

Asylum-seeker sites

Why are containment sites invariably in Conservative constituencies? And almost always in England, where there is a senior MP?

Briefing | 25 April 2023



This photo is of the perimeter fence around the asylum-seeker site at RAF Wethersfield

One life to live

Are Conservative voters and MPs
in England disproportionately paying
the price for the government's asylum
policy? The Home Office may have
chosen their constituencies for asylum-
seeker accommodation in the hope
of an easier ride. It hasn't worked.

What is large-scale containment?

This is the Home Office's plan to solve the cost of accommodating asylum-seekers in hotel accommodation.

2022: Priti Patel's new strategy

On 14 April 2022, the government announced its plans for removing asylum-seekers to Rwanda. But slipped into the same announcement was the news that a "new, bespoke, asylum reception centre" would be created at the former RAF station at **Linton-on-Ouse**, North Yorkshire. This was to be on a new scale entirely: 1,500 people.

Linton-on-Ouse was to be the first in the then home secretary Priti Patel's planned [string of large-scale containment sites](#), designed to reduce the government's costly reliance on hotels. Unfortunately for the Home Office, campaigners and the local authority were [successful](#) in preventing the site from going ahead.

2023: New sites announced

In January 2023, Rishi Sunak reiterated to Parliament that it was important to end the "eye-watering" cost of hotels for asylum seekers. In March 2023, therefore, immigration minister Robert Jenrick said the government would look to "end the use of hotels", confirming plans to contain asylum-seekers in large-scale asylum containment centres at:

- **RAF Wethersfield** (1,700 people)
- **RAF Scampton** (2,000 people)
- the former **Northeye Prison** at Bexhill, which the Home Office is seeking to acquire (1,200 people)
- **Catterick Garrison** (unknown number of people - but it is our view that this will not go ahead, or at least not as large-scale accommodation for asylum-seekers. We believed that this would instead be a small number of army houses

for Afghan evacuees, and indeed some have been provided, and another 10 are about to be provided. There is currently no sign of a large-scale contingency site at Catterick.)

Since then, the government has also announced:

- the **Bibby Stockholm barge** at Portland Port (506 people)
- **Northop Hall Hotel** in Flintshire (400 people, with 150 in the hotel plus 250 in 'stacked containers' in the grounds)
- **two barges** which have been reserved by the Home Office for use in locations as yet unknown (with an unknown number of people). Three ports have so far rejected the idea of berthing these barges.

All of these are referred to as 'large-scale containment sites' for asylum-seekers.

And then there's immigration detention

The Illegal Migration Act prevents anyone who arrives by boat from making an asylum claim, and requires the Home Secretary to detain them. However, the immigration detention estate (besides being needlessly draconian) is nowhere near large enough for this. The combined maximum capacity of both the immigration removal centres (IRCs) and short-term holding facilities is around 2,802 people (yet 45,755 people arrived by boat in 2022).

Immigration detention centres are now spilling over into already overcrowded prisons. The immigration detention estate currently costs the UK government around £94m per year. However, with the planned re-opening of previously closed sites at Haslar and Campsfield House, this sum will rise.

Note that people in IRCs are unlikely to have committed a crime.

The 15 asylum sites announced since 2020

All but 2 of the containment and detention sites have been in Conservative constituencies

| No. | Site | Labour | LibDem | Conservative | Green | Independent | Plaid Cymru |
|-----|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------|-------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | Barton Stacey army camps | | | ● | | | |
| 2 | RAF Coltishall | | | ● | | | |
| 3 | Penally Barracks | | | ● | | | |
| 4 | Napier Barracks | | | ● | | | |
| 5 | Yarl's Wood expansion | | | ● | | | |
| 6 | RAF Linton-on-Ouse | | | ● | | | |
| 7 | RAF Wethersfield | | | ● | | | |
| 8 | RAF Scampton | | | ● | | | |
| 9 | Former Northeye Prison, Bexhill | | | ● | | | |
| 10 | Bibby Stockholm barge, Portland | | | ● | | | |
| 11 | Northop Hall Hotel | | | | | ● | |
| 12 | Catterick Garrison | | | ● | | | |
| 13 | Derwentside IRC | | | ● | | | |
| 14 | Campsfield House IRC | | ● | | | | |
| 15 | Haslar IRC | | | ● | | | |

IRC = immigration removal centre (detention centre)

What could be behind this ‘coincidence’?

