

Asylum statistics Annual Trends

February 2019

APPLICATIONS:

- In 2018 the number of applications for asylum in the UK, excluding dependants, (29,380), was 9% higher than in 2017 (26,547). After a significant drop in the number of applications from 2009 to 2010 there had been an upward trend from 2011 to 2015 which had reversed in 2016 and 2017.

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

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Applications	25,033	32,733	30,747	26,547	29,380
% change from previous year	+6%	+31%	-6%	-14%	+9%

Applications by nationality:

- In 2018 there were significant increases in the number of applicants from Eritrea, Albania and Iran and a significant decrease for Bangladesh compared with 2017.

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

	2017	2018	% change
Iran	2,570	3,327	+29%
Iraq	2,379	2,697	+13%
Eritrea	1,085	2,158	+99%
Pakistan	2,495	2,022	-19%
Albania	1,430	2,001	+41%
Sudan	1,685	1,613	-4%
Afghanistan	1,326	1,349	+2%
India	1,327	1,300	-2%
Bangladesh	1,712	1,294	-24%
Vietnam	1,070	1,204	+13%

- Over the past 7 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 7 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 numbers from 2009 to 2013 applications from Iraq have risen in recent years. Libya featured in the top ten list in 2011, but not before or since. The number of applicants from Syria rose steadily from 2010 until 2016, but fell in 2017 and since 2012 there was an increase every year in applications from Eritrea until 2016 and 2017 but numbers began to rise again in 2018.

Applications by location

- The majority of applications are made in-country rather than at ports. Over recent years there have been only small variations in the percentage of applications made in-country, ranging from 85% to 92% of all applications. In 2018 80% of applications were made in country, which is the lowest figure in the last 10 years.

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

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
In-country	22,423	29,815	26,865	22,474	23,483
% change from previous year	+8%	+33%	-10%	-16%	+4%
Port	2,610	2,918	3,882	4,073	5,897
% change from previous year	-6%	+12%	+33%	+5%	+45%
Total	25,033	32,733	30,747	26,547	29,380
% change from previous year	+6%	+31%	-6%	-14%	+9%

DECISIONS:

- In 2018 67% of initial decisions were refusals, 26% were grants of asylum, 3.5% were grants of Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave, and 3% 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 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 whose claim has been refused.
- The percentage of refusals in 2018 was similar to 2016 and 2017.

Table 4: Initial Decisions (excl. Dependants)

	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
Decisions	19,782		28,622		24,895		21,269		21,119	
Refugee status	7,266	37%	9,975	35%	7,137	29%	5,957	28%	5,558	26%
Humanitarian Protection	68	0.3%	110	0.4%	187	0.8%	146	0.7%	584	3%
Discretionary Leave	200	1%	227	0.8%	114	0.5%	84	0.4%	104	0.5%
Other Grants of Leave	616	4%	1,109	4%	1,027	4%	592	3%	687	3%
Refused	11,632	59%	17,201	60%	16,430	66%	14,490	68%	14,186	67%

- Among the countries with large numbers of asylum applicants from which the highest percentages were given refugee status or other forms of leave to remain in 2018 were Iran, Eritrea, and Sudan as can be seen from the table below.
- In contrast, among the countries with relatively large numbers of applicants Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nigeria had well above average refusal rates.
- The larger number of decisions to grant UASC leave for applicants from Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan relates to the number of applications from unaccompanied children from these countries.

Table5: Asylum decisions by nationality, 2018, top ten countries for number of decisions

	Decisions	Refugee status	Humanitarian Protection	Discretionary Leave	Family or Private Life / UASC Leave	Refusals
Iran	2,255	890	8	2	70	1,285
Iraq	2,042	239	56	21	124	1,602
Pakistan	1,698	291	1	2	19	1,385
Sudan	1,289	540	2	2	18	727
Eritrea	1,279	814	1	0	5	459
Afghanistan	1,232	408	20	8	111	685
Bangladesh	1,189	61	2	2	16	1,108
Albania	838	15	0	4	47	772
Nigeria	711	63	1	15	55	577
Vietnam	653	221	15	4	34	379

APPEALS:

- In 2018 38% of appeals were allowed, while 57% 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. Fewer appeals were heard in 2018 than in 2016 and 2017 and the success rate was similar to earlier years.

Table 6: Appeals determined

	2014		2015		2016		2017		2017	
Determined	6,178		9,224		12,581		14,299		11,422	
Allowed	1,758	28%	3,260	35%	5,051	40%	5,074	35%	4,379	38%
Dismissed	4,081	66%	5,511	60%	6,914	55%	8,623	60%	6,510	57%
Withdrawn	339	6%	453	5%	616	5%	602	4%	533	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 had significantly above average appeal success rates. Vietnam had a higher than average percentage of initial grants of refugee status and slightly above average appeal success rate. Iraq, Albania, Pakistan, Nigeria and Bangladesh all had low initial grants of status and Pakistan, Nigeria and Bangladesh also had below average appeal success rates.

