

Asylum statistics Annual Trends

May 2017

APPLICATIONS:

- In 2016 the number of applications for asylum in the UK, excluding dependants, (30,603), was 7% lower than in 2015, (32,733). After a significant drop in the number of applications from 2009 to 2010 there had been an upward trend from 2011 to 2015.

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

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Applications	21,843	23,584	25,033	32,733	30,603
% change from previous year	+10%	+8%	+6%	+31%	-7%

Applications by nationality:

- In 2016 there were significant increases in the number of applicants from Iran, Pakistan, Iraq, Bangladesh, and India, and significant decreases for Syria, Sudan and Eritrea, compared with 2015.

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

	2015	2016	% change
Iran	3,242	4,192	+29%
Pakistan	2,470	2,857	+16%
Iraq	2,216	2,666	+20%
Afghanistan	2,261	2,341	+4%
Bangladesh	1,110	1,939	+75%
Albania	1,519	1,488	-2%
India	1,014	1,488	+47%
Syria	2,539	1,409	-45%
Sudan	2,912	1,314	-55%
Eritrea	3,693	1,238	-66%

- Over the past 5 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 (5599) and third highest in 2010 (1446) 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 numbers from 2009 to 2013 applications from Iraq rose in 2014, 2015 and 2016. 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 until 2016, and since 2012 there has been an increase every year in applications from Eritrea, again until 2016.

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 87% to 92% of all applications.

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

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
In-country	19,202	20,796	22,423	29,815	26,717
% change from previous year	+9%	+8%	+8%	+33%	-10%
Port	2,641	2,788	2,610	2,918	3,886
% change from previous year	+14%	+6%	-6%	+12%	+33%
Total	21,843	23,584	25,033	32,733	30,603
% change from previous year	+10%	+8%	+6%	+31%	-7%

DECISIONS:

- In 2016 66% of initial decisions were refusals, 29% 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.
- The percentage of decisions made in 2016 to grant refugee status was the lowest in the past 5 years.
- 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.
- The percentage of refusals increased in 2016 compared with other recent years.

Table 4: Initial Decisions (excl. Dependants)

	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
Decisions	16,744		17,543		19,782		28,622		24,984	
Refugee status	5,135	31%	5,736	33%	7,266	37%	9,975	35%	7,136	29%
Humanitarian Protection	88	0.5%	53	0.3%	68	0.3%	110	0.4%	189	0.8%
Discretionary Leave	751	4%	533	3%	200	1%	227	0.8%	115	0.5%
Other Grants of Leave	85	0.5%	220	1%	616	4%	1,109	4%	1,026	4%
Refused	10,715	64%	11,001	63%	11,632	59%	17,201	60%	16,518	66%

- 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 2016 were Eritrea, Iran, Sudan, and Syria as can be seen from the table below although the refusal rate for Eritrea was much higher than in the years before 2015.
- In contrast, among the countries with relatively large numbers of applicants Pakistan, Albania, Iraq and India had well above average refusal rates, as did Nigeria and Sri Lanka.
- The larger number of decisions to grant UASC leave for applicants from Afghanistan, Albania, Iran, and Eritrea relates to larger numbers of applications from unaccompanied children from these countries.

Table5: Asylum decisions by nationality, 2016, top ten countries for number of decisions

	Decisions	Refugee status	Humanitarian Protection	Discretionary Leave	Family or Private Life / UASC Leave	Refusals
Iran	3,915	1,333	3	4	115	2,460
Iraq	2,388	164	25	5	92	2,102
Pakistan	2,032	279	0	2	11	1,740
Syria	1,859	1,579	3	1	8	268
Eritrea	1,833	986	122	2	125	598
Afghanistan	1,715	293	3	13	294	1,112
Sudan	1,384	1,168	1	0	4	211
Bangladesh	1,231	62	0	1	7	1,161
India	914	3	0	2	2	907
Albania	823	11	0	13	197	602

APPEALS:

- In 2016 41% of appeals were allowed, while 54% were dismissed.

- The success rate at appeal had remained steady for a number of years, but there was a significant increase in both 2015 and 2016 as well as an increase, after several years of decline, in the number of appeals heard.

Table 6: Appeals determined

	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
Determined	8,285		8,325		6,178		9,224		12,304	
Allowed	2,208	27%	2,078	25%	1,758	28%	3,260	35%	5,002	41%
Dismissed	5,472	66%	5,681	68%	4,081	66%	5,511	60%	6,698	54%
Withdrawn	605	7%	566	7%	339	6%	453	5%	604	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 4 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). Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh have low initial grants of status and also have below average appeal success rates.

