

To: Mayor and Aldermen and Mr. M. Akerboom, Director of Social and Safety
Jacob Obrechtlaan 4
4611 AR Bergen op Zoom

Date: April 29, 2024

Subject: Open Letter Regarding My Stay at Avondvrede

Dear Mayor and Aldermen, Mr. Akerboom,

I am writing this open letter in response to your communication dated April 16, 2024, in which Mr. Akerboom asked me to indicate whether I wish to remain a resident of Avondvrede. I have shared my response with the readers and viewers of Streekomroep ZuidWest, as the ombudsman and investigative editorial team of that broadcaster have been closely following developments at this shelter location.

There appears to be a misunderstanding in your letter of April 16 that could have significant consequences for me. It states that I am no longer staying at Avondvrede. However, this is not accurate. I am there almost daily, unless I am away from the city for an art project for a few days. However, I do not sleep there, and there are several important reasons for this decision. When I was directed to the basement space by your staff, the heating was not working, and it was freezing cold. The emergency exit was blocked, and the sanitary facilities were broken. While some of these issues have been addressed, there is still no bed, and I do not feel safe. Since receiving that official letter, I have not heard anything further from your staff.

As your project leader for refugees, Ms. De Valk, has emphasized on multiple occasions, there are rats around the building, and it cannot be guaranteed that they stay outside. I urgently request your understanding that I do not wish to sleep there and therefore would like to be assigned a different room. Your staff is aware of the importance of a single-person room for me. Hence, my appeal to you in this open letter: I do not want to leave Avondvrede. Please provide me, like the other residents of Avondvrede, with a room where I feel safe.

Furthermore, I kindly ask that our correspondence be conducted in English. Your previous letter was in Dutch, and it takes some time for me to understand its content.

Sincerely,

O. Pinchuk
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4611DX Bergen op Zoom