also be involved in working with Migrant Help to provide positive move on advice for service users in Scotland and will also provide outreach support when required.

### Welsh Refugee Council (WRC)

WRC provide assistance to asylum seekers and refugees in Wales. Through AIRE they will be working with Migrant Help to provide positive move on advice for service users in Wales and will also provide outreach support when required.

### Bryson Intercultural

Bryson are an existing subcontractor with us. They provide information and advice to asylum seekers and refugees in Northern Ireland. With AIRE they will also assist in providing positive move on support within Northern Ireland and outreach services when required.