

Bridging hotels and homelessness for Afghan households

Research Report

August 2023



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Summary

Background

To monitor homelessness pressures caused by the closure of bridging hotels for Afghan nationals, in August 2023, an online survey was sent to 44 councils in England with bridging hotels in their area. A total of 22 responded – a response rate of 50 per cent.

Key findings

- Respondents reported 1,009 Afghan nationals who had stayed in bridging hotels in their area at some point: 812 were still in bridging hotels at the time of completing the survey, and 197 were in bridging hotels that have since expired.
- At the time of completing the survey, respondents reported that of the Afghan nationals who had stayed in a bridging hotel at some point, 225 had already presented as homeless to the council (22 per cent).
- At the time of respondents completing the survey, 336 Afghan nationals still in bridging hotels had not yet secured further accommodation (41 per cent) This is in addition to the 225 who had already presented as homeless.
- Respondents reported a range of measures they were taking to assist Afghan nationals who had not yet found follow-up accommodation, including helping them find options directly, working with partner organisations to find accommodation for them, delivering workshops and training to Afghan nationals, matching them to properties in their area supported by the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF), assisting them in being transferred to other areas with more options available, and providing them with further temporary accommodation.

Introduction

In order to monitor homelessness pressures caused by the closure of bridging hotels for Afghan nationals, in August 2023, an online survey was sent by the LGA to all councils in England with housing responsibility that had a bridging hotel within their local authority area. The purpose of this survey was to obtain estimates of the numbers of Afghan nationals staying in these bridging hotels, the number who were staying in the bridging hotels but have since left following their closure, and the number who have presented to the council as homeless either before or after the closure of the bridging hotels.

Methodology

A link to the online survey was distributed in a letter from the Chair of the Local Government Association, Cllr Shaun Davies, addressed to all English councils with responsibility for housing and with bridging hotels for Afghan nationals in their area. The survey was also shared with selected county councils to complete on behalf of applicable districts, where these councils were substantially involved in the coordination of these bridging hotels. A total of 44 councils met this description, and were given the opportunity to respond to the survey. Of these 44 councils, a total of 22 responded – a response rate of 50 per cent.

Whilst these results should strictly be taken as a snapshot of the views of this particular group of respondents, rather than representative of all local authorities with bridging hotels, this level of response means that the results are likely to provide a good indication of the position of these areas more widely.

Table 1 shows a breakdown of response rates by local authority type. All applicable local authority types, took part in the survey to some extent, with London boroughs having the highest response rate (100 per cent, although this was due to there only being one applicable council in London), followed by unitary councils (57 per cent), district councils (52 per cent), and metropolitan districts (25 per cent). This demonstrates that a reasonable level of representation from all applicable authority types was received.

As noted above county councils were not included in the survey as they do not have responsibility over housing matters but the survey was shared with relevant counties where appropriate for information. Two counties provided a response on behalf of districts in their area, and these have been classified under their respective districts in the table below.

Table 1: Response rate by type of authority

Type of authority	No. of councils with bridging hotels	Number of responses	Response rate %
District	21	11	52
London borough	1	1	100
Metropolitan district	8	2	25
Unitary	14	8	57

Table 2 shows a breakdown of response rates by region. One hundred per cent of applicable councils in the Eastern and Greater London regions responded to the survey, and a level of response of at least 20 per cent was achieved from all other regions, with the exception of the North East, which did not have any applicable councils which had bridging hotels in their area. This demonstrates that the responses to the survey were generally well-distributed among the applicable regions.

Table 2: Response rate by region

Type of authority	No. of councils with bridging hotels	Number of responses	Response rate %
Eastern	5	5	100
East Midlands	3	2	67
Greater London	1	1	100
North East	0	0	n/a
North West	5	1	20
South East	14	3	21
South West	6	3	50
West Midlands	6	5	83
Yorkshire and Humber	4	2	50

Bridging hotels for Afghan households

This section contains analysis of the full results from the survey.

Numerical estimates of Afghan nationals

Respondents to the survey were asked to estimate the following numerical figures, relating to the time at which they submitted their response:

1. Number of Afghan nationals currently in bridging hotels that are still open, where a notice to quit has not yet expired.
2. Number of Afghan nationals meeting question 1. above, who have not yet secured accommodation and are likely to present as homeless before or after the notice to quit has expired.
3. Number of Afghan nationals who were in bridging hotels that have already closed at the point the notice to quit expired, whether or not they have since presented as homeless.
4. Number of Afghan nationals from bridging hotels who have already presented as homeless, either before or after the notice to quit expired.

Table 3 shows an outline to the results of this survey, demonstrating that the 21 respondent councils reported a total of 1,009 Afghan nationals who had been staying in bridging hotels at any point, including 812 Afghan nationals who were still in bridging hotels at the time of completing the survey, and 197 who were staying in bridging hotels which have already closed following the expiration of their notice to quit.

