



Home Office

Allocation of asylum accommodation policy

Version 16.0

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About this guidance

This guidance advises caseworkers on how to consider requests from people who are receiving asylum support and express particular needs or preferences as to where they are to be accommodated. This could, for example, include a request for accommodation in a particular area. It contains the suitability criteria for accommodating those receiving asylum support at non-detained accommodation sites: this includes ex-Ministry of Defence (ex-MoD) sites and vessels. It also includes guidance for room sharing in all forms of accommodation.

For the purposes of this guidance, 'ex-MoD sites' refers to ex-Ministry of Defence sites which are currently being used for the purpose of asylum accommodation, including, but not limited to, Crowborough and Wethersfield.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors, then email the Asylum Policy team

If you identify any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email the Guidance Rules and Forms team.

Publication

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was published:

- version **16.0**
- published for Home Office officials on **29 July 2026**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This update restores the previous policy position set out in version 10 in relation to individuals being assessed or treated by Freedom from Torture (FfT) or the Helen Bamber Foundation (HBF), individuals who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, and individuals with serious mental health issues where there is a high risk of suicide, serious self-harm or risk to others, pending further consideration following litigation concerning the policy development process.

As a result, these cohorts are not suitable for accommodation at ex-MoD sites, vessels or in room-sharing arrangements. The previous arrangements relating to the consideration of evidence provided by FfT and HBF and the accommodation of individuals receiving treatment from those organisations have also been restored.

The remainder of the suitability assessment framework continues to apply to cohorts not affected by this change.

References to Napier accommodation have also been removed throughout the guidance.

Related content

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Introduction

This instruction provides the following:

- guidance to caseworkers on how to consider [location](#) requests from those receiving asylum support to be accommodated in specific areas of the UK
- [suitability criteria](#) for accommodation at non-detained asylum accommodation including ex-MoD sites and vessels
- considerations for room sharing for those receiving asylum support accommodated in all forms of non-detained accommodation
- guidance to caseworkers on how to deal with grants of section 95 accommodation and subsistence support for those living in private accommodation

Policy intention

Due to the pressure on the asylum system, the government's aim is to reduce reliance on hotel accommodation, maximise use of the accommodation estate and use alternative non-detained accommodation options which are more manageable for communities. This includes room sharing in all forms of accommodation, as well as use of ex-MoD sites and vessels. These are non-detained accommodation sites and individuals are free to come and go.

Some of the accommodation sites were formerly used as military barracks, and some features at the wider sites (such as the airfield apron) still fall within their boundaries. However, they have been redeveloped, and the sites do not have an unduly militaristic appearance, despite their previous and current use and history. Rather, Wethersfield and Crowborough are within a mature, mainly open and verdant setting with some distinctive historic character. It is considered that the provision of non-detained accommodation through these sites is not unduly militaristic (such that this could alone give rise to significant health effects).

Whilst most forms of asylum accommodation are considered suitable for the majority of individuals receiving support, suitability must be considered in light of the individual's circumstances, vulnerabilities and any available evidence. The overriding principle when allocating accommodation is that it is offered on a 'no choice basis'. Accommodation is intended for those who would otherwise be destitute and have no other viable accommodation open to them, for example through friends or family.

If individuals are able to live in private accommodation, for example, with friends and / or family, or have other means to support themselves financially and with accommodation, they should leave Home Office accommodation.

Accommodation is provided in all areas of the UK where the Home Office has a supply of accommodation available and ready to use. In considering requests to be allocated accommodation in a specific location, you must consider whether there are exceptional circumstances that make it appropriate to agree to the request.

Exceptional circumstances should be considered on a case-by-case basis but may include, for example, serious risks around health and safety or security. In rare cases, the strength of the exceptional circumstances might make it appropriate to agree to the request to provide accommodation in a particular location, despite the 'no choice' principle.

Legislation

Asylum accommodation is provided under **the 1999 Act** to asylum seekers, failed asylum seekers and those whose claims are declared inadmissible who would otherwise be destitute. For the purpose of this guidance, the term "asylum support" should be taken to mean support provided under sections 98, 95 or 4 of the 1999 act unless it is clear from the context that support under only one of these provisions is being referred to.

