

Quarterly asylum statistics

February 2020

This briefing covers the latest quarterly asylum statistics. For annual and longer term trends see the Refugee Council briefing on asylum trends.

APPLICATIONS:

- The number of applications for asylum in the UK increased in Q4 2019 compared with each of the previous four quarters.

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

Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019
8,659	8,922	7,633	9,140	9,871

Applications by nationality:

- Compared with the corresponding quarter in 2018 there was an increase in the number of applicants from seven of the top ten countries of origin. The largest percentage increases were from Albania, Vietnam and China. Three countries showed significant decreases in numbers.

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

	Q4 2018	Q4 2019	% change
Iran	1,347	1,451	+8%
Albania	666	1,002	+50%
Iraq	924	743	-20%
Vietnam	352	495	+41%
Pakistan	449	460	+2%
Eritrea	647	428	-34%
Afghanistan	349	423	+21%
China	284	413	+45%
India	336	401	+19%
Sudan	431	323	-25%

Applications by location

- The proportion of applications made at ports and in-country has changed only marginally in the past year, and for in-country applications was 74% in Q4 2019.

Table 3: Applications by location (excl. dependants), by quarter

	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019
In-country	6,742	7,283	6,140	7,099	7,341
Port	1,897	1,639	1,493	2,041	2,530
Total	8,639	8,922	7,633	9,140	9,871

DECISIONS:

- In Q4 2019 5,100 initial asylum decisions were made, excluding dependants; a small change compared with the previous two quarters.
- 48% of initial decisions in Q4 2019 were to grant asylum, compared with only 34% in Q4 2018. 4.3% of initial decisions in Q4 2019 were to grant Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave, similar to Q4 2018 and 45% were refusals, a decrease from earlier quarters.

Table 4: Initial Decisions (excl. dependants) by quarter

	Q4 2018		Q1 2019		Q2 2019		Q3 2019		Q4 2019	
Decisions	4,800		5,462		5,011		5,217		5,100	
Refugee status	1,650	34%	2,286	42%	2,285	46%	2,383	46%	2,450	48%
Humanitarian Protection	136	2.8%	134	2.5%	154	3%	161	3%	193	4%
Discretionary Leave	19	0.4%	24	0.4%	19	0.4%	15	0.3%	13	0.3%
Other Grants	110	2.3%	269	5%	136	2.7%	139	2.7%	143	2.8%
Refused	2,885	60%	2,749	50%	2,417	48%	2,519	48%	2,301	45%

- Countries with an above average percentage of applicants granted protection in Q4 2019 included Iran, Eritrea, Sudan, Afghanistan and Syria. Several countries had very high refusal rates.

Table5: Asylum decisions by nationality, Q4 2019, top ten countries for number of decisions

	Decisions	Refugee status	Humanitarian Protection	Discretionary Leave	Other Grants	Refusals
Iran	784	524	1	1	7	251
Iraq	524	100	37	2	33	352
Eritrea	501	475	3	0	0	23
Sudan	420	391	2	0	0	27
Afghanistan	234	118	10	0	1	105
Albania	231	53	0	0	15	163
Pakistan	216	79	1	0	12	124
India	207	1	0	2	4	200
Nigeria	181	40	1	2	12	126
Syria	157	144	1	0	0	12

APPEALS:

- 2,205 appeals were determined in Q4 2019, a decrease from the previous four quarters.
- The proportion of appeals allowed was 41% in Q4 2019, while 51% were dismissed. The remainder were withdrawn.

