



UK Visas
& Immigration

Freedom of Information
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FOI Reference: 68669

29 March 2022

Dear Twasul Mohammed

Thank you for your enquiry of 1 March in which you requested a variety of information regarding UK asylum seekers currently being accommodated in Northern Ireland. Your enquiries have been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Information Requested

- 1. How many asylum seekers are currently housed in hotels in Northern Ireland?*
- 2. What is the time frame for their being moved to asylum accommodation? What body is responsible, and under what policy?*
- 3. What oversight mechanisms are in place? If none, what are the plans for establishing the same?*
- 4. What is the situation of the groups of asylum seekers reportedly moved from Northern Ireland to other parts of the UK? What body is responsible, and under what policy? What oversight mechanisms are in place? If none, what are the plans for establishing the same?*
- 5. For points 2-4, please provide copies of relevant policy documents, memorandum of understanding, contractual agreements or other framework materials*

With regard to (3), the query refers to mechanisms for oversight of (a) time frame for being moved to residential accommodation as well as of (b) housing conditions, (c) children's access to school, (d) security guarantees for residents of the accommodation (for instance in the light of recent acts of intimidation by individuals purporting to be from a 'Britain First' group) and similar integration issues.

With regard to (4) asylum seekers moved from Northern Ireland to other areas of the UK: (a) what are the reasons for moving people (disciplinary? Administrative? Other?) (b) Are such moves voluntary / at people's request, or is instigated by the Home Office or Mears? (c) Are people moved from hotels in Northern Ireland placed into hotel accommodation elsewhere, or moved into houses/flats? (d) Is the Home Office responsible for deciding to move people out of Northern Ireland, or is it Mears? (e) On the basis of what policy? (f) If it is Mears, how does the Home Office oversee its decisions?

Response

1 - How many asylum seekers are currently housed in hotels in Northern Ireland?

At the end of December 2021, of the asylum seekers in receipt of support under Section 98, Section 95 and Section 4 provisions of the 1999 Act, internal management information indicates that 807 individuals were accommodated in Hotels in Northern Ireland.

This figure has been taken from a live operational database. As such, numbers may change as information on that system is updated.

Enquiries 2,3,4 and 5 –

The information you have requested can be found using the link below to the AASC – Asylum Accommodation & Support Services Contract for Northern Ireland:
[AASC - Asylum Accommodation & Support Services Contract NI - Contracts Finder](#)

Section 21(1) of the FOIA exempts the Home Office from having to provide you with this information, because it is already reasonably accessible to you. If you have any difficulties in accessing this information at the source which I have indicated, please contact me again.

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request by submitting a complaint within two months to foirequests@homeoffice.gov.uk, quoting reference **68669**. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

As part of any internal review the Department's handling of your information request would be reassessed by staff who were not involved in providing you with this response. If you were to remain dissatisfied after an internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the FOI Act.

Yours sincerely

C. Walls
Central Operations Team

We value your feedback, please use the link below to access a brief anonymous survey to help us improve our service to you:

<http://www.homeofficesurveys.homeoffice.gov.uk/s/108105TAZNG>