



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

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By email

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Our ref: 09/02/tr/2750

08 March 2021

Dear Callum May,

Re: The suitability of barrack-type accommodation to asylum seekers during pandemic

Thank you for your request received on 08 February 2021 addressed to Public Health England (PHE). In accordance with Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act), I can confirm that PHE does not hold the information you have specified.

Request

On Monday February 8th, the Home Office minister Chris Philip MP was asked about the suitability of Napier Barracks in Folkestone to house asylum seekers during the Coronavirus pandemic. He told the House of Commons:

"We've been consulting with Public Health England throughout this episode. The use of such accommodation is appropriate and suitable"

"Barrack-type accommodation not only is suitable but it's a great deal cheaper than hotels".

Under the Freedom of Information Act, please could you supply the advice you have provided to the Home Office about the suitability of barrack-type accommodation to house asylum seekers during the pandemic?

Response

PHE does not hold information in the way you have requested. The role of the PHE health protection team is to provide advice on outbreak management, rather than the suitability of the accommodation. Under section 16 of the Act, public authorities have a duty to provide advice and assistance. Accordingly, you may find the following Government guidance for providers of accommodation for asylum seekers regarding COVID-19 of some use: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-providers-of-accommodation-for-asylum-seekers>

If you have any queries regarding the information that has been supplied to you, please refer your query to me in writing in the first instance. If you remain dissatisfied and would like to request an internal review, then please contact us at the address above or by emailing foi@phe.gov.uk.

Please note that you have the right to an independent review by the Information Commissioner's Office if a complaint cannot be resolved through the PHE complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner's Office can be contacted by calling the ICO's helpline on 0303 123 1113, visiting the ICO's website at www.ico.org.uk or writing to the ICO at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely
FOI Team