

Y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb, Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau/
Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee
ELGC(5)-05-17 Papur 2/ Paper 2



WLGA • CLILC

Date/Dyddiad: 2nd February 2017
Please ask for/Gofynnwch am: Naomi Alleyne
Direct line/Llinell uniongyrchol: 029 2046 8660
Email/Ebost: naomi.alleyne@wlga.gov.uk

Mr John Griffiths AM
Chair, Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear John

Thank you for your letter dated 25th January 2017 seeking further information as part of the Committee's Inquiry into Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Wales.

In response to the queries raised in the letter, the following information is provided:

- Local authorities provide a range of environmental and regulatory services, which aim to make our communities safe places to live, work and visit. This includes undertaking inspections of privately rented homes to ensure they meet appropriate Standards and Regulations. While local authorities would have the power to inspect private sector properties used by Clearsprings to accommodate asylum seekers, there is no systematic plan in place to do so and we are not aware that such an approach has ever been requested, for example, in Swansea 'spot checks' are undertaken by Environmental Services on properties procured to accommodate asylum seekers with recommendations to improve made as appropriate however resources are limited to undertake these checks as often as they would wish to do so. Authorities are able to respond to concerns raised or complaints made and recommend improvements or undertake enforcement activity should it be required. While funding for environmental and regulatory services are provided by Welsh Government as part of the Block Grant for local government, no specific funding

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has been earmarked with a view to inspecting accommodation used for asylum seekers.

It should also be noted that any private landlords that rent their properties should be registered with Rent Smart Wales, and any Agents that landlords use must also be registered.

- When asked to assess a property that Clearsprings wishes to procure, the local authority will consider the location of the property and in particular, any reasons why the property should not be procured to accommodate asylum seekers (e.g. whether there are or have been recent community tensions that could affect asylum seekers; appropriate places in local schools if needed etc). There is also internal liaison with other parts of the authority and environmental health services will also consider any information they have available to them about the property as to its suitability (for example, in relation to housing standards and compliance with regulations). Local authorities work closely with Clearsprings when potential properties have been identified and their agreement is needed before the property is procured. The Wales Strategic Migration Partnership have developed a Property Procurement Consultation Form which is used by Clearsprings to consult with local authorities and other partners on procurement (copy attached at Appendix 1).
- Local authorities are not involved in the awarding of asylum accommodation contracts as this is done by the Home Office following a competitive process. While the Home Office engages with local authorities and other stakeholders when developing their approach to the provision of asylum accommodation, the awarding of contracts is the role of the Home Office. A recent early engagement event was held with local authorities, organised by the Home Office, ahead of the renewal of contracts in 2019 where discussions centred on how the contracts could operate and whether there are any different models of accommodation provision that could be considered. We understand similar events were held across different parts of the UK and the outcome of these discussions has been collated by the Home Office.

I hope this information is of use to you and the Committee and if you require further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Naomi Alleyne". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Naomi Alleyne
Director, Social Services and Housing

Appendix 1

Property Procurement Consultation for Asylum Properties

(To be returned to property@clearsprings.co.uk within 5 working days of request date (10 for bail level 2/3 properties) – this is a target date)

To be completed by Clearsprings Ready Homes

Property Address:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Property Use:

- Families
- Singles
- Level 1 Bail
- Level 2 Bail (if selected a wider debate on bail accommodation may be required)
- Level 3 Bail (if selected a wider debate on bail accommodation may be required)

- New Property
- Replacement

Address of Property Being Replaced

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Termination date

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Change of use

From

| |
|--|
| |
| |

to

| |
|--|
| |
| |

Variation of Use

From

to

Number of Bed spaces

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Number of Bedrooms

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Property Type

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Own Entrance (y/n)

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Shared Communal Areas (y/n)

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Date Requested:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|



To be completed by Local Authority

Local Authority:

Concern: YES NO

Location Concerns **Community Cohesion** **Other**

Please provide any additional notes or restrictions.

Approved for use YES NO

To be completed by Police

Police:

Concern YES **NO**

Concern Regarding:

ASB **Hate Crime** **Community Cohesion** **Other**

Please provide any additional notes or restrictions.

Approved for use YES **NO**

Other Concerns:

Note: only Police and LA can refuse a property, all other concerns will be taken into account but may not result in a refusal.

Education:

Admissions Language Support Other:

Comments:**Health:**

GP Case Load Available Local Resources Other:

Comments:**Property Procurement Consultation Form Guidance**

To ensure the safe and successful procurement of temporary accommodation for Asylum Seekers the attached screening tool will be completed by all the named partners within 5 working days and returned to Clearsprings Ready Homes.

1. Request completed by Clearsprings, detailing address and usage of property to Local Authority SPOC (Single point of contact)
2. SPOC will confirm receipt of request and coordinate information from department leads and return to property@clearsprings.co.uk within 5 working days
3. SPOCs from Police and Local Authority will share any concerns via the form with each other prior to returning their response.
4. If either the Local Authority and/or Police identify initial concerns or restrictions, please note them in the relevant section.
5. Clearsprings will inform the local authority if procurement is successful

Bail Case Definitions:

| Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 |
|--|--|--|
| False instrument Theft without aggravation Motoring offence One off violent occurrence Public disorder - Minor Non - MAPPA only | GBH / ABH Sexual offence with adults Supply and production of drugs Armed robbery Violence Kidnap - can also be level 3 depending on the circumstances of the offence | Applicants who cannot be accommodated near schools / local amenities Extreme violence Rape on a minor Exceptionally serious convictions – normally dealt with on a case by case basis |

Key Contacts:**Clearsprings:**

Clearsprings Ready Homes Property Dept. - Property@clearsprings.co.uk
Tel - 01268 740200 (automated option 3)

Police:

SPOC:

For Community Safety information:

Local Authority:

SPOC:

For Housing Enforcement information:

For Housing/ASB/Hate Crime information:

For Education information:

For School Admissions:

Home Office:

Lawrence Williams - Lawrence.Williams@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk – Tel: 077 6855 7641