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Hi Adam,

My colleague has submitted questions, due for a response tomorrow so will update accordingly.

Thanks,

Amy

**Amy Nicholls (she/her/hers)**
Constituency Support Officer
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**From:** Divney, Adam <Adam.Divney@luton.gov.uk>
**Sent:** 13 December 2022 18:00
**To:** HOPKINS, Rachel <rachel.hopkins.mp@parliament.uk>
**Subject:** FW: MP question re asylum picture in Luton

Hi Rachel,

Just wondering if you were able to submit of the question(s) we put forward or advise on any possible next steps?

From our side – we intend on sending the HO a pre action protocol letter next week

Best,

Adam

Adam Divney

Service Director – Citizen Engagement and Legal Services

Luton Council

M: 07595 465699

**From:** Divney, Adam
**Sent:** 29 November 2022 17:51
**To:** 'Rachel.hopkins.mp@parliament.uk' <Rachel.hopkins.mp@parlaiment.uk>; OWEN, Sarah <sarah.owen.mp@parliament.uk>; 'francis.steer@parliament.uk' <francis.steer@parliament.uk>
**Cc:** SYMMONS, Jenny <jenny.symmons@parliament.uk>; Lubelski, Marek <Marek.Lubelski@luton.gov.uk>; Porter, Robin (Chief Exec) <chiefexec@luton.gov.uk>; Cllr (Lab) Simmons, Hazel (Luton) <Hazel.Simmons@luton.gov.uk>
**Subject:** MP question re asylum picture in Luton

Dear all,

Thanks again for your time on Friday

You probably will have seen some of the news and social media coverage across the weekend, but I’ve attached our statement again FYI. [25/11/2022 - Concern about welfare of asylum seekers in Luton](https://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=5774&d=5L-Y4-Sh7Gk3EFvfWD1KcBcj4rlDUJmikEQwlIEsrA&u=https%3a%2f%2fm%2eluton%2egov%2euk%2fPage%2fShow%2fnews%2fPages%2fConcern-about-welfare-of-asylum-seekers-in-Luton%2easpx)

This will form the basis of the letter being drawn up to send the PM from the Leader, which we will share also.

As covered on our session, I think we have three core issues currently (described in more detail below). As discussed, it would be really helpful if we could pose the below as questions:

**“In April 2022, the Government talked about fixing the broken asylum system through the work of the Nationality and Borders Bill, stating that the asylum accommodation was placing unsustainable pressure on a limited number of local authorities. It was stated that this was not acceptable; not fair on the taxpayers, it did not offer the right solution for communities or those seeking asylum and it must change. A commitment was made to working with local authorities to move to a fairer distribution of asylum seekers.**

**Luton is a caring and compassionate town that has always supported those seeking sanctuary in this country. However, representing just over 3% of the East of England population, yet hosting 24% of the asylum seekers placed in hotels in the region, can you explain why the Home Office taking a disproportionate approach to placing asylum seekers within a town already stretched far beyond its means and recognised as disproportionally impacted? ”**

Additional (if possible) **“with an emergency situation such as this, can you explain why the Home Office is not being clear regarding the funding available for Local authorities and also what the commissioned arrangements between the Home Office and its accommodation providers are?”**

**Key issues**

1. **the disproportionate approach the Home Office has taken with regards to placement of asylum seekers with Luton**
	1. 24% of contingency hotel population of East of England based in Luton
	2. This is on top of the disproportionately existing high numbers of asylum seekers based in other forms of accommodation under the umbrella of Dispersed accommodation and Overflow Dispersed accommodation (Please note: Following the government’s recent Regional Asylum Dispersal Planning process, Luton was suggested to reduce its asylum headcount from c300 to c170 by December 2023)
	3. Its worth noting that the above doesn’t cover existing support Luton has/is providing under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, The airport Ukraine Humanitarian Hub and the significant support provided for Afghan emergency refugees and a full local allocation of unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC)
2. **the lack of clarity around funding available**
	1. We have repeatedly asked for classification to be provided of the six hotels in Luton so we can understand what funding is available (as per the attached PDF, this is completely contract to what had been promised in terms of a fairer process).
	2. this lack of clarity and transparency is worrying. Especially when you take into context the example given where the status of the Luton IBIS was changed in April from an Initial Processing Centre (controlled by Border force) to what the Home Office now term Overnight Initial Accommodation – something not listed in any of the Home Office definitions when it comes down to funding available. Lea Halls and the Sadie Best Western have been given the titles of Spot Booking – again, no Home office definition in the context of funding available for local services.
3. **the lack of clarity around HO commissioned accommodation provider services**
	1. As mentioned, the opaqueness of the above means it is also unclear what the HO has commissioned its providers to actual provide for asylum seekers.  The authority and system partners such as health, have not been provided with any formal documents, so we are left to piece things together on a semi-anecdotal basis.
	2. This lack of clarity means the call on unfunded services and the local VCS is much greater than it should be.

Attached also is the Chief Execs and CEx briefing notes – note the regional positon on page 2 of the SMP briefing (please note the sensitivity classification)

Below is the Luton position in detail, against please treat as Official Sensitive information.

Please contact me directly if any further clarity is required

Thanks once again for your support,

Adam

**Version: 24.11.22**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category**  | **Accommodation name /type**  | **Volume of people**  | **Any funding received**  |
| Dispersed Accommodation  | Houses/flats across the town  | 182 | No |
| Overflow Dispersed Accommodation | Cardiff Road  | 115 | Yes |
| Initial accommodation/ Contingency Hotel | Chiltern Hotel | 115 | No |
| Initial accommodation/ Contingency Hotel | Skyline Luton hotel (The Luton Hotel) | 100 | No |
| Initial accommodation/ Contingency Hotel | Luton Icon  | 146 | No |
| Stage 1 OIA hotel (Overnight Initial Accommodation) | Luton IBIS  | 122 (data from SMP, not HO) | No |
| Spot Booking | Lea Halls  | 408 (capacity 460) | No |
| Spot Booking | Sadie Best Western Luton | 134 (Capacity 80 rooms) | No |

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