

SOUTH WEST CHIEF EXECUTIVES' GROUP

12 MAY 2022

SW STRATEGIC MIGRATION PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

1. Purpose and recommendation

- 1.1 Chief Executives are asked to note the brief on the upcoming consultation on Asylum Reform and start to consider a regional response ahead of the South West's consultation event with the Home Office on 25 May 2022.
- 1.2 Chief Executives are asked to note the updates, some of which will be verbal at the meeting on both the Ukraine and the Afghan schemes.

2. Asylum Reform

- 2.1 The Minister sent a letter to all Local Authorities on 13 April 2022, announcing a consultation to improve arrangements for asylum accommodation dispersal.
- 2.2 As you will be aware, there has been increasing pressures on the asylum system, with hotels being used across the country as contingency accommodation for new arrivals to the UK. This is because there is not a sufficient amount of existing dispersal accommodation available.
- 2.3 Therefore, the announcement was made that all Local Authorities will be expected to participate in a new system of full dispersal to allow the Home Office to move from hotels to less expensive and more suitable dispersed accommodation, with work commencing immediately.
- 2.4 The Home Office will achieve this through three key interventions:
 - To reduce and eliminate the use of hotels for asylum seekers by moving to a full dispersal model for asylum accommodation. This will mean expanding our existing approach of using private rental sector housing to all local authority areas across England, Scotland and Wales.
 - In May, in the week commencing 9 May 2022, following the local elections, the Home Office will launch an informal consultation with local government to inform how this model will work across England, Scotland and Wales and within regions and nations. The consultation will explore how asylum dispersal can better take account of the other impacts on local authorities, of resettlement and the care of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
 - Providing specific funding to recognise the existing contribution of local authorities and for new dispersed accommodation. We will continue to work with local government to capture and evaluate data to understand the impact of asylum dispersal on local authorities going forward.

2.5 The Home Office, via the Strategic Migration Partnerships will work with Local Authorities through an informal consultation, to design the details of how the full dispersal system will operate in each region. The model will consider the impacts on urban and rural areas as well as market capacity and will seek to align asylum dispersal to national population share. It will provide local authorities with more control and autonomy at a regional level by asking them to collectively agree an approach to dispersal in their region. There will also be consideration to the broader context of migration to ensure the impact of resettlement schemes and Unaccompanied asylum seeking children are included.

2.6 A new burdens assessment is to be carried out, however in the meantime the following funding will be made available to Local Authorities:

- To recognise the existing contribution and longstanding support from local authorities, each local authority in England, Scotland and Wales which was accommodating asylum seekers on 27 March 2022 will receive a £250 one off payment per asylum seeker.
- In addition, the Home Office made further funding available for 2022/2023 to provide £3,500 for each new dispersal bed space occupied, in both new and existing dispersal areas, between 28 March 2022 and 31 March 2023. This funding can be used to implement and/or bolster services in both new and existing areas. This will alleviate some pressures on local authorities and will ensure every local authority plays its part in this important work.

3. South West Response

3.1 At the South West Chief Executives Meeting on 22 October 2020, a widening dispersal plan for the region was shared and agreed. This enabled Clearsprings Ready Homes, the Home Office contracted accommodation provider for the region to look at all areas for any potential dispersal properties. This work has remained slow, with only a handful of new areas with very low numbers of properties being identified and utilised. Please see the figures below as at the end March 2022.

	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22
Bristol	397	391	392	401	381	375	353	361	387	399	388	402	395
Gloucester	116	125	145	154	145	140	150	154	168	162	159	163	162
Plymouth	338	362	363	356	340	337	338	339	344	347	341	332	333
Swindon	257	275	289	296	287	284	287	297	325	356	367	380	397
Yeovil	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	6
Cheltenham	16	17	17	15	14	18	20	21	30	30	30	29	33
Devizes	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	2	2	0
Trowbridge	8	12	12	12	12	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Bournemouth						6	6	6	5	8	9	10	11
Taunton												5	5
Bridgewater												1	7
Region	1140	1190	1226	1238	1183	1175	1171	1195	1276	1319	1309	1342	1362

- 3.2 Our understanding of why progress on increasing dispersal in the region has been slow is due to lack of available and affordable properties in the South West Region.
- 3.3 It is expected that each region will be given an allocation of numbers of asylum seekers to accommodate. It will then be for the region to work together via the strategic migration partnership on how best to spread those numbers across the Local Authority areas.
- 3.4 Therefore we would like to ask South West Chief Executives to start to consider the following questions ahead of the consultation event on 25 May 2022:
- What do you think a regional response looks like?
 - What accommodation do you think could be accessed by Clearsprings in your local areas for dispersal?
 - What numbers do you think could be accommodated in your area in line with available accommodation?
 - How would you use the funding to support asylum seekers in your area?
 - How does asylum dispersal fit in with the resettlement programmes you are already delivering in your areas?
 - What needs to be done differently for the rural areas?
 - Can there be more of a “place based approach” for the region, in order to respond to all the various migration schemes?
 - What does the Home Office/Clearsprings need to do differently in your area in order to procure accommodation?

4. Afghan and Ukraine Updates

- 4.1 Due to the fast changing nature of both of these policies, a verbal update will be provided at the meeting to enable discussion. For information the following announcements have been made:
- There has been a recent announcement regarding a refusals policy for those Afghan families that decline to move into their matched accommodation. A letter was sent to all Chief Executives on 9 May. (Appendix 2)
 - DLUHC are currently working on policy to enable those Ukraine families who sponsors failed their checks to be able to come to the UK as soon as possible

Kelly-Anne Phillips
South West Councils

Appendices

- 1 Minister Letter of 13 April 2022
- 2 Enhanced Matching Policy Letter of 9 May 2022



13 April 2022

CONSULTATION TO IMPROVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASYLUM ACCOMMODATION DISPERSAL

The Government is fixing the broken asylum system through the work of the Nationality and Borders Bill.

As you are aware, the asylum accommodation system is under enormous pressure because of the significant and sustained increase in asylum intake over the last 12 months and the build-up of the population as a result of Covid-19 related measures, which is placing unsustainable pressure on a limited number of local authorities. This has resulted in over 25,000 asylum seekers being accommodated in temporary contingency accommodation, such as hotels. This is not acceptable; it is not fair on the taxpayers, and it does not offer the right solution for communities or those seeking asylum; it must change.

