



Alison Thewliss MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

27 August 2021

Dear Alison,

Re: Extension of Home Office's tenure of the Napier Barracks

Given the APPG's ongoing interest in Napier Barracks as well as broader immigration issues, I am writing to notify you of the Home Office's intention to continue our use of Napier as asylum accommodation beyond 21 September 2021 when our planning approval under Q Regs (Permitted Development) is due to expire.

We have implemented significant improvements since February 2021, following the High Court's finding that for the period between September 2020 and February 2021, the accommodation provided at Napier was inadequate for the purposes of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and the Asylum Seekers (Reception Conditions) Regulations 2005 and Reception Directive 2003/9/EC. The improvements we have made include:

- Increased direct engagement by the Home Office with contractors, stakeholders and site residents
- Putting in place joint management tools developed in partnership with Public Health England (PHE) and Clearsprings Ready Homes (CRH)
- Supporting CRH to ensure they prioritise work on fire risk management
- Restricting the length of stay for those in Napier to between 60 and 90 days. Based on the current configuration once an individual's stay has hit 60 days, we will look to move to dispersal accommodation before the 90-day limit. If any individual is found not to fit the suitability criteria, they are moved offsite at the earliest opportunity to alternative accommodation.

My officials continue to make improvements, including:

- The re-introduction of sports and recreational activities
- The introduction of outdoor seating and tables
- Weekly virtual meetings between Home Office officials and residents, and the main subcontractor meeting residents weekly to identify and act on concerns
- The provision of visiting dentistry on site and continued free travel to medical appointments
- The re-introduction of NGOs on site to provide activities, advice, and support

- Installing electrical sockets for each sleeping area and rolling out individual lights are to enable individuals to control the light around them at night
- Installation of CCTV on the site
- A joint general risk register and issues log along with a business continuity plan and evacuation plan have been developed, which has improved the operation of the site and confidence of the onsite teams
- Conducting asylum interviews for those who are eligible

Specifically, in terms of managing public health in relation to Covid-19, we are:

- Offering all residents of Napier vaccinations against Covid-19
- Ensuring new residents take a lateral flow test on arrival and thereafter twice a week;
- Ensuring all staff take a lateral flow test on arrival;
- Providing extensive Covid-19 signage in the top 10 languages
- Providing residents with personal cleaning kits

The accommodation at Napier was set up in response to the enormous pressures placed on our asylum system by the coronavirus pandemic. These pressures remain and are being exacerbated by the unprecedented rise in dangerous and illegal small boat crossings. Similarly, hotel availability is impacted by the work currently under way to bring Afghan families to safety, the provision of Managed Quarantine Service accommodation and the revival of our domestic tourism industry as lockdown restrictions have been removed across the UK.

To ensure this much-needed facility continues to provide accommodation, my officials have prepared a planning proposal extending our use of Napier to 2025 and we have today laid a Special Development Order (SDO) which will come into effect on 21 September when the current permission expires. The site will be handed back to the MoD in 2025 for housing development in 2026, and in the meantime, as part of our ongoing tenure we will implement a programme of works to improve the accommodation and strengthen the available amenities.

Ongoing use of Napier, and the development of new accommodation models, are vital to our ability to continue to meet the ongoing demand to accommodate destitute asylum seekers. The use of the Napier site may also form part of the Home Office's longer-term plans to reform the asylum system, as set out in the New Plan for Immigration published on 24 March 2021. The plan includes the provision, through the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, for the greater use of accommodation centres to provide housing and other services to asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute. Continued use of the Napier site may enable the new processes to be tested and piloted, and so inform the final design of how accommodation centres will operate.

Following on from your request to visit Napier with members of the APPG, I welcome your visit and confirm my officials will be pleased to host you in September.

Yours sincerely,



Kevin Foster MP
Minister for Future Borders and Immigration