# Residents voice rising fears over asylum seeker hotel’s impact on Chesterfield community



Residents of a quiet countryside area near Chesterfield, Derbyshire, are expressing growing concerns regarding the Sandpiper Hotel, which has functioned as accommodation for asylum seekers for the past two years. Once a three-star Best Western, the hotel was repurposed under a Home Office contract following its closure, sparking complaints from locals who claim they were not consulted about its new role.

Concerns have been raised about alleged antisocial behaviour linked to the hotel’s residents. Locals have reported issues including excessive noise, littering, and groups of men loitering in the vicinity, prompting calls for the facility's closure. Gary Cook, whose family previously owned the hotel, expressed that the current situation has negatively impacted local property values and the community's overall wellbeing. “I think there are about 80 blokes in there, and it has lowered the value of the houses around here,” he stated.

Residents, such as Shannon Freeman, 31, have described feeling uneasy about the activities they have witnessed. Freeman noted that there has been an increase in what she perceives as problematic behaviour. “They have been on the street looking through people's windows. We got cameras and that seemed to stop,” she said, recounting experiences that have contributed to a general sense of discomfort.

Recent incidents have exacerbated local fears, including the arrest of a 27-year-old man at the hotel on suspicion of possessing explosives. Although he was released on bail with authorities confirming no danger was posed to the public, the event has heightened residents' anxiety.

Numerous community members shared their feelings about the ongoing issues. Chelsea Lodge, a 23-year-old mother, recounted experiences of being approached for money when returning home after bus rides. She reflected a sentiment echoed by others, stating, “there are a few that are not sensible to be around.”

Another local, Marina Tamasauskas, 41, raised concerns for her daughter's safety. “I had to walk up and get her [from school] a couple of months ago when we heard some men were hanging around,” she said, expressing solidarity with other parents worried for their children's safety.

Residents have also noted that previous tranquillity in the area has deteriorated. Caroline Winn, a mother of four, reported unsettling observations of groups roaming the streets during the night. “I cannot let my 14-year-old daughter walk my dog any more,” she expressed, indicating the change in community dynamics over the past two years.

Amid growing hostility, many residents have voiced their frustrations about feeling unheard. One anonymous woman lamented, “We had no idea. It was a derelict hotel they took over,” criticising the lack of community consultation prior to the hotel’s transition to housing asylum seekers.

As the situation continues to evolve, local authorities have been contacted but remain reticent regarding specific interventions. The Home Office has yet to publicly respond to the myriad complaints raised by the Chesterfield community.

Overall, the transformation of the Sandpiper Hotel into a migrant accommodation facility has ignited significant anxiety and discontent among local residents, who now wrestle with the implications for their community’s safety and overall quality of life.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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