Table 6: Appeals determined, by quarter

	Q4 2018		Q1 2019		Q2 2019		Q3 2019		Q4 2019	
Determined	2,728		2,654		2,389		2,377		2,205	
Allowed	1,041	38%	1,044	39%	1,000	42%	1,028	43%	897	41%
Dismissed	1,546	57%	1,458	55%	1,226	51%	1,194	50%	1,120	51%
Withdrawn	141	5%	152	6%	163	7%	155	7%	188	8%

ASYLUM SUPPORT:

- The total number of asylum seekers (including dependants) in receipt of Section 95 asylum support at the end of Q4 2019 was 43,549, a decrease from the previous four quarters.
- 2,847 of these asylum seekers were receiving subsistence only support at the end of Q4 2019.
- 40,702 of these asylum seekers were supported in dispersal accommodation at the end of Q4 2019.
- The region of the UK with the largest number of people in dispersal accommodation at the end of Q4 2019 was the North West (9,381).
- 2,738 asylum seekers were in initial accommodation under Section 98 support at the end of Q4 2019 which is a lot higher than in recent quarters.

Table 7: Asylum seekers in receipt of Section 95 asylum support at the end of each quarter (incl. Dependants)

	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019
Dispersed accommodation	41,316	42,602	42,182	41,214	40,702
Subsistence only	2,949	3,046	3,021	2,942	2,847
Initial accommodation	2,129	1,832	1,583	3,049	2,738

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

- At the end of Q4 2019 3,804 applicants, including dependants, were receiving Section 4 support.

Table 8: Numbers in receipt of Section 4 Support at the end of the quarter (incl. dependants).

	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019
Number supported	4,032	3,903	3,893	3,857	3,804

ENFORCEMENT & COMPLIANCE:

Removals (Asylum Applicants)

- In the year ending December 2019 3,137 asylum seekers were removed or departed voluntarily from the UK, a 23% decrease from the year ending December 2018 (4,049).
- 1,506 asylum seekers left via enforced removals from the UK in the year ending December 2019, a 34% decrease from the year ending December 2018 (2,271).
- 1,631 asylum seekers left under Voluntary Return schemes in the year ending December 2019, a 8% decrease from the year ending December 2018 (1,778).

Note: The most recent figures are often revised in subsequent statistical releases, usually upwards, so percentage decreases can change significantly when this happens.

Detention

Persons leaving detention

A total of 2,325 people were recorded as having been removed from the UK upon leaving detention, having been held solely under Immigration Act powers in Q4 2019;

Persons Detained at the end of Q3 2019

- At the end of Q4 2019 a total of 1,637 persons were detained, at this point no children were in detention.
- 994 persons who had sought asylum at some stage were being detained solely under Immigration Act powers (61% of all immigration detainees)
- 73 children were recorded as entering detention in the year ending December 2019.

CHILDREN:

Applications by Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum

- The number of applications from unaccompanied children, excluding dependants, was 1,046 in Q4 2019, an increase from previous quarters.

Table 9: Asylum applications by Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum (excl. dependants)

	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019
Applications	941	951	753	901	1.046

- Iran was the top country of origin for unaccompanied children (17% of all applications in Q4 2019). Vietnam accounted for 16.5%, Afghanistan for 14%, Eritrea for 11%, Iraq and Sudan for 9% each and Albania for 7%. Together these seven countries accounted for over 80% of all applications in Q4 2019.

- In Q4 2019 89% of applicants were male, a similar percentage to the previous quarter.
- In Q4 2019 119 asylum applications by unaccompanied children were made by girls.
- There are a small number of applications recorded as sex unknown.

Table 10: Applications by unaccompanied children seeking asylum

	Total Applications	Applications by girls	% Female
Q4 2019	1,046	119	11%
Q3 2019	901	94	10%
Q2 2019	753	72	10%
Q1 2019	951	110	12%
Q4 2018	941	111	12%

For the detailed statistics on the main countries of origin for unaccompanied girls seeking asylum see the Refugee Council briefing on annual trends in statistics.

Age Disputed Cases

- The number of age disputed cases raised in Q4 2019 was 186, an increase compared with the previous two quarters. Iran (43), Iraq (28), Afghanistan (27), Eritrea (27), Sudan (23) and Vietnam (15), were the countries of origin with the largest number of age disputed cases in Q4 2019.

Table 11: Age Disputed Asylum applications (excl. dependants)

	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019
Applications	290	285	144	167	186

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, according to Home Office policy. This used to state that 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” but the wording has changed since June 2019 to “very strongly suggests that they are 25 years or over”.