Could this be a coincidence? After all, asylum accommodation centres are often placed in rural areas, which is where the Conservatives can be strong, and they do hold a 64-seat majority.

But it seems too coincidental to be a coincidence.

It's worth digging deeper, and asking some questions. If the answer to any of them is 'yes', then this may be a sign that the government is willing to exploit its own MPs, and the party faithful, to achieve its own objectives.

This would mean causing a great deal of distress and anxiety for the very people who elected Home Office ministers to power.

Whatever the reason, local people – especially Conservative voters in England – are paying the price for the government's failing asylum policy.

Has the Home Office selected its own strongholds in the hope there will be less of a backlash?

If so, that clearly hasn't worked. In every case, local people have fought the Home Office. In almost every case, the MP has supported their constituents as well as legal action against the plans.

Has the Home Office deliberately selected the constituencies of MPs who have held ministerial office in the hope they will support this pressing Conservative policy?

For example, James Cleverly, Caroline Dinenage, Caroline Nokes, Simon Hart, Damian Collins, Richard Holden, Huw Merriman and Edward Leigh.

8 out of the 11 Conservative MPs is a bizarrely high proportion (Rishi Sunak is not counted because he volunteered his constituency).

Is the Home Office requiring its MPs and supporters to ‘take one for the team’?

And also to take the hit for the monstrous asylum-claim backlog of 166,000 cases, which has led to the huge cost of accommodating them in hotels – and therefore this knee-jerk policy to clear those hotels?

Are local MPs now quietly being asked to agree to asylum sites, regardless of the views of constituents?

A case in point is Huw Merriman at Bexhill, who stands alone in not condemning the plans for his area. If so, **should local constituents know that that's why their MP isn't representing their views?**

Will the site in Rishi Sunak's constituency be the same as everyone else's?

The only asylum accommodation site for which no details have been released is the Prime Minister's, at Catterick Garrison. Is that because in this case it won't be 2,000 men in a camp – rather, will he move a small number of Afghan families, who are already in a hotel in the county, and place them into military housing (not a camp)?

Isn't it unlikely that he would place thousands of asylum-seekers on an active base, among service personnel and their families? Is Mr Sunak only offering Catterick Garrison to show that even the Prime Minister is mucking in, so other MPs shouldn't be NIMBYs – while at the same time mitigating the effect on his own constituency?

Why are most of the sites in England?

England appears to be bearing the brunt of this policy:

- 13 sites in England (up to 2,000 people each)
- 2 small sites in Wales (one now closed, one yet to open, of 250 and 400 people respectively)
- 0 sites in Scotland
- 0 sites in Northern Ireland

Is it a coincidence that the simple [MoD Disposal Database spreadsheet](#), with only 13 columns, has a column for ‘constituency’?

Local people – especially Conservative voters in England – are paying the price for the government's failing asylum policy.

How can local anxiety be relieved?

The effect of the sites – and even just the announcements

Local communities are severely affected whenever the Home Office announces one of its large-scale containment plans or immigration removal (detention) centres.

Local residents are perturbed, local authorities have to respond at great cost and inconvenience, and the far right arrives – encouraging an increase in racist and anti-refugee sentiment, and causing irreparable damage in relationships. **No local community has yet responded well to having an asylum containment or detention centre placed there.**

Refugee support charities don't agree with these 'camps' either, claiming they are not humane and (especially when behind barbed wire on military sites) they risk traumatising already-traumatised people.

There is a better way:

Clear the backlog of asylum claims and allow people to go back to living in communities, like they did before COVID.

#CommunitiesNotCamps

Local people – especially Conservative voters in England – are paying the price for the government's failing asylum policy.

Why have we been using hotels?

The government maintains that numbers of asylum claims are unprecedented. But [new claims](#) totalled 74,751 in 2022, *lower* than the 2002 peak of 84,132.