Table 7: Success rates at appeal by country, 2018

	Initial Grants (%)	Appeals determined	% success at appeal
Sudan	42%	415	71%
Afghanistan	33%	753	54%
Eritrea	64%	86	50%
Iran	39%	1,372	50%
Vietnam	34%	309	41%
Iraq	12%	1,423	39%
Albania	2%	425	39%
Pakistan	17%	1,294	28%
Nigeria	9%	448	24%
Bangladesh	5%	1,052	19%

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)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Gateway Programme	630	652	804	813	693
Mandate Scheme	14	18	8	28	18
Syrian Vulnerable Persons	143	1,194	4,369	4,832	4,407

ASYLUM SUPPORT:

- The total number of asylum seekers (including dependants) in receipt of Section 95 asylum support at the end of 2018 was 44,258 of whom 41,309 were in dispersal accommodation and 2,949 were receiving subsistence only.
- The numbers rose during 2018 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 2018 was the North West (9,948). This region has had the largest proportion since the beginning of 2008.
- 2,129 asylum seekers were in initial accommodation at the end of 2018.

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

	End of 2014	End of 2015	End of 2016	End of 2017	End of 2018
Dispersed accommodation	26,350	31,432	36,626	37,716	41,309
Subsistence only	3,403	2,931	2,763	3,020	2,949
Initial accommodation	1,476	1,985	1,990	1,802	2,129

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

- 2,007 decisions to grant Section 4 support were made in 2018. This is a significant decrease compared with recent years.
- At the end of 2018 2,744 applicants, excluding dependants, were receiving Section 4 support, as well as 1,282 dependants. The number of dependants supported has only been published since the beginning of 2013.

Table 10: Grants of Section 4 Support

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of grants	5,558	5,127	4,530	5,257	2,007

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

	End of 2014	End of 2015	End of 2016	End of 2017	End of 2018
Number supported	3,655	2,525	2,424	2,689	2,744

- 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 2018, 3,809 asylum seekers were removed or departed voluntarily, a 28% decrease from 2017 (5,316).
- The total number of removals and voluntary departures went down in each year from 2009 until 2017. The number went down again in 2018.
- 736 asylum seekers left under Assisted Voluntary Return schemes in 2018.
- Other types of departure have tended to decrease year by year, with the exception of 2011 when there was a peak in the number of other verified returns. The figure for other verified returns in 2018 was the lowest in the last 5 years.

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

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Enforced	4,372	3,398	2,365	2,722	1,742
Assisted Voluntary	1,453	864	498	729	736
Notified Voluntary	747	793	740	1,235	1,021
Other Verified Returns	453	378	514	630	310
Total	7,025	5,433	4,117	5,316	3,809

Detention

Persons leaving detention

- A total of 11,152 people were recorded as removed from the UK upon leaving detention in 2018, having been held solely under Immigration Act powers, of whom 21% were asylum detainees.

Persons detained at the end of the year

- At the end of 2018 a total of 1,784 persons were detained, there were no children in detention at this point in time.
- 1,085 persons who had sought asylum at some stage were being detained solely under Immigration Act powers (61% of all immigration detainees)
- 91% of all detainees were male.

Table 13: People in detention

	End of 2014	End of 2015	End of 2016	End of 2017	End of 2018
Total	3,462	2,607	2,738	2,545	1,784
Male	3,135	2,337	2,489	2,275	1,621
Female	327	270	249	270	163
Asylum detainees	1,698	1,250	1,626	1,508	1,085

Detained Asylum Seekers by Nationality

- At the end of 2018, of the countries with the largest numbers of asylum detainees Nigeria, China, and Somalia do not also appear in the top ten countries for the number of asylum applications in 2018.
- Iran, Eritrea, and Sudan ranked in the top ten countries for the number of asylum applications in 2018. However at the end of 2018 there were 20 Iranian asylum seekers, 26 Eritreans, and 8 Sudanese in detention.

Table 14: Countries with largest numbers of asylum detainees

	End of 2017	End of 2018
India	195	126
Albania	92	123
China	81	105
Bangladesh	183	94
Pakistan	91	82
Vietnam	51	53
Iraq	45	52
Nigeria	167	39
Afghanistan	41	35
Somalia	49	34

Children in Detention

- In 2018 63 children entered detention, of whom 42 were asylum detainees. 36 of these children were detained at the Gatwick pre-departure accommodation, and 24 at Tinsley House.
- 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 2,872 in 2018, a 20% increase compared with 2017.

- *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. Dependents)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Applications	1,945	3,253	3,290	2,399	2,872
% change to previous year	+54%	+67%	+1%	-33%	-14%

- Eritrea is now the country of origin for the largest number of unaccompanied children. After large numbers in 2015 and 2016 the number of applications from Afghanistan decreased significantly in 2017 and 2018. 91% of all applications in 2018 were from the 9 countries listed below.

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

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Eritrea	460	736	413	355	620
Sudan	51	148	255	356	462
Vietnam	103	182	194	305	312
Iraq	32	182	324	271	308
Albania	632	481	420	265	286
Iran	73	227	388	233	251
Afghanistan	179	694	754	277	210
Ethiopia	18	114	104	90	117
Syria	118	169	140	39	40

- In 2018 89% of applicants were male, a similar percentage to earlier years.

