# Blind woman terrified after man enters home as tensions rise around Canary Wharf asylum hotel



A blind woman near Canary Wharf was left “terrified” after a man forced his way into her home on the evening of Wednesday 13 August, her family say, in an episode that has sharpened tensions around a nearby hotel being used to house asylum seekers. Cherelle Augustus, who spoke to the Daily Mail, said her sister — who has serious health problems and is blind — was at home with a child when “this lunatic bursts in”, adding that the occupants feared for their lives. According to the original report, family members described the sister as traumatised and shaken by the incident.

Police say the circumstances are “complex”. The Metropolitan Police has told reporters that the man entered through an open door after being followed by a group in the street and, after an initial review, has not been arrested because the force’s enquiries so far “have not identified any offences.” Officers say they are reviewing body‑worn footage and other video as part of their investigation. Family members, however, have accused officers of simply returning the man to the nearby hotel without questioning him — an account that sits uneasily alongside the force’s statement and which highlights the conflicting perceptions of policing on the ground.

In a linked strand of activity that night the Met says a 22‑year‑old woman was arrested on suspicion of a number of offences, including common assault, affray, possession of an offensive weapon, possession of a Class B drug and assault on an emergency worker. The force also used a dispersal power in the area and detained two other people for alleged breaches of that order, as officers try to restore order amid competing gatherings around the hotel.

The incident occurred yards from the Britannia International Hotel in Marsh Wall, which Tower Hamlets Council says the government intends to use for temporary asylum accommodation. The hotel has been a focal point for public anger and for counter‑demonstrations in recent weeks, and the original report notes video footage showing groups of new arrivals being brought to the site in coaches and ushered hurriedly into the lobby at dawn — images that have fuelled anxiety locally.

The Britannia has repeatedly drawn rival street gatherings. Journalists and broadcasters on the scene described crowds of anti‑migrant protesters met by counter‑demonstrators, with police forming containment lines and, at times, detaining people from both sides. LBC reported that a mothers’ “pink” protest was disrupted by masked men who let off flares and chanted, and the Met confirmed officers intervened after flares were set off, with at least one arrest on suspicion of assaulting an emergency worker.

Beyond the immediate policing challenge, the hotel’s conversion has produced knock‑on effects across the local neighbourhood. A Canary Wharf residential management company temporarily banned food‑delivery riders after citing resident security concerns linked to the heightened tensions around the site — a measure the delivery platforms deny was connected to undocumented workers but say reflects residents’ anxieties and media coverage of the protests.

Those local disturbances sit against a wider national backdrop of sustained Channel crossings that has stretched accommodation capacity and intensified political debate. Official Home Office figures cited by broadcasters show more than 50,000 people have crossed the Channel in small boats since the current prime minister took office, with one day in August seeing hundreds of arrivals. Separately, national reporting has highlighted an especially dangerous episode when Border Force recovered an inflatable carrying more than a hundred people — a single‑craft record reported in national newspapers — underscoring the operational strain on border and reception systems.

The combination of large numbers arriving and the need to find temporary housing has fed political controversy. Broadcasters and local officials say councils and the Home Office have been moving people into hotels as an interim measure, prompting protests over the absence of local consultation and concerns about security, welfare and the practicalities of hosting large groups in residential precincts. Government pilot measures and bilateral arrangements with France were described by ministers as partial responses, but critics maintain those steps fall short of a durable solution to smuggling networks and the housing pressures that follow arrivals.

For the family of the woman who was frightened in her own home, the immediate demand is for clarity and reassurance. The Metropolitan Police says its investigation remains ongoing while it reviews footage and other evidence; local residents and campaigners are calling for better communication about placements and stronger safeguards for vulnerable neighbours. The episode underlines how national migration challenges can quickly become acute local flashpoints — and how, as officials and campaigners argue across different forums, finding balance between public safety, compassion and law enforcement remains politically and practically contested.

