

OpenVoiceNews

Transparent. Unbiased. Yours.

High Court Orders Epping Asylum Hotel Closure

August 22, 2025

— *Categories: Breaking News*

The High Court has ruled that **The Bell Hotel in Epping, Essex**, must stop housing asylum seekers by **12 September 2025**. The decision follows legal action by **Epping Forest District Council**, which argued that the hotel's use as temporary accommodation breached planning regulations.

The interim injunction granted this week has sparked interest from **18 councils across England**, including those controlled by the **Conservative, Labour, and Reform UK** parties. Many are now exploring similar legal action against the government's use of hotels to house asylum seekers.

The **Home Office** announced its intention to **challenge the ruling** and has requested to intervene in the case as an interested party. Officials said the government remains committed to closing all asylum hotels across the UK but stressed that closures must take place in a **“managed and ordered manner”** to avoid disruption.

Security Minister Dan Jarvis stated: “We will deliver on our pledge to end the use of hotels for asylum seekers during this Parliament, but it must be done in an orderly way.” **Home Secretary Yvette Cooper** warned that piecemeal legal actions could create complications for local authorities and undermine the national plan.

The case began after protests in Epping highlighted concerns about the Bell Hotel's use as accommodation for asylum seekers. Residents and councillors argued that the hotel's operation had changed significantly without the appropriate planning consent. The High

Court found the council had a legal basis to seek temporary restrictions while the matter undergoes further review.

Current government figures estimate that **over 32,000 asylum seekers** are living in hotels across the UK. This number has risen by around **8% over the past year**, prompting increasing pressure on the government to provide alternative housing solutions. The administration has pledged to phase out hotel use for asylum accommodation entirely by **2029**.

The ruling in Epping could become a **test case**, potentially setting a legal precedent for how similar disputes will be handled in other areas. Councils awaiting the appeal outcome are monitoring developments closely, as the result may influence their own decisions on whether to challenge the placement of asylum seekers in local hotels.

The Home Office has not yet provided details on where the residents of the Bell Hotel will be relocated, but said arrangements would follow established procedures and support measures.