



BRIEFING PAPER

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Asylum Statistics

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Cover page: [Syrian refugees in Kawar Gosk camp, Erbil, Iraq](#), 2014. Author: Anmarrfaat. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license / image cropped.

Summary

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 asylum and is awaiting a decision on whether they will be granted refugee status. An asylum applicant who does not qualify for refugee status may still be granted leave to remain in the UK for humanitarian or other reasons. An asylum seeker whose application is refused at initial decision may appeal the decision through an appeals process and, if successful, may be granted leave to remain.

- The number of asylum applications to the UK peaked in 2002 at 84,132. After that the number fell sharply to reach a twenty-year low point of 17,916 in 2010, before rising again to reach 35,737 in 2019.
- The percentage of asylum applicants refused at initial decision reached its highest point at 88% in 2004. After that, the percentage of applicants refused at initial decision fell to 59% in 2014, then rose again before dropping to 42% in 2019.
- Asylum seekers made up around 6% of immigrants to the UK in 2018.
- In the period from 2004 to 2019, around three-quarters of applicants refused asylum at initial decision lodged an appeal and almost one third of those appeals was allowed.
- In 2019, 29% of asylum applicants were nationals of Asian countries, 27% were nationals of Middle Eastern countries, 24% were nationals of African countries, and 14% were from Europe.
- Between January 2014 and March 2020, 26,308 people were resettled to the UK, mainly from Syria and the surrounding region. Resettlement accounted for around 22% of the people granted humanitarian protection in the UK since 2014.
- In 2019, there were around 5 asylum applications for every 10,000 people resident in the UK. Across the EU28 there were 14 asylum applications for every 10,000 people. The UK was therefore below the average among EU countries for asylum applications per head of population, ranking 17th among EU28 countries on this measure.

1. Background

1.1 What is asylum?

Asylum is protection given by a country to someone fleeing from persecution in their own country. According to Article 1 of the 1951 United Nations Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is a person who:

... owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country;¹

As a signatory to the Convention, the UK grants asylum to those who meet these criteria. The UK also adheres to the European Convention on Human Rights, which prevents the UK from sending someone to a country where there is a real risk they may be exposed to torture, or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The UK can also grant other forms of humanitarian protection to people who the Home Office decides have a need for protection but who do not meet the criteria for refugee status. Prior to 2003, such people were granted exceptional leave to remain (ELR) and from 2004 onwards this was replaced with humanitarian protection (HP) or discretionary leave (DL).

In this briefing, humanitarian protection is used as a catch-all term for asylum and these other forms of leave, unless specified otherwise.

1.2 Who is an asylum seeker?

An asylum seeker is someone who has applied for asylum and is awaiting a decision on whether they will be granted refugee status. An asylum applicant who does not qualify for refugee status may still be granted leave to remain in the UK for humanitarian or other reasons. An asylum seeker whose application is refused at initial decision may appeal the decision through an appeals process. Asylum applicants initially refused refugee status may be granted leave to remain following an appeal.

1.3 What percentage of migrants are asylum seekers?

A long-term international migrant is someone who changes their country of usual residence for a period of at least a year. In 2018, there

¹ UNHCR, [United Nations Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees](#), Article 1. The UK signed the Refugee Convention in 1954 and the Protocol in 1967.

were around 604,000 long-term international immigrants into the UK; around 34,500 of these were asylum seekers, which was 5.7%.²

1.4 Sources of asylum statistics

Statistics on asylum seekers and refugees in the UK are published by the Home Office in their quarterly immigration statistics.³ These statistics contain data on the number of people applying for asylum and the outcomes of asylum applications.

Home Office statistics distinguish between the number of main applicants for asylum, which represents the asylum caseload, and the number of main applicants and dependants, which represents the number of people covered by asylum applications.

