

February 2016

Asylum statistics Annual Trends

APPLICATIONS:

- In 2015 the number of applications for asylum in the UK, excluding dependants, (32,414), was 29% higher than in 2014, (25,033). After a significant drop in the number of applications from 2009 to 2010 there has been an upward trend over the past four years with an overall 63% increase from 2011 to 2015.

Table 1: Asylum applications in the UK (excl. Dependants)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Applications	19,865	21,843	23,584	25,033	32,414
% change from previous year	+11%	+10%	+8%	+6%	+29%

Applications by nationality:

- In 2015 there were significant increases in the number of applicants from Iran, Sudan, Afghanistan and Iraq and to a lesser extent Bangladesh and India, compared with 2014.

Table 2: Top ten asylum applicant producing countries (excl. Dependants)

	2014	2015	% change
Eritrea	3,233	3,729	+15%
Iran	2,000	3,248	+62%
Sudan	1,449	2,918	+101%
Syria	2,025	2,609	+29%
Pakistan	2,726	2,441	-10%
Afghanistan	1,139	2,240	+97%
Iraq	588	2,185	+292%
Albania	1,576	1,504	-5%
Bangladesh	748	1,084	+45%
India	703	1,004	+43%

- Over the past five years 14 different countries have appeared in the list of the top ten asylum applicant producing countries. Eritrea, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh have been in the top ten in every one of the last five years.

- Zimbabwe had the highest number of applicants in 2009 (5,599) and third highest in 2010 (1,446) but since then has never been in the top ten. China and Somalia are other countries where the number of applicants has declined in recent years.
- After reducing in number from 2009 to 2013, applications from Iraq rose in 2014 and again in 2015. Libya featured in the top ten list in 2011, but not before or since. The number of applicants from Syria has risen steadily since 2010, and since 2012 there has been an increase every year in applications from Eritreans.

Applications by location

- The majority of applications are made in-country rather than at ports. Over the past five years there have been only small variations in the percentage of applications made in-country, ranging from 88% to 92% of all applications.

Table 3: Applications by location (excl. Dependants), by year

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
In-country	17,546	19,202	20,796	22,423	29,494
% change from previous year	+8%	+9%	+8%	+8%	+32%
Port	2,319	2,641	2,788	2,610	2,920
% change from previous year	+33%	+14%	+6%	-6%	+12%
Total	19,865	21,843	23,584	25,033	32,414
% change from previous year	+11%	+10%	+8%	+6%	+29%

DECISIONS:

- In 2015, 61% of initial decisions were refusals, 34% were grants of asylum, just over 1% were grants of Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave, and 4% were grants of leave to remain under other categories, such as family or private life rules; a category introduced in 2011.
- Over the past four years the percentage of decisions which have been to grant refugee status has changed marginally, but it is still just over a third of applications which result in this decision.
- There has been a steady decline in the number of decisions to grant discretionary leave to remain. This is related to a change in the way decisions are made on applications from unaccompanied children, who used to be frequently granted discretionary leave when they were under 18.
- The 'other grants of leave' category now includes UASC leave, the temporary leave now often given to unaccompanied children.
- While the percentage of refusals has dropped slightly in recent years it remains at just over 60% of applications.

Table 4: Initial Decisions (excl. Dependants)

	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
Decisions	17,380		16,744		17,543		19,782		28,950	
Refugee status	4,312	25%	5,135	31%	5,736	33%	7,266	37%	9,975	34%
Humanitarian Protection	81	0.5%	88	0.5 %	53	0.3%	68	0.3%	109	0.4%
Discretionary Leave	1,256	7%	751	4%	533	3%	200	1%	200	0.8%
Other Grants of Leave			85	0.5%	220	1%	616	4%	1,107	4%
Refused	11,731	67%	10,715	64%	11,001	63%	11,632	59%	17,531	61%

- Among the countries with large numbers of asylum applicants, those from which the highest percentages were given refugee status, humanitarian protection, or discretionary leave in 2015 were Eritrea, Iran, Sudan, and Syria as can be seen from the table below. However, the refusal rate for Eritrea was much higher than in previous years.
- In contrast, among other countries with relatively large numbers of applicants; Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Albania, Iraq and Nigeria; there were well above average refusal rates.
- The larger number of decisions to grant UASC leave for applicants from Afghanistan, Albania and Eritrea relates to larger numbers of applications from unaccompanied children from these countries.