Table 7: Success rates at appeal by country, 2016

	Initial Grants (%)	Appeals determined	% success at appeal
Eritrea	67%	1,583	75%
Sudan	85%	272	58%
Afghanistan	35%	807	49%
Iran	37%	1,232	44%
Iraq	12%	1,005	36%
Albania	27%	713	34%
Syria	86%	149	33%
Pakistan	14%	1,109	28%
India	1%	106	19%
Bangladesh	6%	666	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)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Gateway Programme	985	935	630	652	804
Mandate Scheme	54	32	14	18	8
Syrian Vulnerable Persons			143	1,194	4,369

ASYLUM SUPPORT:

- The total number of asylum seekers (including dependants) in receipt of Section 95 asylum support at the end of 2016 was 39,389 of whom 36,626 were in dispersal accommodation and 2,763 were receiving subsistence only.
- The numbers rose during 2016 and are now at their highest since 2007, which relates in the main to the rise in the number of applications for asylum in recent years before 2016.
- The region of the UK with the largest number in dispersal accommodation at the end of 2016 was the North West (9,491). This region has had the largest number since the beginning of 2008.
- 1,990 asylum seekers were in initial accommodation under Section 98 support at the end of 2016. There has generally been an upward trend in the numbers supported under Section 98 since 2009 although the numbers have stabilised in the last 3 quarters of 2016.

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

	End of 2012	End of 2013	End of 2014	End of 2015	End of 2016
Dispersed accommodation	17,594	20,687	26,350	31,432	36,626
Subsistence only	2,588	2,772	3,403	2,931	2,763
Initial accommodation	1,067	1,197	1,476	1,985	1,990

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

- 4,530 decisions to grant Section 4 support were made in 2016. This is a reduction of 12% compared with 2015.
- At the end of 2016 2,424 applicants, excluding dependants, were receiving Section 4 support, as well as 1,349 dependants. The number of dependants supported has only been published since the beginning of 2013.

Table 10: Grants of Section 4 Support

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of grants	4,841	5,786	5,558	5,127	4,530

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

	End of 2012	End of 2013	End of 2014	End of 2015	End of 2016
Number supported	2,757	3,488	3,655	2,525	2,424

- 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 2016, 3,618 asylum seekers were removed or departed voluntarily, a 33% decrease from 2015 (5,433).
- 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.
- 410 asylum seekers left under Assisted Voluntary Return schemes in 2016.
- 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

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Enforced	5,068	4,828	4,372	3,398	2,117
Assisted Voluntary	2,529	2,941	1,453	864	410
Notified Voluntary	841	592	747	793	664
Other Voluntary	593	666	453	378	427
Total	9,031	9,027	7,025	5,433	3,618

Detention

Persons leaving detention

- A total of 13,466 people were recorded as removed from the UK upon leaving detention in 2016, having been held solely under Immigration Act powers, of whom 22% were asylum detainees.

Persons detained at the end of the year

- At the end of 2016 a total of 2,738 persons were detained, no children were in detention at this point in time.
- 1,626 persons who had sought asylum at some stage were being detained solely under Immigration Act powers (59% of all immigration detainees)
- 91% of all detainees were male.

Table 13: People in detention

	End of 2012	End of 2013	End of 2014	End of 2015	End of 2016
Total	2,685	2,796	3,462	2,607	2,738
Male	2,412	2,505	3,135	2,337	2,489
Female	273	291	327	270	249
Asylum detainees	1,676	1,684	1,698	1,250	1,626

Detained Asylum Seekers by Nationality

- At the end of 2016, of the countries with the largest numbers of asylum detainees Nigeria, Vietnam and China do not also appear in the top ten countries for the number of asylum applications in 2016.
- Eritrea, Sudan and Syria ranked in the top ten countries for the number of asylum applications in 2016. However at the end of 2016 only 12 Eritrean asylum seekers, 21 Sudanese, and 12 Syrian asylum seekers were in detention.

Table 14: Countries with largest numbers of asylum detainees

	End of 2015	End of 2016
India	157	193
Pakistan	99	175
Bangladesh	107	139
Nigeria	67	98
Iraq	97	97
Afghanistan	59	93
Albania	66	91
Vietnam	36	80
China	68	78
Iran	70	70

Children in Detention

- In 2016 71 children entered detention, of whom 50 were asylum detainees. 27 of these children were detained at the Cedars pre-departure accommodation, and 22 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 3,175 in 2016, a 2% decrease compared with 2015.
- 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)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Applications	1,125	1,265	1,945	3,253	3,175
% change to previous year	-10%	+12%	+54%	+67%	-2%

- Afghanistan 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. 91% of all applications in 2016 were from the 9 countries listed below.

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

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Afghanistan	235	150	179	694	740
Albania	265	470	632	481	407
Eritrea	80	131	460	736	405
Iran	119	76	73	227	366
Iraq	12	6	32	182	303
Sudan	19	32	51	148	258
Vietnam	62	68	103	182	175
Syria	21	64	118	169	146
Ethiopia	11	7	18	114	101

- In 2016 almost 90% of applicants were male, a similar percentage to earlier years.

