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## UK Migrant Protests Spark Clashes in London Suburbs

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*August 24, 2025*

— *Categories: Breaking News*

Protests concerning asylum housing were reported across several UK towns and cities over the holiday weekend, following a High Court ruling requiring the closure of a hotel used for migrant accommodation in Essex.

The ruling favoured Epping Forest District Council, which had argued that the Bell Hotel in Epping was operating in breach of local planning regulations. The court granted an injunction ordering its closure after weeks of demonstrations at the location. The government has confirmed it intends to appeal the decision.

Police reported protest activity in multiple areas, including Bristol, Liverpool, Horley, Canary Wharf in London, and Epping. Groups opposed to the use of hotels for asylum housing, including campaigners under the name Abolish Asylum System, gathered outside the Bell Hotel. Counterdemonstrators were also present in some locations. Authorities confirmed that dozens of arrests were made nationwide, with no incidents of serious violence reported.

According to official Home Office statistics, 32,059 asylum seekers were housed in hotels at the end of June 2025. This figure was higher than 29,585 in June 2024, though substantially below the September 2023 peak of more than 56,000. In the 12 months to June 2025, the Home Office recorded 111,084 asylum applications.

Data shows that small-boat Channel crossings remain the primary source of irregular arrivals. More than 27,000 people had crossed into the UK by August 2025, representing almost 50% more than at the same stage in 2024. The Home Office has stated that work is

ongoing to target trafficking networks and speed up processing. Proposals include the introduction of an independent appeals panel to address backlogs.

Several councils are now considering legal action against hotel-based asylum projects, citing the Epping judgment as precedent. National political figures have reiterated the need to reduce unauthorised migration and have confirmed that the government plans to end the use of hotels for asylum accommodation during the current parliament.

Facilities previously used for asylum housing in Kent are being wound down, while a former air base in Essex is being prepared to accommodate adult male applicants. Plans to expand capacity using a barge off the south coast have been cancelled. Officials said the policy is part of a strategy to reduce reliance on short-term commercial sites, which have been criticised for cost and limited suitability.

Police and councils are continuing to monitor protests linked to asylum housing, with coordination between local and national agencies. The demonstrations underscore ongoing pressures on migration management, accommodation availability, and the balance between local authority planning powers and national asylum obligations.