

Home Affairs Committee

The Home Office's management of asylum accommodation: Government Response

Third Special Report of Session 2024–26

HC 1642

Home Affairs Committee

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Publication

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Third Special Report

The Home Affairs Committee published its Fourth Report of Session 2024–26, [The Home Office’s management of asylum accommodation](#) (HC 580), on 27 October 2025. The Government Response was received on 15 January 2026 and is appended below.

Appendix: Government Response

Introduction

The Home Affairs Committee’s report comes at a time of significant change in the asylum landscape. Rising demand and evolving operational pressures on the system have required a fundamental shift in how the Home Office delivers accommodation and support services. In response, the Home Office has strengthened its approach to governance, delivery, oversight and accountability across the system.

The Government’s response to the Home Affairs Committee’s report on asylum accommodation is set firmly within the context of the Home Secretary’s ambition to restore order and control to the UK’s asylum system. The ‘Restoring Order and Control’ statement, announced earlier this year, sets out a clear direction to deliver a fair, robust, and sustainable asylum accommodation system that commands public confidence and meets the needs of those seeking protection. Exiting hotels is a key part of the department’s ambition to reform the asylum fundamentally by tackling pull factors to the UK.

This ambition is driving a fundamental transformation across the asylum accommodation estate. Our approach prioritises decisive action to end the use of hotels as soon as possible, strengthen contract management, and ensure value for money for the taxpayer. We are committed to building a system that is resilient, transparent, and accountable – one that reduces

reliance on contingency measures and balances delivering equitable standards of support for vulnerable individuals with alleviating the burden on local communities.

As part of our commitment to deliver continuous improvement and robust contract management, the Home Office has instructed a Non-Executive Director from the Ministry of Justice to lead an independent review into the asylum accommodation and support contracts that were signed in 2019. By instructing an external expert to scrutinise our contract arrangements, we are ensuring that our approach remains forward-looking, transparent, and accountable – acknowledging that more needs to be done. While there is more to do, and complexities and challenges ahead, these changes represent a clear direction of travel towards a system that meets the needs of those seeking asylum while maintaining public confidence. Our response sets out the actions already taken and the further steps we will pursue to ensure that accommodation provision is safe, effective, and aligned with best practice.

Over-reliance on Contingency Accommodation

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the Home Office sets out plans for an asylum accommodation system that can flexibly respond to changing demand, whilst minimising potential costs to the taxpayer. In the short term, the Home Office should identify and implement any possible action it can take to direct and incentivise providers to identify alternative accommodation and exit hotels. The Home Office should also give urgent consideration to the practical implications of exercising the contractual break clauses, that become exercisable from March 2026. The Home Office should ensure that the design of future contracts from 2029 onwards is sufficiently flexible to respond to changing demand, while protecting value for money, and provides the necessary levers to ensure providers deliver appropriate accommodation. (Recommendation, Paragraph 32)

Government Response

The Home Office recognises that hotels became a significant part of the asylum accommodation system due to unprecedented demand and limited contractual flexibility.

As part of the Government's 'Restoring Order and Control' programme, the Home Office will design a future asylum accommodation system that responds to fluctuations in demand, safeguards vulnerable asylum

seekers and minimises the impact on local communities. In the near-term, this Government is committed to exiting the use of asylum hotels as soon as possible by progressing alternative accommodation initiatives and working collaboratively with other government departments to deliver a range of suitable alternative sites to hotels, including former military sites. We are working with providers to deliver more Dispersal Accommodation bedspaces and move away from their reliance on hotels as Contingency Accommodation. Hotel use has already reduced substantially – from over 400 at its peak, to 197 in use as of 5 January 2026 – but this government remains committed to exit all asylum hotels as soon as possible.

In the longer term, the Government continues to explore options for stable and sustainable accommodation models. These models aim to reduce pressure on local housing markets, improve resilience in the asylum system, and ensure that accommodation solutions are fit for purpose and adaptable to future needs.

