

Debate Pack

11 March 2024

Number CDP 2024/0054

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Estimates Day debate: The spending of the Home Office on asylum and migration

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1 Estimates

1.1 What are Estimates?

One of Parliament's longest standing functions is the consideration and authorisation of the Government's spending plans, requiring the Government to obtain parliamentary consent before spending public money. These are presented to Parliament in documents known as "Estimates".

Estimates typically take place twice per financial year:

- April to June: Main Estimates (initial departmental spending plans)
- February to March: Supplementary Estimates (revised final departmental spending plans)

What are Supplementary Estimates?

Supplementary Estimates show the changes to this financial year's budgets which the Government is seeking for each department. They are divided into separate limits for current, day-to-day spending (also known as Resource)—on staff and other running costs, on goods and services and grants; and capital (investment) spending—covering purchase and sale of assets, loans and capital grants.

Changes are further divided into spending subject to fixed limits, based broadly on the plans outlined for 2023/24 in the 2021 Spending Review, known as Departmental Expenditure Limits; and less predictable and more demand led spending, known as Annually Managed Expenditure.

The 2023/24 Supplementary Estimates were [published on 27 February 2024](#).

As is usual, all these changes will be put to Parliament for approval in March, and if Parliament is content will be given legal effect by a new Supply and Appropriation Act before the end of the financial year, allowing access to additional funds approved.

1.2 The Home Office Supplementary Estimate 2023-24

Home Office spending is broken down into several different spending totals, for which Parliament's approval is sought. The spending totals which Parliament votes are:

- Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (“Resource DEL”). This incorporates the day-to-day running costs for front line services including the Enablers support function. This includes, but is not restricted to, the control of immigration, securing the UK border, counter terrorism and intelligence, and the responsibility for the fire and rescue services. Income is generated from services such as issuing visas and passports.
- Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit (“Capital DEL”). This encompasses the investment in the Home Office’s infrastructure enabling it to deliver its core activities and includes equipment and IT.
- Resource Annually Managed Expenditure (“Resource AME”). This is less predictable day-to-day spending such as contributions for police and fire pensions, pension scheme management charges as well as provisions created for accounting adjustments that do not impact cash.
- Capital Annually Managed Expenditure (“Capital AME”). This is for spends which are unpredictable or not easily controlled by the department including provisions created for accounting treatment. This includes dilapidation costs linked to International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) 16, where restoration works are required at the end of the lease term.

The Home Office proposes a Resource DEL budget of £19,564.5 million, an increase of £4,956.5 million (+33.9%) compared with its initial budget of £14,608.0 million.

The main drivers of this increase are:

- £3,983 million of additional funding for asylum support, resettlement and accommodation (ASRA). This brings the total budget for ASRA to £5,422.3 million for 2023/24, 39% more than the 2022/23 supplementary estimate;
- £601.3 million to implement the measures set out by the Prime Minister on 13 December 2022 to tackle illegal migration and fix the UK’s asylum system;
- £528.2 million for the Afghanistan Resettlement Scheme;
- £325.8 million to implement the Illegal Migration Act 2023;
- £269.0 million for additional depreciation requirements;
- £137.9 million provided by HM Treasury to fund an Illegal Migration Taskforce;

- £112.4 million additional funding for various areas including £54.4 million to support the 2019 Economic Crime Plan and £25.0 million for additional support to tackle anti-social behaviour.

These increases are partially offset by:

- £733.6 million budget transferred to other government departments, including:
 - £651.7 million for the Department of Health and Social Care and devolved administrations for the Immigration Health Surcharge
 - £70.9 million for the Ministry of Justice to fund costs relating the Illegal Migration Act, New Plan for Immigration, clear asylum backlog, combat controlling and coercive behaviours and other joint initiatives
- £267.5 million resource budget reduction in exchange for capital, of which £140.3 million was directly switched to capital and £127.2 million was surrendered to HM Treasury in exchange for a corresponding drawdown from the capital reserves.

The Home Office proposes a Capital DEL (investment spending) budget of £1,399.8 million, an increase of £468.5 million (50.3%) compared with its initial budget of £931.3 million. The main drivers of this increase are:

- £267.5 million additional capital following a resource budget switch, of which £135.4 million is to be used for measures to tackle illegal migration;
- £130 million to implement the Illegal Migration Act;
- £47 million to fund the Illegal Migration Taskforce;
- £30 million to tackle money laundering as part of the 2019 Economic Crime Plan (this investment funding sits alongside the £54.4 million resource mentioned above).

The Home Office proposes Resource AME of £3,064.0 million, an increase of £346.3 million (12.7%) compared with its initial budget of £2,717.7million. The main drivers of this increase are:

- £256.3 million additional pension costs linked to the compensation for McCloud Matthews and McCloud judgments, which increases the number of firefighters and police officers retiring.
- £90 million for decommissioning provisions in the major law enforcement portfolio.

The Home Office proposes Capital AME of £110.0 million, an increase of £110.0 million compared with its initial budget of nil. This is for possible costs

associated with leasehold dilapidations where works are required at the end of the lease term to return a leasehold property to the state it was at the commencement of the term.

1.3 How does the Home Office spend its money?

The table below shows a breakdown of [the 2023-24 Home Office Supplementary Estimate](#) (PDF) and provides an overview of where the department spends its money.

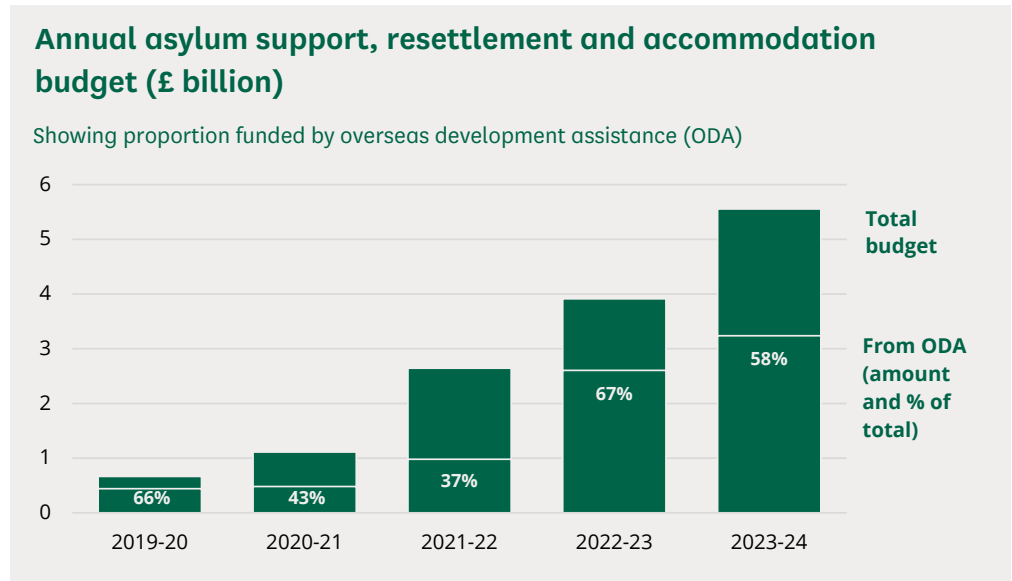
This breakdown includes income of £5.5 billion most of which is generated from passport and visa fees. The department's UK Visas and Immigration arm aims to recover twice as much in fees as it spends on processing applications, to cross-subsidise border operations.¹

Home Office Supplementary Estimate 2023-24 (£'000)				
Budget	Estimates Line	Resource	Capital	Total
Department	A Public Safety Group (includes police settlement)	11,331,410	240,031	11,571,441
Expenditure Limits (DEL)	B Homeland Security Group	1,206,533	279,726	1,486,259
	C Migration and Borders Group	775,288	114,842	890,130
	D Strategic Operations for Illegal Migration	166,239	13,400	179,639
	E Customer Services (Visas & Passports)	-3,314,816	110,126	-3,204,690
	F Asylum Support, Resettlement and Accommodation	5,422,254	131,860	5,554,114
	G Border Force	1,104,595	139,396	1,243,991
	H Immigration Enforcement	738,375	133,892	872,267
	I Corporate and Delivery	1,355,603	114,223	1,469,826
	J Digital, Data and Technology	509,002	62,152	571,154
	K Science, Technology, Analysis and Research	40,247	37,820	78,067
	L Strategy	75,788	2,301	78,089
	M Legal Advisors	13,072	0	13,072
	N Communications	13,376	0	13,376
	O Arm's Length Bodies (Net)	127,533	20,004	147,537
	Departmental Unallocated Provision	0	0	0
	Total DEL	19,564,499	1,399,773	20,964,272
Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)	P Police and Fire Superannuation	2,973,993	0	2,973,993
	Q AME Charges	90,000	110,000	200,000
	Total AME	3,063,993	110,000	3,173,993

1.4 Home Office asylum expenditure

Asylum Support, Resettlement and Accommodation (ASRA) expenditure is £5.6 billion. This represents over one quarter (26%) of total expenditure (Total DEL).

¹ Home Office, [Annual report and accounts: 2022 to 2023](#), HC 1355, 19 September 2023, p198; see generally Commons Library briefing CBP 9859, [UK immigration fees](#)



The ASRA budget covers the running of the asylum system as well as delivery of refugee resettlement programmes.² Over the last five years it has increased by 733%, and by 110% since 2021-22 (the baseline year for the last spending review settlement).³

This increase is due to:

- The increase in small boat crossings;
- The market price for accommodation; and
- The resettlement grants for Afghanistan and Ukraine.⁴

Costs for other areas of asylum expenditure such as the implementation costs for the Illegal Migration Act are not captured within this estimate line item but have also driven up costs in the Home Office budget.

Overseas Development Assistance (ODA), also known as the foreign aid budget, can be used to support asylum seekers in their first year of arrival. As asylum claims have increased, so too has the usage of ODA (see section 2.7 below).