Table5: Asylum decisions by nationality, 2015, top ten countries for number of decisions

	Decisions	Refugee status	Humanitarian Protection	Discretionary Leave	Family or Private Life / UASC Leave	Refusals
Eritrea	3,216	1,320	39	5	167	1,685
Iran	2,847	1,482	8	5	36	1,316
Sudan	2,726	2,291	3	0	3	429
Pakistan	2,370	460	1	7	21	1881
Syria	2,107	1,757	6	1	31	312
Sri Lanka	1,551	156	0	9	14	1,372
Afghanistan	1,452	321	1	24	166	940
Albania	1,441	7	0	35	304	1,095
Iraq	1,094	144	13	18	41	878
Nigeria	930	85	1	23	26	795

APPEALS:

- In 2015 35% of appeals were allowed while 59% were dismissed.
- The success rate at appeal had remained steady for a number of years, but there was a significant increase in 2015 as well as an increase, after several years of decline, in the number of appeals heard.

Table 6: Appeals determined

	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
Determined	10,597		8,285		8,325		6,178		9,115	
Allowed	2,779	26%	2,208	27%	2,078	25%	1,758	28%	3,234	35%
Dismissed	7,139	67%	5,472	66%	5,681	68%	4,081	66%	5,422	59%
Withdrawn	679	6%	605	7%	566	7%	339	6%	459	5%

- The table below compares the success rate at appeal for the top ten countries by the number of initial decisions. The 'grants' column shows an initial decision to grant any form of status.
- The first seven countries in the list have above average appeal success rates. Eritrea in particular had a very high success rate. Some other countries with high initial grants of status also have above average appeal success rates (Sudan and Iran). Albania, Pakistan and Nigeria have low initial grants of status and also have below average appeal success rates.

Table 7: Success rates at appeal by country, 2015

	Initial Grants (%)	Appeals determined	% success at appeal
Eritrea	48%	562	80%
Sudan	84%	143	52%
Afghanistan	35%	541	48%
Sri Lanka	12%	1123	45%
Iran	54%	796	42%
Iraq	20%	272	37%
Syria	85%	92	37%
Albania	24%	444	31%
Pakistan	21%	1207	25%
Nigeria	15%	334	17%

The figures on appeals may differ from those shown in earlier summaries due to changes in the data sources (see note at the end of this summary).

REFUGEES RESETTLED:

- Refugees may be accepted for resettlement in the UK via the Gateway programme, the Mandate Scheme, or most recently via the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (started in 2014).

- The UK commitment to the Gateway programme is for 750 refugees per year, referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The Mandate scheme covers people who have been granted refugee status by UNHCR and have ties to the UK.
- The numbers resettled each year (including dependants) are shown in the table below.

Table 8: Refugees resettled (incl. Dependants)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Gateway Programme	432	985	935	630	652
Mandate Scheme	22	54	32	14	18
Syrian Vulnerable Persons				143	1,194

ASYLUM SUPPORT:

- The total number of asylum seekers (including dependants) in receipt of Section 95 asylum support at the end of 2015 was 34,363 of whom 31,432 were in dispersal accommodation and 2,931 were receiving subsistence only.
- The numbers rose during 2015 and are now at their highest since 2007, which relates in the main to the rise in the number of applications for asylum.
- The region of the UK with the largest number in dispersal accommodation at the end of 2015 was the North West (8,444). This region has had the largest number since the beginning of 2008.
- 1,985 asylum seekers were in initial accommodation under Section 98 support at the end of 2015. There has been an upward trend in the numbers supported under Section 98 since 2009.

Table 9: Asylum seekers in receipt of asylum support (incl. Dependants)

	End of 2011	End of 2012	End of 2013	End of 2014	End of 2015
Dispersed accommodation	18,108	17,594	20,687	26,350	31,432
Subsistence only	2,786	2,588	2,772	3,403	2,931
Initial accommodation	962	1,067	1,197	1,476	1,985

Applicants supported under Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

- 5,127 decisions to grant Section 4 support were made in 2015. This is a reduction of 8% compared with 2014.
- At the end of 2015 2,525 applicants, excluding dependants, were receiving Section 4 support, as well as 1,296 dependants. The number of dependants supported has only been published since the beginning of 2013.

