



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

**Social Justice and Social Security Committee**

Minister of State for Legal  
Migration and the Border, and  
Minister for Housing  
UK Government

Social Justice and Social Security Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

Via email only

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27 June 2024

Dear Ministers,

**Housing and homelessness – refugees and asylum seekers**

Since the beginning of the year, the Scottish Parliament's Social Justice and Social Security Committee has held two evidence sessions that focused on housing, homelessness and temporary accommodation, as well as on how these issues affect asylum seekers and refugees.

Given the very serious nature of the evidence heard, the Committee is seeking a response from the UK Government on various matters. These are listed below:

*Asylum seekers*

- How many asylum seekers are there in Scotland?

- How many asylum seekers who applied for refugee status before 7 March 2023<sup>1</sup> in Scotland are awaiting a ruling on their claim?
- How many asylum seekers who arrived in the UK after 7 March 2023 have been dispersed to Scotland?
- Where are those who arrived after 7 March 2023 living, and what type of accommodation are they in?
- How many people seeking asylum have arrived in the UK each month, since 7 March 2023, and of these: (a) how many have been granted some form of leave to remain? (b) how many does the UK Government plan to remove from the UK?


### *Housing pressures in Scotland*

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

The Committee also wishes to draw your attention to some of the evidence it has received, which is pertinent to the above questions. This is attached in the annex to this letter.

The Committee would appreciate a reply by **20 July 2024**, so that it can reflect on the response as part of its work programme considerations.

Yours sincerely,



**Collette Stevenson MSP**  
**Convener**  
**Social Justice and Social Security Committee**

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<sup>1</sup> [7 March 2023](#) is the date on which the new duties, under the Illegal Migration Bill 2023, to arrange removal and declare asylum claims automatically void apply.

# Annexe

## Oral evidence

- **Glasgow City Council:** Latterly—probably since June—we have seen a dramatic and substantial increase in positive leave to remain cases from Mears and from the Home Office backlog. When we take those into account, we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of people presenting in Glasgow as homeless. They are probably the main profiles. ([The Social Justice and Social Security Committee. Official Report, 1 February 2024, Col 2](#))
- **Scottish Refugee Council:** ...in November last year, our refugee integration service in Glasgow saw 27 individuals who had suffered a statutory failure to accommodate by the local authority. Some of that was to do with the fact that, as we talked about, the Home Office was accelerating asylum decisions for the first time in five years and was doing so with a shortened move-on period, which was not even 28 days; in some cases, it was seven or 14 days max. At best, people were moving into inappropriate temporary accommodation for the longer term—so it was not really temporary—or, at worst, there was a statutory failure to accommodate. That issue has not been resolved. Asylum will continue to be a part of the homelessness issue throughout 2024. A lot of people are getting decisions, and we think that a good proportion of them will remain positive decisions, so those people will have homelessness rights. However, we think that, throughout 2024, a growing proportion of homeless people will be people who have been refused asylum, as was touched on earlier. Those people will be in an incredibly difficult situation. Organisations such as mine and the British Red Cross are often the only places that those individuals can go. The pressures of homelessness are huge. ([The Social Justice and Social Security Committee. Official Report, 29 February 2024, Col 16](#))
- **British Red Cross:** The process of expanding dispersal from Glasgow across different local authorities comes with a whole range of questions, such as whether there is infrastructure in those areas and what people's experiences have been in the asylum system prior to their getting refugee status and starting life in those places. ([The Social Justice and Social Security Committee. Official Report, 29 February 2024, Col 3](#))

## Written evidence

### [Correspondence received from The City of Edinburgh Council on 30 May 2024](#)

- Since August 2023 Edinburgh has seen a rise in the number of homeless presentations from households who have recently had a positive asylum decision and have been asked to leave home office accommodation.
- In 2023/24 there were 328 homeless presentations from these households.

- 89% of presentations resulted in the household accessing temporary accommodation for at least one night. This is likely due to the lack of alternative options for people, as they may not have family or other support networks.
- At the end of March 2024 there were 165 households in temporary accommodation. This equates to 3% of the total number of households in temporary accommodation.
- Further analysis of the 31 presentations during March 2024 has found that: 81% of presentations were from households who have recently had a positive asylum decision, 19% were from households from refugee resettlement programmes.