The 2026 break clause pertains to the core contract that provides Initial and Dispersed Accommodation. Hotels can be exited without exercising these break clauses as they are contracted via a Contract Change Notice to the main contract. To exercise the break clause on the core contract, there needs to be sufficient alternative supply of accommodation in place to ensure service continuity. The break clause can be enacted at any point between 2026 and 2029.

Lessons have been learned from the mistakes of the past. The Home Office will review these lessons and ensure they are used to design future contracts that are flexible and better able to respond to changing demand, while ensuring value for money for the taxpayer.

Contract Management

Recommendation 2

The Home Office should set out plans for enhancing and maintaining its commercial and contract management capability, to ensure that it has the skills and resources necessary to effectively manage the delivery of the contracts and control the costs of asylum accommodation. This essential capability should be embedded as a core function of the department's operations, with clear accountability to prevent a decline in operational effectiveness over time. The Home Office should institute a consistent and systematic approach to the performance management of its officials and internal capabilities. Given these contracts will continue to cost vast sums of taxpayer money, the Home Office must ensure it acquires the capacity to manage them in a competent way. (Recommendation, Paragraph 44)

Government Response

The Home Office recognises the critical importance of robust contract management in ensuring value for money and operational effectiveness of its accommodation suppliers. To ensure this remains a core function, we have taken a series of steps to strengthen our approach and embed best practice across the Department.

Over the past year, we have invested in expanding our internal operational and commercial contract management capacity, supported by a surge consultancy team, to ensure the teams have the skills and resources needed to manage complexity and control costs. This includes ongoing training and accreditation for contract managers, ensuring recruitment into roles focuses on the qualifications required to deliver the role and all officials working on the contract have the correct level of training with robust procedures in place to monitor.

The introduction of clearer accountability frameworks, and the professionalisation of roles responsible for contract delivery. These improvements have enabled us to recover £74 million in profit share and service credits in the current financial year – the largest restitution since the contracts were mobilised – demonstrating the effectiveness of our strengthened controls.

We have also implemented systematic performance management processes, including regular reviews of supplier performance, enhanced inspection regimes and the use of integrated performance databases to support intelligence-led assurance. These measures ensure that officials are held to account for delivery and that operational effectiveness is maintained over time.

To further strengthen governance and drive continuous improvement, we have commissioned an independent review of our contract management arrangements, led by Mark Beaton, a Non-Executive Director at the Ministry of Justice with extensive consultancy experience. This review will provide external assurance on the robustness of our systems, help us identify opportunities for further enhancement and ensure that our capability remains resilient and fit for purpose.

The Home Office is committed to ongoing investment in skills, resources, and professional standards, so that our teams are equipped to manage contracts competently and deliver best possible outcomes.

Oversight of Provider Performance

Recommendation 3

The Home Office should establish a clear process for routinely assuring KPI data submitted by asylum accommodation providers and applying service credits where providers fail to meet the terms of the contract. There should be a clear and transparent framework for decisions about when service credits are applied in full, in part, or waived. Service credits for performance failures should be applied across all types of accommodation. The Home Office should ensure that the inspection and assurance regime is proportionate to the value of the contracts. (Recommendation, Paragraph 54)

Government Response

Over the past year, the Home Office has significantly strengthened its approach to assuring Key Performance Indicator (KPI) data and applying service credits where providers fail to meet contractual obligations. We have introduced a clear and transparent framework, supported by a dedicated Contract Assurance function and specialist analysts who validate provider data against multiple sources, including Migrant Help. Service credits are now applied consistently in line with contractual terms, except where allowable and appropriate mitigations are in place. This enhanced process enables intelligence-led inspections and assurance checks, ensuring accuracy, accountability, and robust compliance across all contractual arrangements.

We have established a clear decision-making process for service credits, setting out criteria for when credits are applied in full, partially, or waived, ensuring consistency and accountability. Our inspection and assurance regime is risk-based and proportionate to contract value, combining scheduled and unannounced visits to higher-risk sites with lighter-touch oversight for lower-risk areas. These improvements are underpinned by enhanced governance, professionalised contract management, and upgraded management information systems.

As a result of these reforms, the Department has recovered £74 million in the current financial year through profit-share repayments and service credits. We will continue to strengthen transparency and oversight and enhance our MI platforms to optimise assurance and inspection activity.