We are committed to working with local authorities to move to a fairer distribution of asylum seekers. All local authority areas in England, Scotland and Wales will be expected to participate in a new system of full dispersal to allow us to move from hotels to less expensive and more suitable dispersed accommodation. We will start to expand the procurement process across England, Scotland and Wales from today, working closely with local authority areas to make them aware of proposed properties and allow any specific concerns to be raised for consideration.

We will achieve this through three key interventions:

1. To reduce and eliminate the use of hotels for asylum seekers by moving to a full dispersal model for asylum accommodation. This will mean expanding our existing approach of using private rental sector housing to all local authority areas across England, Scotland and Wales.
2. In May, following the local elections, the Home Office will launch an informal consultation with local government to inform how this model will work across England, Scotland and Wales and within regions and nations. The consultation will explore how asylum dispersal can better take account of the other impacts on local authorities, of resettlement and the care of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
3. Providing specific funding to recognise the existing contribution of local authorities and for new dispersed accommodation. We will continue to work with local government to capture and evaluate data to understand the impact of asylum dispersal on local authorities going forward.

The arrangements for asylum accommodation are different in Northern Ireland as Northern Ireland does not form part of the asylum dispersal system. My officials will work with

colleagues in Northern Ireland, following the conclusion of their elections on 5 May to identify how they can contribute to this UK wide challenge.

Consultation

The Full Dispersal model will reduce and end the use of hotels by allowing the Home Office to procure dispersal properties within the private rental sector in all local authority areas across England, Scotland and Wales, rather than the minority of local authorities which currently participate, this approach will reduce pressures on those local authorities.

We will work with local authorities, through an informal consultation, to design the details of how the full dispersal system will operate in each region. We will invite views from Devolved Governments, Local Authorities and Non-Government Organisations who have an interest in asylum dispersal and resettlement. The model will consider the impacts on urban and rural areas as well as market capacity and will seek to align asylum dispersal to national population share. It will provide local authorities with more control and autonomy at a regional level by asking them to collectively agree an approach to dispersal in their region. This presents an opportunity for national and local government to work together to ensure the system works better for communities across England, Scotland and Wales. The process will be underpinned by a robust governance framework which is fair and transparent. If local authorities are unable to agree an approach to dispersal in their region, then the Home Office and its commercial partners will move ahead with a regional plan.

Longer term, the consultation will shape the design of a reformed asylum dispersal system which covers all local authority areas in England, Scotland and Wales and is:

- Fair and sustainable
- Collaborative, providing increased engagement and involvement of local authorities
- Innovative and responsive to changing demands and needs.

As part of the ongoing work with local authorities we will ensure the asylum dispersal scheme is part of the broader context, including ensuring we work together on providing accommodation to refugees brought here under the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), those on the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), the Afghanistan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP), Homes for Ukraine and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) looked after by local authorities.

Funding

The New Burdens Doctrine states all new burdens on local authorities must be properly assessed and fully funded by the relevant department. To support the implementation of a full dispersal model, as part of the consultation process, the Home Office is committed to undertaking a new burdens assessment. This will be an opportunity to better understand the costs associated with asylum dispersal and engage with the local government sector. Where we identify genuine additional and ongoing costs, these will be addressed in line with the New Burdens Doctrine and subject to a post-implementation review.

To recognise the existing contribution and longstanding support from local authorities, each local authority in England, Scotland and Wales which was accommodating asylum seekers on 27 March 2022 will receive a £250 one off payment per asylum seeker.

In addition, I have made further funding available for 2022/2023 to provide £3,500 for each new dispersal bed space occupied, in both new and existing dispersal areas, between 28 March 2022 and 31 March 2023. This funding can be used to implement and/or bolster

services in both new and existing areas. This will alleviate some pressures on local authorities and will ensure every local authority plays its part in this important work.

Home Office officials will contact council officers shortly to provide further detailed information on the initiatives outlined.

This Government remains committed to working collaboratively with local authorities to ensure we have an asylum accommodation system which is suitable, sustainable, and fair for taxpayers.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Foster', with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the top of the 'F' across the top of the signature.

Kevin Foster MP
Minister for Safe and Legal Migration



Penny Hobman
Director
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Sean Palmer
Director Resettlement, Asylum Support and Integration
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

9 May 2022

Dear colleagues,

We wrote to you on 29 March 2022 with an update from the Home Office and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on Afghan resettlement. This letter provided information on the ongoing improvements to the matching process and the work being undertaken across Government to address the number of refusals, while seeking to minimise new pressures elsewhere in the system, such as homelessness and funding.

DLUHC provided advance notice of the planned implementation and key components of the enhanced matching process to operational leads in English councils and Strategic Migration Partnerships on 4 May 2022, and to the Scottish and Welsh Governments on 5 and 6 May respectively.

We are writing to confirm that, from today, we will be implementing the new end-to-end process for those households that refuse both appropriate offers of settled accommodation. A comprehensive Q&A document, covering context and key principles, full detail of the process, communications to families/individuals, roles for national and local government, funding provision and monitoring, is included as an annex.

The enhanced matching process

These enhancements build on work already begun to improve the rate at which families accept offers of accommodation. We have increased resources in the Home Office Liaison Officer (HOLO) Team to provide greater support within the bridging hotels for the evacuees and to increase capacity for in-depth conversations with families about accommodation offers, making sure families understand the offer being made, resolving any questions or concerns the family may have and ensuring families understand the consequences should they choose not to accept an offer.

We have improved our family triage process, putting in place a face to face meeting with the family before accommodation matching starts, to make sure that we are capturing all the information available about a family's circumstances which is relevant to identifying an appropriate accommodation offer for that family.

Under the enhanced matching process, households in bridging accommodation will be given two offers of 'appropriate' accommodation, with the expectation being that they will accept the first accommodation offer made to them, unless they have a 'good reason' to refuse it. (See Q&A annex for definitions of 'appropriate' and 'good reason'.)

