

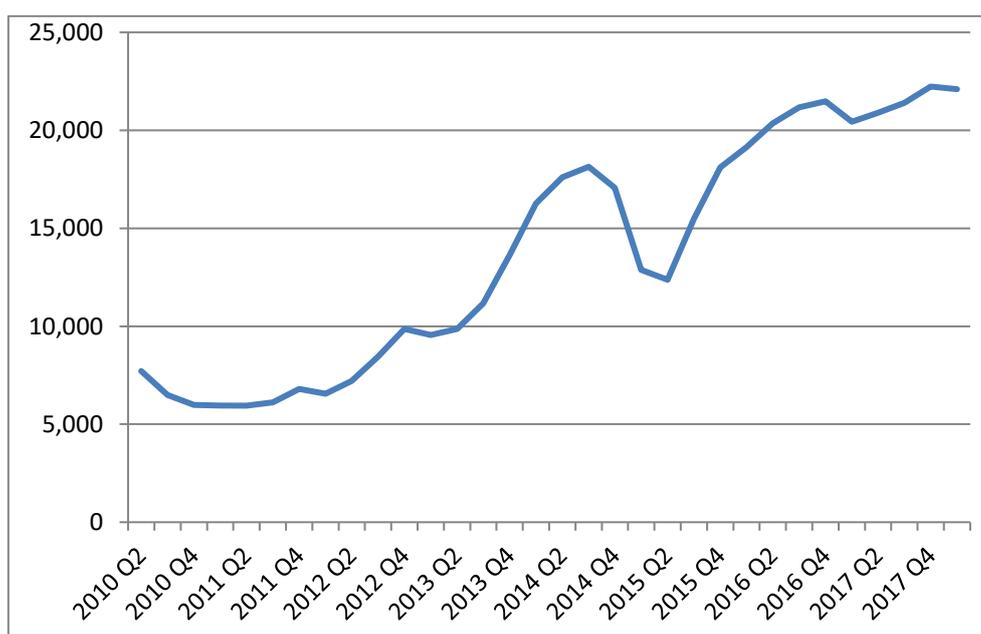
ASYLUM BACKLOGS

May 2018

At the end of March 2018 24,593 of the applications for asylum received since April 2006 from main applicants were pending a decision (initial decision, appeal or further review). After decreasing during 2016 this figure has risen during 2017. The Home Office has stated that the number of decisions outstanding increased over a period of time due to a decrease in staffing levels following a restructure initiated by the UK Border Agency and say that since January 2014, steps have been taken to reallocate resources to this area, the impact of which can be seen in some of the latest figures. However the number of cases outstanding for more than 6 months increased in each quarter of 2016, before decreasing slightly in the first quarter of 2017. It rose again during the remaining quarters of 2017. There has been a reduction in the number of cases pending further review over recent years.

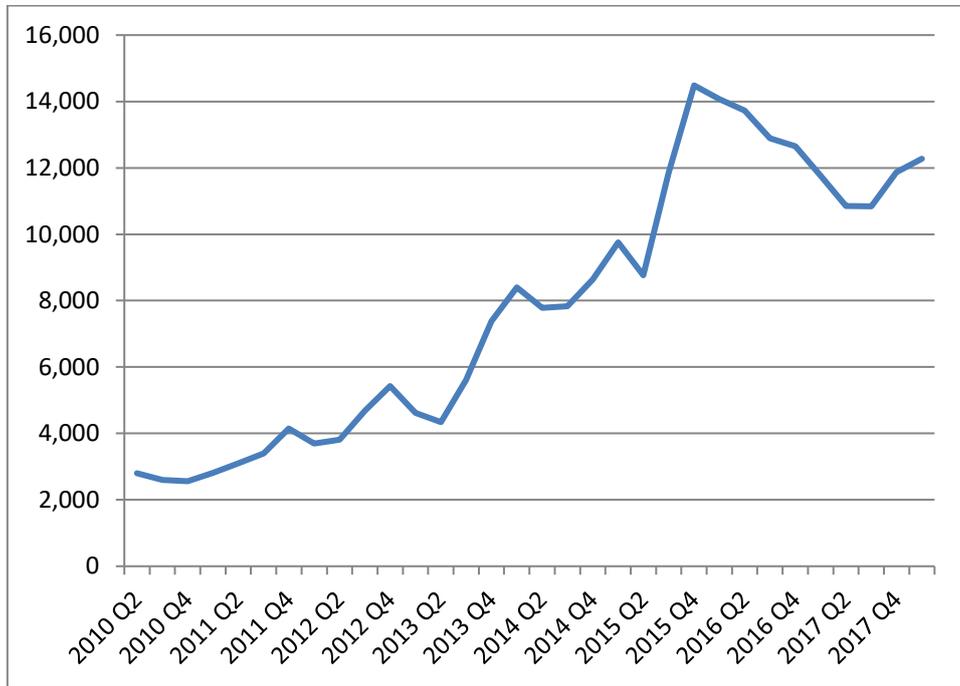
During 2010 the number of asylum initial decisions taken in each quarter was larger than the number of new applications. However in every quarter since then the opposite has been true, except for the last quarter of 2014 and the first two quarters of 2015. (The initial decisions taken in a quarter are not necessarily on applications made in that same quarter, but the cumulative effect of a continued gap over a number of years between applications made and decisions made is inevitably an increase in the number of cases with decisions pending). The statistics on pending cases have been published since quarter 2, 2010.

