

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



21 November 2018

Dear Chair

Having been asked by the Home Affairs Committee Specialist, I am writing to provide clarification of the sequence of events regarding the interactions between the Home Office and the Inspectorate about the properties referred to in my inspection report on 'the Home Office's management of asylum Accommodation provision'.

In its factual accuracy response to the draft report, which I received on 3 July 2018, the Home Office commented that "it would be useful to see details of the specific properties inspected and findings made in order to be able to follow up and ensure that defects been [sic] corrected." This was a reference to the 69 properties visited by inspectors. In my response to the Home Secretary, sent on 9 July 2018, I indicated that I was not willing to do so. The majority of the properties were visited in the company of the service provider, and in some cases with a Home Office person also present.

However, 16 properties had been identified by NGOs and visits took place without the service provider or the Home Office. This included the mother and baby unit referred to at page 31 of the inspection report. In these cases, I had given an undertaking to the NGOs and the occupiers that I would not share their details with the service provider or Home Office, since the occupiers were concerned that this might have adverse consequences for them. I did however make two exceptions, with agreement, where I judged that there was an issue that required immediate attention.

My report was sent to the Home Secretary on 9 July 2018. Since then the only engagement between the Home Office and my office has been concerning the delays in publishing the report. On 19 November, publication having been set for the following day, I was asked again if I would share details of the properties with the Home Office. I declined for the same reasons as before. However, I was also concerned that this would focus too much attention on these particular properties rather than on the wider problems that my report sought to highlight.

Now that the report has been published together with photographs of some of the properties, some of the concerns about confidentiality are less acute since it will be possible for the service providers to identify the properties for themselves, including the mother and baby unit. Where this is not the case, I would feel obliged to revert to the NGOs in question before sharing any more details.

Yours Sincerely



David Bolt

Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration.

cc. Rt Hon. Caroline Nokes MP, Minister of State for Immigration
Shona Dunn, Second Permanent Under Secretary, Home Office

