Dear Secretary of State

**Urgent Action Needed in Response to Death in Glasgow Asylum Accommodation**

I write in the expectation that you are aware of the tragic death of a young man in MacLay’s Hotel in Glasgow last Tuesday, 5 May 2020. The deceased man sought refugee protection in the UK and therefore was under your jurisdiction.

In that context, we welcome the Prime Minister commitment at [**PMQs**](https://twitter.com/scotrefcouncil/status/1260567164265926656) yesterday to urgently investigate your housing contractor Mears’s decision to move 300+ people from existing safe accommodation in Glasgow to six hotels in the city. The deceased man was one of this group.

On Monday this week, Scottish Refugee Council published a [**5-point plan**](https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/devastating-death-in-hotel-used-for-asylum-accommodation-in-glasgow/) that we urged the Home Office and Mears to adopt and implement immediately.

For ease of reference, our 5-point plan is as follows:

1. Both Mears and the Home Office must cooperate fully with the Scottish investigation of death process led by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. The family and loved ones of the man must be contacted sensitively by the Home Office and treated with dignity and respect.

2. You must publicly set out any steps taken or planned to support those affected by this traumatic event, especially hotel residents as well as front-line workers.

3.[**Hundreds of people have been moved recently**](https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/why-are-people-in-asylum-accommodation-being-moved-into-hotels/) from either single occupancy or two-bedroom flat accommodation to hotels procured by Mears and the Home Office. Your department and Mears must explain, in a public statement:

* **why** they adopted this plan and how it was deemed compliant with Covid-19 public health instructions;
* **who** they consulted on this plan and when and in what terms; and
* **how** they considered vulnerabilities before, during and after moving each of all those affected.

4. We understand that around 360 people are now housed in hotels in Glasgow. The Home Office and Mears must publicly set out the conditions in these hotels and the specific support available to people in them.

Page 2/…..

Page 2.

**5.** Mears must keep the commitment they made at the [**Home Affairs Committee on Thursday 7 May**](https://parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/c8bcbf6b-b6f4-413d-9073-0a22c4c7daa9) to work closely with Glasgow City Council and NGOs on transitioning out of the pandemic. The Home Office, under your direction, must also make this commitment. Destitution and homelessness are incompatible with public health recovery in relation to Covid-19. Evicting people from any form of asylum accommodation this summer must be ruled out now.

I urge you to lead, and to instruct your Department to implement this plan. As always, the refugee support sector stands ready to assist. It is imperative that we lessen the risk of further tragedies in these hotels and asylum accommodation.

There is much work to be done. I urge you to start now by ensuring the use of hotel accommodation is temporary, that those with vulnerabilities are moved to safe accommodation, and that as the lockdown eases, no one is left destitute and homeless and at heightened risk of exposure to and transmission of Covid-19.

Yours sincerely



**Sabir Zazai**

**Chief Executive**

Scottish Refugee Council

Email: sabir.zazai@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk