



Foreign, Commonwealth  
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Sarah Champion MP  
Chair, International Development Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
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Dear Sarah

Thank you for your letter of 1 April responding to the recent announcement that FCDO's Scotland Joint Headquarters will no longer be moving to a central Glasgow location.

I appreciate you taking the time to write to me with your concerns. I underline that the former DFID - and since the merger - the FCDO, have been well served by local talent in the region over many years.

As demographics change, it's also a fact that 75% of FCDO staff working in Abercrombie House live in postcodes in the Central Scotland Belt, outside East Kilbride. The FCDO remains keen to offer opportunity and attract talent to its Joint Headquarters in Scotland from across the region, wherever people may happen to live.

In response to your specific questions.

**Are there plans to continue with a relocation programme in the future, or will the FCDO commit to maintaining its headquarters within Abercrombie House?**

The Foreign Secretary and I remain committed to an enduring FCDO presence in Scotland as part of the UK Government's wider footprint. For the foreseeable future, this means Abercrombie House will remain the FCDO's Joint Headquarters.

The decision not to relocate to Glasgow, together with wider Civil Service reform and impacts from the latest Spending Review, needs to be considered fully and in a coordinated way as we plan ahead. We are developing our thinking on what this means for the FCDO. The future size and shape of the FCDO, including our presence in Scotland, will depend on the outcome of all these considerations.

In the meantime, recruitment in Abercrombie House continues as before. Our relocation support package remains in place and staff who wish to relocate can and are continuing to do so.

**Was the decision to remain in Abercrombie House made as a result of the recent announcement to reduce ODA spend to 0.3% of GNI, or were there other concerns with the plans in place?**

No. This decision is independent of the Government's decision to fund an increase in the Defence budget to protect the UK's security by reducing the UK's Overseas Development Assistance temporarily.

The FCDO considered that the move to Glasgow would bring the greatest benefits to our future Joint HQ in Scotland, enabling us also to deliver the FCDO's Places for Growth 2030 ambition. But the final decision on the move was always subject to FCDO and Treasury Ministers being comfortable with the value for money and affordability of the move.

**Can you provide an estimate of the expected financial loss resulting from the cancellation of the relocation?**

Development of the project to relocate to Glasgow was professionally managed by the FCDO's Estates and Finance experts with the support of colleagues from the Government Property Agency (GPA) as well as external professional consultants assessing and developing our real estate options in Glasgow over the last 18 months.

The overall costs of the relocation were incorporated in the FCDO's Outline Business Case. Costs incurred in developing our proposal were rigorously controlled using existing service contracts and procurement controls and were commensurate with projects of this scope and nature. We are reviewing the expenditure incurred in line with the losses guidance per Managing Public Money, and these will be disclosed in due course. Meanwhile, there is no ongoing financial implication resulting from the cancellation of the relocation.

**Is the FCDO planning to invest in updating the capacity and functionality of Abercrombie House, to allow for staff to have equal opportunities to their counterparts based in London?**

The FCDO and GPA are already undertaking immediate improvements to facilities in Abercrombie House to benefit the overall working experience for our staff, such as the resurfaced car park which was delivered last month. Further initiatives and improvements are being considered. Decisions on future investment are subject to the outcome of ongoing Spending Review discussions and longer-term requirements across the FCDO's UK and overseas estates.

Yours ever,



**CATHERINE WEST MP**  
**Minister for the Indo-Pacific**