



Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP
Chair, Home Affairs Select Committee
House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA

2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

www.gov.uk/home-office

22 November 2018

Dear Yvette,

At the Home Affairs Select Committee evidence session held on 21 November 2018 on Asylum Accommodation, you requested that we write to you the following day to address issues regarding the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's findings, and the Home Office response.

The Independent Inspector began his inspection on 21 February 2018 and from the outset and throughout the course of the inspection the Home Office was in regular contact with the inspection team and made clear that any concerns regarding specific cases or accommodation could be raised directly with the Home Office or its accommodation providers for further investigation. During the course of the inspection two specific cases were raised with the Home Office and the inspection team was provided with further information to address their immediate concerns.

One of those cases primarily concerned the provision of cash support and this was addressed in full. The second case is Case Study 4 in the Inspector's report and as you will see from the report we responded in full, setting out that the defects were known to the Provider and that they were being resolved.

The Inspector shared a draft version of the report with the Home Office in July which highlighted a number of case studies that had not previously been brought to the Home Office's attention. The Home Office wrote to the Independent Inspector on 2 July 2018 requesting the details of the properties that were inspected and highlighted in the report as defective. Officials were keen to ensure that the defects were rapidly addressed. The Home Office received a response to this request for information from the Independent Chief Inspector on 9 July 2018, as the ICI has already confirmed he decided not to provide these details for the reasons he has set out.

This chronology of events is consistent with the information provided to the Committee at the hearing on 21 November. Some members of the Committee, citing information provided by the Independent Chief Inspector, suggested that the evidence provided by the Home Office Minister for Immigration and senior officials was incorrect. We do not believe that is the case. The Independent Chief Inspector has subsequently clarified the information passed to the Committee in a letter dated 21 November. The clarification is consistent with the information provided by the Home Office in the evidence session on 21 November.

We do have some concerns regarding the approach taken by the Committee to verify information in real time. As we have seen, this can cause inaccurate information to be used by the Committee to inform their questioning. We hope that this approach will not be used in future.

We would reiterate that if any third party have concerns about individual properties or cases they should refer these to the Home Office so that we can resolve them in the best interests of our Service Users.



Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP
Minister of State for Immigration



Shona Dunn
Second Permanent Under Secretary