The accommodation provided to asylum seekers, failed asylum seekers and those whose claims are declared inadmissible may be linked to the progress of their claim, appeal, or their compliance with the rules. However, the consideration and allocation of accommodation does not impact on the status of the person's asylum claim.

Any breach of the conditions of an individual's support may result in discontinuation of support, including subsistence and accommodation.

[Section 97\(3A\) of the 1999](#) act sets out the matters which can form the basis on which those receiving support under section 95 or section 4 of the 1999 act, or who need support can be provided with different types of accommodation. There is no obligation to provide a specific form of accommodation.

The intention of section 97(3A) is to allow for the use of certain types of accommodation to house asylum seekers, failed asylum seekers and those whose claims are declared inadmissible in order to increase efficiencies within the system and increase compliance.

If it is decided not to agree to a particular request, reasons should be given, and the decision must be compatible with the Home Office's obligations under Human Rights legislation and in line with our obligation to take into account the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK. In cases involving individuals with dependent children included on the asylum claim, you should consider the need under [section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009](#) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK. The best interests of any relevant child should be taken into account as a primary consideration but will not necessarily be determinative. Consideration should also be given to the Section 55 guidance, [Every child matters](#).

The [Equality Act 2010](#) has also been considered.

Accommodation provided under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (“the 1999 act”)

If those receiving support, including accommodation under section 95 of the 1999 act, have alternative, private accommodation available to them, for example with family or friends, they are able to move into private accommodation and can apply for subsistence-only support under section 95 of the 1999 act.

[Section 97 of the 1999 act](#) provides that, in exercising the power to provide accommodation for those on support under section 95 under the 1999 act, you must have regard to the desirability, in general, of providing accommodation in areas in which there is a ready supply.

Regulation 13 of the [Asylum Support Regulations 2000](#) requires the Home Office to have no regard to an asylum seeker’s “personal preference as to the nature of the accommodation to be provided”. However, whilst we are not obliged to have regard to an individual’s preferences on the location and nature of accommodation, the Home Secretary is obliged to consider the individual circumstances of each applicant, including their needs and family ties (*R (Hetoja) v Home Secretary* [2002] EWHC 2146 (Admin)).

Evidence needed to support the request for accommodation in a particular location

Requests for accommodation in a particular location should normally be made in writing and be supported, where appropriate, with documentary evidence, for example from medical practitioners or professional experts. The reasons for the request should normally be fully supported by evidence of why accommodation in a particular location is necessary.

Where the request for accommodation in a particular location is made because the individual is being considered for treatment or is receiving treatment from Freedom from Torture or the Helen Bamber Foundation, the request should normally be supported by a letter from the particular organisation. Where necessary, for the purposes of considering the request, the organisation may be asked to provide information about the date or dates when the individual is due to be assessed for treatment and, where treatment is being provided (such as the location of the centre). Neither organisation should be asked for details of the nature or frequency of the treatment the individual is receiving as this information is covered by client confidentiality.

Reviewing decisions to agree requests for accommodation in a particular location

Where a request for accommodation in a particular location is agreed, the reasons should be recorded carefully. Where it appears that the individual has only a temporary need to be accommodated in a particular location, you should normally set a review date for the purposes of considering whether the circumstances that

made it appropriate to agree to the request still apply at the time of the review. If the circumstances no longer apply, the individual may be moved to accommodation in a different area if required.

Where it is not possible to provide accommodation in a particular location

You may encounter some cases where it appears appropriate to provide accommodation in a particular location because of the individual's exceptional circumstances, but it is not possible.

Where this is the case, the reasons should be provided to the individual and best endeavours made to provide alternative accommodation which best suits the individual's circumstances. As an alternative, it may be possible to mitigate the negative impact of a decision that accommodation cannot be provided in the location requested by signposting the individual to apply for additional support for travel expenses to visit the particular area. This could, for example, be appropriate in some circumstances to enable attendance for medical appointments or counselling sessions in the particular location requested.

Application of this instruction in respect of children and those with children

Section 55 of the [Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009](#) (the "2009 act") requires the Home Office to carry out its existing functions in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK. It does not impose any new functions or override existing functions.

