

9 June 2022

Smartphone initiative for Rotherham's asylum seekers

Mears Foundation is partnering with Rotherham-based engineering company, AESSEAL to help asylum seekers temporarily housed in the town to communicate with their families and support groups.

Together, the two organisations are funding the purchase of more than 800 basic smartphones in an initiative that recognises the social and emotional needs for connectivity of a group that has experienced extreme hardship during their journey to the UK.

At any one time around 600 people, including individuals and family groups, are in temporary accommodation in Rotherham while their asylum claims are processed. The asylum seekers come from various part of the world, including from conflict regions such as Afghanistan and Syria.

The Mears Foundation is the independent, charitable, grant-making arm of Mears Group. Mears Group provides accommodation and support for asylum seekers on behalf of the UK Home Office in Rotherham and across Yorkshire.

Heather Tyrer, General Manager of the Mears Foundation said: "We are proud to be partnering with AESSEAL to provide important support for asylum seekers to communicate and get online. When people arrive in the UK, often fleeing persecution, providing a link for them to be able to speak to relatives, find out about their new local area and to make new connections, is literally a lifeline."

AESSEAL Managing Director, Chris Rea said: "The company heard about the project and wanted to help. These are displaced people and families with the same needs for emotional support and connectivity that we all



have. It's a joined-up world and smartphones give them access to information and important family and social support", he added.

We also wanted to ensure that, whatever the outcome of their case to remain in the UK, that they retained positive memories of Rotherham and its people".

Notes to Editors

Mears Foundation and AESSEAL, the Rotherham headquartered engineering company, are jointly financing the initiative to buy a stock of entry level but fully functional smartphones that are capable of internet connection and support video calling. This is in addition to the support provided by the UK government to those who arrive in the UK seeking asylum on a variety of grounds.

About Mears

Mears is one of the UK's leading housing solutions providers to both the public and private sector.

With more than 5,500 employees, we work with clients to help develop, fund and implement innovative solutions. We are a highly responsible partner, who is committed to; delivering the highest levels of customer service, keeping our promises, creating a great place to work and tackling issues that matter to people and communities.

About AESSEAL

AESSEAL®, founded in 1979, operates from 231 locations in 104 countries, and holds, in addition to its engineered product portfolio, the world's most comprehensive standard inventory portfolio of mechanical seals, bearing protectors, seal support systems, and packing. It is part of the AES



Engineering Group Ltd and is based in Rotherham, UK, which is also the Group's global headquarters.