

We have received a Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) request about the cost of repairs to Harmondsworth Removals Centre and its re-opening following a disturbance in July 2004.

Harmondsworth is an Immigration Removal Centre that is used solely for the accommodation of immigration detainees and currently houses single adult males. The Centre opened in September 2001 and is managed by UK Detention Services. Immigration Removal Centres are an essential part of effective immigration control and help to remove those with no legal right to be in the UK. In March 2003 the Government announced that a new pilot scheme would fast track asylum claims from initial decision to final appeal within a month. The scheme commenced at Harmondsworth in April 2003. The Government believes that improving the speed and efficiency with which claims are processed is a key element in its radical reform of the asylum system. It is committed to further developing fast track processes to significantly reduce the unfounded asylum intake, improve removals performance, bear down on support costs and remove the opportunity for unfounded claimants to prolong their stay in the UK.

Following the disturbance in July 2004, the cost of repairs to the Harmondsworth Immigration Removals centre was met by its insurers; the latest approximate final cost is £2,115,000. The centre partially re-opened on 11 October and all places were available by 26 November 2004.