Officers must not apply the actions set out in this instruction either to children or to those with children without having due regard to section 55 of the 2009 act. The Home Office instruction 'Arrangements to Safeguard and Promote Children's Welfare in the Home Office' sets out the important principles to take into account in all activities relating to children.

Our statutory duty to children includes the need to demonstrate:

- fair treatment which meets the same standard a British child would receive
- the child's interests being made a primary, although not the only consideration
- no discrimination of any kind
- asylum applications are dealt with in a timely fashion
- identification of those that might be at risk from harm

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Typical request scenarios

This section deals with the typical requests that you may need to consider. Any request for accommodation in a particular location should be considered on a case-by-case basis and is expected to only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Medical treatment

You may receive requests to provide accommodation in a particular location because the individual is receiving medical treatment in that area. Care and treatment for most medical conditions is available in all parts of the UK and the transfer of responsibility for managing an individual's care and/or providing that treatment to different NHS organisations (or Health and Social care trusts in Northern Ireland) is a normal everyday occurrence within the NHS. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, requests to be provided with accommodation in a specific location solely on the grounds that medical care or treatment is already being provided in the area should therefore be refused, particularly if primary care based.

The requests may sometimes be made in order to avoid unreasonable disruption of the medical care, treatment or related assistance that the individual is receiving from the NHS. Subject to the guidance set out in the section titled [Those being assessed or treated by Freedom from Torture or the Helen Bamber Foundation](#), you may refer any evidence to the Home Office Asylum Support Medical Adviser and/or the Home Office Psychiatrist for advice on how a move or dispersal may affect the individual, including how any disruption may be minimised. They will provide expert advice on disruption of medical care, treatment or related assistance the individual is receiving, as well as the availability of care in the new accommodation and/or location. When they have provided their advice, you should use it to inform your decision, though you are not bound by it.

These requests should be considered carefully, balancing the degree of disruption that may be caused by a move to another area against the overriding principle of allocating accommodation on a 'no choice basis'.

For cases where the individual is pregnant you should consider the guidance set out in Healthcare needs and pregnancy dispersal.

For cases where the individual is receiving treatment or being assessed for treatment by Freedom from Torture or the Helen Bamber Foundation you should refer to the section titled [Those being assessed or treated by Freedom from Torture or the Helen Bamber Foundation](#).

Disability

You should have regard to the particular vulnerabilities of individuals and their children who have disabilities or serious health problems. Requests for accommodation in a particular location may sometimes be made in order to avoid unreasonable disruption of existing treatment or assistance to cope with the

disability. These requests should be considered carefully, balancing the overriding principle of allocating accommodation on a 'no choice basis' against the level of disruption caused if the individual is required to relocate. Further information should be sought from child welfare agencies and medical professionals if needed. You should use this information to inform your decision.

You should have particular regard to cases where a local authority (or Health and Social care trust in Northern Ireland) is already providing some support or assistance and support, separate to assistance with accommodation and subsistence, to cater for an individual's disability. Where possible accommodation should normally be arranged close to where the support or assistance from the local authority/HSC trust is being provided. See: Asylum seekers with care needs.

Family ties

When considering requests for accommodation near to relatives or friends, you should have regard to Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR):

'Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others'.

The individual's circumstances and the nature of their relationship with the particular relative or friend should be carefully taken into account but will not automatically mean the individual should be accommodated near to relatives or friends. Article 8 of the ECHR is qualified and should always be balanced against public interest. Family ties will not necessarily outweigh the public interest of allocating accommodation on a 'no choice basis' in areas of the UK where the Home Office has more accommodation available.

You may receive requests to provide accommodation in a particular location in order to enable the individual to maintain contact with a child from a previous relationship. These requests should be considered on a case-by-case basis. In some circumstances, where it is accepted that arrangements may need to be made to enable reasonable contact with the child, it may be more appropriate to agree to pay reasonable travel expenses to facilitate the contact.

Education

Requests for accommodation in a particular location because the individual's children are attending school in the area should normally be refused, as arrangements can be made to transfer the children to a school in another area.