If a household rejects an appropriate accommodation offer, the Home Office will review the offer, consider their reasons, and if it was a good reason to refuse, the offer will be discounted. If this is not the case and the review finds that the offer was appropriate, the household will be informed of this and then given their second appropriate accommodation offer. If the household reject the offer (and it is still deemed appropriate upon review) then they will be given a minimum of 56 days' notice to leave the bridging hotel and find their own accommodation. We hope that given the improvements to the matching process there will be increased uptake of housing offers, and few circumstances in which the Home Office need to give notice to leave bridging accommodation.

We are aware of the need to minimise any homelessness pressures that may arise as a result of the matching process. As part of this process, we will establish a homelessness referral pathway to ensure that households who have been given notice to leave bridging accommodation will be supported with their move-on plan, including identifying whether they have alternative accommodation available to them or may become homeless at the point of eviction. We are developing a process to determine which council should receive a homelessness referral, in the event that a household is at risk of homelessness, and we will test this with councils over the coming weeks. Our primary aim will be to achieve a fair distribution of homelessness impacts and responsibilities across council areas.

We will ensure that councils providing temporary accommodation as part of homelessness duties, and integration support (similar to that provided in bridging accommodation), will be funded for a set period of time to do this. Funding for temporary accommodation (including staff and administration costs) will be available

for 6 months per household, whilst wrap-around integration funding will be available for 3 months. (See Q&A annex for further detail and rationale on funding arrangements.)

Co-design with councils

We have worked with councils in recent months to develop the policy, including through a series of workshops, and this will continue to be an iterative process. We will be putting in place a process to monitor outcomes and the effectiveness of the policy and are committed to working collaboratively with councils to review progress and adjust the process as required. We will be establishing a Task and Finish Group to co-design and further refine the homelessness referral aspect of the policy with a small group of councils, and will be working with the Local Government Association (LGA), Welsh LGA (WLGA), Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and Devolved Administrations to develop the policy detail further. We will write to councils again in the coming months to update on policy outcomes and the progress of the enhanced matching process.

We continue to work closely with the Devolved Administrations, WLGA and COSLA to ensure that enhanced matching and the end-to-end process for households that refuse both appropriate offers of settled accommodation are implemented as successfully as possible for councils and Afghan families and individuals in the Devolved Nations.

Communication with Afghans in hotels

Letters, translated into Pashto and Dari, have also been sent today by the Home Office to families/individuals currently residing in bridging accommodation to set out the changes being made. A copy of the letter to families is attached for information. New arrivals to the UK will be made aware of the process for finding them settled accommodation as part of their arrival induction.

We are also developing engagement products to help tackle the high level of myths and misconceptions which are circulating through cohorts in hotels. We are engaging with Local Authorities, Home Office Liaison officers and Afghans to design communication and engagement products to help families better understand their options and take more informed decisions (for example accepting a matched property or finding their own private rental sector property). We have had a positive response when user-testing products to support group presentations in two hotels and are now developing the products for rollout across hotels.

If you have any questions, please contact your local engagement lead from the Home Office or the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Yours sincerely,

Penny Hobman



Director

Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

Sean Palmer



Director – Resettlement, Asylum Support and Integration (RASI)

Asylum and Protection

Home Office

ANNEX 1

Letter to families/individuals in bridging accommodation



Important information about use of hotels and moving to longer term housing

Dear Hotel Guest

We wrote to you on 10 January 2022 outlining how we would match families and individuals in bridging hotels to accommodation across the UK. Over 6,000 people have already moved or are in the process of moving into their settled accommodation where they are being supported by the local community. We want to help you make a new home and start your lives in the UK too.

This letter sets out some changes we are making to the accommodation matching process so that we can help people into homes more quickly.

We have improved how we match properties so that offers made are appropriate and meet your needs. Before we match individuals and families to accommodation, we will talk to you to make sure we have all the necessary information about your circumstances to enable us to make an appropriate offer of accommodation. We will take the following criteria into consideration, based on evidence that you provide us:

- Education needs
- Health needs
- Faith needs
- Employment
- Close family links and caring responsibilities.

Given the work that goes into finding a house that is suitable for you and the limited housing options in the UK, we expect you to accept appropriate housing offers made to you. We and the local authority will ensure that there is a warm welcome in your new area when you move.

We will offer you a maximum of two offers of appropriate accommodation. If you decline both offers without good reasons, the Home Office will not make any further offers and you will be required to leave the hotel and make your own arrangements for accommodation.

To make this process work effectively, we will ask you to help us by responding quickly, within 5 working days, when we make you an accommodation offer. If you

do not think the accommodation we offer is appropriate for you, you should let us know why, and we will consider whether the explanation you have given amounts to a good reason for refusing the accommodation. We have set out what constitutes an “appropriate” offer and examples of what might be a “good reason” for refusing an offer in the questions and answers (Q&A) section below.

Please read this letter carefully and if you have any further questions, please speak to your Home Office Liaison Officer (HOLO).

Kind regards,

Penny Hobman



Director

Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

Sean Palmer



Director – Resettlement, Asylum Support and Integration (RASI)

Asylum and Protection

Home Office

Q&A on the accommodation offer process

Q) What is an appropriate accommodation offer?

We will offer individuals and families accommodation which meets the following criteria:

- The Home Office will offer accommodation which has been put forward for the scheme by a local council or Community Sponsorship group. This is most likely to be accommodation from the private rental sector although it may very occasionally be from social housing stock.
- The accommodation will meet all relevant health and safety requirements, be in a good state of repair and will be furnished.
- Where necessary, adaptations to the property will be made before the household move in to ensure that it is accessible for any residents with a known disability.
- Accommodation will be available for a minimum of 12 months; however, the local council where the household is placed is responsible for ensuring that accommodation is available, if needed, for the three years that it has committed to providing integration support to the household.
- The accommodation will be affordable for the household, considering the financial resource available to them, including any government support for which they are eligible.
- Once we confirm we have received the individual or family's acceptance of a property, they will be provided with five working days' notice of a planned move from their bridging hotel to their new accommodation.
- Accommodation will be of suitable size to accommodate all household members. The accommodation will meet the standards outlined in the 'Technical Housing Standards'¹, Department for Work and Pensions 'housing benefit rules'²; and the 'statutory overcrowding and space standards'³.
- For larger households, where it is not possible to identify one accommodation option which is affordable and large enough to accommodate all household members together, the Home Office will consult with the household to consider whether, with their consent, the family can be accommodated across two separate properties. The division of the family will take into account the ages of household members, any caring or vulnerability needs and the personal preferences of the family. Properties offered will be in reasonable

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard>

² <https://www.gov.uk/housing-benefit/what-youll-get>

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1985/68/part/X/crossheading/definition-of-overcrowding> - particularly section 326

proximity to each other so that all household members can maintain close contact with each other.