Recommendation 4

The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration should be given access to commercial contracts so they can be properly scrutinised. The legislation underpinning the Inspector's role should be amended if necessary to achieve this. (Recommendation, Paragraph 56)

Government Response

The Department does already allow the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) appropriate access to contract information to fulfil their statutory inspection duties effectively.

The ICIBI is permitted supervised access to sensitive contract information. This approach balances the need for transparency in assessing efficiency and effectiveness with the protection of commercially sensitive data. We are working closely with the new ICIBI, John Tuckett, to ensure he has access to the information required to conduct inspections and assessments of efficiency and effectiveness of the Migration and Borders System.

The UK Borders Act 2007, which underpins the ICIBI's role, does not currently provide a clear framework for access to sensitive information, nor does it specify how such information should be used or redacted. To address this, the Department is working with the ICIBI to update protocols on ways of working between the ICIBI and the Department. We will consider formalising these arrangements in the future when Parliamentary time allows so that there is a statutory basis for the sharing and use of information.

Recommendation 5

The Home Office should, as a matter of urgency, agree new KPIs with contract providers. In future the KPI regime should be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains appropriate and relevant. (Recommendation, Paragraph 58)

Government Response

Changes to the KPI regime are being developed collaboratively with service providers, as any amendment to the KPI regime require mutual agreement. In light of lessons learned, the department has proposed robust amendments to the existing KPIs, which have been subsequently refined and will be finalised by February 2026.

Future asylum accommodation contracts will incorporate enhanced KPI frameworks, building on lessons learned and including mechanisms to review and improve KPIs throughout the contract term.

Oversight of Subcontractors

Recommendation 6

We recommend that the Home Office reports back to us in its response to this report on the outcome of its audit of asylum accommodation subcontractors and implements a clear process for how it will regularly review significant subcontractors. It should also increase transparency about which companies are responsible for delivering asylum accommodation. In the interests of transparency, the Home Office should write to the Committee as soon as it is able, to provide a full account of the circumstances of the termination of Stay Belvedere Hotels Ltd as a subcontractor. (Recommendation, Paragraph 65)

Government Response

The Home Office is committed to strengthening transparency and accountability across its asylum accommodation contracts. As a result, 93% of the excess profits identified by the auditors have been returned to the Home Office, with the validity of the remaining 7% still under discussion and negotiation is currently underway with the aim of swiftly agreeing the return of these remaining monies.

To ensure subcontractors are regularly reviewed, a subcontractor assurance framework is being devised and implemented to identify and rectify any issues within supply chains. This will ensure Asylum Accommodation and Support Contract providers carry out adequate due diligence on their subcontractors. The framework will set out a consistent approach to subcontractor checks and controls and will strengthen supply-chain visibility for the Home Office.

The Home Office publishes information about asylum accommodation contracts and related awards on Contract Finder, which provides public access to contract notices, award detail and associated documentation. We have written separately to the Committee as requested.

Provider Profits

Recommendation 7

The Home Office should conclude the process of recouping excess profits for past years as quickly as possible and set out the amounts that have been returned to the department by contract providers. The Home Office should put in place an annual process for auditing profit share data submitted by

contract providers and recouping any excess profits due. The department should report to Parliament on the outcome of this annual process. (Recommendation, Paragraph 71)

Government Response

Each contract has a Profit Share clause, which obligates the provider to share details with the Home Office to establish whether the threshold for profit has been achieved. On conclusion of each contractual year, the Commercial Contract Management team will investigate retrospective data to establish value of return.

As of 4 November 2025, the Home Office has been in receipt of profit share credit notes to the value of £45.9m from the providers. CRH has returned the full £33m. Mears has returned £12.9m and discussions are ongoing about a remaining £3.7m. There is no profit share due back from Serco.

The outcome of the annual profit-share audit process, including confirmation of any excess profits recouped from providers, will be reported through the Department's annual accounts. This circular approach would limit our ability to ultimately procure the levels of Dispersal Accommodation required to exit contingency accommodation and in line with standard practice.