Statistics on asylum seekers and refugees in European Union countries are published in the Home Office bulletin and by the United Nations High Commissioner for refugees (UNHCR) in two annual reports: *Asylum Levels and Trends in Industrialized Countries* and *Global Trends*.⁴

1.5 What about resettled refugees?

Resettled people are granted refugee status or another form of humanitarian protection by the UK while abroad and then brought to live in the UK.

The UK does not have a large-scale, permanent resettlement programme but, historically, has introduced specific resettlement schemes in response to humanitarian crises. From 2014 onwards, the UK began resettling Syrians under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), with the aim of resettling 20,000 by 2020.

Given the scale of the VPRS (and other resettlement schemes currently in place), resettled people made up just over one quarter (27%) of those granted humanitarian protection in the UK in the last six years (2014-2019).

Resettled people are usually not included in asylum statistics and feature in a separate Home Office data series.

² ONS, [Long-Term International Migration](#), Table 1.01 LTIM Components and Adjustments

³ Home Office, [Immigration statistics quarterly release](#)

⁴ The latest editions are [Asylum Levels and Trends in Industrialized Countries 2014](#) and [Global Trends 2018](#).

2. Asylum in the United Kingdom

2.1 Asylum applications and initial decisions

The number of asylum applications to the UK peaked in 2002 at 84,132. After that the number fell sharply to reach a twenty-year low point of 17,916 in 2010, before rising slowly to reach 32,733 in 2015. The number fell, then rose again to 35,737 in 2019 – the highest number since 2003. These trends are illustrated in Charts 1 and 2 below.

Chart 1: Applications for asylum in the UK, thousands

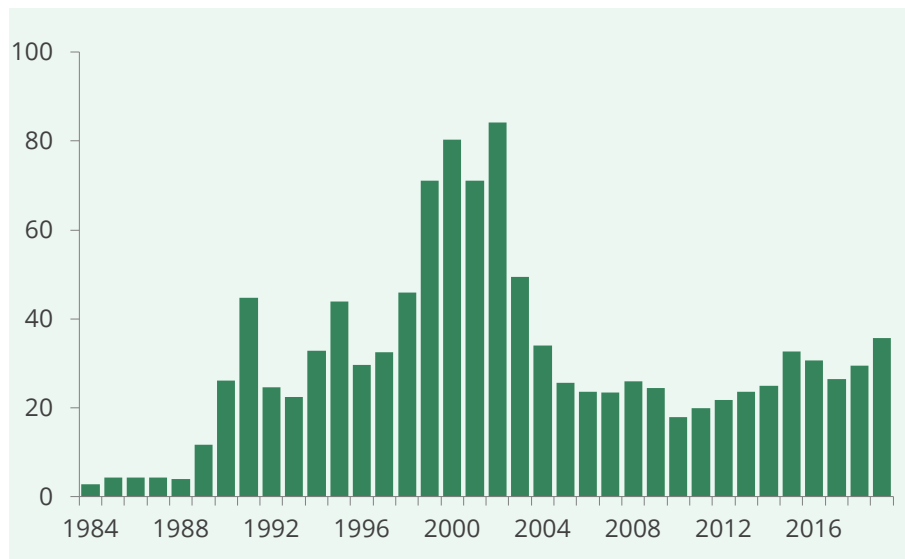
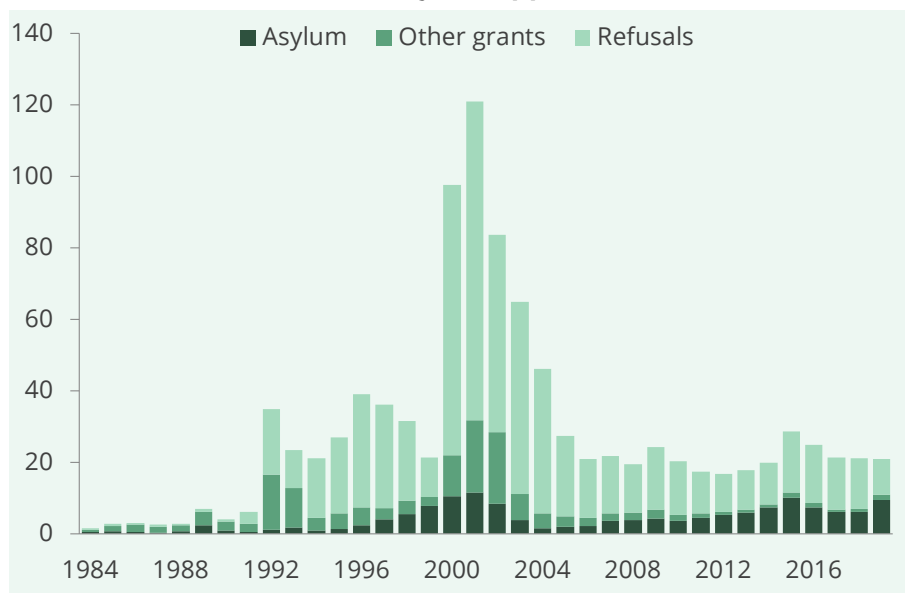