² Home Office, [Supplementary Estimate 2023-24](#) (PDF), p9

³ Data taken from Supplementary Estimates 2019-20 to 2023-24

⁴ [Letter from the Home Office Permanent Secretary to the Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee](#) (PDF), 27 February 2024

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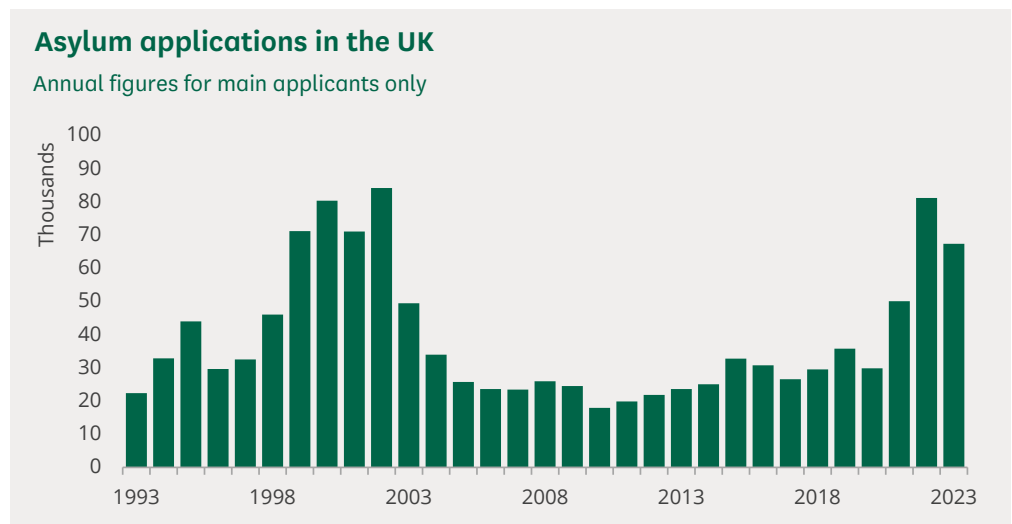
Asylum policies and issues

2.1

Overview

Asylum is protection given by a country to someone fleeing from persecution in their own country. An asylum seeker is someone who has applied for protection and is awaiting a decision on whether they will be granted refugee status.

In 2023, over 67,000 applications for asylum were made in the UK, which related to 84,000 individuals (more than one applicant can be included in a single application). This is roughly the number that has been typical in recent years, although it is less than in 2022, when there were 81,000 applications—the highest in two decades.⁵



Source: Home Office, [Immigration Statistics, year ending December 2023](#), tables Asy_D01

Some asylum claims are made by people making unauthorised journeys into the UK by small boat across the English Channel. But this does not account for all, or even most, asylum claims: in the 12 months ending on 30 June 2023, people arriving by small boat accounted for 37% of asylum seekers. The others would have arrived legally, undetected or on false documents.⁶

The UK Government aims to reduce unauthorised migration, including by asylum seekers, whether or not they will ultimately be granted refugee status. It believes that the key to so doing is deterrence.

⁵ See Commons Library briefing SN01403, [Asylum statistics](#), last updated 1 March 2024

⁶ Home Office, [How many people do we grant protection to?](#), 29 February 2024, section 2.2 (the year to June 2023 is the latest period available)

To that end, the Government has introduced new legislation designed to deter people seeking asylum from coming to the UK. The Illegal Migration Act 2023 will place a legal duty on the Home Secretary to arrange the removal of people entering the UK illegally, irrespective of any attempt to claim asylum. Claims for asylum by people entering illegally will not be processed.⁷

The act envisages most asylum seekers being removed not to their home country but to a ‘third country’ willing to receive them. Rwanda has agreed to receive asylum seekers from the UK under an asylum partnership agreement.⁸ The core elements of the act have not yet been brought into force because the agreement with Rwanda is not operational and no other third country has agreed to receive asylum seekers from the UK.

The Supreme Court held in November 2023 that sending asylum seekers to Rwanda is unlawful.⁹ The Government has decided to continue with the policy; it has signed a new treaty with Rwanda and proposed new legislation, both designed to render the relocation arrangements lawful. The treaty is pending ratification and the [Safety of Rwanda \(Asylum and Immigration\) Bill](#) returns to the Commons on 18 March 2024, having been substantially amended in the Lords.

2.2

NAO report on the Rwanda policy

Background

The Government initially said that details of the funding arrangement with Rwanda were confidential, and refused to speculate about the likely overall costs.¹⁰ The Home Office instead intended to disclose payments to the Rwandan Government once a year, in its annual report and accounts.

The annual report and accounts for 2022-23, published in September 2023, reported that the UK had paid Rwanda £140 million in the first year of the deal. £120 million of this was for a new Economic Transformation and Integration Fund to support Rwanda’s economic development and growth. £20 million was an advance payment to cover initial set-up costs.¹¹

Home Office officials confirmed that there would be further payments, both fixed amounts towards the Economic Transformation and Integration Fund and per-person costs depending on the number of people sent to Rwanda. They declined to state how much these would be until the next annual

⁷ [Illegal Migration Act 2023](#), ss2 and 5

⁸ See Commons Library briefing CBP-9568, [UK-Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership](#), last updated 6 December 2023

⁹ *R (AAA and others) v Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2023] UKSC 42, 15 November 2023

¹⁰ PQ 2110 [on [Asylum: Rwanda](#)], answered on 21 November 2023

¹¹ Home Office, [Annual report and accounts 2022-23](#), 19 September 2023, p76

report.¹² But it later emerged that the 2023-24 payment for the Economic Transformation and Integration Fund was £100 million.¹³

The Chairs of the Home Affairs and Public Accounts Committees invited the National Audit Office (NAO) to investigate the Rwanda policy and report on the costs. The NAO agreed, and published a report on 1 March 2024.¹⁴

Report

The report confirmed the following costs of payments to Rwanda:

- The fixed cost of the Economic Transformation and Integration Fund is £370 million in total. As mentioned above, the UK has already paid £220 million; it will pay the remaining £150 million in three instalments of £50 million in April 2024, April 2025 and April 2026.
- There are additional payments due to the Fund depending on the number of people sent to Rwanda:
 - £20,000 per person
 - £120 million once 300 people have been relocated
- The UK would also pay up to £150,874 per person relocated to cover asylum processing and integration over five years:
 - Year 1: £45,262 (this includes £11,000 for the asylum assessment)
 - Year 2: £37,718
 - Year 3: £30,175
 - Year 4: £22,632
 - Year 5: £15,087

If the person left Rwanda voluntarily, these payments would cease. The £20 million payment made in April 2022 was an advance payment on these per-person costs.¹⁵

This means that, if 300 people were relocated to Rwanda and remained there for five years, the total cost of the scheme would be £541 million (£1.8 million per person relocated). If 1,000 people were relocated and remained for five

¹² Home Affairs Committee, [Oral evidence: Work of the Home Office](#), HC 356, 29 November 2023, Qq3-9

¹³ Public Accounts Committee, [Oral evidence: UK-Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership](#), HC 410, 11 December 2023, Q1

¹⁴ National Audit Office, [Investigation into the costs of the UK-Rwanda Partnership](#), HC 577, 1 March 2024

¹⁵ As above, paras 2.1-2.6

years, the total costs would be £661 million (£661,000 per person relocated). If those 1,000 people stayed only for one year, the total costs would be £555 million (£555,000 per person).

In addition to payments to Rwanda, the Home Office will incur its own costs. These include an estimated £11,000 per person for flights to Rwanda.¹⁶

Ministers had previously indicated that the per-person payments to Rwanda would be similar to the per-person cost of processing asylum claims in the UK.¹⁷ Asked at the Home Affairs Committee what the UK processing cost was, the then minister responsible for illegal migration said it was £12,000:

Q14 Chair: [...] The Home Office has stated that the cost per person relocated to Rwanda will be approximately the same as the cost of processing a person in the UK. Could you tell us what that figure is, please, and could you also tell me what the evidence base is for that figure?

Tom Pursglove: The approximate figure for processing a case within our asylum system is around £12,000 per individual.

Q15 Chair: And that is the figure that you are saying it will cost to process someone in Rwanda.

Tom Pursglove: What we have said is that we will make contributions to the Rwandan Government similar to those that we are spending on processing claims here in the United Kingdom. That is important, because we think that it is right that this is done properly—that there is that proper wraparound support provided. You will recognise that this is an economic development and migration partnership. We think it is right that we support jobs, skills and proper integration.

In terms of actual processing costs, we will be making contributions akin to those that we are currently spending in the United Kingdom. You will recognise, Madam Chairman, that we are spending nearly £5 million a day in the asylum system, at the moment, on hotel accommodation. That is not sustainable. If we stand back and do nothing, those costs will continue to grow.¹⁸

As noted above, the per-person operational costs due to Rwanda are up to £151,000. However, the payment directly related to the processing of the claim in Rwanda is £11,000 (see the Year 1 payment above), which is similar to the £12,000 figure.

The NAO report also notes that the payments may change as a result of the treaty signed in December 2023, which made significant changes to the arrangements with Rwanda. There has already been one change: “In January 2024, in response to revisions to the provisional treaty agreed with the Government of Rwanda, the Home Office agreed to pay a further £100 per

¹⁶ As above, paras 2.9-2.10

¹⁷ PQ 18801 [on [Asylum: Rwanda](#)], answered on 29 June 2022; PQ 34885 [on [Asylum: Rwanda](#)], answered on 15 July 2022

¹⁸ Home Affairs Committee, [Oral evidence: Asylum and migration, HC 197](#), 11 May 2022, Qq14-15

year (up to £500 in total) per individual as a contribution towards their healthcare costs”.¹⁹

The Home Secretary told the House of Lords International Agreements Committee on 19 December 2023:

I want to take this opportunity to nail down an error that has been floating around. The Rwandans did not ask for any extra money for the treaty. We did not offer any extra money for the treaty. There has been no extra money for the treaty. Where we have asked for institutional changes that will incur costs to the Rwandans, because we are basically buying a service from the Rwandans, that will be reflected in the ongoing financial relationship, but there is no money attached to the signing of the treaty.²⁰

The NAO says the revisions to the financial agreements were yet to be finalised as of February 2024. Aspects of the treaty that would incur costs to Rwanda and/or need to be covered by the UK include the recruitment of foreign judges to a new asylum appeal body.²¹

The report does not assess the scheme’s value for money, because this depends on whether or not it successfully deters people from coming to the UK.²² The Migration Observatory at Oxford University has also suggested that a value for money assessment should also take account of asylum seekers who are neither deterred from coming nor removed to Rwanda. Such people cannot have their asylum claim processed nor in most cases be removed to their home country because of the Illegal Migration Act 2023; the Home Office would therefore incur asylum support costs indefinitely.²³

Government response

Ministers note that the costs of the Rwanda policy should be put in the context of high spending on asylum in the UK. The Advocate General for Scotland has referred to “the enormous expense inflicted on British taxpayers” of maintaining the status quo: “it is in order to prevent the current expenditure—the cost of housing asylum seekers is set to reach £11 billion per year by 2026—that the Government propose to act”.²⁴

¹⁹ National Audit Office, [Investigation into the costs of the UK-Rwanda Partnership](#), HC 577, 1 March 2024, para 2.5 and figure 3

²⁰ International Agreements Committee, [Corrected oral evidence: UK-Rwanda asylum agreement](#), 19 December 2023, Q27

²¹ Home Office, [Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Republic of Rwanda for the provision of an asylum partnership to strengthen shared international commitments on the protection of refugees and migrants](#), 5 December 2023, art 4.2

²² National Audit Office, [Investigation into the costs of the UK-Rwanda Partnership](#), HC 577, 1 March 2024, para 2

²³ Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, [Why the government’s economic impact Assessment of the Illegal Migration Act tells us little about the Act’s economic impact](#), 26 July 2023

²⁴ [HL Deb 4 March 2024 cc1343-1345](#)

The departmental press office has issued statements along similar lines, including the projected figure of £11 billion per year for asylum accommodation by 2026 (discussed in the next section).²⁵

Immigration minister Tom Pursglove told the Commons on 4 March: “It is not acceptable to spend £8 million a day in the asylum system. However, it does not take many spends of £8 million a day to get to the figures that have been provided to the NAO in a transparent manner”.²⁶

2.3

Asylum accommodation

Backlog

In recent years, the Home Office has overseen a large ‘backlog’ of pending asylum cases. This is partly driven by the large increase in asylum claims from 2021 onwards. But the number of pending claims had risen every year since 2010, from 6,000 then to 51,000 in 2020.²⁷

A decline in caseworker productivity (the number of decisions per caseworker) “provides perhaps the single strongest explanation” for the backlog, according to Migration Observatory analysis.²⁸ The immigration inspector has also noted delays caused by a new process for considering whether someone’s claim is inadmissible to the asylum system because they travelled through a safe country en route to the UK. On average, this took people out of the asylum queue for five months before, in almost all cases, being admitted for processing; staff described it as “pointless”.²⁹

Contingency accommodation

The Home Office has statutory responsibilities to provide for the essential living needs of destitute asylum seekers, including accommodation. These responsibilities cease when the person is granted refugee status or definitively refused asylum (with exceptions in the latter case).³⁰ The backlog of pending cases has led to an increase in the number of people being supported by the Home Office.