Table 10: Grants of Section 4 Support

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number of grants	3,788	4,841	5,786	5,558	5,127

Table 11: Numbers in receipt of Section 4 Support (excl. Dependants)

	End of 2011	End of 2012	End of 2013	End of 2014	End of 2015
Number supported	2,310	2,757	3,488	3,655	2,525

- For more detail on asylum support see the separate briefing on this subject produced by the Refugee Council.

ENFORCEMENT & COMPLIANCE:

Removals (Asylum Applicants)

- Including dependants, in 2015, 5,184 asylum seekers were removed or departed voluntarily, a 26% decrease from 2014 (7,025).
- The total number of removals and voluntary departures has gone down in each year from 2009. The number of enforced removals has dropped in each of those years.
- 854 asylum seekers left under Assisted Voluntary Return schemes in 2015.
- Other types of voluntary departure have tended to decrease year by year, with the exception of 2011 when there was a peak in the number of notified voluntary returns, and 2013 when there was a small increase in the number of other voluntary departures.

Table 12: Removals and voluntary departures of Asylum Applicants, incl. dependants

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Enforced	5,774	5,068	4,828	4,372	3,264
Assisted Voluntary	2,071	2,529	666	1,453	854
Notified Voluntary	1,565	841	592	747	724
Other Voluntary	667	593	666	453	342
Total	10,077	9,031	9,027	7,025	5,184

Detention

Persons leaving detention

- A total of 15,086 people were recorded as removed from the UK upon leaving detention in 2015, having been held solely under Immigration Act powers, of whom 23% were asylum detainees.

Persons detained at the end of the year

- At the end of 2015 a total of 2,607 persons were detained, no children were in detention at this point in time.
- 1,250 persons who had sought asylum at some stage were being detained solely under Immigration Act powers (48% of all immigration detainees).
- 90% of all detainees were male.

Table 13: People in detention

	End of 2011	End of 2012	End of 2013	End of 2014	End of 2015
Total	2,419	2,685	2,796	3,462	2,607
Male	2,178	2,412	2,505	3,135	2,337
Female	241	273	291	327	270
Asylum detainees	1,370	1,676	1,684	1,698	1,250

Detained Asylum Seekers by Nationality

- At the end of 2015, of the countries with the largest numbers of asylum detainees, India, China, Nigeria and Sri Lanka do not also appear in the top ten countries for the number of asylum applications in 2015.
- Eritrea, Sudan and Syria ranked first, third and fourth respectively for the number of asylum applications in 2015. However at the end of 2015 only 16 Eritrean asylum seekers, 6 Sudanese, and 14 Syrian asylum seekers were in detention.

Table 14: Countries with largest numbers of asylum detainees

	End of 2014	End of 2015
India	150	157
Bangladesh	128	107
Pakistan	279	99
Iraq	36	97
Iran	46	70
China	66	68
Nigeria	122	67
Albania	74	66
Afghanistan	116	59
Sri Lanka	102	46

Children in Detention

- In 2015 128 children entered detention, of whom 81 were asylum detainees. 41 of these children were detained at the Cedars pre-departure accommodation, and 63 at Tinsley House Family Unit.

- For more detail on children in detention see the separate briefing on this subject produced by the Refugee Council. There are also briefings on detention in the asylum system and the detained fast track process.

CHILDREN:

Applications by Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum

- The number of applications from Unaccompanied Children, excluding dependants, was 3,043 in 2015, a 56% increase compared with 2014.
- Figures for years before 2012 in earlier briefings are not directly comparable to later figures because of a change in the way the statistics have been compiled. There is a link at the end of this document to the Home Office publication explaining the change. The Home Office has now updated the figures for the years before 2012 to reflect the change in methodology.

Table 15: Asylum applications by Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum (excl. Dependants)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Applications	1,248	1,125	1,265	1,945	3,043
% change to previous year	-18%	-10%	+12%	+54%	+56%

- Eritrea is now the country of origin for the largest number of unaccompanied children. After declining for a number of years the number of applications from Afghanistan increased significantly in 2015. 88% of all applications in 2015 were from the eight countries listed below.