Recommendation 8

The Home Office should ensure that profit share clauses in future contracts take account of not just profit margins but also the cash value of profits, so that contract providers cannot benefit so substantially from increased demand for and changes to the type and/or base costs of asylum accommodation. (Recommendation, Paragraph 73)

Government Response

The Home Office will seek to introduce a more rigorous profit-share methodology in future asylum contracts to ensure greater transparency and value for money. Work is already underway to incorporate such provisions into future procurements for asylum accommodation contracts. This approach will aim to deliver a more structured and equitable application of profitability, reinforce accountability and drive sustainable commercial outcomes.

Large sites and former military barracks

Recommendation 9

When planning the closure of the hotels, the Home Office should prioritise the closure of manifestly unsuitable hotels—such as those in remote areas and near limited infrastructure—that cause the most harm to their residents and place the most pressure on local services, and also the closure of hotels in areas that have experienced significant community cohesion issues. The Home Office should work with local partners to develop a prioritisation process to support the early closure of the least suitable hotels. (Recommendation, Paragraph 89)

Government Response

The Home Secretary has announced that we will close asylum hotels as soon as possible, and by the end of this Parliament. This is a complex process that must be delivered through a controlled, managed and orderly plan of work.

We are already making progress. As a result, hotel use has reduced from over 400 at its peak. As of 05 January 2026, there are 197. We are working to accelerate delivery by exploring the use of large sites, including military sites, as an alternative.

we will close hotels, taking into consideration a range of factors. The closures and relocation of those accommodated will be coordinated and undertaken in partnership with local authorities and stakeholders, wherever possible, practical and feasible to ensure closures are managed responsibly, operational requirements and community impact and the welfare of those that are accommodated by the Home Office.

Communication with asylum seekers

Recommendation 10

We recommend that the Home Office sets clear standards for providers to communicate with asylum seekers about their accommodation and support, including minimum notice periods for moving asylum seekers to new accommodation. The department should regularly monitor provider practices to ensure these standards are being met and take corrective action where necessary. (Recommendation, Paragraph 94)

Government Response

Section 4.2.2 of the AASC Schedule 2 of the Statement of Requirement sets out the contractual obligation of Home Office service providers to notify asylum seekers of any moves, which is underpinned by a service level agreement of at least five days.

Our accommodation providers are clear on their contractual obligations and processes are in place when communicating with asylum seekers ahead of accommodation moves, and that all information requiring upcoming moves is understood. This is reviewed during inspections carried out by the Department.

Additionally, all asylum seekers are provided with an induction booklet which sets out how the asylum process works, and they also have 24/7 access to Migrant Help for any further advice or complaints. As part of regular contract management meetings, service delivery managers will continue to ensure that service providers are meeting these contractual obligations.

To deliver our ambition of exiting hotels before the end of the Parliament there will be a requirement to move asylum seekers into alternative accommodation to maximise estate utilisation. The contractual obligations of Home Office's service providers will continue throughout this period.

Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility (AIRE) service

Recommendation 11

The Home Office should take urgent action to address the performance of Migrant Help. If Migrant Help is unable to fulfil the Advice, Issue Reporting, and Eligibility (AIRE) contract to an acceptable standard, the Home Office should find an alternative provider or consider alternative ways of delivering the essential services provided under this contract. (Recommendation, Paragraph 108)

Government Response

Migrant Help's responsibilities under the AIRE contract are defined by statutory and contractual requirements, including impartial advice, eligibility support, issue reporting, and safeguarding. Since 2019, Migrant Help has served as the single point of contact for asylum seekers, with demand exceeding initial projections.

The contract requires Migrant Help to meet specific performance standards and KPIs, which are monitored by the Home Office. While some KPIs have been affected by systemic pressures, improvements have been made in areas such as call handling and issue reporting. The department is working closely with Migrant Help to ensure its services can meet the required standards.

Despite this, if Migrant Help does not meet the required standards and remedial actions are unsuccessful, the Home Office retain the right to consider alternative providers or delivery models to maintain service quality. The Home Office is currently reviewing performance frameworks and contract scope to ensure services continue to meet the needs of asylum seekers.