Chart 2: Initial decisions on asylum applications, thousands



Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants only. 2. Initial decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period. 3. Some people refused asylum at initial decision may be granted leave to remain following an appeal. 4. The data shown in these charts is set out in Appendix Table at the end of this briefing.

Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2020](#), tables Asy_D01 and Asy_D02

Chart 1 shows the number of applications for asylum by main applicants in each year from 1984 to 2019. Chart 2 shows the number of initial decisions during the same period, broken down into asylum grants, other grants, and refusals.

Chart 3 below shows the proportion of applications that were refused at initial decision for decisions made in each year from 1984 to 2019. The percentage of main applicants refused at initial decision reached its highest point at 88% in 2004. After that the percentage fell to 59% in 2014, before increasing and then falling again to 42% in 2019 – the lowest annual rate since 1990.

Chart 3: Percentage of asylum applications refused at initial decision



Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants only. 2. Initial decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period. 3. Some people refused asylum at initial decision may be granted leave to remain following an appeal.

Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2020](#), table Asy_D02

2.2 Final outcomes of asylum applications

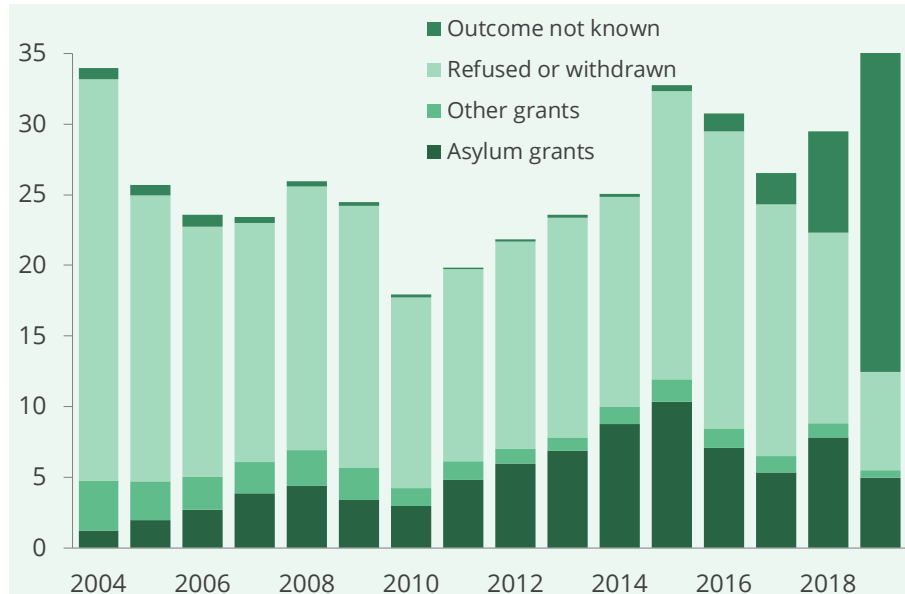
Because some asylum applicants who are initially refused asylum can appeal, the number of applicants granted leave to remain at initial decision does not reflect the number who are ultimately successful. For this reason, the Home Office publishes data on the final outcomes of asylum applications, which shows the outcomes for cohorts of asylum seekers applying in each year. Because it can take longer than a year for an asylum case to reach its final outcome, this data lags behind the data on initial decisions.