The real reason for the extended use of hotels is that the Home Office has built up an unprecedented *backlog* of unprocessed asylum cases: a [74% increase](#) in 2022 compared to 2021. By the end of March 2023, the backlog stood at [173,000](#) cases.

These people would normally have been flowing out into communities in the normal way – but faced with a growing problem of their own making, the Home Office turned to hotels.

What about the 'national emergency'?

The home secretary has said that the situation is a national emergency. This is currently being disputed through the courts by local communities where asylum camps are to be placed.

- COVID is over
- Numbers are not unprecedented
- Communities must have a say in what happens locally

Are numbers unprecedented?

- In 2002, there were 84,132 claims
- In 2022, there were 55,146 claims

Are these migrants 'illegal'?

The focus has been on people who come by boat (however, there is no other 'safe route' for coming to the UK to claim asylum).

[98%](#) of these people claim asylum, which means they are tracked and vetted by the Home Office.

The bar for being granted asylum is set very high. Nevertheless, 75% of these have their claim granted, and then another [51%](#) on appeal (2022 data). Some nationalities, eg Syrians, have an initial grant rate as high as 98%.

The MoD Disposal Database

Crown land includes a large amount of military infrastructure and land which is due for disposal.

This infrastructure and land is listed in a [public-domain spreadsheet](#) online.

The spreadsheet lists constituencies, making it even easier to filter where sites could be located.

The columns in the MoD spreadsheet are:

1. ID code
2. Status
3. DEO site (Defence Estate Optimisation)
4. Establishment name
5. Parcel name
6. Disposal from (date)
7. Address
8. Town
9. County
10. Country
11. Total area (hectares)
12. Housing unit potential
13. Constituency

Sites on Crown land

ALL 9 of the containment accommodation sites proposed since 2020 have been in Conservative constituencies

| Site | Location | Aim/type | Announced | Outcome | Constituency | Party |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------|---|---|-------|
| Barton Stacey army camps | Test Valley, Hampshire | Re-purpose derelict army camp | 2020 | Dropped before opening | Caroline Nokes <i>Romsey and S'ton North</i> | Cons |
| RAF Coltishall | Near Norwich, Norfolk | Opening and later attempted reopening of derelict RAF station | 2020 | Opened April 2020 Closed Feb 2021 Reconsidered Jan '22 Dropped July 2022 | Jerome Mayhew <i>Broadland</i> | Cons |
| Penally Barracks | Tenby, Wales | Re-purpose derelict army camp | 2020 | Opened Sept 2020 Closed March 2021 | Simon Hart <i>Carmarthen West and South, Pembrokeshire</i> | Cons |
| Napier Barracks | Folkestone, Kent | Re-purpose derelict army camp | 2020 | Opened Sept 2020 Remains open | Damian Collins <i>Folkestone & Hythe</i> | Cons |
| Yarl's Wood expansion | Near Bedford | Accommodation adjacent to the IRC | December 2020 | Dropped Feb 2021 | Richard Fuller <i>North East Bedfordshire</i> | Cons |
| RAF Linton-on-Ouse | Near York, North Yorkshire | Re-purpose RAF station | April 2022 | Dropped August 2022 before opening | Kevin Hollinrake <i>Thirsk & Malton</i> | Cons |
| RAF Wethersfield | Near Braintree, Essex | Re-purpose RAF station | March 2023 | Pending, not yet open | James Cleverly <i>Braintree</i> | Cons |
| RAF Scampton | Near Lincoln, Lincolnshire | Re-purpose RAF station | March 2023 | Pending, not yet open In legal pre-action | Edward Leigh <i>Gainsborough</i> | Cons |
| Catterick Garrison | Near Richmond, North Yorkshire | No information | April 2023 | Pending information Likely to be very different, eg Afghan families in homes | Rishi Sunak <i>Richmond, Yorkshire</i> | Cons |

