# London borough's relocation of Chagos nationals sparks criticism over housing and immigration policies



A London borough's decision to house a group of Chagos nationals in luxury flats located over 150 miles from the capital has reignited concerns over the UK’s handling of immigration and public resources. Hillingdon Council, under the guise of addressing its own “unprecedented” homelessness crisis, has moved these UK citizens—who, thanks to a government scheme announced in November 2022, now hold British passports—into former student residences in Stoke-on-Trent. Shockingly, the council did so without prior consultation or notification to Staffordshire authorities, exposing a blatant disregard for local oversight and responsible planning.

The council’s official justification—that these flats are "temporary emergency housing"—fails to hide the deeper issues at play. While Hillingdon cries poverty, citing costs that could reach £1.2 million supporting the arrivals, the reality is that local authorities across the country, including Stoke-on-Trent with its own rising homelessness problem, are overwhelmed. The city has seen a 40% increase in rough sleepers this year—the highest since 2010—yet Hillingdon’s latest move seems more about offloading its own burdens than genuinely tackling homelessness.

This move further highlights the problematic framework of the UK government’s own policies on displaced British nationals from the Chagos Islands. After the controversial handover of the islands to Mauritius—an act that many perceive as a betrayal of longstanding British sovereignty—hundreds of Chagossians fled the UK, citing persecution fears and seeking refuge here. Now, instead of a sustainable solution, these citizens are being displaced yet again, dumped into properties many of these communities already struggle to afford.

Despite the fact these residents are UK passport holders, Hillingdon’s leadership has seemingly prioritized political optics over practical support for its own citizens. The council’s reliance on leased flats in Uxbridge and the use of former student housing in Stoke-on-Trent as a temporary fix should raise red flags about the government’s failure to address the root causes of housing shortages and to prioritize local needs. It is yet another example of how the Government’s immigration and resettlement policies have been pushed onto communities ill-prepared for such burdens, all while claiming to offer “support.”

The fact that Staffordshire authorities were not even informed about the placement exposes a concerning disconnect between central and local government—one that unfairly burdens the communities least equipped to handle it. This ничего challenge spurred by the government’s own policies, which have effectively outsourced the homeless crisis to areas already strained by cost-of-living pressures and housing shortages.

Ultimately, this latest episode underscores a critical failure: the government’s inability—or outright refusal—to develop a coherent, responsible approach to immigration and housing. Instead, decision-makers are flicking vulnerable populations from one place to another, all while the local councils struggle to cover the mounting costs. This is a shortsighted political approach that neglects the needs of working families and local taxpayers, with a government more interested in political expedience than genuine solutions. The message is clear: the UK’s approach to housing displaced citizens and managing immigration is broken—and it’s local communities who pay the price.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15058849/London-council-housing-homeless-Chagos-nationals-150-miles-capital-city-rough-sleepers-hit-record-high-local-authorities-no-idea.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/politics/chagos-islands-heathrow-airport-hillingdon-london-homeless-b1215392.html> - Hillingdon Council has reported an increase in Chagossian families arriving at Heathrow Airport without planned accommodation, leading to a projected cost of over £1 million by the end of the year. Between July 2024 and mid-February, 171 individuals from the British Indian Ocean Territory sought assistance, comprising 51 households, primarily with children. The council, facing a £34 million budget cut, has a duty to support these households, but the expenses are unfunded by central government. Councillor Steve Tuckwell highlighted the financial challenges and called for government support, estimating the annual cost to be £1.2 million due to the expected rise in arrivals. The UK government has committed to working with local authorities to manage these pressures and has provided funding to support areas like Hillingdon experiencing high numbers of arrivals. ([standard.co.uk](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/chagos-islands-heathrow-airport-hillingdon-london-homeless-b1215392.html?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.stoke.gov.uk/news/article/1892/council_commits_to_supporting_city%E2%80%99s_most_vulnerable_residents_with_new_homelessness_strategy_> - Stoke-on-Trent City Council is set to approve a new five-year strategy aimed at supporting rough sleepers and individuals facing homelessness. The council has been proactive since 2020, opening a Homelessness Hub that supports over 900 people monthly and creating 74 new bed spaces through rough sleeper programmes. Despite these efforts, homelessness has continued to rise due to factors like the cost of living crisis and a shortage of affordable housing. The new strategy outlines the council's priorities for the next five years to address these challenges. ([stoke.gov.uk](https://www.stoke.gov.uk/news/article/1892/council_commits_to_supporting_city%E2%80%99s_most_vulnerable_residents_with_new_homelessness_strategy_?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/14615/Council-acquires-more-temporary-accommodation-to-meet-demand> - Hillingdon Council has secured a long-term lease of 87 family-sized flats in Uxbridge to address the increasing demand for temporary housing for homeless households. The council receives an average of 100 new homeless applications each week, primarily due to evictions involving private landlords or friends and family. To meet this demand, the council's Cabinet agreed to lease the properties for a minimum of 10 years, furnishing each with necessary upgrades, including new fire doors. ([hillingdon.gov.uk](https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/14615/Council-acquires-more-temporary-accommodation-to-meet-demand?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/14584/Council-calls-for-fairer-funding-to-support-asylum-seekers> - Hillingdon Council is campaigning for fairer government funding to address the significant financial pressures it faces due to the high number of asylum seekers and Chagossian UK nationals arriving at Heathrow Airport seeking public assistance. The council accommodates nearly one in ten of all migrants housed in hotels across the country, with approximately 3,000 asylum seekers placed into accommodation by the Home Office, more than double the government's national threshold. The council estimates an asylum-related grant funding shortfall of approximately £5 million in 2024/25, urging the government to provide additional support. ([hillingdon.gov.uk](https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/14584/Council-calls-for-fairer-funding-to-support-asylum-seekers?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.gbnews.com/politics/chagos-deal-hillingdon-councillor-blasts-labours-failure-fund-fleeing-chagossians> - Ian Edwards, Leader of Hillingdon Council, has criticised the government's failure to fund the influx of Chagossian residents following the handover of the Chagos Islands to Mauritius. Edwards stated that the borough is overwhelmed by new arrivals and that the government is failing to provide adequate funding. In the first six months after the deal was announced, 55 households fled Chagos to live in the UK, with numbers increasing in recent weeks. ([gbnews.com](https://www.gbnews.com/politics/chagos-deal-hillingdon-councillor-blasts-labour-failure-fund-fleeing-chagossians?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/13764/Social-Housing-Allocation-Policy-refreshed-to-meet-changing-demand> - Hillingdon Council's Cabinet has approved changes to the borough's Social Housing Allocation Policy to address the growing demand for housing support and provide a clearer framework for prioritising applications. The updated policy, effective from 1 March 2025, includes making the priority order for rehousing clearer, giving increased priority to the most vulnerable residents and those who have lived in the borough for 10 years or more, and allowing more overcrowded households to bid for properties below their assessed need. ([hillingdon.gov.uk](https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/13764/Social-Housing-Allocation-Policy-refreshed-to-meet-changing-demand?utm_source=openai))