Q) How will the Home Office match individuals and families to an appropriate accommodation offer?

Before we match individuals and families to accommodation, we will talk to you to make sure we have all the necessary information about your family circumstances to enable us to make an appropriate offer of accommodation to you which meets your needs.

We will use the information you provide to identify the most appropriate accommodation for you and may disclose your information to other organisations to enable us to do this. This is in line with the Borders, Immigration and Citizenship Privacy Information Notice which you can see at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-information-use-in-borders-immigration-and-citizenship>.

We will match individuals and families to appropriate accommodation taking the following criteria into consideration:

- Education needs
- Health needs
- Faith needs
- Employment
- Close family links and caring responsibilities.

Education

- For households including children, accommodation will be sought within a reasonable distance of age-appropriate education facilities.
- Where the Home Office is aware of the special educational needs of a child this will be taken into consideration when allocating accommodation.

Health

- The Home Office will consider any known medical treatment needs, and accommodation provided will be within a reasonable distance of any necessary services.
- For specialist or ongoing medical treatment where continuity of care is important and has already begun, the Home Office will accommodate the household as close to that provision as possible. For more complex, specialist treatment, this may require significant travel out of the area

Faith

- The Home Office will consider any faith practice needs and all households will be able to practise their faith if they wish to do so. In towns and cities, access

to faith facilities may be in the form of a mosque, church or temple, however in more rural areas it may be via facilities such as Islamic centres, visiting imams, church groups or community gatherings.

Employment

- When we match accommodation, the Home Office will take into consideration the location of any paid employment that has already begun, or where there is a signed contract of paid employment in place. Where one of the adults is in employment which requires them to attend a specific location to perform that role, and where the role cannot move to another location the Home Office will consider the impact of the proposed move and journey time on that employment and seek to provide accommodation which is within a reasonable travel distance of it. Households will be expected to meet the costs of any necessary travel to and from employment from their own funds.
- Speculative or unconfirmed offers of employment will not be taken into consideration for the purposes of matching accommodation.

Family links

- The Home Office will take close family connections into consideration when matching accommodation as far as reasonably possible and will seek to provide accommodation within the same local area, or close by, where there are existing caring and support arrangements in place for family members.

Q) What are good reasons for refusal of an appropriate accommodation offer?

There may, in exceptional circumstances, be good reasons for refusal of an appropriate accommodation offer. Good reasons will be assessed on a case-by-case basis but could include:

- Where the accommodation does not fulfil the criteria of an appropriate accommodation offer, as set out above – for example due to needs around education, health, faith, employment, close family or caring responsibilities.
- Specific examples could include:
 - Where an individual or family has specific needs to be in a different area to access specialist medical or education support that is not available in or within a reasonable travelling distance to the offer area. However, for more complex specialist treatment, this may require travel out of the local area.
 - Where a member of the household has care or support needs that are being met by close family members accommodated in a different area.
 - Where a member of the household has the offer of a paid employment as defined in the definition of an acceptable offer.

- Where there is a short-term barrier to the individual or family moving, for example medical procedure, and the accommodation offer cannot wait for that to be completed.

This is not a complete list, and we will assess the reasons given on a case-by-case basis.

Q) What do I need to do when the Home Office make me an accommodation offer?

First accommodation offer

When we match you with your first appropriate property, we will send you a formal offer letter with details of the accommodation being offered and some information about the area in the UK where the accommodation is located. The Home Office Liaison Officer (HOLO) will talk to you about the offer and provide you with more information about the accommodation and the area if you require it. The receiving council may also call you to give you more information about the accommodation, the area and the support they will be able to give you in their area.

We will ask you to reply to this formal offer within 5 working days, telling us whether you accept or reject the offer. For example, if we offer you accommodation on a Wednesday, you will need to accept or reject the offer before the end of the next Wednesday.

If you accept the offer, we will arrange transport to take you to that accommodation within 5 working days of receiving confirmation that you accept the offer. We will give you a minimum of 5 working days' notice of your move date.

If you reject the offer, you will need to provide us with your reasons for rejection. We will consider whether these amount to "good reasons" as set out above. If we accept your reasons for refusing the offer, your next accommodation offer will count as your "first accommodation offer", and the original offer will no longer be counted towards your total number of offers.

If we do not accept your grounds for refusal of the offer, you will move to the second accommodation offer stage.

You should not ignore this offer. If you choose not to respond within the five working days required, we will take your lack of response to mean that you are rejecting the offer and you will move to the next stage of the process.

Second (final) accommodation offer

If you rejected your first accommodation offer and we did not assess your reasons for rejecting it to be good reasons, we will make you one more accommodation offer – and this offer will be final (unless you have good reasons to reject it). This second offer may not be made immediately after the first offer and may be less preferable to you than the first offer.

We will make the second accommodation offer to you in writing. Your HOLO will talk to you about the offer and provide you with more information about the property and the area if you require it. The receiving council might also call you with further details about the accommodation, the area and the support they will be able to offer.

As with the first offer, we will ask you to reply to this formal offer within 5 working days, telling us whether you accept or reject the offer.

If you accept this offer, we will arrange transport to take you to that accommodation within 5 working days of receiving confirmation that you accept the offer. We will give you a minimum of 5 working days notice of your move date.

If you reject the offer, you will need to provide us with your reasons for rejection. We will consider whether these are good reasons as set out above. If we accept your reasons for rejecting the offer, we will make you another accommodation offer which will count as your second accommodation offer

You should not ignore this offer. If you choose not to respond within the five working days required, we will take your lack of response to mean that you are rejecting the offer and you will move to the next stage of the process.

Q) What happens if I reject or ignore both offers of accommodation?

If you reject or ignore both offers of accommodation without good reasons for doing so you will be required to leave the bridging hotel and find your own accommodation. We will advise you of this in writing within five working days.

Q) When will the new process start?

We will implement this new process from 9 May 2022. Only properties offered on or after 9 May 2022 will count towards the two accommodation offers.

