

**MEARS**



# **REGENCY HOUSE**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

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# What role do Mears have in Asylum and Accommodation and Support in North East, Yorkshire and Humber?

In January 2019, Mears Group (“Mears”) were awarded a 10 year Asylum and Accommodation and Support Contract (AASC) by the Home Office. The contract requires Mears provide a range of services to asylum seekers (“Service Users”) across three regions of the United Kingdom: - **North East Yorkshire and Humber (NEYH)**, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

# What type of accommodation is Mears required to deliver?

Under the terms of the contract, Mears is required to provide two distinct forms of accommodation to Service Users in the NEYH:

- Initial Accommodation (“IA”): - Mears houses Service Users in hostel-type accommodation (“an IA”) for a 4-6 week period during which their claim for Asylum support is assessed by the Home Office;
- Dispersal Accommodation (“DA”): - Once Service Users receive Section 95 status, Mears is required to disperse such Service Users to private houses or houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) across the participating local authorities in the NEYH region.

# Why has Regency House, Sheffield been selected as the overflow IA?

Regency House, Sheffield has been selected as the preferred site to provide the overflow IA facility. Historically the site has been used for student accommodation and is now surplus to requirements by owners Henley Investments, with whom Mears has agreed Heads of Terms. The site offers purpose-built accommodation for a managed and transient population and benefits from good connections to the city centre.

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### Why is an overflow IA required?

IA represents the first stage in the Service User journey. As such, the numbers requiring IA at any time are directly related to the number of Service Users entering the system and can fluctuate significantly. Mears is contractually obliged to make available a minimum nightly capacity of 330 IA bedspaces but must also provide “Overflow IA” bedspaces on occasions when demand exceeds 330. Mears has a sub-contract in place with Urban Housing Limited for the provision of 330 dedicated IA bedspaces at Urban House, Wakefield. The facility provides Service Users with a unified and coherent welcome centre along with health screening and welfare facilities.

IA demand has consistently exceeded capacity. This has resulted in the need to accommodate Service Users in hotel settings across the NEYH region. In light of this current situation, it has become evident that there is a need for an overflow IA unit within the NEYH region. Such a unit would largely eliminate the need to use hotel settings, and thereby enhance the safety, security and wellbeing of Service Users during periods of high IA demand.

### How long will service users stay at Regency House, Sheffield?

IA is hostel-type accommodation which Service Users typically occupy for a 4-6 week period during which their claim for Section 95 asylum support is assessed by the Home Office.

## How will Regency House, Sheffield be operated?

Regency House Sheffield will only house people with no known health risks or concerns and have no additional vulnerabilities or complex needs.

The accommodation will accommodate individuals and families. It would be operated as a Hostel and provide self contained bedrooms, with cooking and dining space. There will be communal space including dedicated sittings rooms for Female's only, Family only and mixed gender. Communal rooms, courtyard space, a teaching room, meeting rooms, offices and laundry facilities will be provided. The site will be staffed 24/7 and include a resident welfare manager. There will also be a Migrant Help office within the building, providing drop-in sessions for Service Users 2-3 times per week.

## What additional support will be provided to service users on arrival in Sheffield?

Service Users will be provided with welcome packs upon arrival, which will include information on accessing local amenities and green spaces. Supermarket Aldi is situated to the south-west and is approximately a 5 minute walk away. The City Centre to the north includes Sainsbury's and Tesco Express which are around a 10 minute walk away.

## What access will service users have to open space?

For open space, the majority of this is to the south or east of the site. Within 20-minute walking distance there are several areas of open space and parks. This includes smaller pocket parks within 5 minute walking distance, such as Duchess Road Park to the south, as well as larger recreational parks including Mount Pleasant Park, Norfolk Park and South Street Park.

## What travel support will be given to service users?

Once Service Users have been assessed and inducted at Urban House Wakefield, Mears will provide transport to Regency House. Once Service Users have been granted Section 95 status, Mears will provide transport to allocated Dispersed Accommodation. Transport would also be provided to attend interviews with the Home Office as well as any other Home Office approved journeys. Service users will not have their own cars. All Service Users will be transported in small groups, using unmarked vehicles as required by Mears' contract with the Home Office. In order to minimise disruption to the local community Mears would anticipate all drop offs to be once a day, Mon – Fri, within the hours of 09:00 – 17:00.

As highlighted above, local amenities including local shops and public open space are within a 5-10 minute walk. Service users would access these independently.

For more information on how Regency House will be operated please review the Management and Operations Statement on the website.

# How will Mears ensure that the accommodation is well maintained and kept clean?

Regency House will be fully inspected every month by Mears' on-site maintenance operatives, who will be responsible for the regular upkeep and maintenance of the site, ensuring all routine maintenance is carried out. As per contract requirements, the Home Office will also complete a regular audit to ensure that all standards are maintained.

Mears will ensure that:

- ▶ All areas are clean, safe and secure.
- ▶ All external areas will be kept clean, free of litter and rubbish will be stored safely and securely with regular collections.
- ▶ Graffiti or rubbish is removed as quickly as possible.
- ▶ Any damage or defects notified to the Manager will be repaired as soon as possible and in line with contractual timeframes by the maintenance team.
- ▶ All fixtures and fittings will be inspected and comply with relevant statutory obligations.
- ▶ All communal spaces are kept clean and in a good state of repair.

# Who do I contact if I have concerns about Regency House?

Alun Hayes at [contact@regencyhousesheffield.co.uk](mailto:contact@regencyhousesheffield.co.uk)