



Home Office

Andrew Larter

2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

Phone:

Email:

Collette Stevenson MSP
Convener, Social Justice and Social Security Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

DECS Reference: MIN/1162561/24

21 August 2024

Dear Ms Stevenson,

Thank you for your correspondence of 27 June 2024 to the former Minister of State for Legal Migration and the Border about housing, homelessness and temporary accommodation issues and their effect on asylum seekers and refugees. Your letter has been passed to me as the Chief Operating Officer of Asylum Support, Resettlement and Accommodation to reply, and I apologise for the time it has taken me to do so.

Statistics on those awaiting an initial asylum decision – including those claims made before and after the 7 March 2023 - are published online in the Statistics relating to Illegal Migration - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk); but they do not disaggregate by location. Annex A outlines information published up to 14 April 2024.

The Illegal Migration Act provisions apply to both those who seek protection and those who do not and, as such, we are not in a position to provide statistics on how many asylum seekers may be removed from the UK. Location data on asylum seekers who receive Asylum Support is however published. The number of asylum seekers in supported accommodation in Scotland, at the end of March 2024 was 5,847. Further information, including a breakdown by local authority, can be found in table Asy_D11 of the [quarterly Immigration System Statistics](#). Please note these figures show the number of people on support on a specific date in time. The published statistics do not disaggregate by date of arrival in the UK.

How can the UK Government ensure its asylum dispersal process does not contribute to increased pressures on the homelessness system in Scotland?

Dispersal Plans were created in partnership with local authorities and our accommodation providers in 2022. These plans have been further refined since April this year, based on a more comprehensive methodology that provides a more robust evidence base for how much Dispersal Accommodation is appropriate for each local authority across the UK. This methodology considers a range of factors including the current housing market and viability, existing population, and importantly, social factors, including pressures on local services such as pressures on GPs and homelessness. The plans will be reviewed and

refreshed quarterly to ensure they are flexible to any changing external factors. These new plans continue to deliver as fair and as equitable approach as possible.

We continue to build upon a model of partnership and collective delivery between accommodation providers, the Home Office and local authorities. There are monthly regional and national governance meetings, which offer an avenue for collaboration and opportunities for all parties to engage, drive progress and raise concerns on procurement of dispersed accommodation. These are coordinated by the SMPs, and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). We recognise that the HO has further to go to improve our partnership model of delivery and remain keen to hear feedback about how we can improve.

What is the UK Government's understanding of the impact of its asylum dispersal process is having on the housing pressures that some councils in Scotland are facing?

We continue to identify and make efficiencies in supporting newly recognised refugees integrate into society before their support is discontinued. We work closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and regularly engage with local authorities to ensure they are supported as well. Working in tandem with MHCLG, we ensure the right asylum decision data is being shared with local authorities at the earliest possible stage, to enable effective planning and to lessen the impact on existing homelessness and rough sleeping pressures. We have enhanced processes with accommodation providers to ensure they work directly with local authorities to notify them when an individual is due to have their asylum support ended.

What work on future potential housing options does the UK Government – or their partners Mears - carry out with individuals and families awaiting asylum decisions; and how does this assist with homelessness prevention?

Home Office Liaison Officers (HOLOs) have been implemented to replicate part of the Afghan resettlement 'move on' process in a number of test areas (Glasgow, Brent and Hillingdon, Liverpool, Manchester, the North East, and Northern Ireland), supporting asylum seekers with 'move on' and supplementing the support Migrant Help provide. This assistance has greatly helped those with positive decisions to move on from the accommodation. This includes providing advice on accessing the labour market, on applying for Universal Credit and signposting to local authorities for assistance with housing. We remain committed to collaborating with SMPs to facilitate regional sessions with councils to share data.

Does the UK Government make any financial contribution to local authorities or others to support the housing transitions of those moving from the asylum system following a positive decision?

In 2023/2024 £750 of grant funding was provided for each asylum seeker accommodated on 1 April 2023, and a further £3,500 for each net additional asylum seeker accommodated in dispersed and initial accommodation over the course of the year. This resulted in Scotland receiving £4,351,500 in 2023/2024. The Home Office does not currently supply any funding through Full Dispersal after an individual is granted Leave to Remain.

I hope this reply has provided some reassurance that we remain committed to engaging with local authorities and key stakeholders as we deliver our statutory obligations towards those people seeking asylum. Additionally, the Government will be reviewing current Home Office arrangements to ensure efficiency and deliver value for money.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Larter
Chief Operating Officer
Asylum Support, Resettlement and Accommodation

Annex A: Number of Asylum Seekers awaiting an initial decision as of 14 April 2024
Source [Statistics relating to Illegal Migration - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Total Asylum Backlog	Legacy Backlog	Flow Backlog	Of which: Nationality and Borders Act (NABA)	Of which: Illegal Migration Bill (IMB)	Of which: Illegal Migration Act (IMA)
83,154	2,377	80,777	7,358	21,313	51,926

- Legacy: claims made before 28 June 2022.
- Flow: claims made on or after 28 June 2022, which are broken down into:
 - NABA: claims made on or after 28 June 2023 and before 7 March 2023.
 - IMB: claims made on or after 7 March 2023 and before 21 July 2023.
 - IMA: claims made after 20 July 2023.

Data up to June 2024 will be published on 22 August 2024.