# Protests escalate over male-only migrant housing at London and Essex hotels amid safety fears



Further protests have unfolded outside a London hotel near Heathrow Airport following the decision to house only lone male migrants there, a shift from the previous arrangement that included both men and women. Concerned locals gathered in the streets carrying placards and chanting slogans such as "protect our kids," while one woman urged the crowd to maintain peaceful demonstrations via a megaphone. Police presence was noted during these protests, reflecting ongoing tensions in communities hosting asylum seekers. Similar demonstrations have taken place at other hotels switching from mixed-gender to exclusively male migrant residents.

In Epping, Essex, the Bell Hotel has become a focal point for unrest after it was repurposed to accommodate only lone male asylum seekers, relocating families and single women elsewhere. The move prompted protests from local residents deeply concerned about community safety and integration. The catalyst for much of the anger was the recent charge against an Ethiopian asylum seeker staying at the Bell Hotel, accused of sexually assaulting a 14-year-old girl shortly after his arrival in the UK. This incident intensified fears and sparked widespread protests, while simultaneously prompting counter-demonstrations by groups such as Stand Up To Racism. The protests have attracted hundreds, sometimes escalating into confrontations that required police intervention, with several arrests made to maintain order.

Local authorities have voiced their alarm over the situation. Joanne Sexton, leader of Spelthorne Borough Council, has formally written to the Secretary of State expressing worry about the sudden change in the hotel’s use, highlighting the potential for poor integration and weakened community ties. Similarly, five local leaders from Epping have called on Home Secretary Yvette Cooper to prioritise the closure of the Bell Hotel, citing increasing community tensions and significant strains on policing resources due to ongoing protests. Epping Forest District Council passed a unanimous motion urging the government to shut the hotel, referencing escalating violence and intimidation. The Home Office has responded by stating it is working closely with community stakeholders and aiming to close all migrant hotels by the end of Parliament.

The policing costs for managing the unrest have been substantial, with reports indicating expenditures of around £100,000 just in Epping. Police have faced challenges during demonstrations, including injuries to officers and the need to separate opposing groups to prevent violence. Despite the strain, public order has been largely maintained, though concerns remain high among residents about safety and community cohesion.

This unfolding situation reflects broader national tensions regarding asylum policies and the accommodation of migrants in local communities. While government officials affirm their commitment to maintaining order and addressing the concerns of residents, communities hosting these hotels continue to navigate the delicate balance between welcoming asylum seekers and safeguarding public safety, with local leaders advocating for clearer communication and more supportive integration measures.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2089655/migration-fury-asylum-hotel-male-only), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/epping-protests-bell-hotel-canary-wharf-migrants-tommy-robinson-b1240185.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2089655/migration-fury-asylum-hotel-male-only), [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/hundreds-descend-epping-asylum-hotel-b1240253.html), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/epping-protests-bell-hotel-canary-wharf-migrants-tommy-robinson-b1240185.html), [[6]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/fight-erupts-migrant-hotel-epping-b1238009.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2089655/migration-fury-asylum-hotel-male-only), [[3]](https://news.sky.com/story/epping-leaders-request-meeting-with-home-secretary-over-asylum-hotel-13404161), [[5]](https://news.sky.com/story/epping-council-demands-government-immediately-close-asylum-hotel-as-home-office-works-to-restore-order-13401550), [[7]](https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/uk/epping-hotel-anti-migrant-protest-small-boats/)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2089655/migration-fury-asylum-hotel-male-only> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/hundreds-descend-epping-asylum-hotel-b1240253.html> - Hundreds of protesters gathered outside The Bell Hotel in Epping, Essex, to demonstrate against housing asylum seekers. The protest was sparked by the arrest of an Ethiopian asylum seeker, Hadush Gerberslasie Kebatu, who was charged with sexual assault. Counter-demonstrators, including members of Stand Up To Racism, also attended, leading to a tense but largely peaceful standoff. Police made three arrests during the demonstration, and both groups were separated by officers to maintain order.
3. <https://news.sky.com/story/epping-leaders-request-meeting-with-home-secretary-over-asylum-hotel-13404161> - Five local leaders from Epping have urged Home Secretary Yvette Cooper to prioritise the closure of The Bell Hotel, which is housing asylum seekers. They expressed concerns over escalating community tensions and the strain on local policing due to ongoing protests. The leaders emphasised the urgency of addressing the situation to prevent further unrest and ensure community safety.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/epping-protests-bell-hotel-canary-wharf-migrants-tommy-robinson-b1240185.html> - Protests continued outside The Bell Hotel in Epping, Essex, where asylum seekers are housed. An anti-migrant protest and a pro-migrant counter-demonstration took place, with police reporting three arrests but no violence. Tensions have been high since an asylum seeker was charged with sexual assault, leading to multiple demonstrations and counter-protests in the area.
5. <https://news.sky.com/story/epping-council-demands-government-immediately-close-asylum-hotel-as-home-office-works-to-restore-order-13401550> - Epping Forest District Council has unanimously voted to urge the government to close The Bell Hotel, which is housing asylum seekers, following a series of protests. The council cited escalating violence and intimidation in the community as reasons for the request. The Home Office has stated it is working to restore order and address the situation.
6. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/fight-erupts-migrant-hotel-epping-b1238009.html> - A protest outside The Bell Hotel in Epping, Essex, turned violent as anti-immigration protesters clashed with counter-demonstrators. The unrest was triggered by the arrest of an asylum seeker, Hadush Gerberslasie Kebatu, who was charged with sexual assault. Police intervened to separate the groups and prevent further violence.
7. <https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/uk/epping-hotel-anti-migrant-protest-small-boats/> - The cost of policing anti-migrant protests outside The Bell Hotel in Epping, Essex, has reached £100,000. The protests were sparked by the arrest of an asylum seeker, Hadush Gerberslasie Kebatu, who was charged with sexual assault. Police reported multiple arrests and injuries among officers during the demonstrations.