### 📌 Reference Map:

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15001229/Blind-woman-terrified-migrant-living-just-metres-away-Canary-Wharf-hotel-burst-home-family-reveal.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/police-metropolitan-police-marsh-wall-london-canary-wharf-b1242873.html), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15001229/Blind-woman-terrified-migrant-living-just-metres-away-Canary-Wharf-hotel-burst-home-family-reveal.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/police-metropolitan-police-marsh-wall-london-canary-wharf-b1242873.html), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15001229/Blind-woman-terrified-migrant-living-just-metres-away-Canary-Wharf-hotel-burst-home-family-reveal.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15001229/Blind-woman-terrified-migrant-living-just-metres-away-Canary-Wharf-hotel-burst-home-family-reveal.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://news.sky.com/story/police-attend-protest-outside-london-hotel-which-will-house-asylum-seekers-13400395)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://news.sky.com/story/police-attend-protest-outside-london-hotel-which-will-house-asylum-seekers-13400395), [[5]](https://www.lbc.co.uk/article/canary-wharf-family-protest-migrant-asylum-hotel-thugs-5Hjd8GC_2/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/aug/09/food-delivery-riders-banned-from-luxury-flats-in-london)
* Paragraph 7 – [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/more-than-50000-people-have-crossed-channel-in-small-boats-since-starmer-became-pm-13410223), [[7]](https://www.thetimes.com/uk/crime/article/channel-migrant-dinghy-106-record-g33f2hgzw?region=global), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15001229/Blind-woman-terrified-migrant-living-just-metres-away-Canary-Wharf-hotel-burst-home-family-reveal.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 8 – [[3]](https://news.sky.com/story/police-attend-protest-outside-london-hotel-which-will-house-asylum-seekers-13400395), [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/more-than-50000-people-have-crossed-channel-in-small-boats-since-starmer-became-pm-13410223)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15001229/Blind-woman-terrified-migrant-living-just-metres-away-Canary-Wharf-hotel-burst-home-family-reveal.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/police-metropolitan-police-marsh-wall-london-canary-wharf-b1242873.html), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/aug/09/food-delivery-riders-banned-from-luxury-flats-in-london), [[3]](https://news.sky.com/story/police-attend-protest-outside-london-hotel-which-will-house-asylum-seekers-13400395)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15001229/Blind-woman-terrified-migrant-living-just-metres-away-Canary-Wharf-hotel-burst-home-family-reveal.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/police-metropolitan-police-marsh-wall-london-canary-wharf-b1242873.html> - The Evening Standard reports that Metropolitan Police officers are probing a ‘complex’ series of events in Canary Wharf after footage circulated showing a man enter a home on Marsh Wall on the evening of 13 August. The force said the man entered through an open door after being followed in the street and has not been arrested because the initial investigation has not identified any offences. In a separate development a 22‑year‑old woman was detained on suspicion of common assault, affray, possession of an offensive weapon, possession of Class B drugs and assault on an emergency worker. A dispersal order was used locally and two further arrests were made for breaching it while officers review body‑worn and other footage as part of their enquiries.
3. <https://news.sky.com/story/police-attend-protest-outside-london-hotel-which-will-house-asylum-seekers-13400395> - Sky News describes protests outside the Britannia International Hotel in Canary Wharf, which Tower Hamlets Council said the government intends to use for temporary asylum accommodation. Officers attended the scene to manage rival gatherings and confirmed a policing plan was in place. The piece notes local political reaction, including supportive messages for refugees from the local MP and angry interventions from national figures, and explains the hotel has become a flashpoint amid wider demonstrations against the use of hotels for asylum seekers. Sky also situates the protests in the context of nationwide unrest over placements and the Home Office’s accommodation policies.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/aug/09/food-delivery-riders-banned-from-luxury-flats-in-london> - The Guardian reports that a Canary Wharf residential management company imposed a temporary ban on food delivery riders in response to heightened local tensions after the Britannia International Hotel was repurposed for asylum accommodation. The article explains the firm cited residents’ security concerns and press coverage of protests outside the nearby hotel as the reason for the measure, while the delivery companies denied employing undocumented workers. The piece also recounts earlier disturbances at the Britannia, notes police action including 28‑day return bans on individuals accused of harassment, and highlights how the hotel’s conversion has produced knock‑on effects across the local community and commercial life.
5. <https://www.lbc.co.uk/article/canary-wharf-family-protest-migrant-asylum-hotel-thugs-5Hjd8GC_2/> - LBC covers a ‘pink’ mothers’ protest at the Britannia International Hotel that was reportedly disrupted by masked men chanting and letting off flares. The broadcaster quotes the Metropolitan Police saying officers intervened after flares were set off and that one man was arrested on suspicion of assaulting an emergency worker. LBC states the hotel is being used to house asylum seekers and places the demonstration within a wider pattern of public gatherings and counter‑protests in London. The report highlights police warnings about unlawful behaviour, their role in keeping rival groups apart, and local anxieties about the lack of consultation over hotel placements.
6. <https://news.sky.com/story/more-than-50000-people-have-crossed-channel-in-small-boats-since-starmer-became-pm-13410223> - Sky News reports official Home Office figures showing more than 50,000 people have crossed the English Channel in small boats since Sir Keir Starmer became prime minister. The article gives the immediate context that 474 people arrived in eight vessels on a single Monday, bringing the total to 50,271, and explains that the milestone was reached faster under this administration than under recent predecessors. Sky outlines the government’s response — including a new UK‑France ‘one in, one out’ pilot — and conveys political reactions that the measures are insufficient, while stressing the human and operational pressures created by sustained high levels of crossings.
7. <https://www.thetimes.com/uk/crime/article/channel-migrant-dinghy-106-record-g33f2hgzw?region=global> - The Times reports that Border Force officials intercepted an inflatable dinghy carrying 106 people — the highest number recorded on a single small craft — describing it as a disturbing illustration of people‑smuggling gangs’ disregard for life. The Home Office is quoted as saying it was ‘pure chance’ the overcrowded vessel did not sink during the lengthy journey. The piece places the incident alongside soaring Channel figures, notes social‑media footage and commentary around crossings, and records political reactions, including concern over accommodation arrangements for arrivals and debate about whether current deterrents and international co‑operation are sufficient to curb the smuggling trade.