



Home Office

James Brokenshire MP
Immigration and Security Minister

2 Marsham Street,
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

Mr Steven Reed MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

26 SEP 2014

Dear Steve,

Thank you for your letter of 9 September regarding use of the Queens Hotel in Crystal Place to accommodate asylum seekers.

Due to pressures on accommodation for asylum seekers throughout the UK it has become necessary to utilise contingency accommodation in a number of areas. Our accommodation providers are permitted to use contingency accommodation under their contracts. This usually means hotels, and the accommodation providers choose which hotels to use. The Home Office did not choose the Queens Hotel. Use of hotels is only acceptable as a short-term contingency arrangement and we have made clear to providers that they must increase procurement to provide alternative forms of accommodation as a matter of urgency.

Clearsprings is our accommodation provider that houses asylum seekers temporarily in London, usually overnight, before onward dispersal to other parts of the country. Due to a lack of accommodation across the country for the high numbers of asylum seekers that we are currently receiving that need support, Clearsprings have needed to rely on hotels to a greater degree than normal. Both my officials and Clearsprings were in contact with Croydon Council from early August when numbers started to build in the Queens Hotel.

I understand that following the inspection of the hotel by Croydon Council, all issues with the number of people in any one room or particular part of the hotel were resolved immediately. I also instructed numbers of asylum seekers housed at the hotel to be reduced immediately. I am pleased to report that we completed the transfer of all asylum seekers out of the Queens Hotel on Wednesday.

I am copying this letter to Jim Dowd MP, Gavin Barwell MP and Richard Ottaway MP.

Yours ever,

James Brokenshire

STEVE REED MP
Member of Parliament for Croydon North



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

James Brokenshire MP
Immigration and Security Minister
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Our Ref: 01140272

29 September 2014

Dear James,

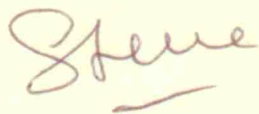
Thank you for your letter of 26 September regarding the placement of large numbers of asylum seekers in the Queen's Hotel, Crystal Palace. I am most grateful for your clarification but would appreciate your response to some remaining questions that will be of great interest to my constituents.

1. I regret that you did not respond to my request to meet with me and Jim Dowd MP so that we can relay our constituents' concerns to you in person. Please will you confirm your willingness to meet with us to discuss this matter.
2. Although you state that the Home Office did not choose the Queen's Hotel to accommodate the 791 asylum seekers I understand were placed there, I trust you accept responsibility for the actions of the accommodation provider that the Home Office appointed to do this on your behalf?
3. Please can you confirm whether the Home Office (or its agents) will be using the Queen's Hotel, Crystal Palace, to accommodate asylum seekers in future, and if so will you be placing any cap on the maximum numbers to be placed there?
4. If asylum seekers are again placed in this hotel in large numbers, what arrangements will be made to provide appropriate support both for the asylum seekers and the local community particularly in light of the concerns raised by residents and businesses during the recent placement.

5. I understand the Home Office's agents block-booked the hotel for four months. Can you confirm whether the hotel was paid for any period after the asylum seekers were removed, and if so what was the sum paid?
6. The owner of the Queen's Hotel, Mr Gauhar Nawab, has previously been exposed in the local press and on BBC Newsnight for accommodating homeless people in sub-standard accommodation in his other hotels, including Gilroy Court in Croydon, which was described in the press as squalid, inhuman and insect-infested, and described by your ministerial colleague Don Foster MP as 'unacceptable'. Please can you advise why the Home Office considers it appropriate to continue to make financial arrangements with a hotel owner with such a dreadful reputation?

I look forward to your early reply.

Yours ever,



Steve Reed OBE MP

cc. Jim Dowd MP.