Sites on non-Crown land

2 of the 3 containment sites proposed since 2020 have been in Conservative constituencies

| Site | Location | Aim/type | Announced | Outcome | Constituency | Party |
|--|---------------------------------|--|------------|--|--|-------|
| <p>Former Northeye Prison AKA "Land at Coneyburrow Lane and Barnhorn Road, Bexhill"</p> <p>Owned by Brockwell Group Bexhill Llp</p> <p>Purchased for £6.3 million in August 2022</p> | Near Bexhill, East Sussex | Re-purpose former Cat B/Cat C prison which was subsequently an education campus for the UAE | April 2023 | <p>Pending, not yet open</p> <p>The Home Office is examining the derelict site (asbestos etc)</p> <p>The LA is awaiting the outcome of Wethersfield injunction hearing on 19 April before commencing court action</p> | <p>Huw Merriman <i>Bexhill & Battle</i></p> <p>Has publicly stated his support for the plans</p> | Cons |
| <p>Barge owned by Bibby Marine</p> <p>Portland Port</p> | Portland Port, Weymouth, Dorset | Re-use of the Bibby Stockholm, previously housed the homeless in Germany & asylum-seekers in the Netherlands | April 2023 | <p>Pending, not yet open</p> <p>LA considering legal action</p> | <p>Richard Drax <i>South Dorset</i></p> | Cons |
| <p>Northop Hall Hotel</p> <p>Purchased by Payman Investments for £850,000 in August 2022</p> | Near Flint, Wales | 150 men in the 39 hotel bedrooms (4 to a room) and a further 250 in 'stacked containers' in the grounds | April 2023 | <p>Pending, not yet open</p> <p>Local campaign group is fundraising for legal action</p> | <p>Rob Roberts <i>Delyn</i></p> | Indep |

Asylum detention/removal sites

2 of the 3 proposed sites announced since 2020 have been in Conservative constituencies

| Site | Location | Aim/type | Announced | Outcome | Constituency | Party |
|----------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------|--|--|--------|
| Derwentside IRC | Consett, Co Durham | Immigration removal centre (detention) | January 2021 | Was a young offenders' institution until 1988 Reopened as same in 1999 Closed 2015 Reopened as an IRC Nov 2021 | Richard Holden <i>North West Durham</i> | Cons |
| Campsfield House IRC | Kidlington, near Oxford | Immigration removal centre (detention) | June 2022 | Opened as an IRC 1993 Closed 2018 To reopen Nov 2022 | Layla Moran <i>Oxford West and Abingdon</i> | LibDem |
| Haslar IRC | Gosport, Hampshire | Immigration removal centre (detention) | Sept 2022 | Began as an IRC 2002 Closed 2015 "Not to reopen" 2016 To reopen Sept 2023 | Caroline Dinenage <i>Gosport</i> Has publicly stated her support for the plans | Cons |

