**BRIEFING: FROM COMPASS TO THE £4 billion AASC ASYLUM HOUSING CONTRACT**

On 18 November the new AASC (Asylum Accommodation and Support Services Contracts) for asylum housing across the UK [from September 2019 to September 2029](http://ted.europa.eu/TED/notice/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:461664-2017:TEXT:EN:HTML&WT.mc_id=RSS-Feed&WT.rss_f=Transport+and+Related+Services&WT.rss_a=461664-2017&WT.rss_ev=a#id10869435-III) were opened for tender. The cost to the British tax payer is a staggering £4 billion. Bidders for the contracts were given TWENTY NINE DAYS to the 17 December to register an interest. There were seven contract areas offered (Northern Ireland is the smallest at £50 million, the North West and the South of England the largest with £900 million all over ten years) making it likely that bidders would be limited to corporations and large housing companies operating in [asylum markets across the EU](http://www.irr.org.uk/news/the-corporate-greed-of-strangers/): like the present holders of the UK COMPASS contracts:G4S, Serco, and Clearsprings.

There is already confirmation that G4S has put in their tender

There are other indications that the three holders of the contracts, or private contractors like them, may well be the government’s preferred companies for delivery of the new contracts. On the 9 November, nine months on from a highly critical report on the COMPASS contracts by the Home Affairs Select Committee published on 31 January 2017, the government finally gave its [response to their findings and recommendations](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmhaff/551/55102.htm). The government rejected the findings and recommendations wholesale and claimed that the “the standard of accommodation provided to asylum seekers has improved since 2012.”

Since the present contractors came on board in June 2012, there have been four significant inquiries, featuring asylum housing in Parliament, the Children’s’ Society Parliamentary panel in 2013, a Home Affairs Committee inquiry in 2013, a Public Accounts Committee inquiry in 2014 and the current Home Affairs Committee inquiry.

In 2016 G4S was fined £5.6m for the standard of the housing it provided in 2013/14. Despite all that, regardless of persistently negative media coverage and asylum tenants’ tenacious resistance and solidarity campaigning, still, G4S, Serco and Clearel hold the contract. They were given an extension (and more money) in December 2016 which will take them through to September 2019.

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Five years of my research and monitoring of the COMPASS contracts alongside asylum tenants can be found at

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/author/john-grayson> and at the Institute for Race Relations News Service [www.irr.org.uk](http://www.irr.org.uk)