The chart below show the total number of cases awaiting an initial decision.

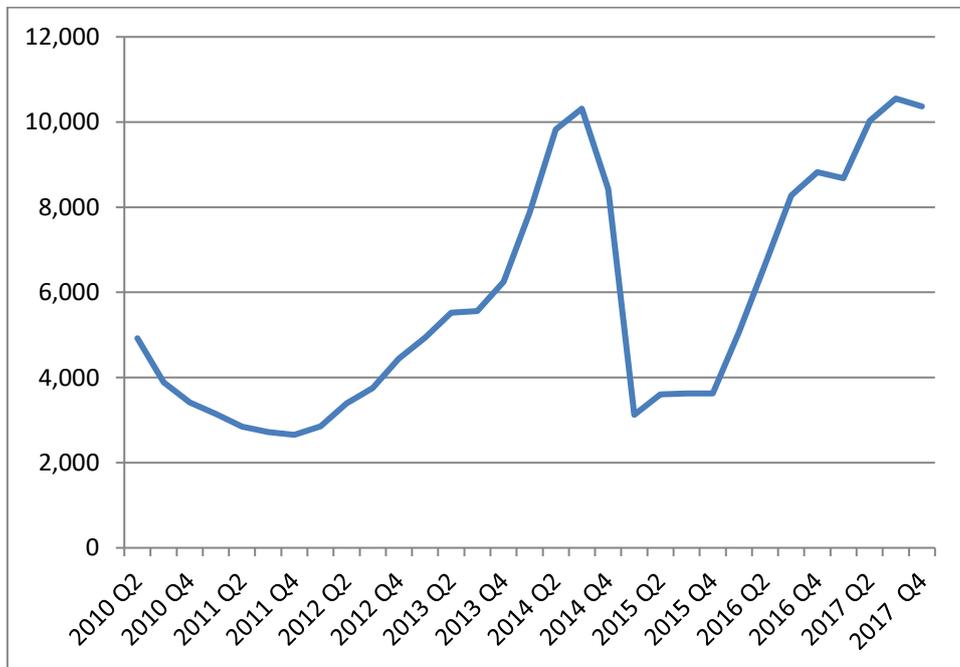


The published statistics also break down the cases into those where an initial decision has been pending for less than 6 months and more than 6 months. The charts below show this data.

Decision pending 6 months or less:



Decision pending for more than 6 months:



It is clear that the number of cases waiting over 6 months increased very significantly from 2011 until 2014, but then reduced quite rapidly until 2016 when it rose again. The first quarter of 2017 showed a

small decrease but this was followed by an increase each quarter until the end of 2017. At the end of March 2018 9,824 applications had been pending for more than six months.

Decisions pending further review

Since the beginning of 2012 until recently there was relatively little change in the number of cases pending further review, ranging from a high of 4,904 in the first quarter of 2012, to a low of 3,412 in the first quarter of 2014. However in the last quarter of 2014 the figure rose to 5,907, and rose again in 2015 up to 9,236 at the end of June 2015, the highest since 2010 when these statistics were first reported. Since then the numbers have reduced and at the end of June 2017 the figure had fallen to 2,527. It rose slightly in the next quarter to 2,794 at the end of September but fell to 2,323 at the end of 2017 before rising to 2,493 at the end of March 2018

The Home Affairs Select Committee of the House of Commons looks at the work of the Immigration Directorates within the Home Office on a regular basis. Their most recent report, published in July 2016, examines the work of the Directorates over the period January to March 2016. It includes a section dealing with asylum applications, including backlogs. On the timescales for determining asylum applications the Committee commented on the increased number of outstanding applications. They said:

- The available data do not allow us to judge whether UKVI is meeting its service standards of processing straightforward asylum cases within six months and non-straightforward cases within 12 months as no such breakdown is provided. There is little point in having service standards if the information is published in such a way that does not allow UKVI's performance to be judged against them. The data must be published in a way that allows such scrutiny.
- The number of outstanding asylum applications is at an all-time high. Despite repeated warnings from this Committee the Home Office has done nothing to address this situation and it must set out what steps it is taking to tackle this concern.

The Committee's report can be found at:

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/151/15102.htm>

The most recent asylum statistics can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018-data-tables>

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.

British Refugee Council, (commonly called the Refugee Council) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales, [No 2727514] and a registered charity, [No 1014576].

Registered office: : Gredley House, 11 Broadway, Stratford, E15 4BQ, United Kingdom VAT reg no: 936 519 988