

Quarterly asylum statistics

February 2022

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

The most recent period for which statistics have been published is the last quarter of 2021. Many of the figures in the last 4 quarters show the impact of coronavirus and the lockdown restrictions and differ significantly from previous quarters as a result.

APPLICATIONS:

- The number of applications for asylum in the UK was higher in Q4 2021 than in the previous four quarters and was the highest quarterly figure since 2003.

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

Q4 2020	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021
7,788	5,902	8,768	15,104	18,766

Applications by nationality:

- Compared with the corresponding quarter in 2020 there were large increases in the number of applicants from all the top ten countries of origin.

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

	Q4 2020	Q4 2021	% change
Iran	993	4,791	+382%
Iraq	432	3,531	+717%
Albania	1,016	1,528	+50%
Syria	425	1,475	+247%
Afghanistan	359	1,026	+186%
Eritrea	694	930	+34%
Sudan	412	658	+60%
India	188	444	+136%
El Salvador	291	368	+26%
Somalia	83	299	+260%

Applications by location

- The proportion of applications made at ports and in-country changed only marginally before Q2 2020 but increased hugely to 97% in-country in Q2 2020 and remained high, at 89%, in Q3 and then fell to 79% in Q4 but rose again during 2021, and was 87% in Q4 2021.

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

	Q4 2020	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021
In-country	6,175	5,199	7,795	13,549	16,409
Port	1,613	703	973	1,555	2,357
Total	7,788	5,902	8,768	15,104	18,766

DECISIONS:

- In Q4 2021 3,530 initial asylum decisions were made, excluding dependants; similar to the previous four quarters.
- 70% of initial decisions in Q4 2021 were to grant asylum, similar to Q3 and an increase on the previous three quarters. 4.3% of initial decisions in Q4 2021 were to grant Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave, and 25% were refusals, similar to Q3 and a significant decrease from previous quarters.

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

	Q4 2020		Q1 2021		Q2 2021		Q3 2021		Q4 2021	
Decisions	3,716		3,847		3,709		3,486		3,530	
Refugee status	1,498	40%	2,354	61%	2,454	66%	2,438	70%	2,476	70%
Humanitarian Protection	125	3.4%	190	5%	131	3.5%	112	3.2%	146	4%
Discretionary Leave	13	0.3%	7	0.2%	5	0.1%	5	0.1%	9	0.3%
Other Grants	50	1.3%	47	1.2%	61	1.7%	26	0.7%	28	0.8%
Refused	2,030	55%	1,249	32%	1,058	28.5%	905	26%	871	25%

- Countries with an above average percentage of applicants granted protection in Q4 2021 included Iran, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Sudan and Syria.

Table 5: Asylum decisions by nationality, Q4 2021, top ten countries for number of decisions

	Decisions	Refugee status	Humanitarian Protection	Discretionary Leave	Other Grants	Refusals
Iran	546	495	0	0	0	51
Afghanistan	379	371	4	0	0	4
Eritrea	311	301	0	0	0	10
Iraq	260	92	40	0	1	127
Syria	253	244	0	0	0	9
Pakistan	168	89	0	1	3	75
Sudan	163	152	0	0	0	11
Vietnam	154	110	1	1	2	40
Albania	136	60	2	0	1	73
Turkey	101	79	0	1	0	21

APPEALS:

- 996 appeals were determined in Q4 2021, similar to the last three quarters but still lower than in previous years.
- The proportion of appeals allowed was 36% in Q4 2021, while 35% were dismissed. The remainder were withdrawn. The percentage withdrawn was well above the average in earlier quarters.

Table 6: Appeals determined, by quarter

	Q4 2020		Q1 2021		Q2 2021		Q3 2021		Q4 2021	
Determined	871		939		1,025		917		996	
Allowed	337	39%	416	44%	447	44%	408	44.5%	355	36%
Dismissed	412	47%	405	43%	501	49%	432	47%	352	35%
Withdrawn	122	14%	118	13%	77	8%	77	8.4%	289	29%

ASYLUM SUPPORT:

- The total number of asylum seekers (including dependants) in receipt of Section 95 asylum support at the end of Q4 2021 was 54,669, an increase from previous quarters.
- 4,720 of these asylum seekers were receiving subsistence only support at the end of Q4 2021.
- 49,949 of these asylum seekers were supported in dispersal accommodation at the end of Q4 2021
- The region of the UK with the largest number of people in dispersal accommodation at the end of Q4 2021 was North West England (9,947) but the number in London had risen to 8,455.
- 24,175 asylum seekers were in initial accommodation under Section 98 support at the end of Q4 2021, a very large increase from earlier quarters.

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

	Q4 2020	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021
Dispersed accommodation	41,302	40,396	41,633	40,490	49,949
Subsistence only	4,324	4,429	4,621	4,917	4,720
Initial accommodation (s98)	12,235	10,294	10,682	16,794	24,175

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

- At the end of Q4 2021 5,613 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 2020	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021
Number supported	6,180	6,122	5,935	6,096	5,613

ENFORCEMENT & COMPLIANCE:

Removals (Asylum Applicants)

- In the year ending September 2021 940 asylum seekers were removed or departed voluntarily from the UK, a 51% decrease from the year ending September 2020 (1,903).
- 203 asylum seekers left via enforced removals from the UK in the year ending September 2021, an 70% decrease from the year ending September 2020 (688).
- 737 asylum seekers left under Voluntary Return schemes in the year ending September 2021, a 39% decrease from the year ending September 2020 (1,215).