However, accommodation may temporarily be arranged in the area requested if the child has started their final school or college year leading up to their GCSE, Scottish

Highers, AS or A-level exams (or their equivalents), provided they have been enrolled at that school for a significant part of the previous school year.

Individuals will not benefit from this concession if they have previously been uncooperative (for example if they have previously failed to travel to accommodation allocated to them without reasonable excuse) or they are requesting accommodation for the first time, having previously been supported through subsistence payments only, and it appears that they delayed a request for accommodation without good reason in order to take advantage of the concession.

If an individual has a child with special educational needs who has gained entry to an appropriate school, accommodation should normally be provided near to the school, unless it is clear that accommodation can be arranged near to another location where there is an appropriate school that the child can be transferred to.

Ethnic group

You may receive requests to provide accommodation in a particular location because the individual is a member of a particular ethnic group and there are significant members of the same group in the area. Requests made solely on this basis should normally be refused because the factor will not outweigh the overarching principle that accommodation should be provided on a 'no choice basis'.

Religion

You may receive requests to provide accommodation in a particular location because the individual is a member of a particular religion and there are significant members of the same religion in the area. Requests made solely on this basis should normally be refused because the factor will not outweigh the overarching principle that accommodation should be provided on a 'no choice basis'.

A request made for accommodation within reasonable travelling distance of a place of worship associated with the individual's religion (for example a church, mosque or temple) should be considered carefully and agreed wherever possible. Although the factor should be given limited weight if there are other places of worship used by the same religious group in other areas.

Legal advice

Requests for accommodation in a particular location because the individual's legal advisers are nearby should normally be refused. The individual has the option of transferring to an alternative legal adviser in the area where accommodation is allocated or travelling to meet their adviser. The costs of travel to attend essential legal appointments are paid for through legal aid.

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Those being assessed or treated by Freedom from Torture or the Helen Bamber Foundation

This section deals with the actions that may need to be taken when an applicant is being assessed or treated by either Freedom from Torture or the Helen Bamber Foundation.

Background to Freedom from Torture and the Helen Bamber Foundation

[Freedom from Torture](#) is dedicated solely to the treatment and documentation of survivors of torture. Freedom from Torture offers:

- medical, psychiatric and psychological consultation
- assessment and treatment
- short and long term rehabilitation through social care, casework and counselling
- psychotherapy
- physiotherapy
- complementary therapies
- group and family work
- medico-legal reports
- small financial grants as well as practical assistance with accommodation and welfare agencies for clients receiving treatment

Freedom from Torture's main treatment centre is in London, but it has smaller centres in Glasgow and Manchester. Because Freedom from Torture's centres outside London have very limited capacity, you must not allocate accommodation to an area outside of London or relocate an individual from one area to another without checking that the particular centre has capacity to treat the individual.

The [Helen Bamber Foundation](#) works with survivors of torture, war, genocide, human trafficking for sexual exploitation or labour (modern day slavery), gender based violence (including violence on the basis of one's sexuality) and extreme domestic violence. The Helen Bamber Foundation offers:

- specialist programmes of psychological care, psychotherapy and counselling for individuals and groups, including intensive trauma-focussed therapy
- provision of Medico-Legal Reports
- medical assessments and co-ordination of healthcare services
- physical rehabilitation therapies and activities
- safeguarding and intensive contact for survivors of human trafficking
- welfare and housing casework
- a Creative Arts and Employability Skills Programme

- clinical research

The Helen Bamber Foundation is based in London.

Assessment procedure by either organisation

Referrals to either organisation, from whatever source, are assessed on the basis of the information contained in the application. The procedures in each organisation may differ slightly but could result in a decision to either:

- reject the request without an appointment
- invite the applicant to complete an assessment
- move directly to an appointment with a clinician

Persons awaiting assessment by either organisation

If the individual is awaiting assessment by either organisation and is due to move to new Home Office accommodation, consideration should be given to deferring the decision until the outcome of the assessment process is known.

Either organisation may be contacted to give an indication of when the assessment process is likely to be completed, in order to assist caseworkers in the decision on whether deferment is appropriate.