Recommendation 12

We recommend that the Home Office reviews the structure and remit of the AIRE service, to identify changes that could be made to ensure the service delivers what is required. The Home Office should report back to us on the outcome of its consideration of how the advice and issue reporting system can best be delivered in the future. This should include an assessment of opportunities for delivering elements of this service at a local level, and possible mechanisms for follow up and end-to-end oversight of issues and complaints raised by asylum seekers. (Recommendation, Paragraph 111)

Government Response

Delivering the AIRE service solely at a local level would be challenging due to its scale, regulatory requirements, and need for consistent 24/7 support. The current model supports over 106,000 asylum seekers and manages high call volumes, requiring accredited advisors, integrated IT systems, and robust safeguarding—capabilities that are not easily replicated by smaller or fragmented providers. While Migrant Help has introduced improvements such as integrated systems, translated webchat, and self-service portals, we recognise the need to review future delivery options. The Home Office is currently reviewing performance frameworks and contract scope to ensure services continue to meet the needs of asylum seekers. As stated above, if Migrant Help does not meet the required standards the Home Office retain the right to consider alternative providers and are currently reviewing performance frameworks and contract scope to ensure services continue to meet the needs of asylum seekers.

This work is already being supported by the future asylum contracts next generation contract and delivery model development, which is examining alternative approaches to AIRE service provision. Additionally, as mentioned in our response to recommendation 2, our ongoing contract management review is assessing lessons learned and will inform future decisions.

Safeguarding

Recommendation 13

We recommend that the Home Office strengthens its approach to safeguarding by:

- a. Ensuring that there is a robust framework for overseeing and auditing how safeguarding policies and processes are applied on the ground by contractors and subcontractors;*
- b. Ensuring that staff working directly with asylum seekers receive adequate safeguarding training;*
- c. Setting performance measures for safeguarding in the contracts, which allow the department to penalise providers who fail to meet safeguarding standards;*
- d. Urgently reviewing its processes for identifying risks and vulnerabilities and sharing these with accommodation providers and statutory partners; and*
- e. Using the data it receives through the Safeguarding Hub to more proactively monitor safeguarding concerns, including outcomes of incidents and referrals. (Recommendation, Paragraph 121)*

Government Response

The Home Office recognises the critical importance of safeguarding within the asylum system and remains committed to continuous improvement in this area. While statutory safeguarding duties rest with other agencies, the Home Office plays an enabling role by ensuring risks are identified, escalated, and addressed through robust governance, contractual levers, and data-sharing arrangements.

As part of this commitment, the Home Office has a safeguarding strategy that combines operational oversight, public protection, and strategic reform and will continue to engage with police, community partners and other key stakeholders on the matter. This commitment includes:

- **Safeguarding Framework Review:** In August 2025, the Safeguarding Framework was updated to reflect the significantly altered asylum landscape since its introduction in May 2022. This revised framework strengthens transparency, consistency, and accountability across all Asylum Accommodation and Support contract providers, which the **Home Office will review to demonstrate progress.**
- **Public Protection and Safeguarding Programme:** Established in response to recent challenges protests over the summer, this programme aims to provide a systemic approach to managing high-risk individuals and reducing harm to asylum seekers and the public. It seeks to improve communication and engagement with statutory partners to ensure appropriate action is taken to reduce risk. The future PPS function envisions a safe asylum estate, **reducing offending** and **restoring public** trust through proactive, effective service user management

While some elements of the recommendation – such as contractual performance measures and wider auditing – are outside the current scope of work being undertaken, these areas remain under review for future development. The Home Office will continue to work closely with statutory and independent oversight bodies and accommodation providers to embed safeguarding into operational delivery rather than relying solely on reactive mechanisms.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

Recommendation 14

The Home Office should review and make improvements to arrangements for identifying and responding to age dispute cases in adult asylum accommodation and ensure that there is clear guidance for accommodation providers. To protect the welfare of children in the asylum system the department must ensure that provider staff have adequate training to respond appropriately to such cases, and that information is consistently shared with local authorities. The Home Office should also establish a mechanism to monitor provider compliance with guidance and training requirements, ensuring that safeguarding responsibilities are being met in practice. (Recommendation, Paragraph 129)

