

I am pleased to report that significant improvement has been made to call waiting times via AIRE at the First Response Centre and Migrant Help is now consistently achieving the service standard.

While we have worked to improve this area of the AIRE contract, we have become aware of informal arrangements that have been made between colleagues within LAs and the VCS and AASC providers in order to respond to various property maintenance related issues which have impacted upon asylum seeker accommodation.

Helen Bransfield (Migrant Help) is in the process of developing communications to advise that as a default position, all property maintenance issues should be progressed via AIRE and in that way will be logged and monitored as per their contract. Similarly, this will mean all works fall within the for governance of the contract for which AASC and AIRE providers are accountable etc.

As you might know, I manage the MEARS contract for Scotland, Northern Ireland as well as the North East and Yorkshire. In the course of business LA contacts have raised specific accommodation issues they have been attempting to resolve with MEARS. I have asked Migrant Help to contact those colleagues to gather those individual cases so they can be logged and managed accordingly to resolution. I would encourage you where there are similar cases to do likewise. Please see Helen Bransfield's e-mail address to contact to facilitate this should there be similar instances within your own SMP areas - Helen Bransfield Helen.Bransfield@migranthelpuk.org Our SDMs are of course aware of this and can advise and support accordingly.

Clearly, those defects etc identified by AASC providers via their own inspection-visits and Service User engagement will be logged and actioned accordingly. But anything outside of that should be escalated via AIRE. We have contacted AASC providers to stand down any arrangements they may have developed over the early stages of this contract and to ensure they operate in a way compliant with the contracts.

This is fundamentally a re-statement of the delivery model envisaged at the project stage but I felt needed to be made following a challenging first business quarter for AIRE.

As an additional point of interest, I have established *Joint Operational Boards* between AASC and AIRE providers. These are action focused and designed to support consistent delivery across all providers and an opportunity to iron out any creases in how they align with the fundamental aim of improving service delivery. They will sit under the formal governance of the contracts though agreed actions etc will be recorded within relevant provider CMGs and have a point of escalation to SRMB.

I hope this note is helpful and clarifies where we are at but as ever, please feel free to contact Louise Pearce, Gemma Brewerton or I to discuss should you wish.

Kind regards,

Mick

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