



AIRE NEWSLETTER



AIRE Partnership Update – November/December 2024

Performance



First Response Centre - the primary point of contact for clients to request advice and guidance, and report issues. This team, which operates 24/7, answered approximately 185,000 calls in October and November. They also responded to nearly 12,000 webchat interactions.



The Eligibility, Advice and Guidance Line (EAGL) team, our second line call centre for more complex issues and queries, answered almost 40,000 calls across the two months whilst also supporting more than 4,700 webchat interactions.



The volume of arrivals into initial accommodation (IA) continues to be very high. We supported over 9,300 clients with their induction into initial/contingency accommodation and their asylum support applications in November and December.



During this period, we have seen the highest monthly volumes since the AIRE contract began. Our Outreach team continues to support the most vulnerable clients. The advisers assisted around 1,200 clients in the last two months with over 230 of those being face to face.



We continue to see large volumes of clients wanting to access initial accommodation who are outside of asylum routing. We assisted with over 2,700 applications for emergency accommodation (Section 98) support during this period.



It is essential that clients notify the Home Office of any Change of Circumstance (CoC), such as a dependant joining or leaving a family group, to advise of a move from Home Office to private accommodation, to update information supplied as part of the initial ASF application etc. Over the last two months, we supported over 5,350 clients to complete a CoC application.

Changes to Migrant Help's client portal

As we shared in the October newsletter, we are looking at further ways to continuously improve our services and will be implementing a new customer relationship management system in early 2025. As part of this change, we will be enhancing our self-serve capabilities and introducing an improved client portal. People seeking asylum will still be able to access our webchat, use the 'Raise an issue' form, submit applications, as well as check on the progress of their applications via the new portal.

To ensure smooth transition, we would like to ask you to save and start using the links below to access the portal.

Self-serve portal: www.migranthelpuk.org/portal

Webchat: www.migranthelpuk.org/webchat

Raise an issue: www.migranthelpuk.org/raise-an-issue

By using these links, the switchover to new service will be unnoticeable to you and your clients. They are functional now and will direct you to the new service once the transition happens.

If a client has an existing self-serve portal account, they may need to set up a new one once the new system goes live in February 2025.

Please update any resources, leaflets or posters you may have with these links, the old link will cease working in February. We can also provide Migrant Help leaflets and posters on request.

We would be grateful if you could share these links with your clients and other organisations who may be accessing our services.

Migrant Help Shoebox Appeal

In December last year, over 6,500 people seeking asylum in the West Midlands received gifts from Migrant Help, making the festive season more joyful. To achieve this, we had 53 volunteers, including staff, helping to sort, wrap, and distribute gifts. We are looking to do this again this year and would love to have as many people as possible involved in this week-long event!

Just like last year, we will be packing gifts to be delivered to clients. The period of volunteering is between 11 and 18 December in Birmingham. If you would like to come along, please send an email to volunteering@migranthelpuk.org to sign up.



A Day in the Life of – Reece Paul – Glasgow Client Adviser

My commute into work takes around 30 minutes, so I usually get up around 7:30, but this morning I got up around 6am and went for a morning swim. I live right next to the University of Glasgow's swimming pool, so I try and swim twice a week. The pool was nice and quiet this morning, and the sun was out to play as well, so today was off to a good start!



After my swim, I made an omelette for breakfast, got ready, and then made my way over to the subway station. Glasgow's subway recently got a 'makeover' which supposedly made the carriages shake less. They literally marketed these new carriages as having 'less shoogle' which is, in my opinion, false advertising...they shake so much more now. I don't like the subway, maybe I should buy a bike and cycle to work.

When I got into the office after my rollercoaster into work, my colleagues Kennady and Flora were already in and setting up for the day. Flora kindly made us all coffees – instant with oat milk, the dream combo – and then we caught up on what we had got up to after work the previous day before our regular morning briefing. Here, we have a little chat amongst ourselves before going over any changes to processes or policies, any issues flagged from yesterday, meetings or training coming up in the day, and anything else that is relevant. It is also a nice way of checking in on each other every day as we might miss one another if we are on different duties for the day, or if the workday gets busy.