The table below shows the final outcomes for main applicants applying for asylum in each year from 2004 to 2019. This includes cases where the final outcome is not yet known (there are more of these cases in the most recent years). The data is illustrated in Charts 4 and 5. Chart 4 shows the number of main applicants for asylum in each year by final outcome, while Chart 5 shows the percentage of all cases with a known

outcome that were either asylum grants, other grants, or were refused or withdrawn.

The percentage of cases with a known outcome that were refused or withdrawn fell from 74% in 2004 to 45% in 2014 and was 56% in 2019. Note that as at the end of June 2020 there were still a large number of cases from 2017 onwards where the outcome was not yet known.

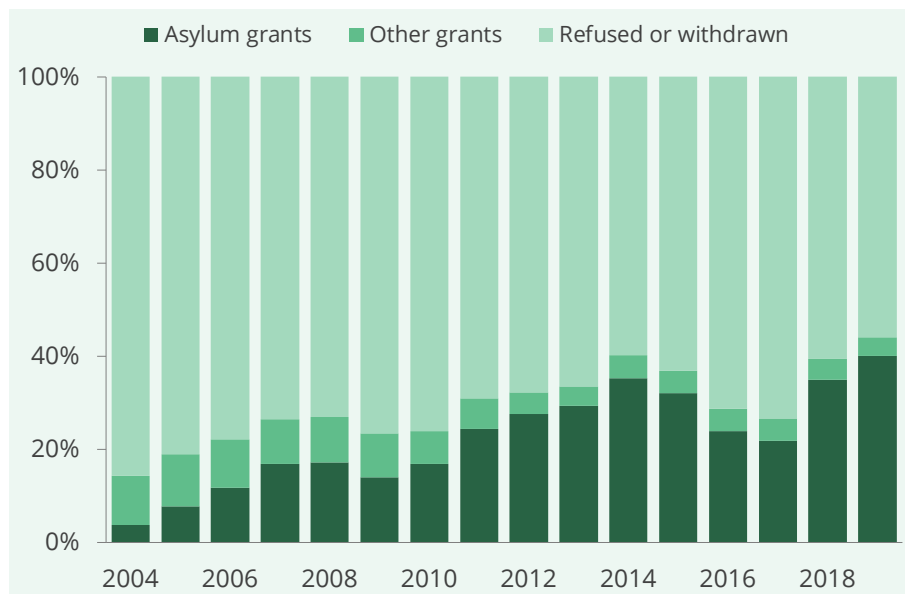
Chart 4: Final outcomes of asylum applications, thousands, at June 2020



Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants only. 2. Year relates to the period in which the application was made. 3. Excludes cases which were successful after appeal to the Upper Tribunal of the Immigration and Asylum Chamber.

Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2020](#), table Asy_D04

Chart 5: Final outcomes of asylum applications as a percentage of known outcomes, at June 2020



Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants only. 2. Year relates to the period in which the application was made. 3. Excludes cases which were successful after appeal to the Upper Tribunal of the Immigration and Asylum Chamber.

Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2020](#), table Asy_D04

FINAL OUTCOMES OF ASYLUM APPLICATIONS MADE IN EACH YEAR								
As at June 2020								
Year	Main applicants	Number				As % of known outcomes		
		Asylum grants	Other grants	Refused or withdrawn	Outcome not known	Asylum grants	Other grants	Refused or withdrawn
2004	33,960	1,253	3,517	28,414	776	4%	11%	86%
2005	25,712	1,944	2,783	20,252	733	8%	11%	81%
2006	23,608	2,691	2,359	17,711	847	12%	10%	78%
2007	23,431	3,874	2,215	16,913	429	17%	10%	74%
2008	25,932	4,411	2,497	18,669	355	17%	10%	73%
2009	24,487	3,397	2,282	18,538	270	14%	9%	77%
2010	17,916	2,988	1,259	13,501	168	17%	7%	76%
2011	19,865	4,802	1,314	13,607	142	24%	7%	69%
2012	21,843	5,971	1,036	14,683	153	28%	5%	68%
2013	23,584	6,879	941	15,561	203	29%	4%	67%
2014	25,033	8,772	1,214	14,856	191	35%	5%	60%
2015	32,733	10,356	1,559	20,420	398	32%	5%	63%
2016	30,747	7,057	1,385	21,030	1,275	24%	5%	71%
2017	26,547	5,327	1,157	17,839	2,224	22%	5%	73%
2018	29,504	7,801	1,017	13,502	7,184	35%	5%	60%
2019	35,737	4,978	496	6,967	23,296	40%	4%	56%

Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2020](#), table Asy_D04

2.3 Asylum appeals

Home Office data on the outcomes of asylum applications also shows the number of main applicants for asylum in each year that are refused at initial decision and go on to appeal.

The table below shows the number of main applicants for asylum in each year from 2004 to 2019, the number of these that were refused at initial decision, the number of those refused that appealed, and the number given each outcome, where the outcome is known.

In the period from 2004 to 2019, around three-quarters (77%) of main applicants refused asylum at initial decision lodged an appeal and just under one third (30%) of those appeals were allowed.

APPEAL OUTCOMES OF ASYLUM APPLICATIONS MADE IN EACH YEAR									
As at June 2020									
Year	Main applicants	Initially refused asylum, HP or DL	Appeals lodged	Appeal outcomes				Appeals lodged as % of refused	Allowed as % of known appeal outcomes
				Appeals allowed	Appeals dismissed	Appeals withdrawn	Appeal outcome not known		
2004	33,960	27,273	21,283	3,950	16,506	766	61	78%	19%
2005	25,712	19,243	14,278	3,032	10,600	523	123	74%	21%
2006	23,608	16,473	11,589	2,567	8,416	497	109	70%	22%
2007	23,431	14,932	10,659	2,292	7,582	415	370	71%	22%
2008	25,932	15,206	12,182	3,167	8,237	506	272	80%	27%
2009	24,487	15,451	13,256	4,000	8,584	507	165	86%	31%
2010	17,916	11,597	9,325	2,500	6,240	444	141	80%	27%
2011	19,865	11,556	9,189	2,529	5,906	629	125	80%	28%
2012	21,843	12,131	9,054	2,708	5,593	626	127	75%	30%
2013	23,584	13,021	9,797	3,115	6,063	529	90	75%	32%
2014	25,033	12,686	10,187	4,016	5,554	483	134	80%	40%
2015	32,733	17,616	14,427	6,124	7,369	804	130	82%	43%
2016	30,747	17,697	13,918	5,687	7,495	527	209	79%	41%
2017	26,547	14,498	10,971	4,379	5,707	496	389	76%	41%
2018	29,504	10,250	7,162	2,610	3,550	373	629	70%	40%
2019	35,737	4,686	2,448	613	940	115	780	52%	37%

Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2020](#), table Asy_D04

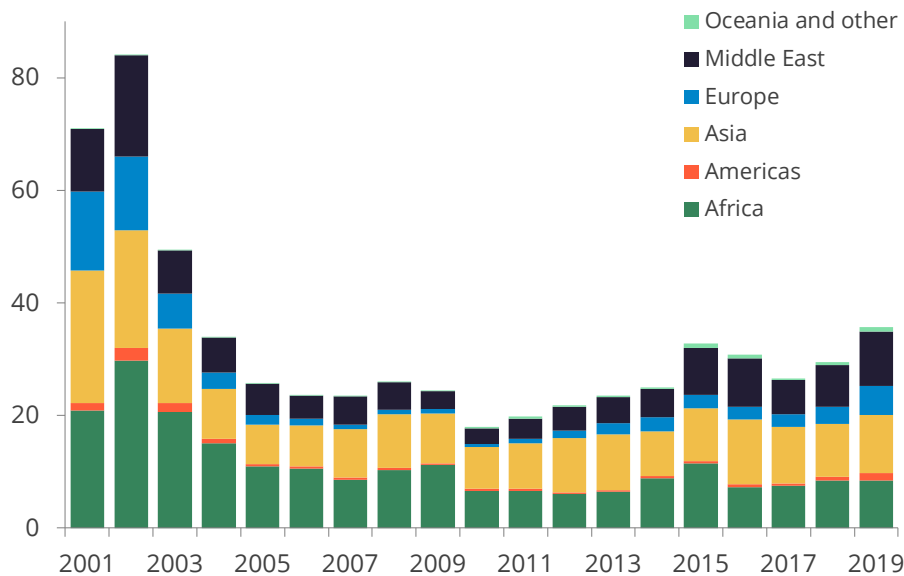
2.4 From where do asylum seekers come to the UK?

In 2019, 29% of main applicants were nationals of Asian countries, 27% were nationals of Middle Eastern countries, 24% were nationals of African countries, and 14% were from Europe.⁵ Less than 6% of main applicants were from countries in the Americas, Oceania, and other parts of the world.

Chart 6 shows the broad nationalities of main applicants for asylum in each year from 2001 to 2019. In 2019, the countries from which the largest number of asylum applicants came to the UK were Iran (4,855), Albania (3,488), Iraq (2,985), Pakistan (1,937), and Eritrea (1,876).⁶

⁵ Afghanistan is included in figures for Asia, while Iran is included in the Middle East.

⁶ These figures represent main applicants only.

Chart 6: Main asylum applicants by nationality, thousands

Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants only.

Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2020](#), table Asy_D01

Since the start of 2014, nearly 22,000 Syrians have been resettled via the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS). This is separate to the UK's in-country asylum process and is described in more detail in section 3.

2.5 Grants of refugee status by nationality

Grants of refugee status or another form of humanitarian leave to remain by nationality follow a slightly different pattern to applications. This is partly due to a time lag between applications and decisions and partly because acceptance rates are higher for some nationalities than others, in particular years.

