Home Office

Alex Norris MP
Minister for Border Security & Asylum
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

DECS Reference: MIN/1430426/25

3 December 2025

Dear Shirley-Anne,

Thank you for your letter of 27 November about the use of Cameron Barracks in Inverness as asylum accommodation.

I understand the need for information in the local community. To address this, the Home Office has published a factsheet which can be shared with local residents. The factsheet will be reviewed regularly and updated as details are confirmed. It is available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-accommodation-at-military-sites-factsheets/cameron-barracks-inverness-factsheet

Current position and timing
No final decision has been made on the use of Cameron Barracks, and as such no arrival date for service users has been confirmed. We will provide reasonable notice once a final decision has been made and timelines are agreed.

Partner engagement and impact mitigation
The Home Office is maintaining regular engagement with statutory partners - including Health, Highland Council, Police Scotland, and the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service - to ensure the site operates safely, effectively, and with respect for the local community. We are working closely with NHS partners and Public Health Scotland to identify specific requirements which will be funded by the Home Office. This approach ensures appropriate mitigation for any potential impact on local services.

Occupancy and cohort
If the site is used, it would accommodate single adult asylum seekers age over 18 on a non-detained basis. Families and minors would not be accommodated at the site, and robust screening processes will be in place to minimise the risk of any service user indicating that they are a minor following their allocation to the site. Any occupancy of the site would be phased and incremental. This gradual approach enables the Home Office to carefully monitor the site and respond promptly to any emerging issues and maintain community confidence.

Health, welfare and local coordination
Before any potential ‘go live’ date, we will ensure essential services and wraparound support are in place. We will continue to work closely with local partners - including health, policing and the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service - to ensure asylum seekers receive the support required by law during the processing of their asylum claims.

In summary, the Government has a statutory duty to provide accommodation for asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute. We are determined to restore order to the asylum system so that it operates swiftly, firmly and fairly.

Moving away from hotels is essential to reduce pressure of communities. Cameron Barracks offers basic, safe accommodation designed to minimise impact on local services while meeting our legal obligations.

Yours sincerely,

Alex Norris MP
Minister for Border Security & Asylum

Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice
Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP

F/T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Alex Norris MP
Minister of State for Border Security & Asylum
Home Office

By email: Correspondence.MigrationMinisters@homeoffice.gov.uk

27 November 2025

Dear Alex,

Thank you for your response to my letters dated 28 October and 4 November, which asked urgent questions to help reassure and inform the local community.

Although your response is welcome, and I am reassured to some extent that your officials have now informed local service providers there will no arrivals prior to January 2026, I am deeply concerned that a number of key points remain unanswered.

This lack of information to those being impacted by the decision of the UK Government to use Cameron Barracks to accommodate people seeking asylum is causing significant anxiety locally. It is increasingly alarming the UK Government is consistently failing to meaningfully inform those being impacted by this decision, despite your assurances that the Home Office would engage on the detail with the Council, local service providers, the third sector and the local community. This is particularly the case for health service provision given the winter health pressures that the NHS will be preparing for and responding to.

I must stress again the importance of, and the urgent need for, information to be provided in order for local agencies to properly plan and assess what reasonable support they may be able to offer for arrivals. Concern has been increasing significantly in the area given public knowledge of the initially planned arrival date of end November/early December, and providing this detail will help to reduce local speculation and allow proper planning to take place. It is imperative that the decision not to bring people to the Barracks prior to January is communicated publicly as soon as possible, given the rising concern.

As an absolute minimum the UK Government must urgently confirm to local service providers the health provision and integration support being supplied on site. As part of this it is essential you confirm, with no equivocation, there will be no placement of people who look under 25 onto the site as this risks placing a UAS child in an unsafe situation and places obligations onto Highland Council. The UK Government must also seek to agree with local service providers the most appropriate timescale for accommodating people on site, to ensure support can be provided effectively and impacts on the local community minimised.

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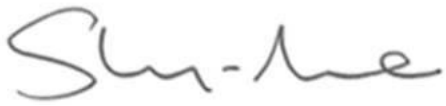
Finally, any cost impacts for local services must be identified and funding agreed to ensure these are mitigated to avoid the local community having to bear the burden of UK Government decisions.

In conclusion and given the Operational Working Group meeting on Wednesday again failed to adequately inform local partners of all the required detail and that our meeting has now been rearranged to mid-December, I again urge you to provide the detail requested as a matter of urgency. Not doing so will make a challenging situation far worse for the local community and for the people seeking asylum we want to support.

I hope to hear from you soon.



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Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice
Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP

F/T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Fergus Ewing MSP
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

By email: Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot

17 November 2025

Dear Fergus,

I am writing in response to the email you sent to the First Minister on 3 November and the email you sent to me following the Urgent Question raised in the Scottish Parliament regarding Cameron Barracks.

I can confirm that I met with Home Office Minister Alex Norris on Tuesday 4 November. Unfortunately, the Minister was still not in a position to provide the answers and clarity urgently needed for the local authority, our local public services and residents. I have once again written to the Home Office seeking urgent answers on the anticipated impact of public services, as well as confirmation on the expected financial support for Highland Council.

I enclose the three letters I have issued to the Home Office regarding Cameron Barracks:

Letter to Home Secretary on 26 September:
Immigration and asylum: Letter to UK Government - gov.scot

Letter to Home Secretary on 29 October:
Accommodation for people seeking asylum: Letter to UK Government - gov.scot

Letter to Minister for Border Security & Asylum on 4 November:
https://www.gov.scot/publications/clarification-on-housing-people-seeking-asylum-letter-to-uk-government/

Our position therefore remains that the Home Office must provide answers to the questions raised so that the Council and other partners can assess the impact that using the Barracks to accommodate people seeking asylum will have on the local area. I do not believe it would be appropriate or helpful for the Scottish Government to state a view either in support of, or in opposition to the plan until we have seen these details.

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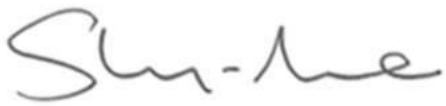
We share many of the same concerns regarding the suitability of the site and the impact that this will have on local services. Regrettably, the lack of engagement and information from the Home Office has left both the Council and local residents facing misinformation and heightened concerns. I can reassure you that the Scottish Government will continue to press the Home Office to share the necessary information.

Yours sincerely,



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