



## Report:

# UK Asylum Accommodation Contracts, Barracks, and Contractors (2019–2025)

## 1. Declared Barracks & RAF Sites

- Cameron Barracks (Inverness, Scotland)
  - Declared in 2025 to house ~300 asylum seekers.
  - Managed by Mears Group.
- Crowborough Training Camp (East Sussex, England)
  - Declared in 2025 to house ~600 asylum seekers.
  - Managed by Clearsprings Ready Homes.
- RAF Scampton (Lincolnshire)
  - Planned to house ~2,000 asylum seekers.
  - Scrapped in 2024 due to cost concerns (~£122m projected).
- MDP Wethersfield (Essex)
  - Legally cleared in 2023 after High Court ruling.
  - Managed by Clearsprings Ready Homes.
- Redford Barracks (Edinburgh)
  - Mentioned in discussions but not formally declared.
  - Would likely fall under Mears Group if activated.

## 2. Contractors & Regional Coverage

- Serco → North West, Midlands, East of England.
- Mears Group → Scotland, Northern Ireland, North East, Yorkshire & Humber.
- Clearsprings Ready Homes → South of England, Wales.
- Stay Belvedere Hotels (SBHL) → Subcontractor (2019–2025), managed Napier Barracks and ~51 hotels. Contract terminated in 2025.

### 3. Contract Values & Guarantees

- Serco: £1.9bn over 10 years.
- Mears Group: £1bn over 10 years.
- Clearsprings: £996m over 10 years.
- SBHL: ~£2bn annually (terminated 2025).

#### Minimum spend guarantees:

- Each contractor is guaranteed baseline payments to maintain housing stock and staff, even if asylum numbers fall.
- Escalator clauses allow costs to rise with increased arrivals.
- NAO projection: £15.3bn over 10 years (up from £4.5bn originally).

### 4. Financial Performance

#### Serco

- Profit ~£37m (2018).
- Profit £146m in H1 2025, on track to exceed £274m in 2024.
- Nearly 7x increase since contracts.

#### Mears Group

- Revenue ~£900m (2018).
- Revenue £1.089bn (2023), ~40% from asylum contracts.
- Asylum housing now nearly half of turnover.

#### Clearsprings Ready Homes

- Turnover <£100m (2018).
- Turnover £1.7bn (2024), profit £120m.

- Turnover £1.3bn (2025), profit £58.7m.

SBHL

- Managed ~25% of asylum accommodation.
- Contract worth £2bn annually cancelled in 2025.

## 5. Political & Royal Connections

SBHL

- Co-owner donated ~£500,000 to the Liberal Democrats in 2025.
- No royal family links.

Mears Group

- Directors are career housing/finance executives.
- No political or royal connections.

Serco

- Former CEO Rupert Soames is Winston Churchill's grandson, brother of ex-Conservative MP Nicholas Soames.
- No royal family ownership (rumours debunked).

Clearsprings Ready Homes

- Founder Graham King has donated to the Conservative Party.
- No royal family links.

## 6. Companies That Missed Out (2019 Tender)

- G4S → Previously managed asylum housing in Yorkshire/North East; lost contracts.
- Reliance & smaller housing associations → Excluded when contracts consolidated into three providers.
- Home Office deliberately reduced providers to simplify oversight.

## 7. Key Implications

- Financial lock-in: Minimum spend guarantees mean billions will be paid regardless of asylum numbers.
- Policy focus: Contracts are about managing arrivals, not preventing them.
- Political influence: Donations and family ties show contractors are embedded in UK political networks.
- Market consolidation: Only three firms dominate, raising accountability concerns.
- Cost escalation: From £4.5bn projected to £15.3bn actual — taxpayers bear the burden.

### **Concise Summary: UK Asylum Accommodation Contracts (2019–2025)**

*Since 2019, the UK government has outsourced asylum accommodation through long-term contracts worth billions. Three firms dominate: Serco (£1.9bn), Mears Group (£1bn), and Clearsprings Ready Homes (£996m). A subcontractor, Stay Belvedere Hotels (SBHL), managed hotels and Napier Barracks until its £2bn annual contract was terminated in 2025. New sites include Cameron Barracks (Inverness, run by Mears) and Crowborough Camp (East Sussex, run by Clearsprings). RAF Scampton was scrapped, while Wethersfield (Essex) continues under Clearsprings. Redford Barracks (Edinburgh) has been discussed but not declared.*

*Financially, costs have ballooned from an estimated £4.5bn to £15.3bn over 10 years, with guaranteed minimum payments ensuring contractors are paid regardless of asylum numbers. Profits surged: Serco's rose nearly sevenfold since 2018, Mears now derives ~40% of revenue from asylum housing, and Clearsprings peaked at £1.7bn turnover in 2024.*

*Political links exist: SBHL donated heavily to the Liberal Democrats, Clearsprings' founder has backed the Conservatives, and Serco's former CEO Rupert Soames is Winston Churchill's grandson. Mears stands out as apolitical. None of the companies have ties to the royal family.*

*Overall, the contracts show a system designed to manage arrivals rather than prevent them, locking in billions of taxpayer spending and consolidating power among a handful of private firms.*



#### References

- openDemocracy investigation
- National Audit Office briefing
- Liberty Investigates
- Commons Home Affairs Committee report