Almost exclusively in England

13 in England

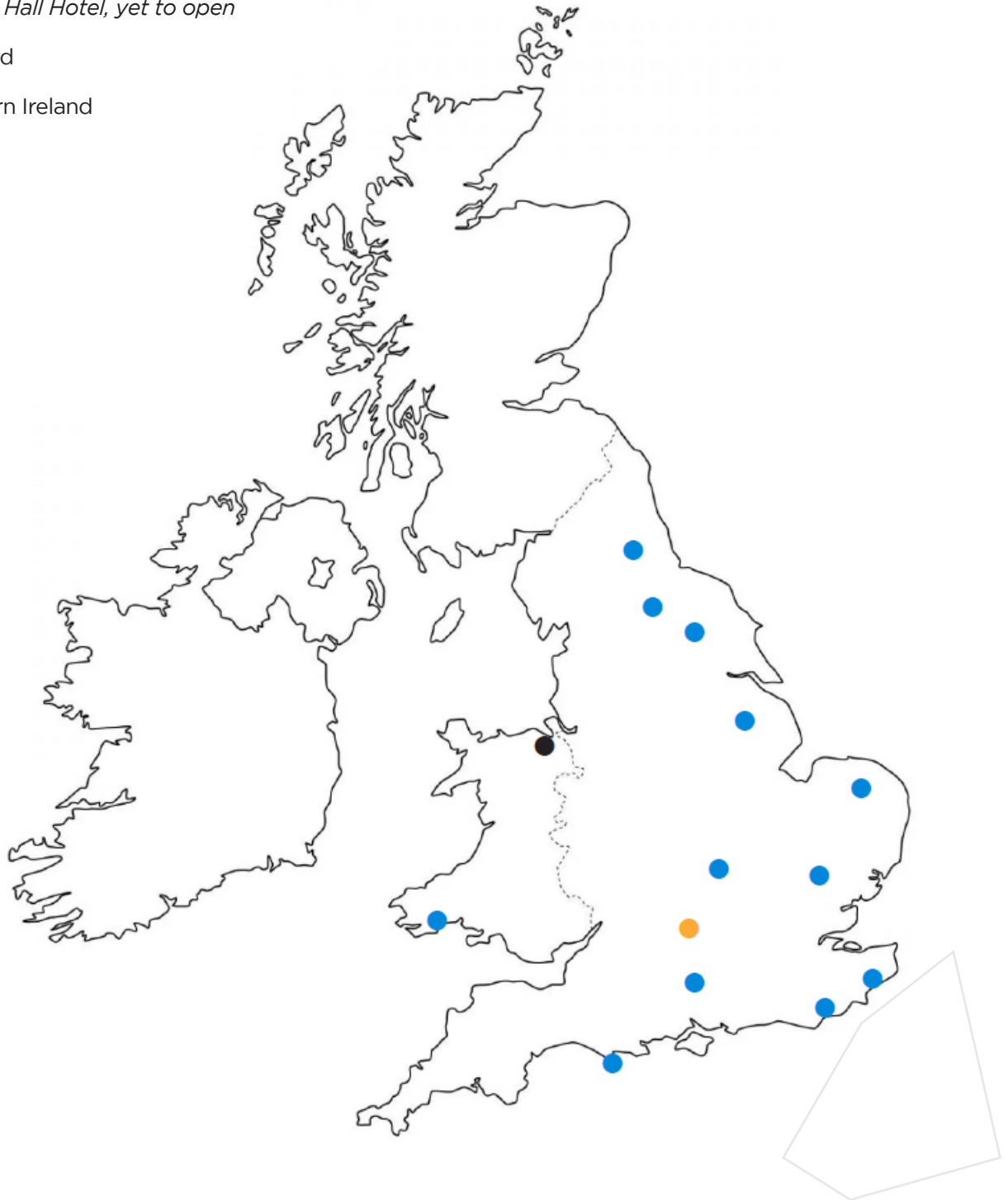
2 in Wales

(i) *Penally since closed,*

(ii) *Northop Hall Hotel, yet to open*

0 in Scotland

0 in Northern Ireland



Senior roles held by these Conservative MPs

Only Kevin Hollinrake, Jerome Mayhew, Richard Fuller and Richard Drax had not held senior/ministerial roles at the time of the announcement about the site in their constituency. However, within two months of the Linton plans being dropped, Kevin Hollinrake then did take up a junior ministerial position.

| Name | Roles & dates |
|-------------------|---|
| James Cleverley | Foreign Secretary, 2022-present Secretary of State for Education, 2022-2022 Minister of State for Europe and North America, 2022-2022 Minister of State for Middle East, North Africa and North America, 2020-2022 Chairman of the Conservative Party, 2019-2020 Minister without Portfolio, 2019-2020 Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, 2019-2019 Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party, 2018-19 |
| Caroline Dinenage | Minister of State for Digital and Culture, 2020-2021 Minister of State for Social Care, 2018-2020 Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Family Support, Housing and Child Maintenance, 2017-2018 Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Women, Equalities and Early Years, 2015-2017 |
| Caroline Nokes | Minister of State for Immigration, 2018-19 Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office, 2017-18 Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Welfare Delivery, 2016-17 |
| Simon Hart | Chief Whip of the House of Commons & Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury, 2022-present Secretary of State for Wales, 2019-2022 Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office, 2019-2019 |
| Damian Collins | Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Technology and the Digital Economy, 2022-2022 |
| Richard Holder | Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Roads and Local Transport, 2022-present |
| Huw Merriman | Minister of State for Rail and HS2, 2022-present |
| Edward Leigh | Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, 1990-1993 |
| Rishi Sunak | Prime Minister (Career irrelevant - he's the boss, and he <i>volunteered</i> his constituency for a site) |

