

Ian Bros

www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk

By email to email address [request-64249-
eb824867@whatdotheyknow.com]

Date: 31/03/11

Freedom of Information Request ref : 17978

Dear Ian Bros

Thank you for email dated 5 March 2011 regarding the public regulatory agencies overseeing the work of the new Open Accommodation and Pre-Departure Accommodation facilities. Your request falls to be dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. You have specified requested information on the following:

1. Which public regulatory agencies will oversee the work of the new Open Accommodation and Pre-Departure Accommodation facilities?
2. Were any public regulatory agencies involved in oversight of the Open Accommodation pilot schemes in Thornton Heath, Kent and Glasgow?
3. Has HM Inspectorate of Prisons been involved in any preparatory discussions over possible oversight of the new Open Accommodation and Pre-Departure Accommodation facilities?

1. Open Accommodation in Thornton Heath

The Independent Chief Inspector of the UK Border Agency (UKBA) may inspect open accommodation in Thornton Heath at any time, and the Children's Commissioner for England has a statutory right of entry in order to interview any child accommodated there.

Open Accommodation is entirely open and we do not use any detention powers to require families to stay there. Therefore, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons is not involved.

Discussions with Croydon Council's Local Child Safeguarding Board on managing local services involvement in open accommodation in Thornton Heath began in November 2010. As a result of these discussions, the safeguarding board is drawing up a protocol with local service providers including Croydon Social Services, the NHS and the police to outline what local services are available to families housed in the accommodation and to set out which local bodies should be contacted in the event of a medical, child welfare or security issue.

2. Pre-Departure Accommodation

Pre-Departure Accommodation will be subject to inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons. It will also have an Independent Monitoring Board and the Children's Commissioner for England will have the power to enter at any time.

We have had no discussions directly with the Chief Inspector of Prisons at this time but these will take place closer to the opening of the facility. We will also be having discussions with the relevant local Child Safeguarding Board.

3. Kent Accommodation Pilot

The Children's Commissioner for England always had a statutory right of entry (at any reasonable time) to the family accommodation in Ashford in Kent in order to interview any child accommodated there.

4. Glasgow Pilot

The Glasgow pilot is testing new ways of interacting with families to help return them to their country of origin. We are testing a process rather than the accommodation that families reside in. Families in the Glasgow pilot are housed in accommodation provided as part of the asylum support delivered under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. The families are not detained during this period and they are not subject to any further regulatory authority. The pilot is operated in partnership with Glasgow City Council.

If you are dissatisfied with this response you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request by submitting a complaint within two months to the address below, quoting reference 17978. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

Information Access Team
Home Office
Ground Floor, Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

e-mail: info.access@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

As part of any internal review the Department's handling of your information request will be reassessed by staff who were not involved in providing you with this response. If you remain dissatisfied after this internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Yours sincerely

Mrs. Isra Hussain
Freedom of Information Team
UKBA