



Action For Refugees In Lewisham  
**ADVICE & ADVOCACY SERVICE**

# **MAXIMISATION**

## **KNOW YOUR RIGHTS**

### **BOOKLET**



**ARE YOU A SINGLE PERSON?**

**HAVE YOU BEEN ASKED TO, OR ARE YOU, SHARING A ROOM?**

**DO YOU NEED ADVICE ON YOUR RIGHTS?**

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR WORK**

**[HTTPS://WWW.AFRIL.ORG.UK/ADVICE-ADVOCACY/](https://www.afril.org.uk/advice-advocacy/)**

## WHAT IS MAXIMISATION?

Maximisation is the policy of single adult asylum seekers sharing a room in Initial Asylum Accommodation (most commonly Hotels). It appears that the Home Office and Asylum Accommodation Providers now operate on the presumption that all single adult asylum seekers CAN share a room, unless there is a valid reason to suggest otherwise.

Asylum Support Accommodation is provided on a 'No Choice Basis', therefore, unless you are exempt from sharing a room under the Home Office's Suitability Criteria, this is likely the only offer of accommodation you are entitled to.



## WHO IS EXEMPT FROM ROOM SHARING UNDER MAXIMISATION?

Under the Home Office Suitability Criteria, published on 12th July 2023, the following people ARE exempt from room sharing :

- Are **younger than 18 or older than 65**
- Are **a victim of Modern Slavery**
- Are 'vulnerable' under the Asylum Seekers (Reception Conditions) Regulations 2005-
- **disabled;**
- **elderly;**
- **experiences of rape, torture, psychological, physical or sexual violence AND, in each of these three cases, has had an individual evaluation of their situation confirming they have special needs**
- **Mobility problems or a physical disability**
- **Complex health needs, including, active TB or infectious disease, serious mental health issues** (high risk or suicide or harm to self or others), **chronic diseases or HIV**
- Has a history of documented disruptive behaviour
- Has a case with the Home Office Foreign National Offenders Team
- Has been granted refugee status
- Is awaiting removal or has removal directions
- Have a child dependent

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Some examples (but not a limited list) of ways that you may be exempt under the suitability criteria are:

- You are a survivor of torture and as a result you have mental health issues that impact your ability to sleep.
- You are a survivor of trafficking and currently have a case under the National Referral Mechanism (*this may apply if you have a support worker through Hestia or the Salvation Army*).
- You have a mental health condition that you are seeking professional help to address.
- You are physically disabled and have mobility issues, or you have a chronic health condition which weakens your immune system.

This is not an exhaustive list, everyone's case is different, and people may not be suitable for room sharing for a huge number of reasons.

## HOW CAN YOU CHALLENGE A SITUATION OF ROOM SHARING, OR PROVE THAT YOU ARE EXEMPT?

If you are asked to share a room, or are currently sharing a room, and you would like to challenge this, you may only have grounds if you can evidence a way in which you meet the suitability criteria above. This evidence should be provided to Migrant Help and your accommodation provider (Clearsprings, Serco or Mears), **an example of this request, and the correct email addresses to send this to, can be found in the next pages.**

You should also outline your concerns to the accommodation provider housing officer or hotel staff on the ground, and clearly explain your reasons at the first possible opportunity.

It is very important to provide high quality evidence of your case, in order to have the strongest chance of challenging room sharing. Some examples of evidence can be a letter from your NRM support worker, a letter from your consultant or psychiatrist, your medical records from your GP.

Obtaining evidence can be challenging, if you require medical evidence attesting to your condition you should make a GP appointment to request this, or contact your consultant or psychiatrist.

If after contacting Migrant Help and the Accommodation Provider, you don't receive a response or are told that you are still considering suitable for room sharing, it may be possible to send a legal letter to the Home Office challenging this. Speak to the charity which has been supporting you about whether they can help you with this.

## EXAMPLE EMAIL

New Message



Recipients

Subject

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: **[INSERT YOUR NAME, DATE OF BIRTH, HOME OFFICE or PORT REFERENCE NUMBER, COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, ROOM NUMBER and ADDRESS]**

I am writing to you in regard to my current Asylum Support Accommodation room allocation to request that I am **[transferred to / remain in]** a single room. I **[am currently/ have been told that I must]** share a room with another person/s and I am deeply concerned about this.

Under the Home Office Suitability Criteria published on 12th July 2023, I believe that I should not be asked to share a room because **[INSERT REASON WHY YOU SHOULD NOT SHARE A ROOM UNDER THE LIST ABOVE]**.

This means that **[INSERT IMPACT OF SHARING A ROOM ON YOU]**.

I have provided evidence of the reasons why I do not fit the suitability criteria to share a room, in the form of **[INSERT A DESCRIPTION OF EVIDENCE, e.g a GP Letter, a letter from my psychiatrist]**.

I would be grateful for an urgent response within 14 days, by no later than **[INSERT DAY 14 DAYS AWAY]**. If I do not receive a response, I will seek advice on escalating this matter to pre-action correspondence.

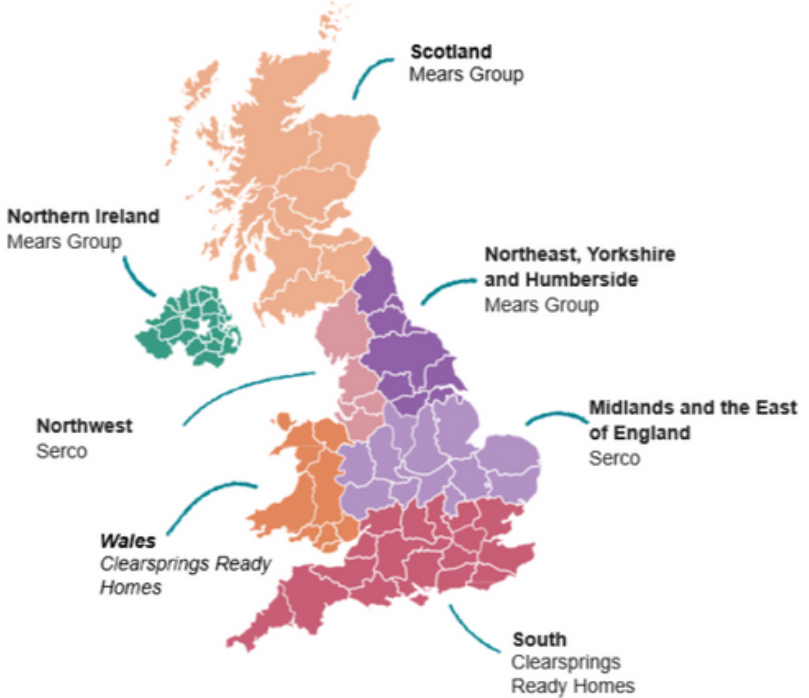
Please provide a response to this request directly.

Regards

**[INSERT YOUR NAME]**



## UK REFUGES ACCOMMODATION PROVIDER MAP



© <https://www.gov.uk/>

Email have to be send to :



[coc@migranthelpuk.org](mailto:coc@migranthelpuk.org)

**+** to one of these accommodation providers, according to your area

**MEARS**

[carola.donald@mearshousing.co.uk](mailto:carola.donald@mearshousing.co.uk)

**serco**

[aasc.safeguarding@serco.com](mailto:aasc.safeguarding@serco.com)

**Clearsprings**  
Group

[lse.safeguarding@ready-homes.com](http://lse.safeguarding@ready-homes.com)