Government Response

The Home Office has made significant progress with regards to protecting the welfare of UASC. In line with the direction of the court, the Home Office closed all remaining emergency UASC hotels by January 2024 and

arriving UASC are placed in the care of the local authority. Additionally, to support local authorities caring for UASC, incentivised funding has been made available during peak arrival periods to ensure the timely transfer of children to their long-term placements. We have also built and maintained strong and productive relationships with key partners including the Office of the Children's Commissioner and Kent County Council to ensure the welfare of these children remains at the forefront of our work.

The Home Office recognises the vital importance of safeguarding children within the asylum system and is committed to strengthening how age dispute cases are identified and managed. The statutory responsibility for child welfare rests with the local authorities. The Home Office plays an enabling role in ensuring risks are identified early, escalated appropriately (and in accordance with Home Office Policy), and managed effectively. To ensure this, the accommodation providers understand the correct escalation routes when an asylum seeker in adult accommodation claims to be a child, and that safeguarding responsibilities are met in practice. The Minister recently clarified this policy with the Home Affairs Committee (letter dated 10 November 2025). Our National Age Assessment Board (NAAB) social workers are also available to conduct age assessments if the local authority requests assistance.

Work is underway to embed robust Standard Operating Procedures across this area. Engagement with accommodation providers, Migrant Help, and NGOs is helping to strengthen collaboration and ensure consistent handling of age dispute cases. Alongside this, we are developing clearer protocols for sharing information with local authorities to support timely risk assessments and safeguarding interventions – a new area of focus design to give statutory partners the tools they need to protect vulnerable individuals.

In response to the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's report and recommendations on the Home Office use of age-assessment, we have completed our review of information shared with accommodation providers and are content that current arrangements are appropriate. Providers receive timely case-level updates through daily travel lists and Secure Communications Forms (SCF), supported by targeted safeguarding information aligned with National Asylum Allocation Unit (NAAU) guidance, enabling proportionate risk assessments and safe placement decisions.

In the government's Immigration White Paper, published in May 2025, we committed to strengthening the age assessment process. Since then, the Home Office has commissioned trials to explore how artificial intelligence technology can improve the process. Early assessment suggests that Facial Age Estimation is effective and could produce workable results much quicker than other potential methods, such as bone X-rays or MRI scans, and at a fraction of the cost.

Finally, governance and oversight remain central to our approach. Safeguarding audits and contractual levers are used to monitor provider compliance with guidance and training requirements, providing assurance that safeguarding responsibilities are consistently met across the estate.

Impacts on local areas

Recommendation 15

We recommend that the Home Office amends the indexing tool used to develop targets for the distribution of asylum seekers across the country so that it accounts for use of Contingency Accommodation. We also recommend that the Home Office ensures that accommodation providers take account of existing Contingency and Dispersal Accommodation—and other factors included in the indexing tool—when identifying any new Contingency Accommodation sites. (Recommendation, Paragraph 141)

Government Response

The Home Office is committed to ensuring that decisions on the distribution of asylum seekers and the identification of contingency accommodation sites are fair, evidence-based, and transparent. Dispersal Accommodation is being managed via the National Asylum Allocation Plans and Dispersed Accommodation Property Adjudication Process. We are also reviewing and updating the indexing tool to provide more accurate picture of capacity and impact across regions. Monthly place-based approach meetings provide a forum for local authorities and partners to align on dispersal planning and support cohesive delivery, informed by community-specific insights to reduce risk and improve outcomes.

The Home Office agrees it needs to account for contingency accommodation in our overall accommodation planning. The department oversees National Allocation Plans which set out a Dispersed Accommodation target scenario. If met, would eliminate the need for Contingency Accommodation across the estate. We also provide data to Migration Partnership and councils that includes all asylum accommodation in each region. We therefore do not agree the recommendation to account for Contingency Accommodation directly in these plans, as doing so would further limit our ability to increase Dispersal Accommodation in LAs with existing Contingency Accommodation. This would risk limiting our ability to procure the levels of Dispersal Accommodation required to exit Contingency Accommodation.

