

# **REBUTTAL PROOF OF EVIDENCE**

## **Volume 2: Appendices**

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Appeal PINS ref. APP/Y3425/W/23/3315258

CHANGE OF USE FROM STUDENT  
ACCOMMODATION TO ASYLUM SEEKER  
ACCOMMODATION

Former University Halls of Residence,  
Stafford Education and Enterprise Park,  
Weston Road, Stafford, Staffordshire, ST18 0AB

Town & Country Planning Act 1990  
(as amended)

Serco Limited

May 2023

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Asylum Dispersal Factsheet



## A FAIRER ASYLUM ACCOMMODATION SYSTEM

### Overview

On Wednesday 13 April, the Home Office announced that all local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales will be expected to be asylum dispersal areas and they will receive new government funding.

An informal consultation, planned to start in May, will enable local authorities and the UK government to come together and propose how asylum dispersal will work in detail within 12 regions and nations, with each area set to agree a regional plan that works for them.

We are committed to working with local authorities to move to a fairer distribution of asylum seekers.

All local authority areas in England, Scotland and Wales will be expected to participate in the new system from today, to allow us to move from hotels to less expensive and more suitable dispersed accommodation.

We will start to expand the procurement process across England, Scotland and Wales, working closely with local authority areas to make them aware of proposed properties and allow any specific concerns to be raised for consideration.

### Why is the asylum dispersal model is not working?

The asylum system is under enormous and unsustainable pressure due to the challenges of the pandemic and significant increase in small boats crossings.

[Home Office statistics released in February](#) showed that 28,526 migrants crossed the Channel in 2021- up from 299 in 2018. Almost all claim asylum.

The United Kingdom has a legal obligation to provide asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute with accommodation and other support whilst their claim for asylum is being considered. This obligation arises from the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act.

Before the pandemic and the rise in small boat crossings, destitute asylum seekers would be provided with accommodation sourced from the rental housing sector.

The sharp increase in crossings and the pandemic led to approximately 37,000 destitute migrants who are currently being accommodated in hotels – costing the taxpayer, when including those on resettlement schemes in hotels, £4.7 million every day.

The pandemic stopped the government from removing people from the UK with no right to be in the UK.



As we work to reform the broken and outdated system, we must ensure we have sufficient capacity to meet our statutory duty to provide accommodation to destitute asylum seekers.

Yet fewer than half of local authorities (47%) participate in the asylum dispersal system, limiting the amount of suitable accommodation available.

This is unsustainable and unacceptable. The system is broken, not fit for purpose and unfair on the LAs who do help. It must change.

The New Plan for Immigration will reform the asylum system, enabling the government to support those in genuine need while preventing abuse of the system and deterring illegal entry to the UK.

## **A new and fairer asylum dispersal model**

From 13 April 2022, all local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales will be considered a dispersal area and will need to take part in asylum dispersal.

This Full Dispersal model, backed by new government funding, will allow accommodation providers, working on behalf of the Home Office, to identify private rental sector properties that can be procured for asylum dispersal accommodation in these local authority areas.

Full Dispersal will therefore help to move asylum seekers out of expensive hotels, immediately increase capacity in the asylum system and be fairer to the overburdened local authorities who were already participating in asylum dispersal for many years.

## **When will this start?**

We are starting to expand the procurement process across England, Scotland and Wales, working closely with local authority areas to make them aware of proposed properties.

Any specific concerns about procuring specific properties or procuring properties in a specific postcode can be raised for consideration.

These objections can be raised on four grounds: concerns around social cohesion, if procurement will impact on development or community plans, the issues with the provision of wraparound services and if a property has special characteristics in short supply (e.g a property adapted for someone with disabilities).

We will also launch an 8-week informal consultation with local authorities on 9 May to work through the detailed regional plans.

Local authorities will not be expected to accommodate asylum seekers beyond 0.5% of their total population. This 0.5% population cap equates to one asylum seeker per 200 local residents.



## What will the informal consultation cover?

The informal consultation will enable local authorities and the UK government to come together and propose how asylum dispersal will work in future within 12 regions and nations, known as Strategic Migration Partnerships.

Through the informal consultation, each area will work collectively to agree on a specific regional plan that works for them and provides sufficient dispersal accommodation capacity for all asylum seekers who are entitled to it.

This includes discussion on existing market demands, how Full Dispersal could impact on urban and rural areas in different ways and whether they wish to retain the 0.5% population cap.

The consultation period will also consider how other existing accommodation pressures such as the response to the situation in Ukraine and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme are impacting local authorities.

We will also open the informal consultation to devolved governments, Strategic Migration Partnerships and other non-government organisations who are involved in the dispersal process.

By the end of the informal consultation, we will have a full dispersal model that is fairer for local authorities and can respond to changing demands.

## What financial support is there for local authorities?

We have already committed that if a local authority was accommodating asylum seekers on 27 March 2022 they will receive a £250 one off grant payment per asylum seeker. This will total £21.3 million.

On top of this, all local authorities will receive £3,500 grant funding for each new dispersal bed occupied from 28 March 2022 and 31 March 2023. This is designed to mitigate the impacts on local services and can be used to provide wraparound support for asylum seekers.

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Local authorities will receive this funding at the end of each quarter throughout the 2022-23 financial year.

Not being ringfenced, these grants will allow councils to meet their area's specific needs.



LAST UPDATED: 14 April 2022

## Home Office

As part of the 8-week informal consultation period, we will continue to work with local government to understand the impact of asylum dispersal on local authorities going forward.

By the end of the informal consultation, we will have a full dispersal model that is fairer for local authorities and can respond to changing demands.