

Room Sharing in hotel sites

Guidance for people seeking asylum, and community and voluntary organisations

Mears have been tasked by the Home Office to introduce room-sharing for some asylum seekers at hotel sites in Northern Ireland. **The majority of those affected will be at male-only sites, but we understand that some females will also be asked to share. If you have been granted status and are waiting to leave Mears accommodation you should not be asked to share a room.**

People in the below categories have been designated as **unsuitable for room-sharing**. If any of these apply, ensure that evidence is provided to prove that the person should be exempt from room sharing.

Mears must receive formal confirmation from the Home Office (via Migrant Help), a qualified medical practitioner or any other safeguarding agency that the person:

- is a victim of modern slavery, and has been confirmed to have a reasonable grounds, or conclusive grounds, decision
- is, or is suspected to be, under 18
- is disabled, has serious mobility problems or physical disability
- has been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence; and Mears have been informed that they had an individual evaluation of his situation by a professional that confirms their needs
- has a history of complex health needs such as:
 - active tuberculosis or infectious / active communicable diseases
 - serious mental health issues where there is a high risk of suicide, serious self-harm or risk to others.
 - chronic disease, for example, kidney disease where the patient requires regular dialysis
 - HIV or other blood-borne infections
- has a history of disruptive and/or abusive/aggressive behaviour towards fellow service users, Mears/Security/Hotel staff or other people.

Choosing your preferred roommate

If you cannot provide evidence that you are in one of the categories unsuitable for room sharing, it is likely that you will be expected to share a room. Your room will have a place to lock your belongings safely.

Mears should give you the opportunity to nominate a person you would prefer to share a room with, this could be a friend or someone you have common interests with. Mears have stated that they will try to accommodate your request.

If you do not nominate someone to share a room with, Mears will allocate someone to share with you. Where possible, Mears will try to accommodate together people who:

- speak the same language
- are from the same country
- have the same religion
- have the same sexual orientation, i.e. gay or bisexual
- who are around the same age

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I refuse to share a room?

Asylum accommodation is allocated on a no-choice basis, therefore anyone who refuses to room share after being instructed to do so risks having their asylum support (accommodation, meals and Aspen card payments) withdrawn.

If Mears already know about my situation, do I have to provide evidence again?

If you have a history of complex mental health needs, for example, Mears should already be aware and have a record of this. Check with Mears staff if you they have a record of your circumstances and if you are exempt from room sharing. If not, you should provide evidence.

What is suitable evidence?

For cases of mental /physical health or disability, you should provide evidence from your GP or specialist medical support provider e.g. a letter outlining your condition, and any medication or support you are receiving for your condition. All evidence should come from a professional person or agency supporting you.

How do I provide evidence?

You should submit evidence as an attachment to Migrant Help and state that you believe you are not suitable for room sharing. You can do this through their [webchat](#) function, or [self service portal](#). You should also send evidence via email to coc@migranthehelpuk.org and carola.donald@mears.co.uk. If you can't do this on your own you should ask a charity or a friend to help you. You should do this as soon as possible.

Webchat

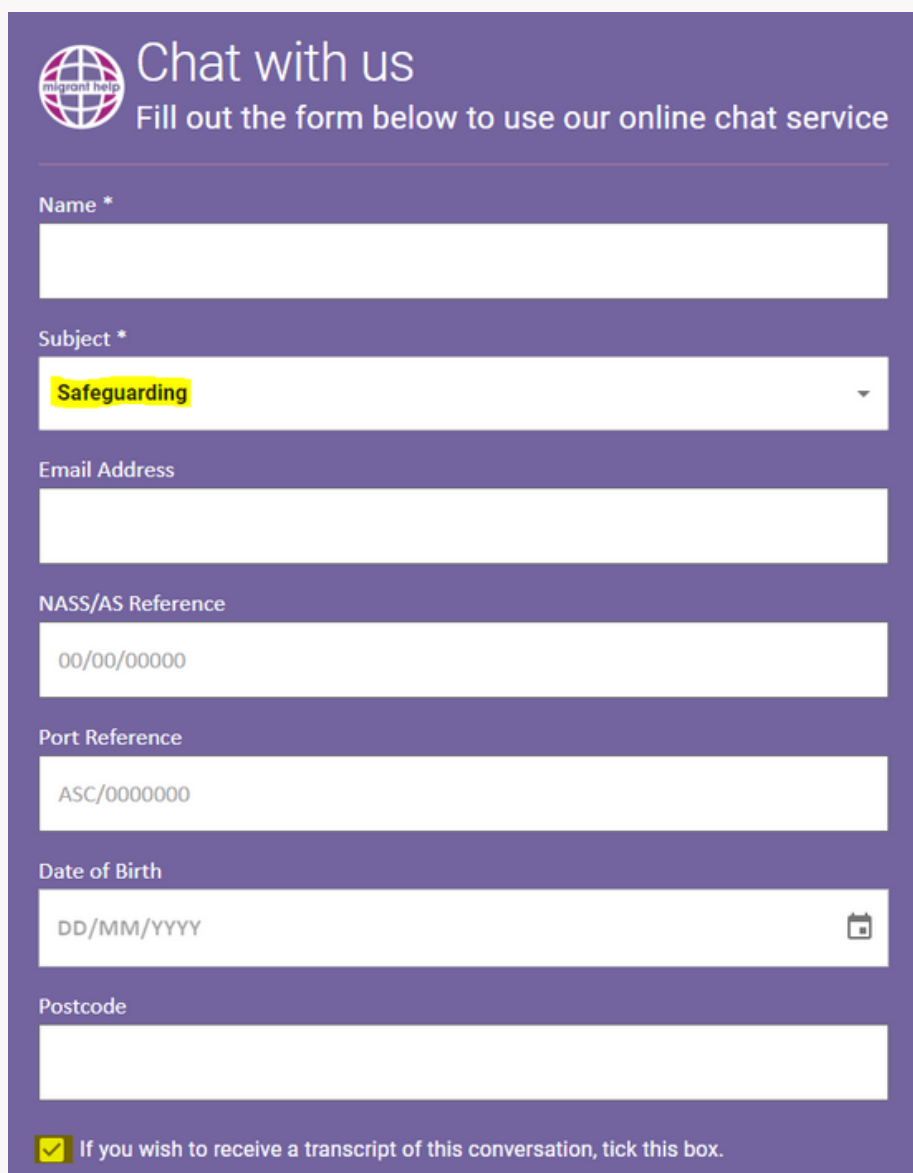
www.timeforstorm.com/CustomChat/MigrantHelp/1/



Select 'Safeguarding'

Reference numbers are on your Home Office letters or Bail 201

Tick to request a copy of the conversation and enter your email address



The screenshot shows a purple-themed webchat form titled 'Chat with us' with the 'migrant help' logo. The form contains the following fields and options:

- Name ***: A text input field.
- Subject ***: A dropdown menu with 'Safeguarding' selected.
- Email Address**: A text input field.
- NASS/AS Reference**: A text input field containing '00/00/00000'.
- Port Reference**: A text input field containing 'ASC/0000000'.
- Date of Birth**: A text input field with the placeholder 'DD/MM/YYYY' and a calendar icon.
- Postcode**: A text input field.
- Footer**: A checkbox that is checked, with the text 'If you wish to receive a transcript of this conversation, tick this box.'