We require our accommodation providers to take account of existing Dispersal Accommodation to ensure alignment with the asylum accommodation plans when proposing any new sites, helping to prevent

disproportionate concentration and maintain equity across the estate. In parallel, we are implementing a structured hotel exit plan that prioritises a variety of factors to ensure decisions are rational and aligned with strategic objectives.

This work forms part of the wider transformation programme to reduce reliance on contingency accommodation and restore a sustainable dispersal model, balancing national priorities with local sensitivities.

Recommendation 16

We recommend that the Home Office set out the steps it will take to overcome barriers to the delivery of a fairer distribution of accommodation and improve engagement with local authorities on how best to address barriers to procurement. Local authorities are the experts on their areas, and the Home Office should consult them on price caps for procuring accommodation. The Home Office should work with local authorities and Strategic Migration Partnerships to understand where spending on asylum accommodation can be invested in local housing and bring benefits to local communities, such as through renovating existing housing, repurposing appropriate buildings, fixing void accommodation, or building new housing. The Home Office should ensure that the future contracts provide them with stronger levers to direct providers to procure accommodation in line with Home Office requirements. (Recommendation, Paragraph 155)

Government Response

The Home Office works with local authorities and Strategic Migration Partnerships to address barriers to procurement, and takes an evidence based and pragmatic approach. Local authorities can provide feedback and local intelligence including issues with community cohesion on every single dispersed property before it is procured.

The Asylum Accommodation Plans (AAPs) mean that procurement of Dispersed Accommodation is undertaken in a fair and equitable manner that is reflective of a number of social factors such as homelessness, availability of GPs and dentists etc. Regular regional governance meetings, offer valuable forums for the Home Office, Strategic Migration Partnerships, Local authorities and Accommodation providers to collaborate and jointly monitor procurement activity and progress against the AAPs.

We anticipate that future contracts will be designed to provide stronger levers to direct providers and ensure compliance with distribution targets, but all actions will be strictly aligned with available funding and agreed priorities. Activity is currently underway to inform the future procurement,

including a delivery model assessment, local authority engagement to test and refine the selected delivery model, market engagement and submission of a programme business case.

Recommendation 17

We recommend that the Home Office implements a package of reforms to ensure that the impact of asylum accommodation on local areas is accounted for, including by:

- a. Ensuring that impacts on local services are adequately assessed by providers prior to accommodation being procured;*
- b. Providing local authorities with at least 28 days' notice of the use of new Contingency Accommodation;*
- c. Reinstating the 56 day notice period for asylum seekers who have received a positive decision; and d. Collaborating with local authorities to develop a clear data sharing standard which sets out what information should be shared with partners, and when. The Home Office should also ensure that data is shared consistently across different providers and the different regions. This could be reflected in a new KPI regime. (Recommendation, Paragraph 166)*

Government Response

The impact of asylum accommodation on local authority areas is actively considered, particularly for dispersed accommodation, using an indexing model. This model determines the required level of dispersed accommodation in each local authority area, considering factors such as market availability, population size, and local pressures – for example, GP capacity

Recognising the importance of evidence-based policy, the Home Office launched a pilot programme in December 2024 to temporarily extend the move-on period for individuals granted leave from asylum accommodation to 56 days. In September 2025, the pilot was amended to revert to a 28-day period for single adults (with some exceptions) and has since been extended in its current form until 31 January 2026.

The Home Office is reviewing the findings from an independent evaluation that took place regarding the impact of this pilot. The evaluation has gathered insights from local authorities, devolved governments, service providers, and voluntary sector partners. The findings from the evaluation, alongside other information such as operational data and the impact of the pause to the pilot in the Summer, are being reviewed to help inform the longer-term approach which will be decided by Ministers. This measured

approach will ensure that our future arrangements are sustainable and continue to meet our statutory duties while supporting those granted asylum effectively.

The Home Office remains committed to ensuring that local authorities receive timely information about newly recognised refugees at risk of homelessness, enabling prompt homelessness assessments within statutory timeframes.