We strongly encourage you to accept the first accommodation offer, even if it is not in an area of the UK that you were hoping for. As set out above, your HOLO and new local council will be able to provide more detail about the area you will be settling in and the support you can receive to help you understand more about the new location. You should see this as your first step in integrating into life in the UK.

Wherever you live in the UK you will receive a warm welcome and will be supported by the council. As you settle into life in the UK you may decide to move independently to a different area, which you can choose to do without support from the Home Office or the council.

You can read some stories of families who have already successfully resettled in the UK either here:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/housing-for-business-and-professionals/afghan-resettlement-programme>

or in the attachment below.

Case Study – Isle Of Wight

- A family with four children were housed in the Isle of Wight in October 2021.
- The family originally wanted to be moved to London or Manchester because they were the only places in the UK they knew. They searched the internet to find out more about the Isle of Wight and accepted the housing.
- Once they arrived, the family were very positive, they called their family back in Afghanistan and visited the beach!
- The children quickly started school and enjoy the outside space. They have been making friends and have started swimming and football.
- Dad has been very encouraging of his wife's independence. Mum has started English lessons and it has been taught in very practical ways including visits to the fruit and vegetable shops.
- Mum now takes and collects the children to/from school and goes shopping independently.
- Dad has now started working part time in a local shop, which he really likes. He has gained a provisional driving license and is studying for his theory test.
- The family are very positive about their new house - "It is brilliant, we love it"



ANNEX 2

Local authority Q&A:

Afghan resettlement enhanced matching process (including the pathway for families/ individuals in bridging hotels that refuse both 'appropriate' property offers)

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Context and summary of the new process

Q: How will the new process work?

- An enhanced end-to-end process for matching families/ individuals to settled accommodation and reduce the growing number of refusals of accommodation is being implemented on 9 May 2022.
- Afghan families/individuals will be offered a maximum of two 'appropriate offers', with the expectation being that they will accept the first accommodation offer made to them, unless they have a 'good reason' to refuse it.
- If a family/individual rejects an 'appropriate accommodation offer', the Home Office will review the offer, consider their reasons, and if it was a 'good reason' to refuse, the offer will be discounted. If this is not the case and the review finds that the offer was 'appropriate', the household will be informed of their final second 'appropriate accommodation offer' and that they must either accept it or they will be given a minimum of 56 days' notice to leave the bridging hotel.
- The family/individual should seek to make their own accommodation arrangements during this period as, at the end of the notice period bridging accommodation will be withdrawn, and the family/ individual will need to leave the bridging hotel.
- Support and clear communication will be provided to families/ individuals throughout the process, including on how to source accommodation and the homelessness process once the period of notice has been issued. There is also an accompanying set of materials that have been developed to address entrenched myths e.g. "if I wait I'll receive a council house" which we have trialled in a small number of hotels and are refining as a result to be most effective.

Q: Why has this process been put in place?

- There are a growing number of households refusing accommodation offers for a range of reasons. These are often complex, but generally include preferences for living in a specific location, limited knowledge of the accommodation and location offered, or the accommodation offer not meeting the household's perceived needs.
- This frustrates efforts to match families to settled accommodation, putting pressure on the bridging hotels and councils expecting a family/ individual to resettle and delays the start of the integration journey.
- Implementing this end-to-end process will help to reduce the increasing number of refusals of 'appropriate accommodation offers'. The process will not penalise families and individuals that refuse to move to accommodation that does not meet their needs (rather than their preferences).

Q: Why isn't the matching process improved instead?

- Work is already being implemented to improve the quality and speed of the matching process. This refusals policy is the backstop to an improved matching system – not a change in isolation.
- We are doing this through a number of routes, including:
 - Improving the information available to families/ individuals.
 - Increasing the communications with families/ individuals regarding offers of 'appropriate accommodation' made to them.
 - Improving data available to matchers.
 - Rolling out an approach whereby people are able to find their own accommodation whilst continuing to receive the support currently provided by the council.
 - Trialling 'localised matching' – working with regions to match families living in bridging accommodation in their region to accommodation in their region.

The end-to-end process / journey

Q: How will families/individuals receive accommodation offers?

First accommodation offer:

- The family/ individual will be sent a formal offer letter from the Home Office by email with details of the accommodation being offered and information about the area in which it is located. The Home Office Liaison Officer (HOLO) will discuss the offer and provide the family/ individual with more information about the accommodation and the area, as required.
- The receiving council may also call the family/ individual to provide more information about the property / area / support and encourage them to accept the offer.
- The family/ individual will be asked to reply to the formal offer within five working days, advising of acceptance or rejection of the offer via the HOLO in their hotel. The family/ individual will need to sign their acceptance or rejection reply. The HOLO will then scan and send this reply back to the Home Office.
- If the family/ individual accept the offer, transport will be arranged within five working days of receiving confirmation of acceptance, with a minimum of five working days' notice of the move date.
- If the family/ individual refuse the offer Home Office will consider whether the reasons for refusal are reasonable and meet the criteria. If Home Office accept the reasons for refusal, the next accommodation offer will count as the 'first accommodation offer', and the original offer will no longer be counted towards the total number of offers.
- If Home Office do not accept the grounds for refusal, or the first accommodation offer is ignored, this will result in a move to the second accommodation offer stage.

Second (final) accommodation offer:

- The second offer will be made by the Home Office in writing and will be final (unless the family/ individual has 'good reasons' for refusal). The HOLO will discuss the offer and provide the family/ individual with more information about the accommodation and the area, as required.
- As with the first offer, the family/ individual will be asked to reply to the formal offer within five working days, advising of acceptance or refusal of the offer.
- If the family/ individual accept the offer transport will be arranged within five working days of receiving confirmation of acceptance, with a minimum of five working days' notice of the move date.
- If the family/ individual refuse the offer Home Office will consider whether the reasons for refusal are reasonable and meet the criteria. If the Home Office accept the reasons for refusal, another accommodation offer will be made, which will count as the second accommodation offer.

Q: What processes are in place so that the first property offer meets the needs of the family/ individual as best as possible?

- The Home Office will meet with a family/ individual, face to face, before consideration is given to matching a household to accommodation. The purpose of this meeting is to capture all the information available about a household's circumstances which is relevant to identifying an 'appropriate accommodation offer' for that household, making sure families/ individuals understand how the matching process will work, the offer being made, resolving any questions or concerns they may have and ensuring they understand the consequences should they choose not to accept an offer.