²⁵ [“UK to pay at least £370m to Rwanda for asylum deal, watchdog says”](#), BBC News, 1 March 2024

²⁶ [HC Deb 4 March 2024 c647](#)

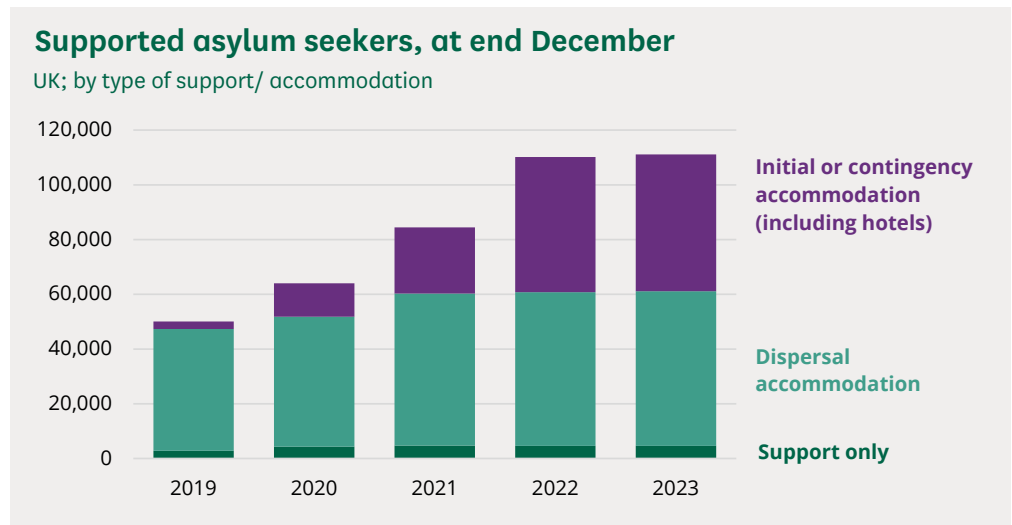
²⁷ Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, [The UK’s asylum backlog](#), 5 April 2023, figure 2

²⁸ As above

²⁹ Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, [An inspection of asylum casework \(June - October 2023\)](#), 29 February 2024, paras 1.28-1.32

³⁰ See Commons Library briefing SN01909, [Asylum support: accommodation and financial support for asylum seekers](#)

As of 31 December 2023, there were 111,000 asylum seekers receiving support, of whom 106,000 were also being provided with accommodation by the Home Office.³¹



Source: Home Office, [Immigration statistics quarterly: December 2023](#), table Asy_D09

Note: ‘Section 98’ support has been labelled as ‘initial/ contingency accommodation’ for the years prior to 2022.

This has outstripped the normal supply of asylum accommodation (‘dispersal’ accommodation, in the Home Office’s terminology). As a result, the Home Office has been relying on ‘contingency’ accommodation: hotels, repurposed military sites and moored accommodation vessels (‘barges’). The National Audit Office is reviewing asylum accommodation, including contingency arrangements, with a report due in spring 2024.³²

Hotels

As of the end of 2023, there were 46,000 asylum seekers living in hotels as a form of contingency accommodation. This was roughly the same number as at the end of 2022.³³

In July 2023, there were almost 400 hotels being used as contingency asylum accommodation.³⁴ By January 2024, the Home Office had stopped using 64.³⁵

³¹ Home Office, [Immigration statistics quarterly: December 2023](#), table Asy_D09

³² [Letter from the Home Office Permanent Secretary to the Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee \(PDF\)](#), 29 February 2024; National Audit Office, [Work in progress: Asylum accommodation](#), accessed on 8 March 2024

³³ Home Office, [Immigration statistics quarterly: December 2023](#), table Asy_D09

³⁴ [Letter from the Home Secretary to the Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee \(PDF\)](#), 3 August 2023,

³⁵ [HC Deb 26 February 2024 cc14-15](#)

This is expensive. Hotels cost £120 per person per night compared to £18 for normal asylum accommodation as of March 2023.³⁶ The Home Office has since provided an updated figure of £140 per person per night for hotels.³⁷

The Government says the total cost is equivalent to £8 million per day.³⁸ This implies annual spending of £2.9 billion. The think tank Policy Exchange, using an alternative estimate of £2.2 billion for spending on hotels, says this is three and a half times the amount spent by central government on homelessness.³⁹

Bibby Stockholm

In April 2023 the Home Office publicly confirmed plans to house some asylum seekers in the Bibby Stockholm, a three-story accommodation barge berthed in Portland Port, Dorset.⁴⁰ The vessel has around 220 bedrooms and can accommodate around 500 single adult male asylum seekers while their asylum claims are processed.⁴¹

Charities have criticised the use of barges to house asylum seekers, including the impact on people's mental health.⁴² In December 2023, an Albanian man died on board; a coroner's inquest will be held in July 2024 but the death is widely reported to have been self-inflicted.⁴³

All asylum seekers have access to mental health support, according to a multi-agency forum of Home Office and local officials.⁴⁴ The Home Office has published a [detailed Q&A on the Bibby Stockholm](#) and [suitability criteria](#) for placement on vessels and other mass accommodation sites.

The running costs of the Bibby Stockholm are £120 per person per night compared to £140 per person per night for hotels, according to the Permanent Secretary.⁴⁵ This excludes set-up costs, and it is not clear whether the figure assumes full occupancy.⁴⁶

³⁶ Independent Commission for Aid Impact, [Rapid review: UK aid to refugees in the UK](#), 29 March 2023

³⁷ [Letter from the Home Office Permanent Secretary to the Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee \(PDF\)](#), 30 January 2024

³⁸ [HL Deb 19 February 2024 c386](#)

³⁹ Policy Exchange, [Small-Boats Emergency](#), 11 July 2023

⁴⁰ Home Office press release, [Vessel to accommodate migrants](#), 5 April 2023

⁴¹ PQ 9106 [on [Asylum: Bibby Stockholm](#)], answered on 16 January 2024

⁴² Freedom from Torture, [Bibby Stockholm - Cruel and Dangerous Government Plan](#), accessed on 8 March 2024; Migrants Organise, [Bibby Stockholm will never be safe. This is why we're taking action](#), 4 August 2023

⁴³ ["Asylum seeker dies by suicide on Bibby Stockholm barge"](#), ITV News, 13 December 2023; ["Bibby Stockholm: No suspicions over migrant's barge death - coroner"](#), BBC News, 21 December 2023;

⁴⁴ Dorset Council, [Bibby Stockholm update from the Multi Agency Forum](#), 31 January 2024

⁴⁵ [Letter from the Home Office Permanent Secretary to the Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee \(PDF\)](#), 30 January 2024

⁴⁶ [Letter from the Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee to the Home Office Permanent Secretary \(PDF\)](#), 15 February 2024

In June 2023, the Prime Minister announced that two other barges had been procured as well as the Bibby Stockholm.⁴⁷ The following month it was reported that the plans for the two other vessels were no longer going ahead.⁴⁸

Projected £11 billion cost

As mentioned above, ministers have been citing a projected asylum accommodation cost of £11 billion per year by 2026. This may reflect mid-2023 impact assessment analysis that assumes the per-night cost of accommodation and the number of people receiving asylum support continues to rise on the same trend as from April 2020 to May 2023. If that were to happen, the cost per person per night would reach £178 and the supported population 185,000. This would work out at £32 million per day, which is the equivalent of £11.7 billion per year.⁴⁹

As the impact assessment says: “These trends assume no government intervention has occurred to acquire additional non-hotel asylum support beds, or to accelerate the pace of asylum decision-making. Government work is ongoing to address both”. In the event, the supported population at the end of 2023 was around the same as at the end of 2022.⁵⁰ This reflects a major increase in the pace of asylum decision-making, discussed below.

2.4

Asylum processing

On 31 December 2023, the latest figures available, there were 128,800 people waiting for an initial asylum decision (main applicants plus dependants). This represents a fall of 27% compared to the peak of 175,000 on 30 June 2023, and a fall of 20% compared to 31 December 2022.⁵¹

The Government focused its efforts on a ‘legacy backlog’ of 92,600 applications lodged before a cut-off date of 28 June 2022. The Prime Minister promised to clear these by the end of 2023. On 31 December 2023, there were 3,900 pending legacy cases (representing 12,900 people).⁵²

⁴⁷ Prime Minister’s Office, [PM statement on illegal migration delivery update](#), 5 June 2023

⁴⁸ “[Cruise ships set to house asylum seekers in Liverpool and Edinburgh sent back to owners after finding nowhere to dock](#)”, Sky News, 18 July 2023; Home Office, [Home Office annual report and accounts: 2022 to 2023](#), HC 1355, 18 September 2023, p75

⁴⁹ Home Office, [Illegal Migration Bill Impact Assessment, HO 0438](#) (PDF), 26 June 2023

⁵⁰ Home Office, [Asylum seekers in receipt of support detailed datasets, year ending December 2023](#), table Asy_D09 (110,000 in Dec 2022 vs 111,000 in Dec 2023)

⁵¹ Home Office, [Asylum applications awaiting a decision detailed datasets, year ending December 2023](#), table Asy_03

⁵² Home Office, [Asylum and resettlement summary tables, year ending December 2023](#), tables Asy_10a and Asy_10b

Last year, the Home Office cleared 98,000 asylum cases (compared to 24,000 in 2022). Around one (25%) of these were withdrawn by the applicant or deemed to be withdrawn by the Home Office, compared to 22% in 2022. Around eight in ten (79%) of these withdrawals were ‘implicit’ withdrawals, meaning the applicant was found not to have complied with the asylum process, for example by failing to maintain contact with the Home Office or attend an interview. This was more than the typical figure of around half.