Table 16: Top child asylum applicant producing countries (excl. Dependants)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Eritrea	102	80	131	460	694
Afghanistan	394	235	150	179	656
Albania	123	265	470	632	456
Iran	171	119	76	73	208
Syria	8	21	64	118	186
Vietnam	78	62	68	103	178
Iraq	16	12	6	32	163
Sudan	9	19	32	51	142

- In 2015 over 90% of applicants were male, a similar percentage to earlier years.

Age Disputed Cases

- The number of age disputed cases increased markedly in 2015 after falling for several years.

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Table 17: Age Disputed Asylum applications (excl. Dependants)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Applications	370	337	323	318	766
% change to previous year	-30%	-9%	-4%	-2%	+141%

N.B. The Home Office statistics on age disputed cases do not include the category of those applicants who claim to be children but who are treated as adult because in the opinion of an Immigration officer "their physical appearance and/or general demeanour **very strongly** indicates that they are **significantly** over 18 years and no other credible evidence exists to the contrary"

Decisions

- The majority of decisions on asylum applications by unaccompanied children under the age of 18 used to be grants of discretionary leave. In 2013 over 70% of all grants of discretionary leave were to children aged 17 and under, although they accounted for only 3% of total decisions.
- For unaccompanied children who have reached the age of 18 when they receive their decision, refusal rates tend to be much higher; there was a refusal rate of 82% in 2015.
- For unaccompanied children a new category, UASC leave, was introduced in 2013 and is now being used in cases where the only reason for giving leave is that the applicant is a child who cannot be returned. This means there are far fewer grants of discretionary leave.

Table 18: Initial asylum decisions on unaccompanied children aged 17 and under

	Total	Refugee status	Humanitarian Protection	Discretionary Leave	UASC Leave	Family or Private Life	Refusals
2015	1,559	356	18	37	805	0	343
2014	988	418	9	23	380	4	154
2013	936	237	4	380	119	18	178
2012	594	159	3	342			90
2011	939	183	6	605			145

Table 19: Initial asylum decisions on unaccompanied children who have reached the age of 18

	Total	Refugee status	Humanitarian Protection	Discretionary Leave	UASC Leave	Family or Private Life	Refusals
2015	373	63	1	3	0	0	306
2014	281	69	1	0	0	2	209
2013	176	50	0	3	0	2	121
2012	87	26	0	8		0	53
2011	127	27	3	9			88

ASYLUM APPLICATIONS (DEPENDANTS):

- In 2015 there were 6,464 applications from dependants.

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- The data relating to age and gender of dependants is published in August each year, so the latest annual figures are for 2014.

Table 20: Applications by Dependants by age

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Under 5	1,530	1,904	2,030	2,423	2,687
5 – 9 yo	829	1,061	1,094	1,125	1,312
10 – 13 yo	470	587	566	590	746
14 – 15 yo	200	257	247	223	307
16 – 17 yo	158	201	191	210	253
18+ yo	1,129	1,667	1,658	1,705	1,969

Table 21: Applications by dependants aged 18 and over

	Total Applications	Male dependants	Female dependants	% Female
2014	1,969	556	1,413	72%
2013	1,705	406	1,299	76%
2012	1,658	385	1,273	77%
2011	1,667	379	1,288	77%
2010	1,129	314	815	72%

N.B. There are a few cases (approx. 5%) where the age or gender of dependants is recorded as unknown.

WOMEN AND GIRLS:

Applications

- In 2014 27% of asylum applications were made by women. This is comparable to other recent years. Most of the data relating to female applicants is published in August each year, so the latest annual figures are for 2014.

Table 22: Applications by women (Excl. Dependants)

	Total Applications	Applications by women	% by women
2014	25,033	6,842	27%
2013	23,584	6,396	27%
2012	21,843	6,071	28%
2011	19,865	5,392	27%
2010	17,916	5,329	30%

- The proportion of women applicants varies considerably from country to country. For a few countries there are more women applicants than men, or a roughly equal number, whereas in others the proportion of women applicants is low.

