# Bell Hotel injunction heightens pressure as asylum hotel numbers reach 32,059 across 122 councils



New data released today offers a granular picture of where the UK’s asylum hotel system stands, and how the landscape is shifting under political and legal pressure. By the end of June 2025, 32,059 asylum seekers were living in hotel accommodation across 122 local authority areas, according to Home Office figures published alongside quarterly immigration statistics. The national total sits at roughly eight per cent higher than a year earlier, but the distribution remains highly uneven: Hillingdon in west London reported the largest hotel population at 2,238 residents, followed by Hounslow with 1,536 and Manchester outside the capital with 1,158. In the majority of councils there were zero residents in hotels, underscoring the concentrated demand in a relatively small number of areas. The release also comes amid a high-profile legal dispute over the Bell Hotel in Epping, Essex, where a High Court injunction blocks asylum seekers from being housed there from next month, a ruling seen as potentially shaping how councils address hotel placements elsewhere.

The political reverberations of the data have been immediate. The ongoing hotel placement debate sits against a backdrop of record asylum activity and a volatile local-politics environment. Official figures show the year to June 2025 produced around 111,000 asylum applications, a record level that has intensified scrutiny of who is housed where and for how long. National opposition and some Conservative-leaning councils have called for tighter controls on hotel use, while arguments have grown louder about coordinating a broader shift toward longer‑term housing solutions. Protests outside the Bell Hotel and other sites have punctuated the controversy, reflecting deep-seated concerns in communities about safety, planning, and the disruption associated with contingency accommodation.

The costs and policy trade-offs of moving away from hotels remain central to the debate. The National Audit Office has warned that substituting large-site accommodation for hotels is likely to be more expensive overall, with the NAO estimating the large-sites programme could cost around £1.2 billion, even as it housing fewer people than originally planned. By March 2024, four large sites were in development, and around 900 residents were being housed at these sites across two open facilities; multiple reviews have highlighted delivery and value-for-money challenges in ramping up a new model. Taken with the hotel-data today, the figures underscore the complexity of achieving a sustained shift away from contingency hotels while managing costs, logistics, and public sentiment as ministers pursue a plan to reduce hotel reliance in favour of longer-term housing options.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2098596/migrants-hotels-bell-epping-britannia), [[4]](https://news.itv.com/news/2025-08-19/epping-council-given-temporary-injunction-blocking-asylum-seekers-at-bell-hotel)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2098596/migrants-hotels-bell-epping-britannia), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/21/number-of-asylum-seekers-housed-in-hotels-rises-8-percent-on-a-year-ago-shows-data), [[5]](https://news.sky.com/story/battle-to-prevent-the-bell-hotel-in-epping-from-housing-asylum-seekers-reaches-high-court-13412359)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/opponents-seek-turn-screw-uks-starmer-asylum-claims-hit-record-2025-08-21/), [[6]](https://www.nao.org.uk/press-releases/alternative-asylum-accommodation-will-cost-more-than-hotels/)

Source Panel - Express (lead data and Bell Hotel injunction context) - The Guardian (context on hotel data and asylum figures) - Reuters (end-June 2025 hotel figures; year-to-June asylum applications) - ITV News (Bell Hotel injunction context and broader site-cost discussion) - Sky News (national reaction and council/legal-action dynamics) - National Audit Office (NAO) (alternative asylum accommodation will cost more than hotels) - GOV.UK Immigration System Statistics (context on asylum-system housing and applications)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2098596/migrants-hotels-bell-epping-britannia> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/21/number-of-asylum-seekers-housed-in-hotels-rises-8-percent-on-a-year-ago-shows-data> - The Guardian report summarises Home Office quarterly data showing that by the end of June 2025, 32,059 asylum seekers were being housed in UK hotels, an eight per cent rise from the previous year. The data covers 122 local authority areas, with most having no hotel inmates and a handful hosting hundreds. The largest hotel populations were in Hillingdon, Hounslow and Manchester, while many councils reported zero. The piece notes a continued effort to move people into longer‑term housing and reduce hotel use, alongside ongoing tensions and protests around asylum accommodation, including the Bell Hotel in Epping in Essex, England.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/opponents-seek-turn-screw-uks-starmer-asylum-claims-hit-record-2025-08-21/> - Reuters reports that official data show more than 32,000 asylum seekers were housed in hotels by the end of June 2025, an 8% increase on the year, with the total around 32,000 and well below the September 2023 peak of 56,042. The article notes the political backlash as councils consider legal challenges to hotel use while protests flare in several towns. It also records that about 111,000 asylum claims were lodged in the year to June, and that the government is seeking to cut hotel reliance and expand returns of failed applicants, amid pressure from opposition and reform groups nationwide.
4. <https://news.itv.com/news/2025-08-19/epping-council-given-temporary-injunction-blocking-asylum-seekers-at-bell-hotel> - ITV News reports that Epping Forest District Council secured a temporary High Court injunction to stop asylum seekers from being housed at the Bell Hotel from next month, arguing that the use constitutes a material change of use requiring planning permission. The piece notes the council’s concerns about safety and local disruption, and that residents hoped to see a rapid removal of current residents by a court-imposed deadline. It also mentions other councils considering similar legal challenges and that the ruling could influence how authorities manage hotel placements across the country. The article emphasises political sensitivities and ongoing opposition locally.
5. <https://news.sky.com/story/battle-to-prevent-the-bell-hotel-in-epping-from-housing-asylum-seekers-reaches-high-court-13412359> - Sky News coverage outlines the legal battle surrounding the Bell Hotel in Epping, where protesters congregated outside the hotel amid allegations of crime linked to residents. The report explains that MPs and local councillors have urged tighter controls, while the Home Office defends its statutory duty to house asylum seekers in contingency accommodation. It describes the High Court hearing, arguments about planning permissions and the potential harm of removing residents, and notes an imminent decision by the judge. The piece also contextualises national debate about hotel use and the prospect of further legal challenges for councils elsewhere, amid public concern.
6. <https://www.nao.org.uk/press-releases/alternative-asylum-accommodation-will-cost-more-than-hotels/> - The NAO press release reports findings from an inquiry into alternative asylum accommodation, arguing that large sites are likely to cost more than hotels. It notes the Home Office's forecast of spending around £1.2 billion on large sites, with four sites in development and hundreds of residents moved from hotels. By March 2024, around 900 people were housed on large sites. The NAO highlights that moving away from hotel use involves cost and logistical challenges, and that while new arrangements could eventually reduce hotel reliance, costs and contracts must be carefully managed. The report also urges monitoring and value-for-money assessments.
7. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2025/how-many-cases-are-in-the-uk-asylum-system> - GOV.UK's immigration statistics release for the year ending March 2025 shows that around 32,345 asylum seekers were in hotel accommodation, around 30% of all supported asylum seekers, with most other cases in non-hotel accommodation. The report notes that England hosts the vast majority of those supported, and the data provides local authority figures such as Glasgow, Hillingdon and Hounslow among those with the highest numbers per capita. It also records that overall asylum applications totalled about 111,000 in the year, with the backlog remaining a key policy focus, and outlines regional distributions. Further details include local authority breakdowns and changes.