Today, me and Kennady were attending our drop-in Q&A session that we put on at the core initial accommodation in Glasgow every Monday and Wednesday morning, so after the briefing we headed over to the hotel. This is a nice way for us meet clients face to face and assist them with their queries and questions. Some days it is busier than others, and today was one of those. The most common type of queries we get are regarding dispersals, room sharing, issues with Aspen cards, education, and free public transport. Our new office is currently being constructed next to this accommodation which is exciting, and we are looking forward to this being completed so we can provide more face-to-face services for our clients.



After the drop-in, we made our way back to the office for lunch. As we are now in the colder months, it is officially the season for soups. I brought in some homemade lentil, sweet potato and coconut soup and made a cheese toastie – we have a toastie machine in the kitchen which has been life changing to say the least. There is a park right next to our office, and when it's nice, I like to walk around it and call my family up in Shetland; I don't get to see them often so I try and call them as much as I can. After I ate, I had a wander around the park and had a wee chat to my mum about her plans for the weekend: nothing...

In the afternoon, I was completing ASF applications for clients housed in the London area and had three appointments set up with different clients – one of which was a family. These can sometimes take a bit longer, for example, if there is a family where both parents had bank accounts in the UK and abroad, arrived in the UK on different visa applications, and if there were also safeguarding concerns for the family. Kennady, Flora and I all needed a little afternoon pick me up, so we had some of our office snacks. Tesfay had brought in some of these apricot-filled cookies earlier in the week which are super yummy and kept us going until the end of work. All my appointments went ahead today with no issues, and we were all out the office bang on 5 o'clock.

After work I walked home because I needed to go past Lidl to get some ingredients for a dinner party I was hosting for some friends. My arms were sore from my morning swim, so it honestly took me over an hour to get home because I had to keep putting my shopping bag down to rest...eventually I made it though, don't worry.

Today was a nice day in the office with Kennady and Flora, and I am back in tomorrow with Kennady and Ammar for a slightly different day. In the morning, I am on Aspen issuing duties and then I have some appointments set up for ASF completion for Glasgow based clients in the afternoon. I made sure to wrap my dinner party up not too late so I could have some decompression time before another lovely day with the team in the Glasgow AIRE office!

Customer Insight Surveys (Feedback)

We are delighted to provide a brief update on the AIRE Customer Insight Surveys. This is a feedback mechanism, via a Home Office system, allowing our clients to provide completely anonymous feedback on Migrant Help and the AIRE service. We have seen a huge increase in the response rate over the last few months with **1,100** responses received in November, compared to **945** in October, **861** in September and **630** in August. We continue to receive excellent, positive feedback from clients, with the majority reporting they are happy and satisfied with the service they have received from Migrant Help.

The top four main reasons for contacting Migrant Help are:

- Asylum support advice - 13%
- Aspen support - 13%
- ARC - 11
- To report maintenance issues - 10%



We will share more details on this in the New Year and an overview of the responses we have seen in the last 12 months, what our clients are telling us and what we are doing to address those queries.

Glossary

AASC	Asylum Accommodation Support Contracts (accommodation provider)
ARC	Application Registration Card
ASF1	Asylum Support Form 1 (for destitute asylum applicants and people whose asylum applications have been unsuccessful, to apply for support)
BEPS	Building, Empowering, Protecting, Supporting Fund
CoC	Change of Circumstances
EAGL	Eligibility, Advice and Guidance Line
ECP	Emergency Cash Payment
FAQ	Frequently Asked Question
FRC	First Response Centre
IA	Initial Accommodation
LA	Local Authority
LEAP	Lived Experience Advisory Panel
S98	Section 98 (support for people seeking asylum who are destitute)