Q: What happens if an Afghan family/ individual refuses or ignores both offers of accommodation?

- If both offers are refused or ignored without 'good reasons' for doing so, the family/ individual will be given notice to leave the bridging hotel and find their own accommodation, which will be communicated formally in writing.

Notice to leave bridging accommodation

- If a family reject the second, 'appropriate accommodation offer' they will be given a minimum of 56 days' notice to leave the bridging accommodation. Ongoing contact and support will take place once the period of notice has been issued. Information will be provided on how to source their own accommodation and the homelessness referral process.

Referral for homelessness assessment

- If a family has not sourced their own accommodation upon leaving bridging accommodation, they will be referred on to council homelessness services and assisted to make an application.
- If a family independently submits a homelessness application, the relevant council should notify DLUHC and HO.
- If the household is not likely to have secured accommodation before they are required to leave the hotel, with their consent, caseworkers will make a referral to council homelessness services.

Q: Will this not mean everyone will now present as homeless?

- There are check points factored into the process to encourage families/individuals to accept settled accommodation and that property offers are 'appropriate'. If a family/ individual refuses an offer, this will be independently reviewed. Further communication with families will take place before a family/ individual is asked to accept or refuse the second offer to ensure the implications of the decision are fully understood. The aim of the process is to encourage families to accept the housing offers and minimise the

number of those who present as homeless. DLUHC are working with HO and DWP to increase Afghan families/individuals understanding of their housing options and to tackle the myths enable people to make informed choices. In relation to homelessness, we will cover myths which inform families that homelessness applications will not ensure house is in exact location.

Q: Can a family/ individual change their mind and take up the first property offered, after they saw the second property or when they fully understood the implications of refusal?

- If the first property offer was still available this may be possible, but will depend on a number of factors, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis. We encourage all families/ individuals to accept the first offer of 'appropriate accommodation' made to them as the second offer is likely to not be more preferable to them.

Q: Why is the notice period after the second refusal set at 56 days?

- The minimum of a 56-day notice period to leave bridging accommodation has parity with homelessness relief duty in England and will mitigate the risk of people entering temporary accommodation.

Q: What will government put in place to limit the impact on homelessness services?

- There are a number of ways we are aiming to limit the impact on homelessness services, including:
 - Intensive work with families by HOLOs to encourage families/ individuals to accept 'appropriate accommodation offers'.
 - Ensuring the Home Office 'appropriate offer' criteria is more generous than the homelessness route to encourage acceptance during the matching process and avoid homelessness.
 - The minimum of a 56-day notice period to leave bridging accommodation has parity with homelessness relief duty in England and will mitigate the risk of families entering temporary accommodation.

Q: How will government ensure a fair dispersal process is applied in relation to homelessness referrals, taking into consideration the different legislative contexts in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?

- We are working with councils across all parts of the UK to develop a referrals process that seeks to distribute homelessness referrals across council areas and that takes account of the different homelessness legislation for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Q: How will large families be supported through this process?

- For larger households, where it is not possible to identify one accommodation option which is affordable and large enough to accommodate all household members together, the Home Office will consult with the household to consider whether, with their consent, the family can be accommodated across two separate properties.
- Any suggested division of the family will take into account the ages of household members, any caring or vulnerability needs and the personal preferences of the family.
- Properties offered will be in reasonable proximity to each other so that all household members can maintain close contact with each other.

Q: Is there an appeal process for families/ individuals to challenge final decisions made by Home Office?

- If a family refuses an 'appropriate accommodation offer', a senior Home Office official will review the circumstances of the case and make a decision based on the evidence provided, which will be communicated in writing to the family/ individual.

Q: Can a family return to bridging accommodation if they don't like their temporary accommodation?

- It will not be possible for a family to return to bridging accommodation once they have left it.
- If a homeless household has been provided with temporary accommodation by a council, the council must ensure it is suitable.
- Households may ask for a review on request of the housing authority's decision that the accommodation offered to them is suitable.

Q: What is the role of the HOLOs and support services providing support in bridging accommodation when it comes to actively encouraging residents to accept properties?

- HOLOs are responsible for initiating conversations regarding accommodation offers and potential moves. They will promote the benefits of moving into settled accommodation and manage any concerns or expectations a family/ individual may have. The HOLO also works with the council staff working in the hotel as well as in the receiving area to make sure families/ individuals are aware of the support and resources available in the area of the proposed accommodation.

Key principles and definitions

Q: How is an 'appropriate offer' defined?

- The Home Office will offer accommodation which has been put forward for the scheme by a council or Community Sponsorship group. This may be accommodation from the private rented sector or from social housing stock.

An 'appropriate accommodation offer' will:

- Meet all relevant health and safety requirements, be in a good state of repair and will be furnished.
- Where necessary, adaptations to the property will be made before the household move in to ensure that it is accessible for any residents with a known disability.
- be available for a minimum of 12 months however the council where the household is placed is responsible for ensuring that accommodation is available, if needed, for the three years that it has committed to providing integration support to the household.
- be affordable for the household, considering the financial resource available to them, including any government support for which they are eligible.
- be of suitable size to accommodate all household members. The accommodation will meet the standards outlined in the 'Technical Housing Standards': <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard>, Department for Work and Pensions 'housing benefit rules': <https://www.gov.uk/housing-benefit/what-youll-get> and the 'statutory overcrowding and space standards': <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1985/68/part/X/crossheading/definition-of-overcrowding> (Section 326).
- For larger households, where it is not possible to identify one affordable accommodation option large enough to accommodate all household members together, the Home Office will consult with the household to consider whether, with their consent, the family can be accommodated across two separate properties. The division of the family will take into account the ages of household members, any caring or vulnerability needs and the personal preferences of the family. Properties offered will be in reasonable proximity to each other so that all household members can maintain close contact with each other.

Q: What is the priority system that underpins the order that families/ individuals are matched and how will that be communicated?

- Prior to matching families/ individuals to accommodation, the Home Office will talk to them to make sure they have all the necessary information about the household's circumstances to enable them to make an 'appropriate' offer of accommodation, which meets their needs. The matching process will take the following criteria into consideration:

Education

- For households including children, accommodation will be sought within a reasonable distance of age-appropriate education facilities.
- Where the Home Office is aware of the special educational needs of a child, this will be taken into consideration when allocating accommodation.

