

# OpenVoiceNews U.K.

Transparent. Unbiased. Yours.

## Community Anger Grows Over Use of Hotels to House Asylum Seekers

August 10, 2025

— Categories: Breaking News



Tensions are rising in parts of the country as residents protest against the government's policy of housing asylum seekers in local hotels. In Epping, Essex, demonstrations have intensified following the arrest of a man staying at The Bell Hotel on charges of sexual assault, harassment, and inciting a girl to engage in sexual activity. The accused, 41-year-old Hadush Kebatu from Ethiopia, denies the allegations and remains in custody.

The Bell Hotel, now surrounded by steel fencing and guarded by round-the-clock security, is one of more than 200 hotels across the United Kingdom currently used to accommodate

asylum seekers while their claims are processed. Critics say the practice is placing an unfair burden on local communities and creating safety concerns.

Protests in Epping began in July and have drawn crowds of varying sizes, with some reaching into the hundreds. According to Essex Police, one demonstration saw numbers rise to approximately 2,000. Signs and banners with slogans such as 'Protect Our Community' and 'Safety of Women and Children Before Foreigners' reflect the sentiments of many local residents.

Among the protesters is Orla Minihane, a long-time Epping resident who works in the City of London and is a member of Reform UK. She argues the issue is not immigration as a whole, but the concentration of single men in the facility. "It's not a balanced culture," she said, adding that residents have reported shoplifting and anti-social behaviour linked to the hotel.

While police have maintained order, isolated clashes between opposing groups have occurred. Some residents say their concerns have been ignored, and that the use of hotels is failing to deter illegal migration. Former Border Force officials have previously warned that such accommodation policies may encourage rather than reduce Channel crossings.

Supporters of the protests argue that the government should end the use of hotels for asylum seekers and instead implement stronger border controls and faster processing of claims. Opponents claim the demonstrations risk inflaming tensions, but many local campaigners maintain that community safety and public resources must come first.

The Home Office has stated that asylum seekers are provided with accommodation to meet legal obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention, an international treaty defining the rights of refugees and the responsibilities of nations that grant asylum. However, residents in Epping and elsewhere remain unconvinced, saying the current approach is neither fair to local communities nor an effective solution to the wider issue of illegal migration.