**Re: The use of camps and barges as asylum accommodation centres**

Dear [name of MP],

I am writing as a constituent to ask that you take a stand against the Government’s policy of segregating and warehousing people seeking asylum in camp-style accommodation centres. I believe people seeking safety in the UK should be housed in communities, not camps.

I am deeply concerned that people seeking sanctuary are finding themselves isolated [in prison-like conditions](https://asylummatters.org/2021/12/15/new-joint-report-in-a-place-like-prison-voices-from-institutional-asylum-accommodation/) without adequate advice, [healthcare](https://www.bmj.com/content/382/bmj.p1874), or support. Facilities such as RAF Wethersfield, RAF Scampton and the Bibby Stockholm barge are segregating and re-traumatising people, and there has been ongoing insufficient consideration of the needs of people seeking asylum or local communities.

One person seeking safety has already [lost his life](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-67751815) aboard the Bibby Stockholm barge. This followed [warnings from others](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/aug/25/asylum-seekers-bibby-stockholm-conditions-suicide-attempt) placed there that such a tragedy was inevitable. In the first months of its operations, clinicians working at ex RAF Wethersfield have [warned of the irreparable and profound harm](https://www.helenbamber.org/resources/reportsbriefings/ghettoised-and-traumatised-experiences-men-held-quasi-detention#:~:text=Our%20new%20report%20with%20Humans,caused%20irreparable%20and%20profound%20harm) being caused to people in the facility, including experiences of suicidal ideation and “intense desperation and fear”.

Placing thousands of people in floating prison-like barges or ex-military camps, often in rural locations without easy means of accessing community or support, blurs the line between freedom and detention, exposes vulnerable people fleeing war and persecution to segregation and re-traumatisation, and leads to community tensions by creating clear targets for racist far-right groups. Ministers should have learned lessons from experiences at Napier and Penally, where the use of military barracks as asylum accommodation led to people being left in limbo in unsafe living conditions for extended periods, difficulties accessing essential healthcare, and harassment by the far right. As a result, many people’s lives have been blighted by deteriorating mental and physical health.

The current use of hotels, barracks and barges as ‘emergency’ asylum accommodation is rooted in the Home Office’s failure both to make timely and fair decisions on asylum claims, and to work effectively in partnership with local communities. The absence of meaningful prior consultation with local communities is emblematic of a wider asylum accommodation system run for profit and characterised by inadequate partnership working and resourcing for local and devolved authorities. This failure has also inflamed tensions and created [opportunities](https://hopenothate.org.uk/2023/12/20/anti-migrant-activism-in-2023/) for racist far-right groups to damage community cohesion up and down the country.

People seeking asylum should be housed in communities, not camps. They need safety, stability and support to rebuild their lives; and local communities require consultation, resources and information in order to welcome them. I am asking therefore that you speak out on my behalf, and call on the Home Office to:

* Immediately move to close down all camps and barges and rehouse people seeking asylum in safe and dignified accommodation within communities.
* Immediately scrap any plans for further camp-style asylum ‘accommodation’ sites in any part of the UK.
* Redouble its efforts to increase the availability of safe asylum accommodation in flats and houses within local communities.
* Work collaboratively with communities and local authorities and provide adequate funding to enable them to welcome people seeking safety.
* Repeal the Illegal Migration Act, which if enacted in full will significantly blur the line between asylum accommodation and detention and may put the UK in breach of international laws.

I would be grateful for the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your organisation if relevant]

[Your address and contact details]