At the time of responding to the survey, 225 Afghan nationals had already presented as homeless to respondent councils (22 per cent of those who were in a bridging hotel at some point).

In addition, of those still in bridging hotels, 336 Afghan nationals had not yet secured follow-up accommodation at the time of responding to the survey (41 per cent).

Unlike the 225 Afghan nationals presenting as homeless, the 336 Afghan nationals had not yet presented as homeless at the time of responding to the survey. However, they could be seen to be at risk of presenting as homeless once the notice to quit on their bridging hotel had expired if permanent accommodation was not found before that time.

Support for Afghan nationals

The survey also asked for what was being put in place for these individuals and households, with the support of the local authorities and other partners, to enable them to find further accommodation prior to the closure of their hotels in order to reduce that risk of homelessness. A summary of measures reported by the respondents is as follows:

- Helping Afghan nationals directly in exploring accommodation options, including hiring additional staff where necessary.
- Working with partners (including the Home Office, Department for Work and Pensions, and bodies in the voluntary sector) to explore accommodation options.
- Delivering workshops to the Afghan nationals on how to find properties and otherwise manage their lives in the United Kingdom.
- Matching Afghan nationals to properties in the area supported by Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) financing.
- Providing further temporary accommodation to those being made homeless.
- Assisting Afghan nationals in being transferred to other areas where they may have connections or improved opportunities for accommodation.

Table 3: Summary of the results of the survey among respondent councils

	Total from all respondents
1. Afghan nationals still in bridging hotels	812
2. Of which have not yet secured follow-up accommodation	336
3. Afghan nationals who were in bridging hotels that have now expired	197
4. Afghan nationals who have already presented as homeless	225
Total Afghan nationals who were in bridging hotels at any point (question 1 plus question 3)	1,009
Afghan homeless presentations as a percentage of those in bridging hotels at any point	22%
Not yet secured follow-up accommodation as a percentage of those still in bridging hotels	41%

Annex A: Questionnaire

Bridging hotels for Afghan households

Information request

Thank you for taking the time to provide information about the bridging hotels for Afghan households within your local authority area. This data will enable the LGA to raise your concerns and issues with central government, and to point to where mitigations can be put in place as a matter of urgency as the hotel closure programme rolls out.

This information request is voluntary and you are not obliged to complete it; however, your participation would be greatly appreciated to help us understand the scale of this issue.

Please complete this request by 5pm on Thursday 31 August at the latest. Please contact us at Research@local.gov.uk if you have any issues in submitting your response.

All responses will be treated confidentially. Information will be aggregated, and no individual or authority will be identified in any publications without your consent. Identifiable information may be used internally within the LGA but will only be held and processed in accordance with our privacy statement. We are undertaking this survey to aid the legitimate interests of the LGA in supporting and representing authorities.

Please enter your details below.

If you are responding on behalf of more than one authority, please complete and submit this survey separately for each authority.

Name: _____

Authority: _____

Job title: _____

Email address: _____

We will use the contact details above for any follow-up communications relating to this topic. If another person at your local authority would be a more appropriate contact, please tick the box below.

Provide details for a follow-up contact

Please provide the following details for the follow-up contact for your local authority.

Name: _____

Job title: _____

Email address: _____

We will now ask you for some numerical estimates relating to numbers of Afghan nationals in bridging hotels in your local area. Please bear the following in mind when providing these estimates:

These figures do not need to be exact or certain, just reasonable estimates of the numbers of Afghan nationals in each category

Please enter only a single numerical estimate into each box - the boxes will not accept letters or symbols

Please provide all figures as of the time at which you are completing this survey

1. Number of Afghan nationals currently in bridging hotels that are still open, where a notice to quit has not yet expired

If all bridging hotels in your area have already closed, please enter a value of zero.

2. Number of Afghan nationals meeting question 1. above, who have not yet secured accommodation and are likely to present as homeless before or after the notice to quit has expired

If all bridging hotels in your area have already closed, please enter a value of zero.

3. Number of Afghan nationals who were in bridging hotels that have already closed at the point the notice to quit expired, whether or not they have since presented as homeless

If no bridging hotels in your area have yet closed, please enter a value of zero.

4. Number of Afghan nationals from bridging hotels who have already presented as homeless, either before or after the notice to quit expired

If no bridging hotels in your area have yet closed, please enter a value of zero.

5. What measures, if any, are being put into place by your local authority to support Afghan nationals who have not yet found suitable accommodation following hotel closure?

Please note that this box, unlike the boxes above, is intended for text comments rather than numerical data.

Once you press the 'Submit' button below, you will have completed the survey.

Many thanks for taking the time to complete this survey. You are in control of any personal data that you have provided to us in your response. You can contact us at all times to have your information changed or deleted. You can find our full privacy policy here: [click here to see our privacy policy](#)



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