

Chief Executive and Home Office Group Asylum accommodation and support Note from co-chairs

Dear colleagues,

Chief Executive Group and Home Office Group - asylum accommodation and support

The Chief Executive and Home Office [Group](#) met again on 14 January 2020, with providers once again in attendance. Co-chaired by the LGA and the Home Office, the Group agreed key priorities as being:

- **Contingency arrangements including hotel use:** Chief Executives flagged the current unsustainable increase in the numbers in hotels, with related safeguarding and public health impacts. This required more effective communications and engagement, and a clear plan for recovery; risk assessment and management particularly around safeguarding; and on managing impacts on local services. The Home Office and providers are monitoring hotel use daily, with a planned trajectory to bring numbers down. A potential review of the current system had been scoped for February, with the Group to have a key role in developing shared solutions across councils, government and providers.
- **Pace of procurement in new areas:** there was a need to move more swiftly on developing new models in semi-rural and rural areas, addressing key issues such as access to support, legal aid, advice and reporting centres, assessing whether these new models fitted within current contracts and what resources were needed to build capacity. There was an agreed need to increase the current pace of procurement in new areas, alongside clarification of the roles of the Home Office and providers in ensuring placements took place once councils had agreed to become dispersal areas.
- **Data and information:** The need for data - particularly real time data – was imperative for transparency and to manage risk and reputation. It was acknowledged that there had been a delay in data sharing as a result of the election and the introduction of new internal systems, rather than a lack of willingness. Data at both SMP and council level that could currently be shared to be released imminently, alongside a timeline of when further requested data would follow.
- **Funding:** funding remained a crucial factor for councils in expanding dispersal. A Chief Executive from the Group would attend the Home Office/Treasury co-chaired Asylum Oversight Board to outline cost impacts as developed for the group. This would form part of a collaborative approach to building an evidence base in the run up to the CSR.
- **Transition/Provider issues:** alongside the issues above, there was ongoing issues post transition with providers in some regions, particularly around communications and data, with ongoing issues in quality of advice from Migrant Help across the UK.

Please contact your SMP or Sally.Burlington@local.gov.uk, Head of Policy at the LGA, if you have any queries or comments to inform ongoing discussions with the Home Office on these key priorities.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive, LGA and Kate Carr, Director of Resettlement, Asylum Support and Integration, Home Office; Co-chairs