

**BREATHING SPACE ACCOMODATION SERVICE**

**REFERRAL CRITERIA**

**What the Service is:**

The service provides safe community based shared (maximum 2 people) temporary accommodation to people made destitute because of Home Office decisions. The service is designed to operate as part of a package of support put in place by the referrer, legal team, and other third sector organisations, as we know from experience accommodation alone does not support positive long-term outcomes. Refugee Survival Trust will provide practical support in the form of housing, weekly cash allowance, a bus pass and a regular supply of toiletries. We will also provide ongoing trauma informed emotional support.

All referrals undergo a case assessment with a legal practitioner before an offer of accommodation can be made. As places are limited, we need to be very thorough in our initial assessment to ensure that we can make a difference to someone within the eighteen month maximum stay and that we are not placing anyone at risk because we are unable to meet their needs.

**What the Service is not:**

The service is not emergency accommodation provision.

The service is not supported housing or social care provision.

The service cannot support people with complex needs.

Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate family groups.

**Who is the service for?**

The service is for people in the asylum system who are not eligible for Home Office or any other statutory support and are destitute. The main reason for this is likely to be Appeal Rights Exhausted (ARE). This service is also for people who are applying for leave to remain on other grounds such as Humanitarian grounds and are destitute.

The service is for people who can live independently and within the client agreement stipulations. Please refer to the client agreement and discuss this with the client before referring.

Due to the nature of referrals, it may be the case that a client is sharing with someone of a different ethnicity/culture/religion. We understand this can be challenging at times but because our resources are limited, we can’t ‘match’ people in the way some service users might prefer. Staff support is on hand to help clients deal with any misunderstandings that may occur.

Primarily, this service is for people who are destitute and need a safe place to stay while focusing on resolving their asylum case. It is expected that clients will be proactive in working with their lawyer and other legal advice services to prepare and submit their legal cases. We understand that many cases are complex, and that progress can be slow, but we are unable to provide accommodation for an indefinite period.

**Time Limits:**

We are only able to accommodate clients for a maximum of 18 months. This should be clearly explained to clients. We will, alongside the referrer support clients to move on from the service and explore other options.

**The Referral Process:**

**Stage one: Referral partner is familiar with the service criteria and discusses this with the client to ensure suitability. The referrer ensures they have the following information before making a referral:**

1. Has confirmed the identification of the client using photographic ID documents
2. Has obtained a signed confidentiality and data sharing agreement from the client
3. Has obtained copies of the clients Home Office asylum refusal decision letters including the reason/s for refusal along with any other useful case related paperwork

**Stage Two: Completing the referral form**

1. The referral form must be completed in full by the referrer with the client present. Any referrals which are incomplete will be returned to the referrer. It is important that we have full and accurate information about potential clients
2. Complete the form either electronically or in black ink capitals
3. Supply as much additional information as possible
4. Attach copies of the required documents, as described in stage one,1 and 2 above
5. Submit the referral form with attached documents to [info@rst.org.uk](mailto:info@rst.org.uk)

**Stage Three:**

1. When the referral is received. RST will process the information and decide if the referral is appropriate to go forward to Strathclyde Law Clinic for a case assessment
2. This process will be quicker if the immigration lawyer at the clinic has access to relevant case papers. If these need to be ordered, it will delay the assessment process
3. The law clinic will contact the applicant for an appointment to discuss the decisions made on their case and potential grounds for a fresh asylum claim or alternative legal route
4. Once the assessment has taken place, the lawyer will make a recommendation to Refugee Survival Trust
5. If the referral is accepted, the applicant will be placed on the waiting list and allocated the next available accommodation space

**Referrers Obligations:**

**As we have limited places, we want to ensure all referrals are appropriate and ask that referral partners ensure and commit to: -**

1. Providing as much information as they can when making a referral to the service
2. Ensuring that the client is aware of the criteria of the service, particularly that accommodation is offered for a maximum of eighteen months
3. Continuing to support the client as part of a package of wrap around services for the best possible outcome for the client
4. Engaging with Refugee Survival Trust throughout the service period
5. Supporting the client, should after eighteen months, they be required to leave the accommodation without a positive destination and help the client to explore their options

Should you be in any doubt about whether to complete and submit a referral or wish to ask any questions about the service, please do not hesitate to contact us at [info@rst.org.uk](mailto:info@rst.org.uk)

[www.rst.org.uk](http://www.rst.org.uk)

[Refugee Survival Trust | Localgiving](https://localgiving.org/charity/refugeesurvivaltrust/)

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