

31 March 2020

Over the past weeks, we have been putting measures in place following the advice given by the Government and the NHS. Our advisers provide a crucial service, helping asylum seekers throughout the UK to access the support and advice they need in these difficult times.

We have appropriate measures in place that enable us to continue providing a resilient service that supports our clients while protecting their safety and wellbeing and, at the same time, ensures that our employees are not putting themselves at risk. All our staff are working very hard to minimise the disruption to our provision.

Our telephone helpline (0808 8010 503) continues to be open 24/7 and is free to call for all asylum seekers in the UK. It can be used to apply for asylum support, general asylum related advice, or to report issues with asylum accommodation or support payments. We are delighted that our First Response Centre has maintained the call waiting time under a minute. With most of the operators now working from home, we hope that the measures undertaken will mean we can maintain a full complement of staff.

Our offices based in the initial accommodation have adopted new ways of operating. Most advisers are based at home, however we continue to maintain presence in the offices. Majority of appointments will be undertaken by phone and we will only offer face to face appointments where absolutely necessary. We have prepared translated information to advise those within the initial accommodations on how they can contact the respective offices and receive the support they need.

These are challenging times with many unknowns for all of us and we are working very hard to ensure that the vulnerable people we support don't fall through the cracks. We are working closely with the authorities, our subcontractors, accommodation providers, other charities and our suppliers to protect our clients.

We will continuously review and adjust of our service delivery as the situation continues to unfold.

Kind regards

Helen Bransfield
Director of Asylum Services