

# FOI Deadlines Expire: Home Office, Tameside, and Stockport Breach Transparency Laws Over Asylum Housing

Greater Manchester authorities accused of stonewalling public over critical asylum housing details, with only one council upholding transparency laws.

*By Jason Nield*

Greater Manchester has been plunged into a transparency crisis after the Home Office, Tameside Council, and Stockport Council all failed to meet statutory Freedom of Information (FOI) deadlines regarding crucial asylum housing arrangements and public safety, leaving vital questions unanswered.

The Home Office, Tameside Council, and Stockport Council have collectively failed to respond to statutory Freedom of Information (FOI) requests concerning asylum housing

and public safety in Greater Manchester, plunging local transparency into question. As of 5:00pm on 1 September 2025, none of the three authorities had provided the

requested information within the legally mandated 20 working day timeframe, directly breaching Section 10 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## The Unanswered Questions

The FOI requests, submitted on 4 August 2025 as part of The Dispersal Files investigation, sought critical information vital for public oversight. These included: correspondence between councils and the Home Office or Serco regarding asylum

placements; internal meeting records discussing housing capacity for asylum seekers; ward-level data on properties considered or used for asylum dispersal; safeguarding and vetting procedures for high-risk individuals placed in local communities; and contractual

obligations and breach notices between the Home Office and Serco. In stark contrast to the widespread non-compliance, Oldham Council alone responded in full, demonstrating a commitment to public accountability.

## A Public Duty Betrayed

The widespread silence from these key public bodies has drawn sharp criticism. "This isn't just a failure of paperwork it's a failure of public duty," stated Jason Nield, Editor of Tameside Independent.

"The public has a right to know how asylum placements are being handled, what safeguards exist, and whether local councils are complicit in secrecy. Silence is not compliance."

This investigation unfolds amid escalating national concerns over asylum housing, fueled by high-profile incidents involving unvetted placements and serious criminal allegations.

Serco, the Home Office's primary contractor for dispersal accommodation in the North West, and Clearsprings Ready Homes (CT), which manages contingency accommodation primarily hotels used for

emergency or overflow housing both operate outside the scope of FOI law.

This lack of direct accountability makes the transparency of public authorities all the more crucial. Councils are the only statutory bodies through which the public can scrutinise how asylum placements are planned, vetted, and monitored. Informed public discourse and community safety depend on it.

## Escalation and The Dispersal Files

The documented FOI breaches will now be formally escalated to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for immediate investigation. Full documentation pertaining

to this inquiry will be made publicly available via The Dispersal Files platform at [tamesideindependent.co.uk](https://tamesideindependent.co.uk) The Dispersal Files is an ongoing public interest

investigation delving into asylum housing, local authority transparency, and the contractual role of Serco in migrant accommodation across Greater Manchester.