Because most people who apply for asylum are successful, the increase in the number of decisions meant that the number of people granted refugee status in 2023 was the highest on record, at over 62,000.⁵³

The Home Office has achieved this in part by increasing the number of officials deciding asylum claims to 2,400, compared to 1,200 in December 2022 and 600 in December 2021.⁵⁴ It has also improved the productivity of those caseworkers by dispensing with interviews for people of certain nationalities very likely to be granted asylum, and other process simplification.⁵⁵

The drive to reduce the asylum backlog has however led to a deterioration in the quality of decisions, according to the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration. There was only one formal quality assurance check on a withdrawn asylum claim between January and October 2023, which he considered unacceptable.⁵⁶ His report, published in February 2024, also found:

- The pressure to meet targets affected the mental health of decision-makers.⁵⁷
- There is no ‘service standard’, or expected timeline, for getting a decision on an asylum claim despite the Home Office having accepting a previous recommendation to reintroduce one (it was previously six months).⁵⁸
- Managers reported “a decision had been taken at ministerial level that no more than 2% of Albanian claims should be successful”.⁵⁹
- There was no unified database allowing all casework to be tracked from start to finish, with the interim system in use at the time “limiting productivity and efficiency”.⁶⁰

⁵³ Home Office, [How many people do we grant protection to?](#), 29 February 2024, section 6.2

⁵⁴ Home Office, [Immigration and protection data: Q4 2023](#), 29 February 2024, table ASY_05(M)

⁵⁵ Home Office, [How many people do we grant protection to?](#), 29 February 2024, section 3

⁵⁶ Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, [An inspection of asylum casework, June - October 2023](#), 29 February 2024, p2

⁵⁷ As above, para 1.8

⁵⁸ As above, paras 3.3-3.7

⁵⁹ As above, para 7.79

⁶⁰ As above, paras 8.37-8.41

- Home Office data remains “inexcusably awful”.⁶¹

The Home Office produces estimates of the unit cost of each case in the current asylum workload on an annual basis. The latest estimate is for the year 2022/23 and so excludes the latest period in which processing capacity has increased. In 2022/23, the unit cost in the total asylum caseload was around £21,000.⁶² This was up from equivalent unit cost estimates of around £15,000 in 2021/22, 12,000 in 2020/21 and £9,000 in 2019/20.⁶³

2.5

Safe and legal routes for Ukrainians and Afghans

Asylum claims cannot be lodged outside the UK.⁶⁴ However, the Home Office does allow certain groups of people to enter the UK for humanitarian reasons. It often describes this as the provision of ‘safe and legal routes’.⁶⁵

Traditionally the main safe and legal route has been refugee settlement. This involves the voluntary transfer of recognised refugees from the country that granted them asylum to another state that agrees to grant them permanent residence. The Government works with UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, to provide resettlement in the UK.

Over 20,000 Syrian refugees came to the UK from 2014 to 2021, in what UNHCR described as “the largest formal resettlement programme that the UK has undertaken in the modern era”.⁶⁶ More recently, the number of people arriving on UNHCR refugee resettlement programmes has slowed, with 632 people arriving in 2023.⁶⁷

Far more people have been arriving on nationality-specific safe and legal routes. In 2023, the UK granted visas to:

- 3,800 Afghans arriving under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme⁶⁸

⁶¹ As above, para 9.54

⁶² This is an illustrative estimate, based on total expenditure divided by a snapshot of the caseload at the end of the year, and the cost per individual case will likely differ considerably.

⁶³ Home Office, [Immigration and protection data: Q4 2023](#), table Asy_04

⁶⁴ UK Visas and Immigration, [Applications from abroad policy: caseworker guidance](#), 20 September 2011

⁶⁵ See generally Commons Library briefing CBP-9630, [Safe and legal routes to the UK for people seeking protection](#)

⁶⁶ UNHCR UK, [The UK's Syria Resettlement Programme: Looking Back, and Ahead](#), 23 March 2021

⁶⁷ Home Office, [Asylum applications, initial decisions and resettlement detailed datasets](#), year ending December 2023, table Asy_D02

⁶⁸ As above. Some arrivals may have a different nationality if part of a family unit.

- 28,300 Hongkongers arriving under the British National (Overseas) scheme
- 41,800 Ukrainians arriving under the Ukraine Family Scheme or Homes for Ukraine⁶⁹

The Home Office publishes data showing the number of Ukrainians who have arrived under Homes for Ukraine and Afghans who have been resettled, by local authority.⁷⁰ As of the end of December 2023, they totalled around 165,600 people across the UK, of whom nearly a third (31%) were in London or the South East.

Of the four parts of the UK, Scotland had received the greatest number of Ukrainians and Afghans on a per capita basis (50 per 10,000 inhabitants), with the Scottish Government having operated as a ‘super sponsor’ for around 21,000 Ukrainians. More detailed location data is not available for those on the super sponsor route in Scotland.

Across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the areas with the largest number of Ukrainians and Afghans per capita were South Cambridgeshire (58 per 10,000), Kensington and Chelsea (57 per 10,000), Derbyshire Dales (57 per 10,000), Camden (54 per 10,000) and Chichester (54 per 10,000).⁷¹

The Illegal Migration Act 2023 requires the Home Secretary to:

- Make regulations putting an annual cap on the number of people who can enter using safe and legal routes, following consultation with local authorities
- Lay a statement before Parliament if the cap is exceeded, explaining why
- Published a report on safe and legal routes⁷²

The consultation has been carried out. The Government intends to respond in spring 2024 and lay draft regulations on the cap before the summer recess on 23 July 2024.⁷³

⁶⁹ Home Office, [Safe and legal \(humanitarian\) routes to the UK](#), 29 February 2024. Some arrivals may have a different nationality if part of a family unit.

⁷⁰ Home Office, [Regional and local authority data on immigration groups, year ending December 2023](#), table Reg_02

⁷¹ As above

⁷² [Illegal Migration Act 2023, ss60-61](#)

⁷³ [HCWS179](#), 11 January 2024

The report was published in January 2024. It did not commit to opening any new routes.⁷⁴ The Government has resisted calls for new nationality-specific routes for Sudan and Gaza.⁷⁵

2.6

Transparency of costs

The Estimates process

The 2021 Spending Review settlement provided annual departmental expenditure limits, known as ‘DELs’, over a three-year period (from 2022-23 to 2024-25). Departments are expected to manage their annual budgets within the confines of their DEL.

Every year in May/June, departments submit their Main Estimate (spending plans for the year). Estimates are the means of obtaining authorisation from Parliament for these spending plans. They provide an overview of departmental expenditure plans to allow parliamentary scrutiny before being given legal effect through the Supply and Appropriation Act. The Main Estimate should not exceed the DEL set out in the Spending Review.

The Permanent Secretary as Accounting Officer is responsible for the content of the Main Estimate and that it complies with Treasury guidelines, including:

- Ensuring that the content of Estimates is complete, accurate and consistent with parliamentary and Treasury requirements, and
- Ensuring that Estimates are consistent with their best forecasts of requirements.⁷⁶

Since 2021, pressures on the asylum system have increased and the Home Office has been unable to stay within its expenditure limit, prompting requests for additional funding from the Reserves at the Supplementary Estimate (updated spending plans, usually released in February).

Treasury guidance on Reserve drawdowns

Departments are expected to manage their DEL budgets so as to stay within them. If pressures arise in one part of a DEL, departments should respond by:

- managing the pressures down;

⁷⁴ Home Office, [Report on Safe and Legal Routes: Illegal Migration Act 2023 \(Section 61\)](#), 11 January 2024

⁷⁵ PQ 200359 [on [Visas: Sudan](#)], answered on 26 October 2023; PQ 15866 [on [Palestinians: Refugees](#)], answered on 6 March 2024

⁷⁶ HM Treasury, [Supply Estimates: a guidance manual](#) (PDF), July 2011, para 1.36

- using their departmental unallocated provision;⁷⁷
- re-prioritising and making offsetting savings elsewhere in the budget;
- deferring spending elsewhere in the budget; and
- transferring provision from resource DEL to capital DEL (if the pressure is in capital DEL).

Exceptionally, a department may seek support from the Reserve.⁷⁸

The Reserve can only be used for genuinely unforeseen, unaffordable and unavoidable pressures, or certain special cases of expenditure that would otherwise be difficult to manage, as agreed with the Chief Secretary.⁷⁹

The drawdown of funding from the Reserve is subject to an assessment of need, realism and affordability at the time at which the funds are released. The final draw down of Reserve claims approved by the Chief Secretary will therefore be decided, and voted on, at Supplementary Estimates when such an assessment can most easily be made.⁸⁰

Missing asylum expenditure from the Main Estimate

In May 2023 the Home Office submitted its Main Estimate excluding an asylum budget that reflected the department's 'best forecast of requirements'. The Main Estimate memorandum explained that funding would be "finalised in-year and transferred at this year's Supplementary Estimates".⁸¹ The Home Affairs Committee points out that this means Parliament has limited ability to scrutinise planned asylum spending until near the end of the financial year after it has been spent.⁸²

On 28 June 2023 the Chair wrote to the Permanent Secretary concerned about this lack of transparency and issued a reminder that the Estimate should reflect the department's best forecast for requirements. The reply received on 31 July 2023 contained the following explanation:

The asylum system forecasts have moved very substantially since the Spending Review with higher volumes of arrivals. In previous years, HM Treasury has only considered additional Reserve funding for asylum costs at Supplementary

⁷⁷ HM Treasury, [Consolidated Budgeting Guidance 2023-24](#) (PDF), March 2023, para 2.35: "Departments are encouraged not to allocate their DELs fully against their programmes at the start of a financial year but to hold some provision back to deal with unforeseen pressures that emerge subsequently, including utilisation of provisions. This unallocated budget is referred to as the DUP".

⁷⁸ HM Treasury, [Consolidated Budgeting Guidance 2023-24](#) (PDF), March 2023, para 2.38

⁷⁹ As above, para 2.39

⁸⁰ As above, para 2.42

⁸¹ Home Office, [Main Estimates Memorandum \(2023/24\) for the Home Office](#) (PDF), May 2023, p5

⁸² Home Affairs Committee, [Letter from the Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee to the Permanent Secretary](#) (PDF), 28 June 2023, p1

Estimates. This is due to the fact that a significant share of asylum costs is driven by extremely volatile forecasts which are refined as the year goes on.⁸³

In February 2024 the Permanent Secretary wrote to the Chairs of the Home Affairs and Public Accounts committees explaining that the £4 billion claim on the reserves in the Supplementary estimate was “within the forecast range of costs that we anticipated before the start of the financial year”.⁸⁴

Challenges with disclosing asylum costs at the Main Estimate

The challenges faced by the Home Office in producing a complete Estimate including Asylum costs are seemingly twofold:

1. the DEL remains unchanged since the 2021 Spending Review forcing the department to apply for Reserve funding every year
2. the volatility of expenditure.⁸⁵

Changes to DEL settlements

It is commonplace for the Government to amend expenditure plans during a Spending Review period to respond to immediate pressures that were not apparent at the time the Spending Review was announced. For example, the Ministry of Defence received an additional £5bn above the 2021 Spending Review settlement following the pressures facing the Department earlier this year. The Government has not made a similar commitment to the Home Office to address the issues with asylum.