Conservative MPs' reactions to asylum sites in their constituencies

Kevin Hollinrake, RAF Linton-on-Ouse

"It is absolutely unfair; it is unacceptable, unsustainable, that **a single community are the sacrificial lambs for a national policy.**"

Meeting with local residents, 21 May 2022

"Is [this] a breach of the Home Office's authority? It may well be."

Meeting with local residents, 21 May 2022

"It will **devastate the community.**"

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-61491711>

"[Home Office] has 'failed to follow its own guidance on the location of such a facility, which said that **asylum-seekers should be placed in urban areas.**'"

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-61162668>

"Every single agency I have spoken to – in fact, there's no cabinet minister defending this, and every single member of parliament I've spoken to thinks it's a bad idea; the local authority does, the police do, the refugee agencies have said this is the wrong place for this facility... we keep up the fight on the basis that this is the wrong plan, wrong place."

Meeting with local residents, 21 May 2022

"Letters voicing concerns over the plan... have gone unanswered. As I understand it, no formal response letter has been received, nor has a response to valid questions and concerns from residents sent nearly three weeks ago – this is unacceptable."

<https://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/20131991.linton-ouse-asylum-centre-kevin-hollinrake-speaks>

"The vote of no confidence [in the Home Office, by North Yorkshire County Council] it is an embarrassment to the Home Office and to the Home Secretary. These plans need to be reversed."

Meeting with local residents, 21 May 2022

"I fully support Hambleton Council in its quest for a legal route to reverse this.... I will continue to work on stopping these plans."

<https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/20142114.kevin-hollinrake-mp-backs-fight-linton-on-ouse-raf-asylum-centre>

Caroline Nokes, Barton Stacey

"Inhuman... It will be like a prison camp and conditions will be appalling... **I am shocked anyone could think this is a good idea.**"

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/priti-patel-plans-dump-300-23194180>

"It's... next to an MoD firing range and a shooting school, so those seeking refuge from war will listen to the sound of gunshot."

<https://www.rampproject.org/news/asylumdebate-independent>

"**Ministers had failed to prioritise people...** "I think it's a great shame that they aren't being more compassionate towards some really vulnerable people."

<https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/brexit-news-westminster-news-caroline-nokes-on-immigration-6895234>

"We know these people are going to have had huge trauma. It fills me with horror that our supported asylum accommodation processes have gone so hideously wrong that they can't even recognise that this is not a decent way to accommodate people."

<https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/brexit-news-westminster-news-caroline-nokes-on-immigration-6895234>

Richard Fuller, Yarl's Wood

"I have long opposed the **dysfunctional asylum system** that has led to a large detention estate including Yarl's Wood... of course it is important that accommodation for asylum seekers is appropriate."

<https://www.bedfordindependent.co.uk/concerns-raised-over-plans-to-house-200-asylum-seekers-at-yarls-wood>

"This [cancellation] is a welcome announcement... The use of Yarl's Wood was stated as a temporary measure, needed over the winter to house asylum seekers safely during the national lockdown... As time has gone on, it has become clearer that the forecasted need had either not materialised or was being accommodated elsewhere."

<https://www.richardfuller.co.uk/news/temporary-accommodation-no-longer-needed-yarls-wood>

Richard Drax, Portland barge

“Disingenuous... **No consultation whatsoever** has taken place and there are many questions to which we have no answers. **The whole matter is a shambles.** We have received most of the information from the press and media.”

<https://www.richarddrax.com/news/diary-home-office-makes-official-announcement-migrant-barge-portland>

“‘very concerned’ about the **impact on businesses** in the area.”

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-65172368>

“**...dumped on our door without consultation** by the Home Office... urged Ms Braverman to scrap the idea... Every option’s being looked at including legal action... We want to get this consigned to the dustbin.”