In some cases, it will not be appropriate to defer the decision because the assessment consideration by either organisation may take some time to complete. In these cases, consideration should be given to any request to provide accommodation near to the centre if any face to face assessment procedures are necessary. Alternatively, consideration should be given to reasonable travel expenses to enable their attendance at the appointment.

If the request is not agreed, reasons should be given and where appropriate the matter discussed with the particular organisation.

Where either organisation decides that the person does not need their services after the assessment process

If, following their assessment procedures, either organisation decides that an individual does not require their specialist services they will notify the Home Office in writing as soon as possible.

Either organisation may recommend another organisation that can offer an appropriate level of support or recommend that the individual be accommodated in a particular location. Such requests should be given serious consideration while taking into account the nature of the treatment required and its availability throughout the UK.

Persons accepted for treatment by either organisation: seeking Home Office accommodation for the first time

If the individual is accepted for treatment by either organisation they should normally be provided with accommodation as close as possible to the centre where the treatment is to take place.

For individuals who are receiving treatment at Freedom from Torture's London centre or those receiving treatment at the Helen Bamber Foundation, this means that accommodation should generally be provided within travel zones in London.

For individuals receiving treatment at one of Freedom from Torture's regional centres, this means accommodation should be provided within 1 hour travelling distance of the centre.

Individuals receiving treatment by either organisation should not be required to share bedrooms with unrelated adults.

You must also note any special accommodation requirements indicated by either organisation and carefully consider any recommendations put forward.

In exceptional cases, either organisation may also consider that self-contained accommodation or other special arrangements are clinically necessary for the individual and notify you. As a general rule, and wherever possible, these needs should be provided for. You should not ask for details of why the organisation considers that self-contained accommodation or other special arrangements are necessary, and you should not refer the case to the Home Office Medical Adviser.

Any request to move an individual from accommodation that either organisation considers is unsafe or unsuitable should be handled on an urgent and case-by-case basis, with appropriate safeguarding consideration where the information indicates a risk of harm

Persons who commence treatment: already being provided with Home Office accommodation

If an individual who is already being provided with Home Office accommodation provided under the 1999 act commences treatment with either organisation their accommodation needs should be reassessed and careful consideration given to relocating them into suitable accommodation near to the centre where their treatment is to take place.

These requests should be considered on a case by case basis, taking into account all relevant factors, including the frequency of the treatment and the availability of accommodation in the location requested.

Where it is decided that the individual should remain in their existing accommodation, caseworkers should give written reasons for the decision and consideration should be given to meeting reasonable travel expenses to enable their attendance at either organisation for treatment. If the treatment centre is more than 3

miles from the individual's accommodation, reasonable travel expenses should normally be met.

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Suitability criteria

The overriding principle when allocating accommodation is that it is offered on a 'no choice basis'.

When allocating accommodation to individuals receiving asylum support, the Home Office may take into account the characteristics and status of the individual's asylum claim, for example whether or not the claim is admissible and / or the stage it has reached within the asylum process. The allocation of accommodation does not impact on the status of the individual's asylum claim.

When assessing an individual's suitability to be accommodated at ex-MoD sites or vessels, you should consider all of the information and evidence available. This includes, but is not limited to:

- asylum screening interviews
- ASF1s, where available
- information on Home Office systems
- supporting correspondence from the applicant or their representative
- any other information that may inform the decision-making process

From 2 June 2026 the Home Office will be using a power to provide accommodation to destitute (or soon to be destitute) asylum seekers. There may be some occasions where accommodation is provided before we have information about an individual's needs. Where information and evidence is available, this must be considered against the suitability criteria. Each case should be individually assessed and a decision made about suitability for accommodation based on the individual's needs. If you are unsure about whether an individual is suitable to be accommodated, you should discuss the matter with a senior caseworker or manager.

The Home Office should ensure any relevant information about an individual's needs or circumstances is sent to the Home Office Accommodation Provider.

Criteria which will make individuals unsuitable for ex-MoD sites, vessels, and/or room sharing with an unrelated adult

Those accommodated at ex-MoD sites or vessels are generally expected to room share. The criteria below distinguish between circumstances which **will** make an individual unsuitable for accommodation at ex-MoD sites, vessels and/or room sharing, and circumstances which **may** make an individual unsuitable depending on their individual needs and circumstances.

