

JULIAN SMITH MP

Skipton & Ripon



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Ms Sara Trehitt

17 January 2018

Dear Ms Trehitt,

Many thanks for your email about the Westminster Hall debate on the 14 December concerning Asylum Accommodation.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend this debate due to previously arranged diary commitments. However, I do understand that during the debate the Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP, then Minister for Immigration, made the following points about the contracting arrangements for asylum accommodation:

"Since the current system for asylum accommodation contracts began in 2012, there have been changes. It is important to be aware that the contracts for the provision of housing for asylum seekers demand high standards of accommodation—in many areas, higher than in the social housing sector. I should also be clear that a third of all properties are inspected every year—more than in social housing—and where it is required, appropriate and requested, that is done in conjunction with local authorities, to involve them in the process. It is a requirement that every property be inspected every month by the accommodation provider. We encourage service users to report defects to their provider as they arise.

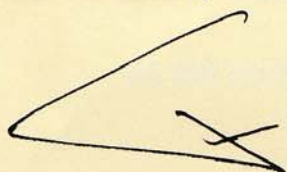
The contracts also contain strict time limits within which repairs must be made, and we in the Home Office have an inspection monitoring regime to ensure that those time scales are met. The vast majority of accommodation provided has been maintained at a good standard, but as with all housing, property defects and issues can and do occur. Where they do, our providers are required to rectify them."

Despite not being able to attend the debate I will continue to follow this important issue very closely. If you want to read the full transcript of the debate you can do so through the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/ydgd2drj>

I have also sent you the response that I have received from the Minister for Immigration regarding the representation I made on your behalf. I hope this has now reached you. If there are any further points you would like me to raise with the Minister, or if there is ever anything else that I can do to help, please do let me know.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a smaller 'S' and a horizontal line.

Rt Hon Julian Smith MP