Age Disputed Cases

- The number of age disputed cases increased in 2018 and was significantly higher than in 2013 and 2014. As a percentage of the number of applications during the year it was slightly higher than 2017.

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

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Applications	318	789	928	716	872
% change to previous year	-2%	+148%	+18%	-23%	+22%

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 have tended to be much higher; there was a refusal rate of 82% in 2015. However the refusal rate fell to 57% in 2016 and to 45% in 2017 but rose to 60% in 2018.
- 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
2018	1,327	771	44	2	319	1	190
2017	1,454	817	36	2	386	2	211
2016	1,656	502	50	14	828	2	260
2015	1,568	357	18	38	809	0	346
2014	988	418	9	23	380	4	154

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
2018	824	299	29	2	0	3	491
2017	586	307	12	1	0	1	265
2016	295	118	6	1	1	2	167
2015	362	63	1	3	0	0	295
2014	282	69	1	0	0	2	210

ASYLUM APPLICATIONS (DEPENDANTS):

- In 2018 there were 8,073 applications from dependants. The detailed statistics for the age and gender of dependants are published in August each year, so the 2017 figures are the most recent which are available for age and gender.

The tables below show the age and gender of dependants.

Table 20: Applications by Dependants by age

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Under 5	2,423	2,687	2,681	3,052	2,711
5 – 9 yo	1,125	1,312	1,337	1,640	1,589
10 – 13 yo	590	746	670	809	790
14 – 15 yo	223	307	282	336	319
16 – 17 yo	210	253	232	264	246
18+ yo	1,705	1,969	2,033	2,481	2,205

Table 21: Applications by dependants aged 18 and over

	Total Applications	Male dependants	Female dependants	% Female
2017	2,205	666	1,539	70%
2016	2,481	845	1,636	66%
2015	2,033	660	1,347	66%
2014	1,969	556	1,413	72%
2013	1,705	406	1,299	76%

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

WOMEN AND GIRLS:

Applications

- In 2017 28% of asylum applications were made by women. This was close to the average for recent years. The detailed statistics for applications by women are published in August each year so the 2017 figures are the most recent available for most of the tables below.

Table 22: Applications by women (Excl. Dependants)

	Total Applications	Applications by women	% by women
2017	26,547	7,364	28%
2016	30,747	7,680	25%
2015	32,733	6,788	21%
2014	25,033	6,842	27%
2013	23,584	6,396	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 2017

	Total Applications	Applications by women	% by women
Iran	2,570	642	25%
Pakistan	2,495	470	19%
Iraq	2,379	741	31%
Bangladesh	1,712	148	9%
Sudan	1,685	120	7%
Albania	1,430	686	48%
India	1,327	330	25%
Afghanistan	1,326	164	12%
Eritrea	1,085	211	19%
Vietnam	1,070	379	35%

Table 24: Top ten countries for women asylum applicants 2017

	Applications by women	% of total by women	Change in no. from 2016
Iraq	741	31%	+135
Albania	686	48%	+29
Iran	642	25%	-56
Nigeria	506	49%	-79
Pakistan	470	19%	-70
Vietnam	379	35%	+94
China	337	39%	+43
India	330	25%	-61
Eritrea	211	19%	-171
Sri Lanka	193	28%	-15

- In 2018 only 11% of asylum applications by unaccompanied children were by girls. The percentage of applications by girls has remained steady in recent years.

Table 25: Applications by unaccompanied children seeking asylum

	Total Applications	Applications by girls	% Female
2018	2,872	319	11%
2017	2,399	260	11%
2016	3,290	333	10%
2015	3,253	296	9%
2014	1,945	232	12%

- The main countries of origin for unaccompanied girls seeking asylum in 2018 were those shown in the table below. There was a significant increase in applications from Vietnam in 2017 and from Eritrea in 2018. There were fewer than 10 girls applying from every other country in 2018.

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

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Vietnam	36	43	71	121	127
Eritrea	57	106	110	29	89
Iraq	6	1	10	8	15
Albania	41	38	33	24	14
Ethiopia	4	15	35	6	11
Iran	7	10	6	7	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, however in 2015 the percentage of women granted asylum was significantly lower than for men and the refusal rate was higher. In 2017 there were small differences between the figures for men and women.

Table 27 Decisions by gender

	Granted Asylum		Granted HP or DL or other leave		Refused	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
2017	26%	31%	4%	4%	68%	65%
2016	29%	29%	6%	4%	66%	67%
2015	36%	30%	5%	5%	59%	65%
2014	37%	36%	4%	5%	59%	59%
2013	31%	38%	4%	5%	65%	57%

Appeals

- Until recently women asylum seekers have been more likely than men to win appeals, but the differences in success rates now are marginal.

Table 28 Appeal decisions by gender

	Appeal Allowed		Appeal Dismissed		Appeal Withdrawn	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
2018	38%	40%	59%	53%	4%	7%
2017	35%	37%	61%	59%	4%	5%
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%

Removals

- In 2018 of the people recorded as removed from the UK on leaving detention 17% (1,907) 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-year-ending-december-2018/list-of-tables>

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.