Decisions

- If an unaccompanied child’s claim for international protection is refused, they may be granted UASC leave. Since 2013 this leave is granted in cases where the only reason for giving leave is that the applicant is a child who cannot be returned. It is not granted for anyone over the age of 17 and a half.

Table 12: Initial asylum decisions on unaccompanied children aged 17 and under by Quarter

	Total	Refugee status	Humanitarian Protection	Discretionary Leave	UASC Leave	Family or Private Life	Refusals
Q4 2019	410	330	19	0	31	1	29
Q3 2019	460	353	22	0	53	0	32
Q2 2019	521	401	22	0	41	2	55
Q1 2019	475	297	16	0	47	83	32
Q4 2018	302	207	20	1	46	0	28

Table 13: Initial asylum decisions on unaccompanied children who have reached the age of 18 by Quarter

	Total	Refugee status	Humanitarian Protection	Discretionary Leave	UASC Leave	Family or Private Life	Refusals
Q4 2019	224	125	9	0	0	0	90
Q3 2019	263	154	11	1	0	1	96
Q2 2019	330	153	18	3	0	1	155
Q1 2019	398	205	25	1	0	2	165
Q4 2018	165	79	11	1	0	1	73

ASYLUM APPLICATIONS (DEPENDANTS):

- In Q4 2019 there were 2,291 dependants included in asylum applications.
- 1,655 of the dependants were under 18 years old and 1,304 were female.

Table 14: Dependants included in asylum applications

	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019
Number of main applicants	8,659	8,922	7,633	9,140	9,871
Number of dependants	2,307	2,258	1,873	2,506	2,291

For the detailed statistics on dependants see the Refugee Council briefing on annual trends in statistics.

FAMILY REUNION:

Adults who have been granted refugee status or humanitarian protection are entitled to apply for family reunion. Immediate family members, defined as spouses or partners and children under the age of 18 are eligible to apply for entry to the UK.

Table 15: Family reunion entry clearance visa grants by quarter

	Total	Under 18	18 and Over
Q4 2019	2,371	1,151	1,220
Q3 2019	1,370	666	704
Q2 2019	1,735	885	850
Q1 2019	1,607	817	790
Q4 2018	1,323	661	662

The majority of the outstanding family reunion applications at the end of Q4 2019 have been waiting for a decision for less than 6 months.

WOMEN AND GIRLS:

- In Q4 of 2019 there were 2,515 applications where the main applicant was a woman or girl. This represents 25% of all applications, a similar figure to previous quarters.

Table 16: Applications by women or girls by quarter

	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019
Total	8,659	8,922	7,633	9,140	9,871
Female	2,170	2,258	2,023	2,292	2,515
% Female	25%	25%	27%	25%	25%

- The proportion of female applicants varies considerably from country to country. For a very small number of countries there are more female than male applicants whereas in many countries the percentage of female applicants is low. Among the countries with the largest number of female applicants in Q4 2019 China, Nigeria and Namibia have high percentages.

Table 17: Female applicants from the top ten applicant producing countries Q4 2019

	Female Applicants	Total	% Female
Iran	201	1,451	14%
Albania	250	1,002	25%
Iraq	142	743	19%
Vietnam	180	495	36%
Pakistan	114	460	25%
Eritrea	118	428	28%
Afghanistan	44	423	10%
China	183	413	44%
India	60	401	15%
Sudan	32	323	10%

Table 18: Top ten countries for female applicants Q4 2019

	Female Applicants	% Female of total application
Albania	250	25%
Iran	201	14%
China	183	44%
Vietnam	180	36%
Iraq	142	19%
Nigeria	124	46%
Eritrea	118	28%
Pakistan	114	25%
Namibia	87	63%
El Salvador	83	32%

NOTE

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/statistical-data-sets/immigration-statistics-data-tables-year-ending-december-2019#asylum-and-resettlement>

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.