

Asylum handouts and accommodation removed for illegal migrants abusing Britain's generosity

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Stricter conditions for migrants receiving asylum support will create a fairer, compliance-based system that's better for the British taxpayer.

Asylum seekers who break the law, illegally work or can support themselves financially will have their accommodation and financial support removed under new laws to be introduced today.

The statutory legal duty to provide asylum seekers with support and accommodation will today be revoked. Instead, it will be replaced with a conditional approach, so support is reserved only for those who genuinely need it and follow the law.

The measures that will be laid in Parliament today (Thursday 5 March) and come into force in June will remove support payments and accommodation for asylum seekers who illegally work, have the ability to support themselves, have the right to work or have broken the law. Those convicted of serious crimes face removal or deportation.

The move comes as Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood will introduce new legislation today to restore order and control to our borders. She will make a speech today at the Institute For Public Policy Research (IPPR) think tank outlining how these reforms are in line with her British values.

The measures deliver on last November's asylum policy statement, which set out this government's plan to fix our broken asylum system and maintain the public's confidence so we can continue provide sanctuary to those genuinely fleeing danger.

Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood said:

Britain will always provide refuge to people fleeing war and persecution.

But taxpayers cannot be expected to fund the lives of those who exploit the system or break our laws.

Asylum support and accommodation will now become conditional – reserved only for those who play by our rules.

Last year a total of £4 billion was spent on asylum support in the UK. As of December, there were 107,003 individuals in receipt of asylum support, with 30,657 in around 200 asylum hotels, costing the Home Office an average of £53,000 a year.

Among this group, around 21,000 migrants could be granted the right to work because they have been waiting for more than 12 months for their asylum claim.

Meanwhile, a record-breaking 9,000 illegal working arrests were made across the UK last year – some of which were asylum seekers.

Under the tougher policy, these people could be eligible to have their support removed, alongside those who break the law, refuse removal and can financially support themselves.

The government has already reduced the number of migrants in asylum hotels by 19% in the past year (to the end of December 2025), and overall asylum support costs by 15% in the last financial year (to the end of March 2025). Tougher rules like those set out could help reduce this even further and lead to greater savings for the taxpayer.

It will ensure the UK offers asylum support that is decent and humane, without attracting illegal migrants to the UK and placing an excessive burden on taxpayers.

Today's announcement comes after the Home Secretary visited Denmark last week to see how it has tackled immigration with extraordinary results, bringing asylum claims to a 40-year low.

Mahmood has set out that her sweeping reforms to the UK immigration system will follow the Danish model to ramp up removals of those with no right to be here and make it less attractive for illegal migrants to come to Britain.

This work includes closing every asylum hotel in the UK and moving migrants to alternative accommodation, such as former military sites like Crowborough, which is already housing male migrants.

The government will also reform the interpretation of Article 8 of the ECHR to ramp up removals, threaten visa sanctions on countries who do not take back illegal migrants, create a one-stop-shop to fix the broken appeals system and open new safe and legal routes.

Taken together, these are the most sweeping reforms to Britain's immigration system in modern times. It sits alongside existing work which has seen illegal working enforcement activity in 2025 reach the highest level in British history in a calendar year. Removals have also scaled up to nearly 60,000 since July 2024 - a 31% increase compared to the 19-month period ending June 2024.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/asylum-handouts-and-accommodation-removed-for-illegal-migrants-abusing-britains-generosity>