In partnership with local authorities, health and education providers, and the police, the Home Office and its accommodation providers are dedicated to improving services for supported asylum seekers. Recognising the crucial role of data, all accommodation providers have been issued with guidance on appropriate data sharing – distinguishing between when personal data can be shared with third parties and when aggregated, non-personal information is more suitable for local partners.

Our aim is to maintain a consistent approach across the UK, working collaboratively and pragmatically with local partners to facilitate access to essential services for supported asylum seekers. The Home Office continues to analyse the results of any pilot introduced, and it is important that the necessary time is taken to review evidence before making any longer-term policy decisions.

Community cohesion

Recommendation 18

The Home Office should work with other government departments, local authorities, devolved administrations and community groups to improve communication with local communities about the use of asylum accommodation in their areas. This should include communicating how legitimate concerns are being addressed and ensuring that misinformation is challenged. (Recommendation, Paragraph 173)

Government Response

The Home Office undertakes engagement at various levels of seniority across government, with local authorities, and other statutory partners concerning asylum accommodation in local authority areas. For dispersed accommodation, the Home Office meets with local authorities from every region in England monthly and provides comprehensive data concerning the current and future dispersed accommodation estate. In addition, local authorities, and if they wish, local police, are consulted on every single dispersed accommodation property before it is procured.

We are committed to improving and prioritising communication with local communities about the use of asylum accommodation and ensuring that legitimate concerns are addressed while misinformation is challenged. This work is being taken forward in collaboration with other government departments, devolved governments, local authorities, local police, and community groups.

Our approach includes developing clear and consistent messaging on why accommodation is required, how decisions are made, and what measures are in place to safeguard local communities as well as asylum seekers. We are strengthening engagement channels to ensure concerns raised by residents and local representatives are acknowledged and acted upon, and that accurate information is provided promptly to counter misinformation. This will form part of a wider programme to build trust, improve transparency, and support community cohesion.

A trial involving six police forces across England is also under way to identify the most agile and effective ways of working with policing partners on misinformation, disinformation and malicious content. Alongside this, further work is taking place with a wider group of 17 police forces across the UK, including forces in Wales and Scotland, to establish and test new ways of working on information sharing, community reassurance and tackling misinformation.

The Home Office's Strategy

Recommendation 19

We recommend that the Government set out a clear, credible strategy for how it will reduce the use of asylum hotels and deliver a sustainable system of asylum accommodation. This strategy should include a realistic timeframe and achievable milestones to ensure that the Home Office has enough time to implement its strategy, in anticipation of the 2026 break clause and the end of the contracts in 2029. The outcome of the pilots being conducted to inform the strategy should be shared with the Committee. The Government should publish details of its overarching strategy for delivering asylum accommodation—in the interests of transparency and accountability—and share detailed plans with key partners, whose engagement will be crucial to its successful implementation. (Recommendation, Paragraph 188)

Government Response

As outlined in the Asylum Policy Statement, exiting all asylum hotels as soon as possible is one of the Department's top priorities, as it will contribute to removing the incentives which draw people to the UK illegally. Significant

progress has already been made, reducing hotel usage from over 400 at their peak in the summer of 2023 to 197 in use as of 5th January 2026. For safety, security, and operational reasons, the department does not comment on individual hotels or the timing of closures. We will take a balanced and evidence-based approach towards making decisions about the locations that we will use and how we will exit hotels. We will continue to engage closely with local authorities as plans develop. We do not want to be in a situation where, without an alternative ready, we start exiting hotels before it is time to do so or publish timeframes that are unrealistic and do not account for fluctuations in demand. The Home Office is committed to deliver the Prime Minister's commitment to end the use of hotels as asylum accommodation as soon as possible, and before the end of this Parliament. This is a complex programme of work that requires concerted cross-government effort and must be managed in an orderly and controlled manner. We will update the Committee of the progress in due course.

We are reviewing our long-term accommodation strategy in light of the publication of the government's recent Restoring Order and Control statement. The Home Office is working in collaboration with other government departments to deliver a range of accommodation sites, including military sites, that contribute to a more flexible estate. This will complement ongoing Home Office reforms to the asylum accommodation estate.