# Labour seeks to expand asylum accommodation through private landlords amid Channel migrant crisis



Labour’s initiative to address the Channel migrant crisis includes expanding accommodation for asylum seekers by involving private landlords, property investors, and agents in multiple regions across England. According to the Express, the asylum accommodation provider Serco is actively seeking landlords with properties in the North West, the Midlands, and the east of England to lease properties for periods exceeding five years.

Serco, which currently manages accommodation for more than 30,000 asylum seekers across a portfolio of over 7,000 properties, is looking to grow this portfolio amid increasing pressure on local councils dealing with the migrant influx. The company has described its current operations as an “ever growing” portfolio and aims to further expand its housing provision as part of Labour’s strategy.

This approach comes as nearly 10,000 migrants have crossed the English Channel so far this year, intensifying the demand for suitable housing outside of costly hotel stays. The National Audit Office has highlighted that accommodating an asylum seeker in a private house, bedsit, or flat costs around £14 per night, significantly less than the £145 per night cost of a hotel room. Currently, more than 38,000 migrants are housed in hotels, with daily costs reaching approximately £5.5 million. An additional 65,707 migrants are in other forms of accommodation, reflecting the scale of the challenge.

Despite the cost savings aimed for by moving asylum seekers from hotels to private accommodation, some local leaders have expressed concern over the impact on communities. One council leader, speaking to LBC, criticised Serco’s role in encouraging landlords to exploit taxpayer funds and noted the broader strain on local rents, services, and social cohesion. The council leader remarked, “It’s Serco who are encouraging landlords to exploit taxpayers, then it’s blamed on councils because of the impact it has on local rents, services and social cohesion. I don’t think it’s good for the fabric of society or the individuals involved.”

Labour’s plan involves placing asylum seekers in properties located in around 120 communities, as revealed by Serco’s promotional materials. The move aims to reduce reliance on hotel accommodation and distribute asylum seekers more evenly across different areas. However, the balance between managing costs and addressing local concerns remains a subject of ongoing discussion as the government works to resolve the Channel migrant situation.

The Express is reporting on the developments related to the expansion of asylum accommodation and the complex dynamics between government strategy, private accommodation providers, and local authorities grappling with the Channel migrant crisis.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/statement-on-serco-asylum-accommodation-list> - This source discusses efforts to restore order in the asylum system and reduce taxpayer costs, indirectly supporting the context of reducing reliance on hotel stays.
2. <https://www.serco.com/uk/sector-expertise/immigration/asylum-accommodation-support-services> - This page highlights Serco's role in providing accommodation and support services for asylum seekers, aligning with their efforts to expand their portfolio.
3. <https://www.gbnews.com/politics/keir-starmer-migrants-rent-homes-summer-channel-crossing-surge> - This article mentions the involvement of contractors like Serco in managing dispersal accommodations, supporting the claim about private landlord engagement.
4. <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/136584/pdf/> - This report details Serco's contract and their responsibilities under the Asylum Accommodation and Support Contract, providing context on their operational scale.
5. <https://www.property118.com/nrla-hits-out-as-labour-appeals-for-more-landlords-to-house-asylum-seekers/> - This article discusses Serco's recruitment of landlords and the incentives offered, supporting the claim about expanding the accommodation portfolio.
6. <https://www.noahwire.com> - While the source is not directly linked to a specific URL, it is the original article. However, due to the lack of specific details, a direct link is not provided.
7. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2047411/Channel-migrants-asylum-seekers-hotels> - Please view link - unable to able to access data