

Inspection Report Published: An inspection of contingency asylum accommodation

News story

This inspection focuses on the use of hotels as contingency asylum accommodation. The Home Office has accepted all 7 of the report's recommendations.



Publishing the report, David Neal said:

I welcome the publication of this report, which explores the use of hotels as contingency asylum accommodation. This inspection examined the delivery and assurance of the Asylum Accommodation and Support Contracts (AASC). It followed ICIBI's inspection (with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons) of the use of Napier Barracks and Penally Camp as contingency asylum accommodation in February 2021.

The use of hotels as contingency asylum accommodation is not new, but the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on moving people on to dispersed accommodation, combined with an increase in intake, added to the demand for hotels. Thousands of asylum seekers are now accommodated in hotels at significant additional cost to the AASC contracts, which have a combined value of more than £4.5 billion over 10 years. The contracts must be overhauled to account for the current situation, with oversight maintained to ensure delivery and quality.

My inspectors visited 20% of each of the 3 AASC providers' hotels, and my conclusion is that the service providers delivered accommodation broadly in line with the statement of requirements.

I also found that the short notice and lack of consultation

provided by the Home Office to local authorities prior to new hotels being established in their areas have damaged relations considerably. The Home Office's failure to consult local stakeholders was also raised by my predecessor in March 2021 in relation to the establishment of Napier Barracks and Penally Camp as contingency asylum accommodation sites. Whilst my inspectors were told that relationships are being repaired, recent reports about the lack of consultation prior to the announcement of the Linton-on-Ouse reception centre in the northeast are concerning and suggest to me that the Home Office has not listened or learned from experience.

The Home Office needs to be realistic in setting targets to end the use of hotels as asylum accommodation and work with providers and stakeholders to agree what is achievable.

I made 7 recommendations in this report. I am pleased that the Home Office has accepted all of them and I am encouraged to hear that work is already under way to tackle the issues raised.

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