Volatile expenditure

For budgeting purposes expenditure deemed so volatile it is beyond the control of the department is excluded from the DELs and instead make up part of the Annually Managed Expenditure or (AME). For example, most welfare expenditure is classified as AME.

Generally, all areas of spend are in DEL unless the Chief Secretary of the Treasury has determined that they should be in AME. The Chief Secretary may agree to reclassify areas of spend to AME if:

they are not only demand-led but also exceptionally volatile in a way that could not be controlled by the department and where the areas of spend are so large that departments could not be expected to absorb the effects of volatility in their DELs”.⁸⁶

⁸³ Home Office, [Letter from the Permanent Secretary to the Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee](#) (PDF), 31 July 2023, p1

⁸⁴ Home Office, [Letter from the Permanent Secretary to the Chairs of the Public Accounts Committee and Home Affairs Select Committee](#) (PDF), 27 February 2024, p1

⁸⁵ Home Office, [Letter from the Permanent Secretary to the Chairs of the Public Accounts Committee and Home Affairs Select Committee](#) (PDF), 27 February 2024, p1

⁸⁶ HM Treasury, [Consolidated Budgeting Guidance 2023-24](#) (PDF), March 2023, para 1.48

Transparency of costs in relation to the Rwanda policy

During the year the Home Affairs Committee requested more transparency on asylum expenditure, specifically in relation to the Migration and Economic Partnership with Rwanda (see section 2.2 above). These requests were particularly pertinent since the Permanent Secretary required a ministerial direction to proceed with the policy in April 2022 because there was no evidence to suggest that the scheme would be value for money.⁸⁷

The Permanent Secretary told the committee: “ministers have decided that the way to update Parliament is annually, rather than by giving a running commentary”.⁸⁸

Only following an accidental disclosure in an International Monetary Fund paper did some financial information on the policy become available.⁸⁹ As discussed in section 2.2 above, the National Audit Office has now outlined the full costs of the Rwanda scheme.

2.7

Official Development Assistance

Official Development Assistance (ODA) refers to aid intended to promote the economic welfare and development of developing countries.

The UK’s ODA is reported under international rules set by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which the UK is a member of. Rules are consensus-based.

Since 2014, the UK has reported increasingly large amounts of spending on refugees and asylum seekers in the UK as Official Development Assistance. This is explored in the Library’s briefing on [The UK aid budget and support for refugees in the UK in 2022/23](#), last updated on 30 October 2023; a summary follows below.

Spending aid in the UK

Under international aid rules, many of the costs of hosting refugees can [count towards the aid budget](#) for the first 12 months refugees are in the UK. This includes basic subsistence costs, such as food and accommodation.

⁸⁷ Home Office, [Letter from Matthew Rycroft to Rt Hon Priti Patel](#), 13 April 2022

⁸⁸ Home Affairs Committee, [Oral evidence: Work of the Home Office](#) (PDF), HC 356, 29 November 2023, q13

⁸⁹ Home Office, [Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda: payments](#), 7 December 2023; Public Accounts Committee, [Oral evidence: UK-Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership](#), HC 410, 11 December 2023

Individual countries are responsible for ensuring their reported aid spend is in line with OECD rules.

A growing amount of UK aid has been spent on UK-based refugees, with spending increasing from [£410 million in 2016](#) to [£3,690 million in 2022](#) (rising from 3.2% of the aid budget to 29%). The Home Office was responsible for £2,382 million of this aid spending in 2022. Most of this money went towards providing food and shelter for refugees.

This also represented an increasing proportion of the overall aid budget, going from less than 0.5% of all aid spending in 2009-13 to 3.1% in 2016. It then rose to 9.2% in 2021 with the introduction of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, and then increased further to 28.8% in 2022 because of several schemes introduced following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

In both 2021 and 2022 bilateral aid on refugees in donor countries was the largest single sector of UK bilateral aid spending—exceeding, for example, health, education, and humanitarian aid.⁹⁰

Stakeholder responses

In March 2023, the Commons International Development Committee and the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) both published critical reports on the level of aid being used to support refugees in the UK.

The International Development Committee argued that while the UK has a legal and moral responsibility to help refugees, it is a “political choice” by Government to oversee an increase in aid spending within the UK “at the expense of vulnerable and marginalised people living in the world’s poorest countries”.⁹¹ To this end, it called for tighter control of Home Office aid spending, additional aid funding from the Treasury, and the ring-fencing of the equivalent of 0.5% of GNI for aid delivered outside the UK.⁹²

In its March 2023 report, [the ICAI also argued that the wider aid budget and priorities were likely to be damaged](#) because of the Home Office's poor control of aid spending. Moreover, it found that the UK was not following OECD guidelines on adopting a “conservative approach” to cost, and it offered the following examples of DAC members that had taken a more conservative approach to reporting.

⁹⁰ FCDO, [Statistics on International Development: final UK aid spend 2022](#), 14 September 2023

⁹¹ International Development Committee, [Aid spending in the UK](#), HC 898, 2 March 2023, para 1

⁹² As above, paras 6, 10, 11, 14

How do other states account for in-donor refugee costs?	
Austria	Declares no asylum or refugee costs as ODA
Luxembourg	Declares no asylum or refugee costs as ODA
Belgium	Does not include support costs for asylum seekers whose refugee status application fails
Iceland	Does not include costs for asylum seekers arriving from safe countries where close to 100% of applications from that country are rejected
France	Does not include education costs
Belgium	Does not include education costs
Sweden	Limits in-donor refugee costs to a maximum of 8% of its aid budget

Source: ICAI, [UK aid to refugees in the UK](#), March 2023, paras 4.23-4.27

It noted that the “UK’s extensive use of modelling and unit pricing to calculate costs increases the risk of higher levels of reporting”. Austria, Italy and Sweden were the only donors to report actual expenditure at the level of individual refugees and asylum seekers.⁹³

Government response

From July 2022 to November 2022, non-essential aid spending was paused in order to ensure that increased aid spending did not push the aid budget above 0.5% of GNI in 2022.⁹⁴

In November 2022, the Treasury announced that in response to increased spending to help people from Ukraine and Afghanistan seek refuge in the UK, it will provide an additional £2.5 billion from 2022 to 2024 to meet these costs.⁹⁵

In May 2023, the Treasury responded to the International Development Committee’s report into aid spending in the UK. It rejected the central recommendation of the committee to ring-fence the equivalent of 0.5% of GNI in the ODA budget for spending on aid outside the UK from April 2023. The responding minister, John Glen, said the Government could not accept the recommendation “as it is not affordable in the current highly challenging economic and fiscal context”. He instead highlighted the additional resources

⁹³ ICAI, [UK aid to refugees in the UK](#), March 2023, para 4.26

⁹⁴ “[UK Treasury blocks “non-essential” overseas aid payments](#)”, Financial Times, 24 July 2022

⁹⁵ HM Treasury, [Autumn statement](#), 17 November 2022, “Spending”; IDC, [Oral evidence: Future of UK aid](#), HC 148, 2022-23, 6 December 2022, Q401

for 2022 to 2024 committed in November 2022, as well as steps government departments are taking to ensure spending is recorded in line with OECD rules on aid reporting.⁹⁶

In July 2023, the Government said it was in contact with Iceland to understand what of its approach (see table above) might be applicable in a UK context, “particularly around making conservative cost estimate[s]”.⁹⁷

Illegal Migration Act 2023

It has been argued that the Illegal Migration Act 2023, which received royal assent on 20 July 2023, could make much of the Government’s spending on UK-based refugees ineligible under ODA rules. This is because the Act provides for claims made by people who enter the UK illegally or on false documents to be automatically inadmissible. Such people would not enter the UK’s asylum processing system and as a result would not be eligible for aid spending.

Furthermore, under section 11 of the 2023 Act, individuals may be detained pending a decision as to whether the removal conditions are met. DAC has said that assistance to “forced returns” is not ODA eligible.⁹⁸

DAC has yet to provide a confirmed opinion on how the Act might affect the use of UK aid on in-donor refugee costs. The Government has said that it will continue to report its aid spending in line with ODA rules, and spending will continue to be reported in the usual way.⁹⁹

In September 2023, the ICAI published an assessment of the potential impact of the Illegal Migration Act on UK aid spending. It estimated that the Act would significantly reduce the share of UK aid spent on refugees in-country “unless the government were to increase opportunities for safe and legal resettlement to the UK considerably”.¹⁰⁰

This would mean more money for aid spending overseas, but increase pressure on the Home Office’s own budget, according to the ICAI: “Whereas currently, the FCDO has to cut other aid programmes in order to meet these costs, they would have to be met by the Home Office out of its own budget”.

⁹⁶ [Government response to the Committee’s sixth report of session 2022-23](#), 22 May 2023

⁹⁷ [FCDO and Home Office response to ICAI review of UK aid funding for refugees](#), 6 July 2023

⁹⁸ OECD, [Clarifying the ODA Eligibility of Migration-Related Activities](#) (PDF), June 2023, p3

⁹⁹ PQ 2287 [on [Asylum: Housing](#)], 22 November 2023

¹⁰⁰ ICAI, [UK aid to refugees in the UK: ODA eligibility update](#), 6 September 2023, para 3.2

3 Parliamentary material

3.1 Debates

[Safety of Rwanda \(Asylum and Immigration\) Bill](#) – HL Deb 19 Feb 2024
– 836 cc381-443

[Rwanda Plan Cost and Asylum System](#) – HC Deb 09 Jan 2024 – 743

[Houses in Multiple Occupation \(Asylum-Seeker Accommodation\) \(England\) Regulations 2023](#) – HL Deb 16 May 2023 – 830 cc29-42GC

[Draft Houses in Multiple Occupation \(Asylum-seeker Accommodation\) \(England\) Regulations 2023](#) – HC Deb 10 May 2023

3.2 Statements

[Home Office 2023-24 funding](#)

01 Feb 2024 | Written statements | House of Commons | HCWS235

[Home Office 2022-23 funding](#)

07 Mar 2023 | Written statements | House of Commons | HCWS610

[Work of the Home Office](#)

19 Dec 2022 | Written statements | House of Commons | HCWS467

3.3

Parliamentary questions

Asylum: Housing

06 Mar 2024 | 16021

Asked by: Alex Sobel

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason his Department has reduced the amount of support given to people living in asylum accommodation which provides all their meals to £8.86 per week.

Answering member: Tom Pursglove | Department: Home Office

The level of the allowance given to those supported under section 95 and section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 is reviewed each year to ensure it covers an asylum seeker's essential living needs.