<https://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/23433864.dorset-mp-opposes-plans-house-migrants-portland-port>

“This is **not the port’s core business**... the full impact on both the port and the wider community has not been thought through... My objections are not helped by the fact discussions have all been carried out in private between the port and home office officials. It was **a fait accompli.**”

<https://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/23439162.richard-drax-mp-portland-port-stick-best>

“There are still many questions to be answered, not least **why did the Home Office not have the courtesy to consult with us** before the announcement was made... I have been working with Dorset Council and the police & crime commissioner to work up a joint position that we can all get behind. Legal action is being considered.”

<https://www.richarddrax.com/news/diary-many-press-inquiries-proposal-put-barge-hundreds-migrants-portland-port>

Jerome Mayhew, RAF Coltishall

“This would be a very significant mistake... it **would have flown in the face of very strong local opposition**... such centres are best placed in urban areas where there is access to community infrastructure.”

<https://www.northnorfolknews.co.uk/news/housing/22786424.home-office-scrap-asylum-plan-former-norfolk-raf-base>

“Unsuitable for anything other than a short-term emergency stopgap to keep asylum seekers off the streets during the COVID pandemic.”

<https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/housing/20634428.former-raf-building-house-asylum-seekers>

“A small village, with inadequate community infrastructure or public transport... the number of asylum seekers to be housed there would have a **disproportionate impact** on a largely elderly small resident community.”

<https://www.northnorfolknews.co.uk/news/housing/22786424.home-office-scrap-asylum-plan-former-norfolk-raf-base>

Simon Hart, Penally Barracks

“We all discovered [the plans] completely by accident because of some comments on Facebook. There was no official contact... this particular saga wasn’t handled particularly well and the Home Office have actually admitted that... enough respect hasn’t been shown towards the area or the Welsh Government.”

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/politics/penally-asylum-camp-simon-hart-19046827>

“In a letter to local residents, Mr Hart said he was ‘deeply conscious’ that the manner in which the use of Penally for asylum seekers had come about **“caused much frustration and anger”**.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-56418361>

“The **lack of engagement or notice**... has undoubtedly made a complicated situation even more challenging for all those affected, in particular the local residents.”

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/09/24/home-office-blamed-lack-consultation-welsh-migrant-camp-becomes>

Damian Collins, Napier Barracks

“The best solution would be for the asylum seekers to have their claims processed and for this facility to be closed down.”

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-55677277>

“I was against the use of Napier Barracks... I would like to see the end of the use of this temporary facility as soon as possible.”

<https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/damian-collins-folkestone-column-for-week-ending-march-18>

“I have expressed my concerns about this decision before, and in particular **the lack of notice or consultation from the Home Office**... I remain of the opinion that creating a hostel style open camp for over 400 asylum seekers in the heart of a residential community was the wrong decision.”

<https://damiancollins.com/napier-barracks-2>

“I have long opposed the use of Napier Barracks for asylum accommodation... The housing of several hundred people, on a single site with limited facilities and little to do, **was always going to cause problems, and so it has proved.**”

<https://www.facebook.com/damiancollinsofficial/posts/my-weekly-blog-napier-barracks-update-last-week-the-government-announced-its-int/4261778417238195>

James Cleverly, RAF Wethersfield

"I highlighted the remote nature of the site, the limited transport infrastructure and narrow road network and that these factors would mean the site isn't appropriate for asylum accommodation."

Facebook

"This decision isn't the result my constituents and I wanted."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-esssex-65114427>

Edward Leigh, RAF Scampton

"Sir Edward Leigh responded by saying an injunction will be sought against the **'thoroughly bad decision'**."

<https://flyer.co.uk/scampton-officers-mess-listed-in-bid-to-halt-asylum-centre>

"Scampton is the wrong site at the wrong time."

<https://www.forces.net/politics/council-launches-legal-action-against-home-office-over-raf-site-asylum-accommodation>

"Sir Edward... said he **only found out about the alleged plan after a 'tip-off'**. **'I'm very annoyed I've had no official notification'**."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lincolnshire-64890522>

Huw Merriman, Northeye Prison

"I only found out that the site was being included **three days before the announcement** in Parliament."

