# Government’s 24-week asylum appeal deadline risks injustice amid soaring backlog and costs



The UK government's recent proposal to fast-track asylum seekers' appeals signifies a misguided attempt to manage the ongoing refugee crisis. With over 38,000 asylum seekers currently housed in taxpayer-funded hotels, this strategy not only fails to alleviate the financial pressures burdening the public but also does little to address the shocking backlog in the asylum system, which has surged nearly 500% in just two years. This unprecedented demand, along with an ever-growing backlog, raises serious concerns about the government's capacity to maintain community relations and effectively manage the situation.

At the heart of this government initiative is the introduction of a 24-week deadline for appeal decisions for those living in temporary accommodations. Despite being framed as a Labour manifesto commitment to eradicate the costly reliance on hotels by 2029, the proposal is riddled with potential pitfalls. Officials acknowledge grave apprehensions surrounding legal challenges under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), particularly regarding discrimination against individuals who may not have sufficient time to prepare their cases adequately from these transient facilities. This approach lacks the necessary foresight and compassion for those in vulnerable positions.

Moreover, the tribunal system's supposed flexibility—allowing for extensions when preparation time proves inadequate—does little to quell justified concerns among legal experts and advocates. The pressure on an already overstretched system threatens to compound injustices for a population facing significant hardships. This level of oversight is not only alarming but indicative of a government that seems more concerned with appearing proactive than actually providing effective solutions.

The financial implications of this situation are staggering; a report from the National Audit Office reveals that out of a colossal £15.3 billion contract for asylum housing, a shocking three-quarters is allocated to hotel accommodations. To put this into perspective, while shared housing costs around £14.41 per night per person, hotel rooms can set taxpayers back upwards of £145. These figures starkly illustrate the urgent need for a government that genuinely seeks sustainable and cost-effective alternatives, rather than perpetuating an expensive and unsustainable model.

As additional reforms loom on the horizon, anxieties are rising regarding a forthcoming immigration white paper. Expected measures, including stricter language proficiency requirements for work visa applicants and constraints on asylum seekers' rights based on family connections, signal a troubling shift toward an even more draconian immigration policy. Such a recalibration is desperately needed to address public concerns about the asylum system, yet it hints at a government increasingly out of touch with the electorate.

Compounding these issues is the government's alarming treatment of vulnerable groups, particularly unaccompanied child asylum seekers. Recent court rulings have declared the routine use of hotels for housing these minors unlawful, raising severe safeguarding concerns amid reports of children being placed in shared rooms with adults. This inadequacy underscores an urgent need for reform that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of the most vulnerable, rather than blindly following flawed policy mandates.

Local councils have voiced their willingness to partner with the Home Office to transition asylum seekers from hotel accommodations to more suitable housing. This initiative is seen as a pragmatic response to ameliorate the financial strain associated with temporary housing while aiming to promote better integration into communities. However, as these reforms evolve, they must be scrutinised through both legal and ethical lenses, ensuring that the rights of asylum seekers are protected while grappling with the pressing fiscal and societal matters that so deeply resonate with the public.

In this complex landscape, the current government finds itself at a crossroads, desperately trying to reconcile compassion for those seeking refuge with the logistical challenges of an overwhelmed asylum system. The stakes are high; how they navigate these hurdles in the coming months will not only shape the future of asylum policies but also influence the broader conversation surrounding immigration in the UK, a conversation that must be rooted in common sense and genuine concern for all citizens.

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

## Bibliography

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2. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/may/09/plan-fast-track-appeals-uk-asylum-seekers-legal-backlash> - The UK government plans to fast-track asylum seekers' appeals, aiming to reduce the use of government-funded hotels. However, officials acknowledge potential legal challenges under the European Convention on Human Rights, particularly concerning discrimination and the adequacy of time for appellants to prepare their cases.
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4. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/nov/03/uk-asylum-system-would-descend-into-chaos-without-more-hotels-says-minister> - UK ministers warn that without additional hotel accommodations, the asylum system could collapse due to a significant backlog of unprocessed claims. Despite plans to end the use of hotels, the current backlog necessitates their continued use as a temporary measure.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/jul/27/routine-use-hotels-lone-child-asylum-seekers-unlawful-uk-court> - A UK court ruled that the routine use of hotels to house unaccompanied child asylum seekers is unlawful. The judgment emphasized the government's duty to ensure the safety and welfare of these children, highlighting the inadequacy of hotel accommodations for minors.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/oct/30/child-asylum-seekers-in-uk-forced-to-share-hotel-rooms-with-adults> - Reports reveal that child asylum seekers in the UK are being forced to share hotel rooms with adults, raising serious safeguarding concerns. The practice has been criticized for exposing vulnerable children to potential harm and exploitation.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jan/14/councils-keen-to-help-home-office-move-asylum-seekers-out-of-hotels> - Local councils express willingness to assist the Home Office in relocating asylum seekers from hotels to more suitable accommodations. This initiative aims to address the financial burden of housing individuals in hotels and improve integration within communities.