In setting the rates, we have utilised an alternative methodology to determine the costs of essential needs, which uses a 'disaggregated CPI' (Consumer Prices Index). The methodology has been designed to offer a more accurate measure of changes in the price of items to cover essential living needs. As previous rate increases have been made using CPI rates, this has led to an overestimate of the cost of essential needs for an individual in catered accommodation, therefore, using the methodology set out above, the catered rates have been slightly reduced.

Individuals accommodated in hotels and other catered sites are also provided 3 meals a day, snacks, water, toiletries, and some other services, in addition to their weekly allowance. Additional support is also available to pregnant women, young children, and individuals who provide evidence of exceptional needs.

Asylum: Rwanda

06 Mar 2024 | 13025

Asked by: Dr Rupa Huq

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he plans to publish guidelines that protect LGBT+ refugees in relation to her proposals to offshore refugees to Rwanda.

Answering member: Michael Tomlinson | Department: Home Office

Protection from discrimination is enshrined within the Rwandan constitution. Rwanda does not criminalise or discriminate against sexual orientation in either law or policy.

The published country information notes (CIN) for Rwanda have been updated and can be found at the following link: [Safety of Rwanda \(Asylum and Immigration\) Bill: supporting evidence - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#), along with other supporting evidence relating to the safety of Rwanda.

[Asylum: Housing](#)

05 Mar 2024 | 15557

Asked by: Sir John Hayes

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the cost to the public purse is of housing (a) owned and (b) rented by his Department for people seeking asylum.

Answering member: Tom Pursglove | Department: Home Office

Data on the number of supported asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority area and the number of supported asylum seekers in accommodation (including in contingency hotels and other contingency accommodation) is published in table Asy_D11 here: [Asylum and resettlement datasets - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

Costs are subject to change depending on numbers being accommodated within the asylum system. Accommodation costs are considered to be commercially confidential. Therefore, the Home Office does not publish this information. However, total expenditure on asylum is published in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts, available at [HO annual reports and accounts - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

[Asylum: Housing](#)

05 Mar 2024 | 15556

Asked by: Sir John Hayes

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in which local authorities his Department (a) owns and (b) rents housing for people seeking asylum.

Answering member: Tom Pursglove | Department: Home Office

Data on the number of supported asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority area and the number of supported asylum seekers in accommodation (including in contingency hotels and other contingency accommodation) is published in table Asy_D11 here: [Asylum and resettlement datasets - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/datasets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets).

Costs are subject to change depending on numbers being accommodated within the asylum system. Accommodation costs are considered to be commercially confidential. Therefore, the Home Office does not publish this information. However, total expenditure on asylum is published in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts, available at [HO annual reports and accounts - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-annual-reports-and-accounts).

[Shamima Begum](#)

04 Mar 2024 | 15639

Asked by: Jim Shannon

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the total cost to the public purse was for legal fees relating to the Shamima Begum case.

Answering member: Mike Freer | Department: Ministry of Justice

Please note that legal aid is not paid directly to the individual in receipt of legal aid. Legal aid is paid to legal representatives to ensure access to justice.

The scope of immigration and asylum matters covered by legal aid are set out at Schedule 1 to Part 1 of the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012.

In civil legal aid cases an applicant must satisfy both a merits and strict financial eligibility test to qualify for legal aid (unless a specific exemption applies). If they do not satisfy these tests, then legal aid will not be made available to them. Applicants who meet the relevant financial eligibility thresholds may still be required to pay a significant contribution towards the costs of their case. The eligibility criteria are kept under review as the case progresses and legal aid may be withdrawn where they are no longer satisfied.

As at the time of writing, a total of £246,097.34 has been paid to legal aid providers in connection with representing Shamima Begum. A breakdown of these costs can be found in the table below:

Case Type	Matter/Proceeding	Start Date	End Date	Solicitors	Barristers	Total Costs
Civil rep - Immigration	Special Immigration Appeals Commission - Asylum	15/04/2019	-	£0.00	£238,000.34	£238,000.34
Civil rep - Public Law	Action for Judicial Review - Pub Law	23/08/2021	-	£8,097.00	£0.00	£8,097.00
Total				£8,097.00	£238,000.34	£246,097.34

The costs include VAT and disbursements where applicable. Disbursements are expenses incurred which although paid by the Legal Aid Agency directly to legal aid providers, are then paid to other parties involved in the case.

Refugees: Resettlement

01 Mar 2024 | 16047

Asked by: Olivia Blake

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what funding he plans to allocate to refugee integration in 2024.

Answering member: Tom Pursglove | Department: Home Office

As pledged at the Global Refugee Forum 2023, the Government remains committed to enabling resettled refugees in rebuilding their lives in the UK. That is why refugees, as well as individuals arriving via our resettlement schemes with Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK, have access to mainstream benefits and services to support their integration.

The Home Office also provides local authorities with a core tariff of £20,520 per person to cover resettlement and integration costs for those who arrive through the UK Resettlement Scheme, the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme or the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy. In the first year, local authorities also receive up to £4,500 per child for education and £850 to cover additional English language provision for adults, and health partners receive £2,600 per individual to cover healthcare.

Those granted protection through the asylum system are offered support from Migrant Help or their partner organisation. This support includes providing advice on accessing the labour market, on applying for Universal Credit, and signposting to local authorities for assistance with housing.

Refugees who arrived through safe and legal routes or were granted Refugee Permission to Stay on or after 28 June 2022 have access to the Refugee Employability Programme (REP). This launched in England in September 2023 and delivers a range of activities to support refugees, including employment, English language and integration support.

Asylum: Rwanda

12 Jan 2024 | HL1100

Asked by: Lord Hacking | Party: Labour

To ask His Majesty's Government what monies they have thus far paid to the government of Rwanda; what further monies they are currently contracted to pay to that government; and what further costs they estimate will arise from the deportation of migrants under the Illegal Migration Act 2023.

Answering member: Lord Sharpe of Epsom | Department: Home Office

Rwanda received an initial £120 million as part of the Economic and Transformation Fund, which has been used to expand Rwanda's economic development and its capability of accommodating and welcoming new arrivals to benefit both migrants and host communities. In advance of flights, £20 million was paid to support initial set up costs for the relocation of individuals. Through the Economic Transformation and Integration Fund (ETIF) we have provided a further £100 million to Rwanda this financial year (23/24) and a further anticipated £50 million that may be payable in 2024. Information on funding will continue to be released as part of the Home Office Accounts publication each summer.

The Impact Assessment for the Illegal Migration Act can be found here: [Impact Assessment \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk).

Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

11 Jan 2024 | 7249

Asked by: Sir John Hayes

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much money his Department has allocated for housing asylum seekers in (a) hotels and (b) other locations in 2024.

Answering member: Tom Pursglove | Department: Home Office

Costs are subject to change depending on numbers being accommodated within the asylum system. Accommodation costs are considered to be

commercially confidential, therefore the Home Office does not publish this information. However, total expenditure on asylum is published in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ho-annual-reports-and-accounts>(opens in a new tab).

Rwanda: Asylum

13 Dec 2023 | 5962

Asked by: Lisa Nandy

To ask the Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, whether he has had discussions with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the potential use of the Official Development Assistance budget to fund the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda.

Answering member: Mr Andrew Mitchell | Department: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The funding for the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda is not from the Official Development Assistance budget. The Migration and Economic Development Partnership is not ODA eligible as per the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) rules.

Migrants: Finance

12 Dec 2023 | 5048

Asked by: Sarah Owen

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment his Department has made of the financial impact on local authorities of supporting asylum seekers who are granted leave to remain.

Answering member: Tom Pursglove | Department: Home Office

All individuals who receive a positive decision on their asylum claim are eligible to support and accommodation for at least 28 days from when their decision is served.

We offer move on support to all individuals through Migrant Help or their partner organisation in doing this. This includes providing advice on accessing the labour market, on applying for Universal Credit and signposting to local authorities for assistance with housing. Newly recognised refugees are entitled to housing assistance from their local authority and are treated

as a priority need if they have children or are considered vulnerable. Individuals do not need to wait for their BRP to make a claim for benefits and are encouraged to do so as early as possible, if they require them.

We are ensuring our cross government partners, such as the (DWP) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) are sighted on data to enable them to consider the impacts of increased decision making and effectively plan. We are also working with DLUHC to ensure the right asylum decision data is being shared with local authorities to enable effective planning and to lessen the impact on existing homelessness and rough sleeping pressures. Our accommodation providers are directly working with local authorities to notify them when an individual is due to have their asylum support ended.

Migrants: Temporary Accommodation

12 Dec 2023 | 5047

Asked by: Sarah Owen

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that local authorities have adequate (a) funding and (b) support to house asylum seekers who are granted leave to remain.

Answering member: Tom Pursglove | Department: Home Office

All individuals who receive a positive decision on their asylum claim are eligible to support and accommodation for at least 28 days from when their decision is served.

We offer move on support to all individuals through Migrant Help or their partner organisation in doing this. This includes providing advice on accessing the labour market, on applying for Universal Credit and signposting to local authorities for assistance with housing. Newly recognised refugees are entitled to housing assistance from their local authority and are treated as a priority need if they have children or are considered vulnerable. Individuals do not need to wait for their BRP to make a claim for benefits and are encouraged to do so as early as possible, if they require them.

We are ensuring our cross government partners, such as the (DWP) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) are sighted on data to enable them to consider the impacts of increased decision making and effectively plan. We are also working with DLUHC to ensure the right asylum decision data is being shared with local authorities to enable effective planning and to lessen the impact on existing homelessness and rough sleeping pressures. Our accommodation providers are directly working with

local authorities to notify them when an individual is due to have their asylum support ended.

Asylum: Finance

08 Dec 2023 | 4757

Asked by: Scott Benton

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether his Department has taken recent steps to provide financial support to asylum seekers housed in hotels for their voluntary return.

Answering member: Tom Pursglove | Department: Home Office

The Home Office will always look to support those who wish to depart the United Kingdom voluntarily, and the extent of that support is based on a case-by-case assessment of an individual's needs. General eligibility criteria can be found online at: [Get help to return home if you're a migrant in the UK: Who can get help - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/get-help-to-return-home-if-youre-a-migrant-in-the-uk).

The Home Office publishes statistics on all types of removals from the UK, which include voluntary departures. The latest statistics are available at [Immigration system statistics quarterly release - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/immigration-system-statistics-quarterly-release). Published datasets for voluntary returns are available at: [Returns and detention datasets - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/returns-and-detention-datasets).

The cost of a voluntary return depends on the individual circumstances of the case, and therefore we are not able to provide a definitive figure.