If an individual meets any of the following criteria they **are not** suitable for ex-MoD sites, vessels, and / or room sharing:

- where an individual has been referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) as a potential victim of modern slavery, and has received a positive reasonable grounds decision - if an individual subsequently receives a negative

conclusive grounds decision or a public order or bad faith disqualification, they are suitable for ex-MoD sites, vessels, and or room sharing

- cases being dealt with by the Foreign National Offenders – Returns Command
- they would be defined as vulnerable under the [Asylum Seekers \(Reception Conditions\) Regulations 2005 regulation 4\(3\)](#) - the relevant points in these regulations are that a vulnerable individual is:
 - an individual who has been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, and who has had an individual evaluation of their situation which confirms they have special needs.
- they have complex health needs within the meaning given by the Healthcare Needs and Pregnancy Dispersal Policy at paragraph 4.16 where those needs relate to serious mental health issues and there is a high risk of suicide, serious self-harm or risk to others, for example where an individual is receiving NHS specialised psychotherapy for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and/or eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR) (when making dispersal arrangements for applicants with mental health issues, also refer to chapter 7.3: Mental Health – Dispersal Guidelines)

Criteria which may make individuals unsuitable for ex-MoD sites, vessels, and/or room sharing

If an individual meets any of the following criteria and provides evidence that they have had an individual evaluation of their situation that confirms they have special needs, they **may not** be suitable for ex-MoD sites, vessels, and/or room sharing depending on whether those needs can be met at the accommodation:

- they would be defined as vulnerable under the [Asylum Seekers \(Reception Conditions\) Regulations 2005 regulation 4\(3\)](#) - the relevant points in these regulations are that a vulnerable individual is:
 - a disabled person: for the purposes of this guidance, this is defined by the [Equality Act 2010](#) which sets out that a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities
 - an elderly person (where room sharing is in question)
- they have complex health needs within the meaning given by the Healthcare Needs and Pregnancy Dispersal Policy at paragraph 4.16 - the relevant complex health needs are:
 - active tuberculosis and infectious / active communicable diseases (when making dispersal arrangements for applicants with Tuberculosis also refer to chapter 7.2: Tuberculosis – Dispersal Guidelines)
 - chronic disease, for example, kidney disease where the patient requires regular dialysis
 - HIV (when making dispersal arrangements for applicants with HIV, also refer to chapter 7.1: HIV – Dispersal Guidelines)

Each case should be individually assessed and a decision made by caseworkers, informed where appropriate by information provided by Home Office Accommodation

Providers, about suitability for accommodation based on the individual's needs as set out in evidence an individual provides. If you are unsure about whether an individual is suitable to be accommodated, you should discuss the matter with a senior caseworker or manager.

Individual assessment of evidence for those who meet the criteria for people unsuitable for room sharing

If a person provides evidence that they fall within one of the cohorts identified in the criteria which **will** make them unsuitable for ex-MoD sites, vessels and/or room sharing, the purpose of considering that evidence is to determine whether the individual meets the relevant criterion. Once it is established that the relevant criterion is met, there is no additional need to consider the suitability of the accommodation.

Evidence provided by Freedom from Torture or the Helen Bamber Foundation should be treated as expert evidence and given significant weight in determining whether an individual falls within the relevant cohort. Such evidence should not normally be referred to the Home Office Asylum Support Medical Adviser (HOMA) or the Home Office Psychiatrist for an opinion on the suitability of the accommodation. Where clarification is required, any referral should be limited to confirming whether an individual falls within the relevant cohort.

Individual evaluation of special needs for those who meet criteria which may make them unsuitable

The provisions in this section apply only to individuals who meet criteria which **may** make them unsuitable for ex-MoD sites, vessels and/or room sharing. They do not apply to individuals who meet criteria which **will** make them unsuitable. Where individuals claim to meet criteria which **may** make them unsuitable, they should provide evidence supporting their claim for unsuitability. All information provided will be considered by Home Office accommodation providers or caseworkers on a case-by-case basis. Where required, Home Office accommodation providers can refer information to Home Office case workers to consider evidence.