Age Disputed Cases

- The number of age disputed cases increased in 2016 after falling for several years until a large increase in 2015.

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

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Applications	337	323	318	789	918
% change to previous year	-9%	-4%	-2%	+148%	+16%

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 since 2013, UASC leave, is now being used in cases where the only reason for giving leave is that the applicant is a child who cannot be returned, and 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
2016	1,655	497	50	14	836	2	256
2015	1,568	357	18	38	809	0	346
2014	988	418	9	23	380	4	154
2013	936	237	4	380	119	18	178
2012	594	159	3	342			90

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
2016	304	117	7	1	1	3	175
2015	362	63	1	3	0	0	295
2014	282	69	1	0	0	2	210
2013	176	50	0	3	0	2	121
2012	87	26	0	8		0	53

ASYLUM APPLICATIONS (DEPENDANTS):

- In 2016 there were 7,914 applications from dependants.

The statistics covering age and gender of dependants are published in August each year so the most recent available are for 2015.

Table 20: Applications by Dependants by age

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Under 5	1,904	2,030	2,423	2,687	2,681
5 – 9 yo	1,061	1,094	1,125	1,312	1,337
10 – 13 yo	587	566	590	746	670
14 – 15 yo	257	247	223	307	282
16 – 17 yo	201	191	210	253	232
18+ yo	1,667	1,658	1,705	1,969	2,033

Table 21: Applications by dependants aged 18 and over

	Total Applications	Male dependants	Female dependants	% Female
2015	2,033	660	1,347	66%
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%

N.B. There are a few cases where the age or gender of dependants is recorded as unknown.

WOMEN AND GIRLS:

Applications

- In 2015 21% of asylum applications were made by women. This was lower than in other recent years.

The figures for 2016 will be published in August 2017

Table 22: Applications by women (Excl. Dependants)

	Total Applications	Applications by women	% by women
2015	32,733	6,788	21%
2014	25,033	6,842	27%
2013	23,584	6,396	27%
2012	21,843	6,071	28%
2011	19,865	5,392	27%

- 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 2015

	Total Applications	Applications by women	% by women
Eritrea	3,695	756	20%
Iran	3,242	503	16%
Sudan	2,912	106	4%
Syria	2,539	311	12%
Pakistan	2,470	516	21%
Afghanistan	2,261	175	8%
Iraq	2,216	290	13%
Albania	1,519	600	39%
Bangladesh	1,110	136	12%
India	1,014	227	22%

Table 24: Top ten countries for women asylum applicants 2015

	Applications by women	% of total by women	Change in no. from 2015
Eritrea	756	20%	+68
Albania	600	39%	-66
Pakistan	516	21%	-164
Iran	503	16%	-84
Nigeria	456	50%	-9
Syria	311	12%	+2
Iraq	290	13%	+62
Sri Lanka	247	26%	-1
India	227	22%	+13
China	221	45%	-114

- In 2016 only 10% of asylum applications by unaccompanied children were by girls. The percentage of applications by girls has been gradually falling in recent years until 2016.

Table 25: Applications by unaccompanied children seeking asylum

	Total Applications	Applications by girls	% Female
2016	3,175	314	10%
2015	3,253	296	9%
2014	1,945	232	12%
2013	1,265	179	14%
2012	1,125	188	17%

- The main countries of origin for unaccompanied girls seeking asylum in 2016 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 2016.

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

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Eritrea	44	36	57	106	109
Vietnam	13	26	36	43	62
Ethiopia	7	2	4	15	34
Albania	14	22	41	38	29
Iraq	0	0	6	1	10

Decisions

- Until 2014 women asylum seekers were generally slightly more likely than men to be granted asylum, and slightly more likely to be granted humanitarian protection or discretionary leave.
- Until 2014 the refusal rates for women tended to be lower than for men.
- In 2015 for the first time in recent years the percentage of women granted asylum was significantly lower than for men and the refusal rate was higher. The relevant statistics for 2016 will be published in August 2017.

Table 27 Decisions by gender

	Granted Asylum		Granted HP or DL or other leave		Refused	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
2015	36%	30%	5%	5%	59%	65%
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%

Appeals

- Until recently women asylum seekers have been more likely than men to win appeals.

Table 28 Appeal decisions by gender

	Appeal Allowed		Appeal Dismissed		Appeal Withdrawn	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
2016	41%	41%	55%	54%	5%	5%
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%

Removals

- In 2016 of the people recorded as removed from the UK on leaving detention 15% (1,977) 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 UKV I. 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-2016/asylum>

For older statistics follow this link:

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

About the Refugee Council

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