Asylum: Finance

04 Dec 2023 | 4251

Asked by: Neil O'Brien

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the cost to the public purse was for (a) financial support and (b) accommodation for people (i) seeking asylum and (ii) arriving through other humanitarian routes in each of the last 10 years, broken down by local authority.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | Department: Home Office

The Home Office has a statutory obligation to provide accommodation and other support to asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute while their application for asylum is being considered. Costs are subject to change depending on numbers being accommodated within the asylum system. The

Home Office is currently spending around £8.3m per day on hotel accommodation. Total expenditure on asylum and humanitarian routes is published in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts, available at HO annual reports and accounts - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The Home Office does not publish a breakdown which disaggregates the cost of financial support and accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees by local authority.

Asylum: Finance

04 Dec 2023 | 3928

Asked by: Stephen Morgan

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of starting the 28 day notice period for the end of asylum support 10 days after the issue of a Biometric Residence Permit.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | Department: Home Office

Following the service of an asylum decision, an individual continues to be an asylum seeker for the purpose of asylum support until the end of the relevant prescribed period, also known as the 'grace period' or 'move on period'. This period is 28 calendar days from when an individual is notified of a decision to accept their asylum claim and grant them leave. There are no current plans to extend this period (of 28 days).

Individuals should make plans to move on from asylum support as soon as they are served their asylum decision. We offer support to all individuals through Migrant Help or their partner organisation in doing this. This includes providing advice on accessing the labour market, on applying for Universal Credit and signposting to local authorities for assistance with housing.

Asylum: Finance

04 Dec 2023 | 3669

Asked by: Alex Sobel

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of implementing a specific timeframe for Section 95 applications to be completed.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | Department: Home Office

The Home Office endeavours to complete applications as fast as possible.

[Asylum: Housing](#)

22 Nov 2023 | 2287

Asked by: Dame Diana Johnson

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 12 September 2023 to Question 198095 on Asylum: Housing, what progress his Department has made on assessing the potential impact of the Illegal Migration Act 2023 on Official Development Assistance spending.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | Department: Home Office

All ODA spending will be in line with the OECD DAC rules relevant to in-donor refugee costs and we will report our spending in the usual way.

[Asylum: Housing](#)

15 Nov 2023 | 651

Asked by: Kate Osamor

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer 20 September 2023 to Question 199155 on Asylum: Housing, how much funding has been returned to her Department by Asylum Accommodation and Support Services contractors because their profits exceeded the agreed contractual margin in each year since 2019.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | Department: Home Office

It is not appropriate to comment on commercial arrangements with suppliers. All Home Office commercial contracts are designed to ensure best value for taxpayer. The Home Office closely monitors its contractors' performance, including financial results.

[Refugees: Finance and Housing](#)

25 Oct 2023 | HL10522

Asked by: The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask His Majesty's Government what guidance or information they have issued to local authorities following the change to the move-on period for newly recognised refugees.

Answering member: Lord Murray of Blidworth | Department: Home Office

An individual remains eligible for asylum support for a prescribed period from the day they are notified of the decision on their asylum claim. Where someone is given notice that their asylum claim has been granted, their appeal has been allowed or their asylum claim has been refused but they have been given leave to enter or remain, the prescribed period in legislation is 28 days. There has been no change to the prescribed period.

Individuals should make plans to move on from asylum support as quickly as possible. We offer support through Migrant Help or their partner organisation in doing this. This includes providing advice on accessing the labour market, on applying for Universal Credit and signposting to local authorities for assistance with housing. Newly recognised refugees are entitled to housing assistance from their local authority and are treated as a priority need if they have children or are considered vulnerable. Individuals do not need to wait for their BRP to make a claim for benefits and are encouraged to do so as early as possible if they require them.

We are ensuring our cross government partners, such as the (DWP) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) are sighted on data to enable them to consider the impacts of increased decision making and effectively plan. We are also working with DLUHC to ensure the right asylum decision data is being shared with local authorities to enable effective planning and to lessen the impact on existing homelessness and rough sleeping pressures. Our accommodation providers are directly working with local authorities to notify them when an individual is due to have their asylum support ended.

In March 2023 we shared data with local and central government that provided a national overview of the initial SAP clearance exercise down to Local Authority level. In August 2023 we shared a further heatmap that included an updated snapshot of all SAP cases, as well as those within the legacy cohort, providing a fuller picture of cases that could be made in each region, down to Local Authority level.

[Asylum: Housing](#)

24 Oct 2023 | 202673

Asked by: Priti Patel

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when payments will be made to local authorities with large scale asylum accommodation sites in their boundaries; and if she will publish the criteria and conditions of the funding provided.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | Department: Home Office

We are committed to making the funding payments in the fastest manner possible, and while we are exploring options to accelerate this and make a one-off payment by the end of this month, at present we are working on a grant where the payment will be released to during the following quarter of the year in which the bed was first occupied. This payment aligns with those made for each new dispersal bed and a funding instruction will be provided when the grant is live.

Refugees: Finance

23 Oct 2023 | 201819

Asked by: Tim Farron

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions her Department held with local authorities before the change in practice of calculating the 28 days prior to asylum support ending for new refugees to when the asylum application decision is made.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | Department: Home Office

All individuals who receive a positive decision on their asylum claim are eligible to support and accommodation for at least 28 days from when their decision is served.

We offer move on support to all individuals through Migrant Help or their partner organisation in doing this. This includes providing advice on accessing the labour market, on applying for Universal Credit and signposting to local authorities for assistance with housing. Individuals do not need to wait for their BRP to make a claim for benefits and are encouraged to do so as early as possible, if they require them.

We work closely with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to ensure the right asylum decision data is being shared with local authorities to enable effective planning and to lessen the impact on existing homelessness and rough sleeping pressures. Our accommodation providers are directly working with local authorities to notify them when an individual is due to have their asylum support ended.

We are working with our partners, including Local Authorities, to provide timely notification of key events that impact them. We are working with our SMP to facilitate regional sessions with councils and to share data.

Asylum: Finance

23 Oct 2023 | 201799

Asked by: Alex Sobel

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending the move-on period for people who have received their asylum decisions to at least 56 days.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | Department: Home Office

We do not publish the information you have requested.

We work closely with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in ensuring individuals can move on from asylum support as smoothly as possible. With DLUHC, we are working to ensure the right asylum decision data is being shared with local authorities to enable effective planning and to lessen the impact on existing homelessness and rough sleeping pressures. Our accommodation providers are also directly working with local authorities to notify them when an individual is due to have their asylum support ended.

Individuals should make plans to move on from asylum support as quickly as possible. We offer move on support through Migrant Help or their partner organisation in doing this. This includes providing advice on accessing the labour market, on applying for Universal Credit and signposting to local authorities for assistance with housing.

The asylum accommodation estate is under huge strain and increasing the 'move on' period would exacerbate these pressures. There are no current plans to extend the prescribed period (of 28 days) for how long individuals remain on asylum support once they have received a grant of asylum.

Asylum: Children

16 Oct 2023 | HL10450

Asked by: The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask His Majesty's Government what funding is available to local authorities to support their responsibility for finding suitable and specialist placements for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Answering member: Lord Murray of Blidworth | Department: Home Office

Local authorities receive through funding from the Local Government Finance Settlement and finance arrangements which apply to the Devolved Administrations. The Home Office provides additional funding contributions to the costs incurred by local government in looking after unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) and former UASC care leavers. UASC and leaving care funding instructions can be found using the link below:

[Unaccompanied asylum seeking children and leaving care: funding instructions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

An incentivised funding programme of £6,000 is also offered to local authorities which includes transfers of unaccompanied children from interim UASC hotels and Kent County Council. Transfers will need to take place within 5 working days to qualify for the funding.

[Asylum: Finance](#)

18 Sep 2023 | HL9832

Asked by: Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask His Majesty's Government what arrangements they will put in place to ensure Aspen card holding asylum seekers can exchange a payment from their cards for any goods they require.

Answering member: Lord Murray of Blidworth | Department: Home Office

Arrangements are already in place to ensure destitute asylum seekers can buy goods that they require to meet their essential living needs. Asylum seekers who are assessed as destitute under Section 95 are provided with a weekly allowance which is loaded on to a debit card (ASPEN card). ASPEN cards can be used to pay for retail transactions at most shops displaying the Mastercard logo, up to the value of the available balance. They can also be used to check available balances at cash machines, to withdraw cash from cash machines and to get cash back when purchasing items at Mastercard participating shops. ASPEN cards cannot be used to make contactless, telephone or internet payments and the card cannot be used overseas.

Failed Asylum Seekers who are assessed as destitute under Section 4 will not be able use their card to withdraw cash from a machine or get cashback from shops.

As part of normal service, anyone experiencing issues in relation to their ASPEN payment card can report them to our Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility (AIRE) provider, Migrant Help, 24 hours a day on the freephone number.

[Asylum: Housing](#)

12 Sep 2023 | 198095

Asked by: Dame Diana Johnson

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the Illegal Migration Act 2023 on her Department's ability to access the Official Development Assistance budget for the purposes of paying for accommodation for asylum seekers.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | Department: Home Office

The government is preparing for the implementation of the Illegal Migration Act, including assessing its impact on Official Development Assistance spending.

Asylum: British Overseas Territories

11 Sep 2023 | 195812

Asked by: Andrew Rosindell

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much from the public purse her Department has spent on feasibility studies for the offshoring of people seeking asylum to UK Overseas Territories in each of the last three years.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | Department: Home Office

While individuals are endangering lives making perilous journeys, every possible option must be considered to reduce the draw of the UK. We are always willing to work with partners around the world to tackle the joint challenge of illegal migration.

Asylum: Finance

24 Jul 2023 | 194891

Asked by: Rebecca Long Bailey

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to publish the next review of the asylum-support allowance.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | Department: Home Office

The Home Office annually reviews the level of the asylum support rate to assess the correct level of financial support that should be provided to meet essential living needs.

Refugees: Rwanda

03 Jul 2023 | 191443

Asked by: Preet Kaur Gill

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much of the funding of the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda she plans to report as Official Development Assistance.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | Department: Home Office

The funding for the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda is separate from, and additional to, the Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget.

Home Office: ClearSprings Group

28 Jun 2023 | 190264

Asked by: Dawn Butler

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much money her Department paid to its contractor Clear Springs for asylum accommodation in the London Borough of Brent in each year since 2015.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | Department: Home Office

Our accommodation providers are contractually obliged to provide adequate accommodation and to conduct regular quality assurance checks across the asylum estate. Accommodation providers complete due diligence checks and all accommodation must be statutorily and regulatory compliant before they are selected.

Asylum: Portland Port

24 May 2023 | 184982

Asked by: Richard Drax

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what funding will be provided to statutory bodies that have responsibilities for the planned migrants on the barge in Portland Port in addition to what has already been promised to Dorset Council and the police.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | Department: Home Office

The Home Office has committed to providing funding to help minimise the impact on the local community and local services. Discussions regarding the specific funding arrangements for statutory bodies are ongoing.