Note: The most recent figures are often revised in subsequent statistical releases, usually upwards, so percentage decreases can change significantly when this happens. The figures for the year ending December 2021 have not yet been published.

Detention

Persons entering and leaving detention

During 2021 a total of 24,497 people were recorded as entering detention of whom 19,886 were asylum cases. In the same period 24,280 people left detention of whom 19,882 were asylum cases. Some people may have been in detention more than once.

Persons Detained at the end of Q4 2021

- At the end of Q4 2021 a total of 1,179 persons were detained, at this point there were no children in detention.
- 622 persons who had sought asylum at some stage were being detained solely under Immigration Act powers (53% of all immigration detainees).
- 100 children were recorded as entering detention during 2021.

CHILDREN:

Applications by Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum

- The number of applications from unaccompanied children, excluding dependants, was 1,296 in Q4 2021, higher than in the previous four quarters.

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

	Q4 2020	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021
Applications	637	516	715	1,235	1,296

- Iran was the top country of origin for unaccompanied children (32% of all applications in Q4 2021). Iraq accounted for 14%, Afghanistan for 13%, Sudan and Syria for 8% each and Eritrea for 6%, These six countries accounted for over 80% of all applications in Q4 2021.

- In Q4 2021 less than 4% of applicants were female, lower than recent quarters.
- In Q4 2021 47 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 2021	1,296	47	4%
Q3 2021	1,235	74	6%
Q2 2021	715	59	8%
Q1 2021	516	33	6%
Q4 2020	637	50	8%

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 2021 was 901. Cases increased significantly in Q3 and Q4 compared with the previous quarters. Iran (381), Iraq (140), Afghanistan (122), Syria (70) and Sudan (55) were the countries of origin with the largest number of disputed cases in Q4 2021.

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

	Q4 2020	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021
Applications	249	184	528	904	901

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. Decisions on over 18s have increased in recent quarters.

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 2021	252	238	4	0	0	0	10
Q3 2021	220	206	5	0	3	0	6
Q2 2021	238	206	7	0	17	0	8
Q1 2021	182	166	4	1	4	0	7
Q4 2020	128	114	1	1	4	0	8

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 2021	498	412	30	9	9	9	56
Q3 2021	476	407	20	1	0	1	47
Q2 2021	380	300	18	0	0	2	60
Q1 2021	273	216	10	0	0	0	47
Q4 2020	185	139	6	0	0	1	39

ASYLUM APPLICATIONS (DEPENDANTS):

- In Q4 2021 there were 3,195 dependants included in asylum applications.
- 2,179 of the dependants were under 18 years old and 1,859 were female.

Table 14: Dependants included in asylum applications

	Q4 2020	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021
Number of main applicants	7,788	5,902	8,768	15,104	18,766
Number of dependants	1,868	1,037	1,390	2,333	3,195

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 2021	1,259	672	587
Q3 2021	1,717	907	810
Q2 2021	1,607	827	780
Q1 2021	1,551	866	685
Q4 2020	1,667	914	753

The number of cases dealt with has increased from a very small number of cases dealt with in Q2 2020 but that may be partly due to a significant backlog of applications.

WOMEN AND GIRLS:

- In Q4 2021, there were 2,201 applications where the main applicant was a woman or girl. This represents 12% of all applications, similar to Q3 but lower than previous quarters.

Table 16: Applications by women or girls by quarter

	Q4 2020	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021
Total	7,788	5,902	8,768	15,104	18,766
Female	1,704	1,227	1,337	1,804	2,201
% Female	22%	21%	15%	12%	12%

- 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 applicants in Q4 2021 El Salvador, Eritrea and Somalia have well above average percentages of female applicants. Of the countries with the largest number of female applicants Namibia and Nigeria have more than 50% female applicants.

Table 17: Female applicants from the top ten applicant producing countries Q4 2021

	Female Applicants	Total	% Female
Iran	216	4,791	5%
Iraq	231	3,531	7%
Albania	168	1,528	11%
Syria	71	1,475	5%
Afghanistan	66	1,026	6%
Eritrea	237	930	25%
Sudan	37	658	6%
India	45	444	10%
El Salvador	135	368	37%
Somalia	70	299	23%

Table 18: Top ten countries for female applicants Q4 2021

	Female Applicants	% Female of total application
Eritrea	237	25%
Iraq	231	7%
Iran	216	5%
Albania	168	11%
El Salvador	135	37%
Nigeria	108	55%
Syria	71	5%
Somalia	70	23%
Afghanistan	66	6%
Namibia	56	68%

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/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-december-2021/list-of-tables>

For older statistics follow this link:

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

The user guide to the Immigration statistics can be found via this link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/user-guide-to-home-office-immigration-statistics--9>

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.