The type of evidence provided by individuals will be a significant consideration in you making decisions about allocation of accommodation.

Where possible, individuals should provide one or more of the following pieces of verifiable expert or professional evidence (based on considerations set out below) in order to support their claim for unsuitability:

- a healthcare record, which may include information about an individual's diagnosis, treatment, hospital admissions, and any risk assessment based on the individual's current needs
- evidence of ongoing treatment which would be interrupted by a move to new accommodation

- personalised assessments and/or psychiatric evidence setting out their specific, individual needs, completed by expert healthcare or medical professionals

This may be supported by documentation from support services or verifiable, expert or professional healthcare practitioners. Documentation provided without supporting evidence from one of the above carries less weight and should generally not be accepted alone as evidence of unsuitability.

You should review any evidence on a case-by-case basis, including with reference to the following considerations:

- expertise of the author, including where their medical qualifications, training and experience have been provided. You can seek to verify legitimacy of the author through searching on the General Medical Council ([The medical register - GMC \(gmc-uk.org\)](https://www.gmc-uk.org)) if required
- the level of investigation the author undertook in assessing the individual's circumstances, and whether the evidence is essentially a self-report or whether the evidence reflects a balanced and objective medical assessment
- the level of detail provided in the evidence, including the standards and framework that the evidence is set out within
- the variety of evidence provided, including whether there are multiple reports from practitioners with different areas of expertise

For any evidence of complex health needs, you should consider the following when allocating individuals to ex-MoD sites, vessels and / or room sharing:

- whether any conditions are currently active
- whether any conditions are currently being treated and managed adequately to enable the individual to be moved and accommodated
- availability of healthcare and treatment to meet the individual's requirements in the new accommodation, particularly where an individual is receiving specialist treatment which is only available in some parts of the country
- continuity of healthcare and the impact of disrupting healthcare and or treatment on the individual

Where evidence of vulnerabilities and or complex health needs is provided, you can, where required, refer information to the Home Office Asylum Support Medical Adviser and / or the Home Office Psychiatrist for their expert opinion. When they have provided their opinions, you should use this to inform your decision about whether the individual is suitable for these sites and / or for room sharing in light of the suitability criteria.

You should consider all evidence provided to determine whether the individual has special needs. If the individual is found to have special needs on the basis of their individual circumstances, you should then assess whether these needs can be met at ex-MoD sites, vessels and / or room sharing. This will be with reference to the services available to individuals within this accommodation, including but not limited to access to healthcare and mental health services.

Ongoing monitoring of suitability

Monitoring of suitability is an ongoing process and an individual's suitability may change over time. There may be circumstances in which new information is identified or provided on an individual's suitability to be accommodated or remain at an ex-MoD site, vessel and / or room sharing. The information may suggest that an individual's circumstances or needs may make them unsuitable for these sites and/or room sharing. In these circumstances, the case should be reviewed, and suitability reassessed as soon as practicable and in timelines proportionate to the seriousness of the issue raised. Depending on the information raised or provided, alternative accommodation may be allocated.

Individuals allocated to accommodation have full access to the advisory services provided by Migrant Help and can raise issues about their suitability to be accommodated at the site. Where an individual's needs and/or suitability changes, and/or they want to share further information about their needs, they can submit a Change of Circumstances to Migrant Help.

Individuals who have been referred into the NRM have an initial risk and needs assessment by The Salvation Army. If they raise any issues about their suitability to be accommodated at the site during this assessment, the Salvation Army can raise this with the Home Office Asylum Accommodation provider who should review and consider allocating alternative accommodation, if necessary.

Application of the suitability criteria at ex-MoD sites

The selection of individuals to be accommodated at these sites is undertaken by Home Office caseworkers who are **required** to apply the [suitability criteria](#) in considering who to place in this accommodation.

Currently ex-MoD sites are **only** to be used to accommodate single, adult males between the ages of 18 to 65. Women and children are not to be accommodated at these sites. For these purposes, 'single' means on asylum support with no dependants. Individuals can only be accommodated at ex-MoD sites when their asylum screening interview has been completed.

The maximum length of stay at the Wethersfield accommodation is 9 months, except when the Home Secretary is unable to find suitable onward accommodation despite reasonable efforts to do so.