Asylum: Finance

22 May 2023 | 185182

Asked by: Harriet Harman

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how her department calculates the weekly allowance received by asylum seekers on aspen cards.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | Department: Home Office

The level of the allowance given to those supported under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (“the 1999 Act”) is generally reviewed each year to ensure it meets an asylum seeker’s essential living needs. Reports on the reviews are published

here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/report-on-review-of-cash-allowance-paid-to-asylum-seekers>.

Asylum: Applications

03 May 2023 | 182766

Asked by: Harriet Harman

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to allocate additional (a) financial resources and (b) other support to local authorities to support asylum seekers who have had their claims rejected under streamlined asylum processing.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | Department: Home Office

The Home Office has a legal obligation, as set out in the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (“the 1999 Act”), to support asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute.

If an asylum seeker has their asylum claim refused, they usually cease to be eligible to receive support provided under section 95 of the 1999 act 21 days after they are given notice that their asylum claim has been refused, or where there is an appeal, 21 days after their appeal is finally rejected. Asylum claims considered under the Streamlined Asylum Process will not be refused on the basis of the questionnaire alone. Where there is insufficient information in the questionnaire to grant protection status, the claimant will be invited to an interview in order to inform the decision.

Failed asylum seekers may be supported under section 4(2) of the 1999 Act if they meet certain eligibility criteria.

Refugees: Homelessness

27 Apr 2023 | HL7146

Asked by: Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support newly recognised refugees; and what plans they have to reconsider extending the move-on period from 28 to 56 days in line with the prevention duty contained in section 195 of the 1996 Housing Act.

Answering member: Lord Murray of Blidworth | Department: Home Office

If an asylum seeker is granted refugee status, they gain immediate access to the labour market and receive advice to help them transition to the mainstream benefit system if they still require support.

We offer support through Migrant Help or their partner organisations. This includes providing advice on accessing the labour market through the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), providing advice on applying for Universal Credit and signposting to local authorities for assistance with housing. In some circumstances, Migrant Help may also book appointments for newly recognised refugees with the DWP to apply for Universal Credit.

Newly recognised refugees are entitled to housing assistance from their local authority and are treated as a priority need if they have children or are considered vulnerable.

The asylum accommodation estate is under huge strain and increasing the 'move on' period would exacerbate these pressures. There are no current plans to change the time period (of 28 days) for how long individuals remain on asylum support once they have had a grant of asylum.

Asylum: Finance

24 Apr 2023 | 180544

Asked by: Sarah Jones

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to page 96 of the Central Government Supply Estimates 2022-23: Supplementary Estimates, published on 21 February 2023, how the additional £1,614,856,000 for asylum support costs was spent.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | Department: Home Office

The Home Office does not routinely publish data breaking down the additional expenditure spent on asylum support or illegal migration.

Home Office expenditure is detailed in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts, with the most recent Annual Report and Accounts for 2021 to 2022 published on 14 July 2022 and available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-annual-report-and-accounts-2021-to-2022>.

Asylum: Northern Ireland

21 Apr 2023 | 177911

Asked by: Stephen Farry

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what additional funding the Government has provided to charity and voluntary organisations providing support to asylum seekers in Northern Ireland.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | Department: Home Office

Funding for Northern Ireland is provided to the Northern Ireland Executive Office under the full dispersal model - this is un-ringfenced funding. We do not fund charities and voluntary organisations directly to support asylum seekers under full dispersal.

Asylum: Advisory Services

04 Apr 2023 | 174388

Asked by: Kate Osamor

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 22 March 2023 to Question 165397 on Asylum: Housing, how much the Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility service costs; and what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of its delivery.

Answering member: Robert Jenrick | Department: Home Office

Costs are subject to change depending on numbers being accommodated within the asylum system. Accommodation costs are considered to be commercially confidential. Therefore, the Home Office does not publish this information. However, total expenditure on asylum is published in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts, available at [Home Office annual report and accounts: 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-annual-report-and-accounts-2021-to-2022).

Robust compliance and governance protocols exist to ensure daily engagement is undertaken with our service providers by Home Office officials to ensure and assure that the providers' operational delivery and overall performance consistently meet the required standards. If any issues are identified providers are required to take immediate action to address and recover accordingly.

The Home Office has published Key Performance Indicator statistics covering the contractual obligations accommodation providers and others working in the asylum sector are required to deliver. This has been done since April 2020. This data is available at [Key Performance Indicators \(KPIs\) for government's most important contracts - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/key-performance-indicators-kpis-for-government-s-most-important-contracts)

All asylum seekers have access to a 24/7 Advice, Issues Reporting and Eligibility (AIRE) service provided for the Home Office by Migrant Help where they can raise any concerns regarding accommodation or support services, and they can get information about how to obtain further support. As the data controller the Home Office are best placed to provide comprehensive responses to the requests of MPs. Should an MP approach Migrant Help directly, rather than the MPs correspondence team. Migrant help will refer these requests to the appropriate MPs team to investigate and respond.

It would be inappropriate to comment on commercial arrangements with suppliers. All Home Office commercial contracts are designed to ensure the best value for taxpayers and the Home Office closely monitors its contractor's performance, including financial results. Any profits above the agreed contractual margins comes back to the Home Office.

3.4

Committee material

[Correspondence from the Home Office relating to Supplementary Estimates for 2023-24](#)

04 Mar 2024 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Committee of Public Accounts

[Letter from the Chair to Home Secretary regarding the emergency drawdown from the Contingencies Fund, dated 8 February 2024](#)

5 March 2024 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Home Office 2023-24 supplementary estimates memorandum](#)

28 Feb 2024 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Letter from the Permanent Secretary regarding the Home Office Supplementary Estimates 2023-2024, dated 27 February 2024](#)

28 February 2024 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Letter to the Permanent Secretary regarding the Bibby Stockholm value for money assessment, dated 15 February 2024](#)

21 February 2024 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Letter from the Permanent Secretary at the Home Office on the value for money assessment of the Bibby Stockholm, dated 30 January 2024](#)

31 January 2024 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Correspondence with the Permanent Secretary, relating to follow-up from the evidence session on 29 November](#)

13 Dec 2023 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Migration and asylum](#)

13 Dec 2023 | Parliamentary committees - House of Commons papers - Select Committee oral evidence | House of Commons | HC 408 2023-24

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Correspondence with the Permanent Secretary, relating to the UK-Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership](#)

12 Dec 2023 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Work of the Home Office](#)

29 Nov 2023 | Parliamentary committees - House of Commons papers - Select Committee oral evidence | House of Commons | HC 356 2023-24

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Asylum transformation programme. Committee of Public Accounts seventy-sixth report.](#)

19 Oct 2023 | Parliamentary committees - Select Committee reports - House of Commons papers | House of Commons | HC 1334 2022-23

[Correspondence with the Home Office Permanent Secretary relating to the 2023-24 Main Estimates](#)

06 Sep 2023 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Letter from the Home Secretary on the use of hotels to accommodate Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children \(UASC\), dated 19 April 2023](#)

06 Sep 2023 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Correspondence with the Permanent Secretary relating to the Home Office main estimate memorandum 2023-24.](#)

05 Jul 2023 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Home Office main estimate memorandum 2023-24.](#)

28 Jun 2023 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Home Office supplementary estimate memorandum 2022-23.](#)

01 Mar 2023 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Home Office oral evidence session.](#)

21 Dec 2022 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee oral evidence | House of Lords

Corporate author: Justice and Home Affairs Committee

[Letter from the Permanent Secretary on the Home Office Main Estimate 2022-23, dated 1 August 2022](#)

07 September 2022 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Letter to the Permanent Secretary on the Home Office Main Estimate 2022-23, dated 18 July 2022](#)

07 September 2022 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Home Office main estimate memorandum 2022-23.](#)

25 May 2022 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Letter from the Permanent Secretary on the Home Office 2021/22 Supplementary Estimates Memorandum, dated 25 April 2022](#)

11 May 2022 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Letter to the Permanent Secretary on the Home Office 2021/22 Supplementary Estimates Memorandum, dated 28 March 2022](#)

11 May 2022 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Home Office supplementary estimate 2021-22.](#)

23 Mar 2022 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

[Letter from the Second Permanent Secretary relating to asylum accommodation costs.](#)

09 Feb 2022 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | House of Commons

Corporate author: Home Affairs Committee

4 Media

4.1 Press releases

[The Human Impact of the Illegal Migration Act and the Rwanda Plan](#)

Refugee Council

November 2023

[Home Office asylum costs could no longer be counted as aid under Illegal Migration Act](#)

Independent Commission for Aid Impact

06 September 2023

[UK aid funding for refugees in the UK](#)

Independent Commission for Aid Impact

29 March 2023

4.2 Articles and blogs

[National Audit Office publishes first breakdown of the cost of sending asylum seekers to Rwanda](#)

Electronic Immigration Network

04 March 2024

[Rwanda plan to cost UK £1.8m for each asylum seeker, figures show](#)

Guardian

01 March 2024

[Legal fees of defending Rwanda scheme soar past £2m](#)

Law Society Gazette

01 March 2024

[Home Office pays for 16,000 homes for asylum seekers despite housing shortage](#)

Telegraph

13 February 2024

[Home Office asks for emergency £2.6bn after asylum seeker hotels overspend](#)

Guardian

01 February 2024

[Q&A: The UK's policy to send asylum seekers to Rwanda](#)

Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford

10 January 2024

[UK outspends rest of Europe on housing asylum seekers by at least 40% a person](#)

Guardian

29 September 2023

[UK Home Office risks losing key source of funding for asylum seekers, says watchdog](#)

Financial Times

05 September 2023

[UK: Latest Home Office Data Reveals Record-breaking Backlog and Increased Spending Amid New Plans to Expand Detention Spaces & Unpractical Promises to Stop the Boats](#)

European Council on Refugees and Exiles

01 September 2023

[Asylum bill doubles to nearly £4bn as Sunak says cost is 'unacceptable'](#)

Sky News

25 August 2023

[Why the government's economic Impact Assessment of the Illegal Migration Act tells us little about the Act's economic impact](#)

Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford

26 July 2023

[Hundreds of millions in UK aid returns to Treasury in VAT on asylum hotel bills](#)

Guardian

23 July 2023

[NAO: Home Office's asylum transformation programme is a long way from meeting ambitions to reduce costs and improve quality](#)

Electronic Immigration Network

17 June 2023

[Sunak's pledge to clear asylum claim backlog 'unachievable'](#)

Times

16 June 2023

[The UK spent a third of its international aid budget on refugees in the UK – what it’s paying for, and why it’s a problem](#)

The Conversation

03 April 2023

[Government spends a third of aid budget on asylum seekers in UK as hotel costs soar](#)

Independent

29 March 2023

[Asylum Seeker Hotel Costs in Context](#)

Migration Watch

01 November 2022

[Government spending £6.8m a day housing asylum seekers in hotels](#)

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26 October 2022

[Britain pays Rwanda extra £20m despite no migrant deportations](#)

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[Cost of housing asylum seekers in hotels](#)

Migration Watch UK

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