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The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
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25 November 2021

Dear Home Secretary,

On Monday 22 November, Stuart C McDonald MP asked you about the Home Office's increased use of hotels to accommodate people seeking asylum and raised concerns about the level of support in place as well as the Home Office's lack of notice to local authorities prior to procuring hotels.

These are entirely legitimate concerns, which I have already raised with you, along with Scottish local government and third sector support organisations. However, in response, I was very concerned, that rather than answer on that point, you instead chose to attack Scotland's record on supporting people seeking asylum and particularly the role Scotland plays in asylum dispersal. This is an inaccurate representation of the role Scotland, and particularly Glasgow, has played in supporting people seeking asylum over two decades of the Home Office's asylum dispersal policy. The Home Office's own statistics show that Glasgow has consistently supported Scotland's regional share of the total number of people seeking asylum accommodated by the Home Office under Section 95 and that there have been times this has been above Scotland's share. Glasgow accommodates significantly more asylum seekers than any other local authority across the UK.

Your comments also come despite the fact that I wrote to you on 21 October offering meaningful discussion alongside COSLA and local authorities on asylum dispersal. You have not replied to my letter or engaged with Scottish Government to have discussion on asylum dispersal.

You are well aware of the significant concerns Scottish local authorities and indeed local authorities across the UK have about use of hotels and lack of appropriate support for vulnerable people accommodated in them for prolonged periods. You are also well aware of the barriers to accepting asylum dispersal which local authorities across the UK have repeatedly raised with the Home Office and the measures you could take to enable local authorities to consider participation.

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I noted your final remarks on Monday. “On the funding side of matters, it is absolutely correct to say that the Home Office, working with the former Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, has been doing everything possible to provide local authorities with financial support and assistance, but certain councils around the country still say no.”

The Scottish Government, COSLA and local authorities would be very interested to hear further detail of the financial support and assistance which the Home Office is doing everything possible to provide and request that you set this out. At present, local authorities which accept asylum dispersal are not receiving any funding from the Home Office and have not received any offer of future funding.

As I set out in my previous letter, widening asylum dispersal is not only a matter of funding local authorities. The Home Office also needs to improve transparency, data sharing and partnership working to build trust with local authorities and ensure that the asylum dispersal system can operate effectively. Procuring hotels without notifying local authorities or properly considering how essential support will be provided further undermines trust in the Home Office. The Home Office needs to be more transparent on system operations by genuinely working with devolved governments and local authorities to overcome issues and ensure that support is in place which meets the needs of people seeking asylum and local communities.

If the Home Office steps up to properly support and fund local authorities across the UK who participate in asylum dispersal, you may find that dispersal is more attractive, to the benefit of those seeking asylum and to local communities.

I reiterate my offer of meaningful discussion on asylum dispersal in Scotland and look forward to your urgent response.

Yours sincerely,



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