<https://www.huwmerriman.org.uk/news/my-main-concern-northeye-plan-residents-feel-safe>

"It's **a real challenge for the constituents**, I absolutely recognise that. I am really sorry to the constituents impacted by it, but I'm just not going to be one of those politicians that says yes there's a problem, but I'm going to turn my back on a solution."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-sussex-65258088>

Caroline Dinenage, Haslar IRC

"Gosport MP Dame Caroline Dinenage had reportedly asked the Home Office to hold a proper **public presentation and question-and-answer session on the proposal with media in attendance, but the request was turned down.**"

<https://www.thegospportglobe.co.uk/campaigners-fight-haslar-detention-centre-plans>

"...told the BBC the centre was in a 'bit of a sorry state' and would be the subject of a refurbishment programme, although she could not supply costs."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-63543778>

"A 'boost for the area'."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-63543778>

Richard Holden, Derwentside IRC

"It is right that the former Hassockfield site be restyled into an immigration detention and removal centre."

<https://www.richardholden.org.uk/news/richard-holden-holds-crucial-phone-call-home-office-details-proposed-development-hassockfield>

Detention (in an IRC) does NOT necessarily mean that the asylum-seeker has committed any crime. They are sent to IRCs because the system indicates their asylum claims have failed or because the government wants to deport them for other reasons.

For most people detained, the Home Office's decision to detain is successfully challenged:

In 2020, 74% of people held in immigration detention centres eventually gained their freedom to live in the community.

Non-Conservative MPs' reactions to asylum sites in their constituencies

Layla Moran, LibDem Campsfield House IRC

"This **disgraceful decision** reflects at best a failure of policy and at worst complete heartlessness from the Home Office."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-61966401>

"The decision to reopen the centre [is] a 'backward step'... We as a community campaigned for more than 20 years to get it closed down. It was a promise that even Theresa May made in 2014."

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/campsfield-immigration-removal-oxfordshire-home-office-b2110905.html>

"...called on the Government to reconsider its proposal, dubbing the plans 'costly' and 'harmful'... the 'huge costs' of re-opening Campsfield and detaining 400 people, which could instead 'fund over 1,000 new caseworkers to process the growing backlog of asylum claims'."

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/22641555.layla-moran-urges-government-ditch-campsfield-house-plans>

"The reality there can **feel like you are living in a nightmare**... I and my community have already fought hard for Campsfield House to be closed, and we are ready to fight to make sure it stays that way."

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/22641555.layla-moran-urges-government-ditch-campsfield-house-plans>

"I raised concerns about the welfare of detainees, and even discovered that there were children being held at the facility."

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/23365788.immigration-centre-oxfordshire-layla-moran-urges-re-think>

Rob Roberts MP, Independent Northop Hall Hotel

"Northop Hall is **wholly unsuitable** for a place like this. There are virtually no public transport services. One small shop, one pub, no capacity in schools, no capacity in GPs, no capacity in Dentists. No capacity in local A&E and other health services."

<https://www.leaderlive.co.uk/news/23374728.mp-councillors-slam-northop-hotel-asylum-seeker-plan>

"Increasing the population of a village like this by about 35% is simply not a viable plan... **I will do all I can to stop this** from proceeding."

<https://www.leaderlive.co.uk/news/23374728.mp-councillors-slam-northop-hotel-asylum-seeker-plan>

"There could be a 'lie down in front of the diggers' moment in the village if the plans go ahead."

<https://inews.co.uk/news/plan-house-asylum-seekers-welsh-village-northop-hall-one-shop-gp-2265823>

One life to live

One Life to Live believes that refugees and asylum-seekers deserve better than Britain's hostile environment. It works collaboratively with charities, NGOs and other organisations to challenge public preconceptions of asylum and refugee issues, to campaign against large-scale accommodation containment sites, and to shine the light on different perspectives within these stories.

Founder Nicola David was a member of the [Linton-on-Ouse Action Group](#) which fought off government plans for the first such site in 2022.

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