The maximum length of stay at the Crowborough accommodation is 90 days, except when the Home Secretary is unable to find suitable onward accommodation despite reasonable efforts to do so

For more information on Wethersfield, please use the [Wethersfield: factsheet](#). For more information on Crowborough, please use the [Crowborough Training Camp, East Sussex: factsheet](#).

Application of the suitability criteria at vessels

The selection of individuals to be accommodated at these sites is undertaken by Home Office caseworkers who are **required** to apply the [suitability criteria](#) in considering who to place in this accommodation.

Currently, vessels are only to be used to accommodate single, adult males between the ages of 18 to 65. Women and children are not to be accommodated at these sites. 'Single' means on asylum support with no dependants. Individuals can only be accommodated at vessels when they have been screened.

The maximum length of stay at a vessel is expected to be 9 months, except when the Home Secretary is unable to find suitable onward dispersal accommodation despite reasonable efforts to do so.

Room sharing at all accommodation sites

This paragraph provides guidance to caseworkers and Home Office Accommodation Providers on identifying single, adults on asylum support with no child dependants who are suitable for room sharing in all accommodation sites including but not limited to ex-MoD sites and vessels.

From 2 June 2026 the Home Office will be using a power to provide accommodation to destitute (or soon to be destitute) asylum seekers. There may be some occasions where accommodation is provided before we have information about an individual's needs, this may be accommodation in a shared room.

Where there is information available to Home Office Accommodation Providers, they must consider the [suitability criteria](#) to determine whether room sharing is appropriate.

Consideration of the [suitability criteria](#) is in addition to Home Office Accommodation Providers' contractual requirements under the Asylum Accommodation and Support Services contract (AASC).

Where an individual is considered unsuitable for room sharing, they may be accommodated in a single room, either at that site or at alternative accommodation depending on availability.

Where an individual is considered unsuitable for room sharing, they may be accommodated in a single room, either at that site or at alternative accommodation depending on availability. You may consider additional information including views from the service user alongside the [suitability criteria](#) where there is an exceptional request to not be required to room share and / or remain at an ex-MoD site. These requests should be considered on a case-by-case basis and balance the overarching principle that accommodation is offered on a 'no choice basis'.

Those who have been referred into the NRM but are awaiting a Reasonable Grounds decision or have received a negative Reasonable Grounds decision, and those with medical ailments that are not considered serious can room share, and / or

be accommodated at ex-MoD sites, but where there are serious medical issues, you should refer to the Healthcare Needs and Pregnancy Dispersal Policy.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Section 95 support for those in private accommodation

This page tells you about the provision of support to those in private accommodation who are granted subsistence and accommodation under section 95 of the [1999 act](#).

Subsistence payments

Previously, individuals in private accommodation who applied for subsistence and accommodation under section 95 of the 1999 act, and were granted such support, would only receive subsistence payments when they were moved to dispersal accommodation. Those who required subsistence payments pending transfer to asylum accommodation could request this by contacting Migrant Help. However, individuals in private accommodation who apply for and are granted subsistence and accommodation under section 95 of the 1999 act shall now be given subsistence payments upon grant.

Accommodation

Individuals who are in private accommodation and who have been granted subsistence and accommodation under section 95 of the 1999 act are not moved to asylum accommodation unless they make further contact with Migrant Help to request urgent accommodation. This is a result of the pressures on the asylum accommodation estate and the prioritisation of those in initial and contingency accommodation for dispersal.

Individuals will need to notify Migrant Help of their section 95 grant of support, any individual needs they have and when their need for accommodation begins. The accommodation provided will likely be initial accommodation provided under section 95 of the 1999 act including hotels and hostel-style properties in a range of areas across the UK and will generally be allocated according to the overriding principle that it is offered on a 'no choice basis'.

Individual needs should be considered including healthcare or pregnancy needs, in line with the Healthcare needs and pregnancy dispersal guidance, the best interests of children and requests based on location, in line with the Allocation of accommodation guidance. Any asylum seekers on support with care needs should also be considered in line with the Asylum seekers with care needs guidance.

This practice is under review.

Related content

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