August 2020

Thank you for contacting me about accommodation for asylum seekers.

This is a complex area and was complicated even further by the Covid-19 pandemic. I hope I can provide some further information in this response to help explain the current situation.

Any asylum seeker who would otherwise be destitute is able to obtain support from the time they arrive in the UK until their claim is fully determined and they have exhausted their appeal rights.

In addition, failed asylum seekers receive support if they are unable to leave the UK for reasons beyond their control and would otherwise be destitute.

Obviously, the vast majority of these are vulnerable people and while they are in the asylum system of the UK this support is necessary for their safety and the safety of the wider community.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic it has been necessary for the Home Office to house a number of asylum seekers in hotels to ensure they can comply with social distancing guidelines. Clearly the health of asylum seekers and those working in the system is of vital importance during a pandemic of this kind.

Since March, the number of people within the asylum system has risen. This is due to the Government temporarily stopping ending asylum support for those whose claims have been granted or refused; a change that was necessary to stop people from being made homeless during lockdown and ensure they are able to follow social distancing guidelines. This is a temporary measure and the Government is reviewing this policy.

Indeed the Government is currently working with local authorities to review these measures and return asylum policy to a pre-Coronavirus footing.

A number of people have concerns regarding the safety and health of those in asylum accommodation.

All asylum seekers in temporary accommodation have been provided guidance in their own language on hygiene, washing hands, social distancing, coronavirus symptoms and what to do if they become symptomatic.

A range of measures have also been put in place to support asylum seekers and assure they are protected from Coronavirus. This includes staggered mealtimes and providing cleaning supplies for free. Those placed in hotel accommodation receive free meals, toiletries and other support.

The Home Office has been very clear that it expects all its suppliers to follow Public Health England guidance and ensure the safety of their staff and those they accommodate at all times.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.



Yours faithfully,

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**

**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**