Table 23: Women asylum applicants from the top ten applicant producing countries 2014

	Total Applications	Applications by women	% by women
Eritrea	3,233	668	21%
Pakistan	2,726	680	25%
Syria	2,025	309	15%
Iran	2,000	587	29%
Albania	1,576	534	34%
Sudan	1,449	101	7%
Sri Lanka	1,292	248	19%
Afghanistan	1,139	171	15%
Nigeria	899	465	52%
Bangladesh	748	122	16%

Table 24: Top ten countries for women asylum applicants 2014

	Applications by women	% of total by women	Change in no. from 2013
Pakistan	680	25%	-76
Eritrea	668	21%	+182
Iran	587	29%	-111
Albania	534	34%	-72
Nigeria	465	52%	+60
China	335	52%	-21
Syria	309	15%	+37
Sri Lanka	248	19%	-52
Iraq	228	39%	+103
India	214	30%	-48

- In 2015 only 9% of asylum applications by unaccompanied children were by girls. The percentage of applications by girls has been gradually falling in recent years.

Table 25: Applications by unaccompanied children seeking asylum

	Total Applications	Applications by girls	% Female
2015	3,043	275	9%
2014	1,945	232	12%
2013	1,265	179	14%
2012	1,125	188	17%
2011	1,248	221	18%

- The main countries of origin for unaccompanied girls seeking asylum in 2015 were those shown in the table below. There was a significant increase in applications from Eritrea in 2015. There were fewer than 10 girls applying from every other country in 2015.

Table 26: Applications by unaccompanied children seeking asylum (girls only)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Eritrea	56	44	36	57	102
Vietnam	23	13	26	36	39
Albania	14	14	22	41	38
Somalia	28	19	21	11	18
Ethiopia	8	7	2	4	10
Nigeria	21	18	10	13	10

Decisions

- In recent years women asylum seekers have generally been slightly more likely than men to be granted asylum, and, since 2011, have generally been slightly more likely to be granted humanitarian protection or discretionary leave.
- The refusal rates for women have tended to be lower than for men in recent years.
- In 2014 there was virtually no difference in grants and refusals between men and women
- Data for 2015 will be published in August 2016.

Table 27 Decisions by gender

	Granted Asylum		Granted HP or DL or other leave		Refused	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
2014	37%	36%	4%	5%	59%	59%
2013	31%	38%	4%	5%	65%	57%
2012	29%	35%	5%	7%	66%	58%
2011	24%	27%	7%	9%	69%	64%
2010	16%	19%	9%	7%	75%	74%

Appeals

- In recent years women asylum seekers have been more likely than men to win appeals, however this was not the case in 2015.

Table 28 Appeal decisions by gender

	Appeal Allowed		Appeal Dismissed		Appeal Withdrawn	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women

2015	36%	34%	59%	60%	5%	6%
2014	27%	33%	68%	61%	5%	6%
2013	24%	28%	70%	64%	6%	8%
2012	25%	30%	68%	62%	7%	8%
2011	25%	30%	69%	64%	6%	6%

Removals

- In 2015 there were 796 women who had applied for asylum who were either removed from the UK (301) or left on a voluntary basis (495).
- Of the asylum enforced removals 9% were female (301 from a total of 3,264) and of asylum voluntary departures 26% were female (495 from a total of 1,920).
- In 2015 of the people recorded as removed from the UK on leaving detention 15% (2,209) were female.

NOTE

Figures given in this summary may differ from those in earlier summaries. In some cases this is because of rounding which was done in Home Office Statistical Bulletins which is no longer done, and in other

cases, particularly for more recent statistics, because of adjustments made as a result of more complete and accurate information becoming available.

There have been significant changes in the figures on appeals. These are now sourced from the UKVI database and are for main asylum applicants. The quarterly data used to be sourced from the Tribunals Service. The Tribunals Service figures were higher as they had a wider definition of asylum appeals, including, for example, some human rights cases and also included some individuals classed as dependants by UKVI. For a fuller explanation see the Control of Immigration quarterly statistical summary for the first quarter of 2011

The change in the method of counting Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children is explained in the Home Office publication accompanying the statistics published in August 2013. See Page 66.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/232217/user-guide-immig-statistics.pdf

The full detailed statistics covering the most recent period can be found on the Gov.UK website via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2015/list-of-tables#asylum>

For older statistics follow this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office/series/migration-statistics>

About the Refugee Council

The Refugee Council is one of the leading organisations in the UK working with asylum seekers and refugees. We give help and support to asylum seekers and refugees, and also work with them to ensure their needs and concerns are addressed by decision-makers.