



9 May 2022

Dear Council Leader

My letter of 13 April announced our move to a full dispersal model supported by grant funding. I also advised we would work with local government through an informal consultation to inform how this model will work across England, Scotland, and Wales across regions and nations.

Your views are extremely important to us and I am pleased to inform you the informal consultation is now open and can be accessed [here](#).

The consultation will invite views from Local Government, Devolved Governments, Local Authorities and Non-Government Organisations who have an interest in asylum dispersal. It will shape the design of a reformed asylum dispersal system which covers all local authority areas in England, Scotland and Wales and is:

- Fair, sustainable and value for the tax payer
- Collaborative, providing increased engagement and involvement of local authorities
- Innovative and responsive to changing demands and needs.

We have engaged with local government officials through the Home Office Local Government Chief Executive (HOLGCEX) and Strategic Migration Partnership (SMP) networks during the pre-consultation period. Our HOLGCEX network brings together senior representatives from the Home Office and its accommodation providers, Local Government Associations and Local Authority Chief Executives to inform the strategic approach to asylum dispersal across the UK. SMPs are local government led partnerships, whose role is to coordinate and support delivery of asylum and refugee schemes alongside regional and devolved migration priorities. The views of both networks have informed the consultation process and content.

In addition to this online consultation, we are also undertaking regional engagement workshops with local authorities to agree a regional allocation model, to implement full dispersal for the coming years. The model will consider the impacts on urban and rural areas as well as market capacity. It will provide local authorities with more control and autonomy at a regional level by asking them to collectively agree an approach to dispersal in their region and presents an opportunity for national and local government to work together to ensure the system works better for communities across England, Scotland, and Wales.

The first round of regional workshops will commence on 16 May. These workshops will provide further detail around next steps and set out a timetable for the development of regional allocations and regional plans. We and our commercial partners will work in partnership through the SMPs to reach regional agreements which work for all parties. If, however, local authorities are unable to agree an approach to dispersal in their region, then

the Home Office and its commercial partners will move ahead with a regional plan. This will be achieved through a backstop; a weighting exercise, designed through the consultation, to determine allocations in that region.

A second round of engagement workshops will commence at the mid-point of the consultation, to build upon the responses through the online consultation, gathering additional qualitative evidence to provide the Home Office with a richer evidence base.

To support the implementation of a full dispersal model, as part of the consultation process, the Home Office will undertake a New Burdens assessment. This will be an opportunity to better understand the costs associated with asylum dispersal and engage with the local government sector. Where we identify genuine additional and ongoing costs, these will be addressed in line with the New Burdens Doctrine and subject to a post-implementation review.

The consultation will close on 1 July, and we expect regional plans will be implemented shortly after. Following the consultation closure, we will continue to work closely with local government and other interested partners to inform the development of the design of the new system.

The arrangements for asylum accommodation are different in Northern Ireland as Northern Ireland does not form part of the asylum dispersal system. My officials will work with colleagues in Northern Ireland, to identify how they can contribute to this UK wide challenge.

I hope you and your colleagues will take the time to complete the consultation and ensure your views are heard as we work together to design the new model.

With my very best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Foster', with a large flourish at the end.

Kevin Foster MP
Minister for Safe and Legal Migration