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FROM LORD GASCOIGNE
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3 June 2024

Dear Lord Bishop of Lincoln,

During questions on Thursday 2 May 2024, you asked about the asylum backlog and its impact on coastal towns including Skegness.

I would firstly like to express my appreciation to the people of Skegness, and other coastal towns, for their hospitality and understanding towards the asylum seekers that have been accommodated in hotels in their areas, and acknowledge their concerns about the impacts on these communities.

The Home Office has met the Prime Minister's pledge to clear the legacy backlog of asylum cases (those claims made before 28 June 2022) and all of those cases have been reviewed. Now it is working through the next cohort of claims. Flow claims (those lodged on or after 28 June 2022 and before 7 March 2023 when the Illegal Migration Bill was introduced) are being prioritised now the legacy backlog has been cleared.

The Home Office is working hard to improve the level of service it can provide to those who claim asylum. It is committed to ensuring asylum claims, where admissible, are correctly decided in accordance with our international obligations under the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights in a timely and sensitive way and on an individual, object and impartial basis.

It has taken action to speed up asylum processing whilst maintaining the integrity of the system. This includes simplifying guidance and streamlining processes. It has developed existing and new technology to help build on improvement such as digital interview and moving away from a paper-based system. It has also developed digital tools to support case working, including appointment booking, case prioritisation, allocation tools and a document exchange portal.

I hope you find this letter helpful. I will also send a copy to those Peers who spoke to the question and will place a copy in the House Library.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'All the best, Lord Gascoigne'.

LORD GASCOIGNE

The Lord Bishop of Lincoln
House of Lords