Health

- The Home Office will consider any known medical treatment needs, and accommodation provided will be within a reasonable distance of any necessary services.
- For specialist or ongoing medical treatment where continuity of care is important and has already begun, the Home Office will accommodate the household as close to that provision as possible. For more complex, specialist treatment, this may require significant travel out of the area.

Faith

- The Home Office will consider any faith practice needs and all households will be able to practice their faith if they wish to do so. In towns and cities, access to faith facilities may be in the form of a mosque, church or temple, however in more rural areas it may be via facilities such as Islamic centres, visiting imams, church groups or community gatherings.

Employment

- When matching accommodation, the Home Office will take into consideration the location of any paid employment that has already begun, or where there is a signed contract of paid employment in place. Where one of the adults is in employment which requires them to attend a specific location to perform that role, and where the role cannot move to another location the Home Office will consider the impact of the proposed move and journey time on that employment and seek to provide accommodation which is within a reasonable travel distance of it. Households will be expected to meet the costs of any necessary travel to and from employment from their own funds.
- Speculative or unconfirmed offers of employment will not be taken into consideration for the purposes of matching accommodation.

Family links

- The Home Office will take close family connections into consideration when matching accommodation as far as reasonably possible and will seek to provide accommodation within the same local area, or close by, where there are existing caring and support arrangements in place for family members.

Q: What is a ‘good reason’ for refusal?

- In exceptional circumstances, there may be ‘good reasons’ for refusal of an ‘appropriate accommodation offer’.
- ‘Good reasons’ will be assessed on a case-by-case basis but could include:
 - Where the accommodation is later deemed not to be an ‘appropriate accommodation offer’ as set out above - for example due to needs around education, health, faith, employment, close family or caring responsibilities.
 - Where the family/ individual has specific needs to be in a different area to access specialist medical or education support that is not available in or within a reasonable travelling distance to the offer area.
 - Where a member of the family has care or support needs that are being met by close family members accommodated in a different area.
 - Where a member of the family has the offer of paid employment as defined in the definition of an acceptable offer.
 - Where there is a short-term barrier to the family moving, for example a medical procedure, and the accommodation offer cannot wait for that to be completed.

Q: Will the Afghan family /individual’s opinion on what parts of the country they would like to live in be a ‘good reason’ for refusal?

- No. Unless it falls within a ‘good reason’, such as where the family has specific needs to be in a different area to access specialist medical or education support that is not available in or within a reasonable travelling distance to the offer area, or where a member of the family has care or support needs that are being met by close family members accommodated in a different area.
- ‘Good reasons’ for refusals will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Q: How will government ensure a fair dispersal process is applied in relation to homelessness referrals?

- We are working with councils to develop a referrals process that seeks to distribute homelessness referrals across council areas.

Q: Can councils use properties already offered to families as part of their homelessness offer?

- Properties previously offered to families/ individuals will be re-allocated to other families/ individuals as soon as a suitable match is identified. Requests from councils to use accommodation previously offered by the Home Office will be subject to availability.

Q: How can a council support if they do not have a bridging hotel?

- We need a significant number of properties to accommodate all the Afghan families/ individuals currently in bridging hotels. Councils can help by pledging properties to support the scheme.

Timelines

Q: When will the enhanced matching process start?

- We will implement this process from 9 May 2022.
- Only properties offered on or after 9 May 2022 will count towards the two accommodation offers.

Q: Will the process be retrospective and apply to those who have already been offered housing?

- No. The process will not be retrospective and will only apply from 9 May 2022.
- Families/ individuals that have refused properties before the implementation of this policy will not be penalised for previously refusing a housing offer.

Q: Will the process apply to those already in settled accommodation?

- Families/individuals already in settled accommodation will not be able to use this process to move back to bridging accommodation to source alternative properties.

Communication to families/individuals on the enhanced end-to-end process

Q: How will you make those in bridging accommodation aware of the process for enhanced matching, offers and refusals?

- A joint letter from HO/DLUHC, written in English, Pashto and Dari, was sent on 9 May 2022 to all those in bridging accommodation, via the Home Office. The letter includes a Q&A.
- The Hotel Liaison Officer (HOLO) based in the hotels will also be talking to families/ individuals about the changes and answering any questions. Home Office have recruited significantly more HOLOs to improve the matching process and better support people in hotels.

Q: How will Afghan families/ individuals be told what an 'appropriate offer' is and what are 'good reasons' for refusing an offer?

- The definition of an 'appropriate offer' and what is a 'good reason' for refusal will be included in the joint letter (HO/DLUHC) sent to all those in bridging accommodation by Home Office.
- When the family/ individual receives their accommodation offer a HOLO will talk through the offer to make sure they understand the process and the next steps they need to take.

Q: How will new arrivals be made aware of this process?

- New arrivals will be made aware of the process for finding them settled accommodation as part of their arrival induction.

Q: Will families be made aware of how long they could spend in temporary accommodation?

- HOLOs will provide ongoing contact and support to families/ individuals once the period of notice has been issued, this will include conversations on the realities of temporary accommodation.

Q: Will individuals be made aware of the risks of presenting as homeless?

- The HOLO in the hotel will have a conversation with the family/ individual at the point of each 'appropriate accommodation offer' to make sure the family/ individual understand the offer being made, to reassure and answer any question the family/ individual may have and also to make sure the family/ individual understand the consequences of refusing the offer.

Q: Will the Afghan family /individual's opinion on what parts of the country they would like to live in be a 'good reason' for refusal?

- No. Unless it falls within a 'good reason', such as where the family has specific needs to be in a different area to access specialist medical or education support that is not available in or within a reasonable travelling distance to the offer area, or where a member of the family has care or support needs that are being met by close family members accommodated in a different area.
- 'Good reasons' for refusals will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Funding for councils

Q: Is government providing financial support for councils where a family presents themselves as homeless via this new matching process?

- Yes, government will be providing time-limited funding for homelessness pressures arising from this policy.
- Councils providing temporary accommodation as part of homelessness duties will be funded for up to six months; and integration support similar to that received in bridging accommodation will be funded for three months. (Breakdown of funding shown below.)
- These time-limited temporary accommodation funding arrangements are intended to reduce new pressures on already stretched homelessness services, reduce prolonged use of temporary accommodation where possible, and support integration outcomes.
- This funding will be kept under review to ensure it is effective and proportionate.
- In addition, councils who provide settled accommodation after a household has stayed in temporary accommodation as part of the refusals process will be able to access the local authority tariff (£20,520 over three years) and Housing Costs Fund in the normal way.

Q: How is the temporary accommodation funding broken down?

- Where Temporary Accommodation is necessary, councils can receive funding to cover costs of additional temporary accommodation, staff and administering costs for applications. This will consist of a **fixed sum of £2,000** per household to cover 2 months additional temporary accommodation and the cost of administering an application.
- After 2 months, if required, this will be followed by £80 per week per household to cover additional temporary accommodation and staff costs only. This will be capped at 16 weeks (4 months).
- The total a council could receive for a household is therefore £3,280 over six months.
- This will be paid in two payments:
 - **Fixed Costs** - will be claimed by the council when a household move into temporary accommodation
 - **Additional temporary accommodation weekly funding** – this second payment should be claimed at the end of the period of temporary accommodation or for a maximum of 16 weeks (whichever sooner) for temporary accommodation support
- Further details will be included in the 2022/23 revised hotel wraparound support Financial Instructions.

Q: Can a council claim funding for integration support for families in temporary accommodation?

- Yes, a council providing temporary accommodation may access integration support funding consisting of £28pppd for up to three months.
- Councils will need to seek reimbursement for integration costs incurred by days rather than as a block three-month sum (given that some may resettle people before the end of this period).
- Specific funding for healthcare and education services is not needed as existing healthcare and education infrastructure is expected to be sufficient to absorb these impacts and costs. This policy is being kept under review to ensure impacts are manageable.

Q: What is the integration support expected to cover?

- As with integration support in bridging hotels, which is shifting from welcome/orientation to an emphasis on supporting people to successfully move into settled accommodation, we expect this temporary accommodation integration support to include:
 - support (and set-up in new areas) to access mainstream services (inc. health, education, employment) and safeguarding;
 - move-on casework support;
 - formal and/or informal ESOL support (English for Speakers of Other Languages).

Q: Is there any further integration funding available if a family remains in temporary accommodation after three months?

- No, there is no additional funding available for integration if a family remains in temporary accommodation after 3 months. We will keep this under review.

Q: Is there any further temporary accommodation funding available if a family remains in temporary accommodation after six months?

- No, funding is not available if a family remains in temporary accommodation after six months.

Q: Why does temporary accommodation support stop after six months, and integration support stop after three months?

- It is crucial for the policy to be effective, and for families/individuals to move swiftly onto settled accommodation, that the temporary accommodation and the parallel integration support is a 'backstop' – rather than a like-for-like replacement for bridging accommodation.
- The government's provision of six months temporary accommodation funding and three months integration funding for councils aims to ensure that councils are given the resource to enable people leaving bridging accommodation to

have access to temporary accommodation where necessary and can be provided with continuity of integration support around this, whilst balancing this against the overall aim of encouraging rapid move on into settled housing with integration support.

Q: How can this funding be claimed?

- Full details of the claims process will be provided in the forthcoming funding instructions (covering Hotel Wraparound Support FY 2022/23), which are currently being updated to reflect these changes.

Q: When can the funding be claimed?

- The **fixed sum costs** may be claimed following the placement of a family into temporary accommodation. If a council provides settled accommodation to a household within the first 8 weeks (2 months) of accepting a homelessness duty, they will be able to keep the fixed sum, to cover their costs of administering the homeless application.
- The additional **£80 per week per household** may be claimed in arrears at the end of the (maximum) 16 weeks period or when the household leave the temporary accommodation.

Q: Can multiple councils claim for different parts of the temporary accommodation funding applicable to the same household (e.g. if they move during the 6 month period)?

- No, claims for up to 6 months of temporary accommodation should be made by one council only, even if people need to be placed in temporary accommodation in an area outside the council that accepted the homelessness duty.
- In this scenario, the council where the duty is accepted should make the claims and would agree to any necessary reimbursement bilaterally with the other council if that council were providing integration support, rather than temporary accommodation claims being made by multiple councils for the same household. (This is similar to the way councils have transferred education funding between themselves in instances where families have moved areas during the school year).
- If possible, no household should move from one temporary accommodation location to another for the stability of the family.

Q: What funding is available to councils who accept a homelessness duty to a homeless household and want to offer settled housing and integration support to that household?

- Councils can access integration funding (£20,520 per person over three years) and the housing costs fund to provide integration support and to secure accommodation for homeless Afghan households eligible for that funding.

- The £20,520 per person tariff and housing costs fund are only available to households in settled accommodation.
- If the settled housing is found within the council's own area all eligible funding can be claimed as with other households supported through ACRS and ARAP.

Q. Is the integration and housing costs funding available where settled housing is found in a different council area from the council that accepted the homelessness duty?

- If the settled housing is secured in another council area, the placing council should contact the receiving area to seek agreement that they are prepared to provide integration support to that family. If the receiving council is prepared to provide integration support they will be able to claim funding for that support.
- If the receiving council is not prepared to provide that integration support then the housing costs funds will not be available for that accommodation placement; as the housing costs are only available as part of an integration package.
- Where there is agreement between placing and receiving councils about a placement with integration support, either council can claim the housing costs funds required to secure the accommodation.

Monitoring impacts

Q: How will you check whether the process is working?

- We are putting in place a monitoring process to monitor outcomes for families/ individuals, homelessness applications and the effectiveness of the policy. We will regularly review and adjust the policy if needed.

Q: Can councils use properties already offered to families as part of their homelessness offer?

- Properties previously offered to families/ individuals will be re-allocated to other families/ individuals as soon as a suitable match is identified. Requests from councils to use accommodation previously offered by the Home Office will be subject to availability.

Q: How can a council support if they do not have a bridging hotel?

- We need a significant number of properties to accommodate all the Afghan families/ individuals currently in bridging hotels. Councils can help by pledging property to support the scheme.

Q: What happens if the process does not work?

- We are putting in place a process to monitor outcomes and the effectiveness of the policy. We will review progress regularly and adjust process as needed.