# Fresh protests outside asylum hotels after High Court blocks Bell Hotel in Epping



A fresh wave of protests outside hotels used to shelter asylum seekers is expected in the coming days, following a High Court intervention that blocked the use of the Bell Hotel in Epping for asylum accommodation. The latest official data show more than 32,000 asylum seekers housed in hotels, marking an 8% rise in Labour’s first year in office. Campaign groups such as Stand Up To Racism say they plan counter-protests in several cities, and local authorities across different political alignments are examining potential legal challenges to asylum hotels. The injunction granted to Epping Forest District Council was described as a response to “unprecedented levels of protest and disruption” surrounding hotel accommodation, while national politicians reflected the tension by arguing for a balanced approach to housing and public order. According to the Telegraph’s reporting on remarks by Shadow Justice Secretary Robert Jenrick, residents and councils have “led the way” as demonstrations continue; Home Secretary Yvette Cooper defended Labour’s record, insisting that crucial steps have been taken toward reform.

A broader context shows the policy aim to end hotel usage for asylum seekers within the current Parliament by 2029, even as occupancy data point to ongoing pressures on housing and services. BBC analysis highlights that by early 2025 more than 32,000 people were in hotels, with the same political theatre surrounding protests and possible legal challenges to hotel locations. The Commons Library briefing adds another layer: in 2022/23 roughly £2.28 billion was spent on hotel accommodation, and about 47,500 people were in hotel beds at the end of March 2023, while the government says it remains committed to end hotel use as part of wider asylum reforms. The reporting also notes that the Home Office has had to navigate bedspace shortages and competing demands on housing, education and local services as it strives to reform contingencies and cut costs associated with hotel-based accommodation.

The debate over alternatives to hotel housing sits within a broader government push for safer, longer‑term arrangements. BBC reporting records a sharp expansion in hotel use, with hundreds of venues across the country—around 220 hotels in operation at one point—alongside openings and closures tied to the political cycle and policy changes. Ministers insist the drive to reform the asylum system remains intact, even as the Rwanda plan and other reforms continue to shape strategy and resource allocation. The Guardian paints a more immediate picture of the human impact: residents at the Bell Hotel and others described fear and uncertainty as a High Court ruling reshaped their futures, while national coverage, including a live political blog, tracks how local protests, budget debates, and court rulings intersect with the push to restore order to asylum provision and public services.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/fresh-wave-of-asylum-hotel-protests-expected-after-epping-ruling-LEEECR6YHVKUXLMSPTAXKY3H3U/), [[4]](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/an-inspection-of-contingency-asylum-accommodation-november-2023-june-2024)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/fresh-wave-of-asylum-hotel-protests-expected-after-epping-ruling-LEEECR6YHVKUXLMSPTAXKY3H3U/), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c9dqqj0v1ndo), [[5]](https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9831/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c704756yxj1o), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/21/were-seen-as-criminals-epping-hotel-residents-facing-limbo-after-say-they-want-to-work)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/fresh-wave-of-asylum-hotel-protests-expected-after-epping-ruling-LEEECR6YHVKUXLMSPTAXKY3H3U/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c9dqqj0v1ndo> - This analysis examines the government’s pledge to end the use of hotels for asylum seekers by the end of the current Parliament (2029) and contrasts it with recent occupancy data. It notes that by early 2025 more than 32,000 asylum seekers were housed in hotels, an eight per cent rise during Labour’s first year in office. The piece also covers political reactions, including counter-protests planned by Stand Up To Racism in several cities, and potential legal challenges by local authorities against asylum hotels. It references an Epping Forest District Council injunction stopping housing at the Bell Hotel and quotes politicians on protests and policy progress.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c704756yxj1o> - This report records a sharp increase in the use of hotel accommodation for asylum seekers, with 220 hotels in use and several openings or closings since the latest election cycle. It notes Labour’s pledge to end hotel usage and the government’s insistence on pursuing safer, longer‑term housing solutions. The minister emphasises continued efforts to reform the asylum system, while acknowledging constraints inherited from previous policy decisions, including the Rwanda plan. The article portrays ongoing government commitment to transitioning away from hotels, while balancing humanitarian obligations and pressures on housing, education and local services.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/an-inspection-of-contingency-asylum-accommodation-november-2023-june-2024> - Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration reports on contingency asylum accommodation, evaluating how hotels, hostels and self-contained flats are used to house asylum seekers. It records safeguarding assurance, contract management and the real‑world challenges of providing accommodation when bedspaces are limited. The document notes recommendations to improve oversight and expresses a clear aim to end reliance on hotel accommodation, situating this within broader NAO work on large sites and the Home Office's strategy to reduce hotel use. The publication date is October 2024, reflecting the most recent comprehensive inspection available at that time.
5. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9831/> - This House of Commons briefing outlines the scale and cost of asylum accommodation, including hotels, vessels and large‑scale sites. It explains that bedspace shortages and rising arrivals have driven contingency hotel use and details the Home Office’s budget for asylum support, including roughly £2.28 billion spent on hotel accommodation in the 2022/23 year. The briefing also notes that about 47,500 people were in hotel accommodation at the end of March 2023 and that the government intends to end hotel use as part of its ongoing reform of asylum provisions.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/21/were-seen-as-criminals-epping-hotel-residents-facing-limbo-after-say-they-want-to-work> - Residents housed at the Bell Hotel in Epping face an uncertain future after a High Court ruling blocked its use for asylum accommodation due to planning concerns. The piece describes hostility and fear among residents and media coverage of protests surrounding the hotel, including accusations that asylum seekers are being treated as criminals. It places the ruling within the wider debate over asylum provision, illustrating the disruption to the government's hotel‑based accommodation strategy and highlighting the potential implications for thousands of people currently housed in temporary accommodation.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/live/2025/aug/21/kemi-badenoch-conservative-councils-legal-challenge-asylum-hotel-uk-politics-latest-updates-news> - Across the day, the live blog reports an eight per cent rise in asylum seekers in hotels and roughly 32,000 people in hotel accommodation, while Labour defends its backlog reduction record and Conservatives urge action. It covers city‑level protests and legal challenges to asylum hotels by local authorities, together with statements by Home Secretary and other senior ministers about restoring order. The entries situate the Epping ruling in a national debate over asylum policy, its cost to public services and the pace of reform, while noting ongoing protests and police responses in multiple locations.