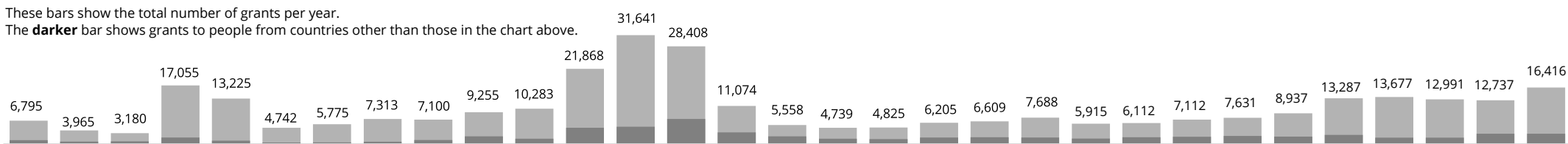
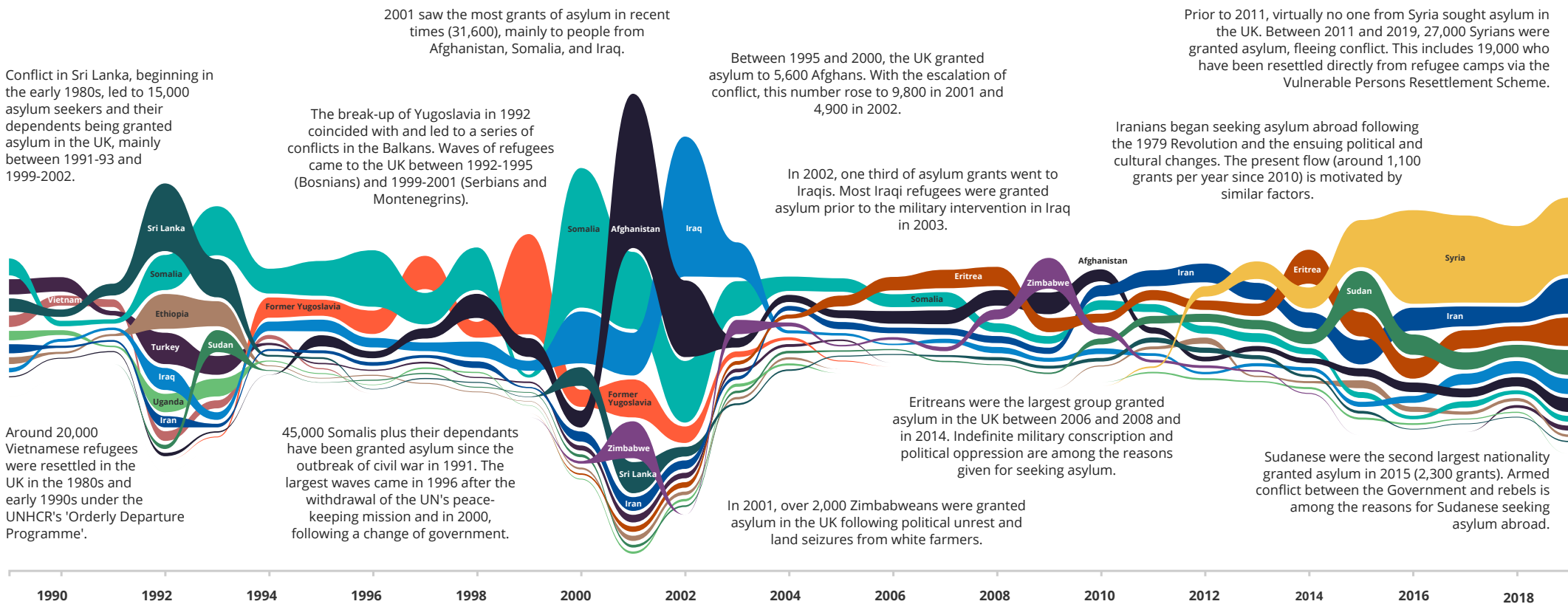
The diagram overleaf is a stylised representation of the number of grants of status, by nationality, in each year between 1989 and 2018. The chart flows horizontally from left to right, with an individual 'stream' for each nationality. Not all nationalities are shown; only those with high numbers of grants.

The height of each stream represents the number of grants in a given year. In each year, the streams are ordered from the nationality with the most grants at the top, to the one with the fewest at the bottom.⁷

⁷ Meaning the fewest of the nationalities which are shown.

WHICH COUNTRIES DO REFUGEES COME TO THE UK FROM?

This chart shows the number of grants of asylum or other forms of humanitarian protection, by refugees' country of origin, in each year since 1989. The height of each 'stream' represents the number of grants of asylum to that nationality in a given year. In each year, the streams are ranked from top to bottom, by number of grants. Not all nationalities are shown.



2.6 How long do asylum applications take?

There are different measures of the time it takes to process asylum applications and the backlog of cases that has built up. Two measures that have been the focus of attention in recent years are the number of asylum applications awaiting an initial decision and the number of cases awaiting conclusion. Since 2001 the attention shifted from the former to the latter, as a backlog of cases awaiting an initial decision in 2001 became a backlog of cases awaiting conclusion in 2006.

In June 2010, the Home Office introduced a new time series for measuring the backlog of asylum applications, based on the UK Border Agency (UKBA) administrative database. This new series counts the number of applications for asylum lodged since 1 April 2006 which are still under consideration at the end of each quarter. It includes cases pending an initial decision (whether for more or less than six months) and those pending further judicial appeal, but excludes those who have lodged a judicial review.

Chart 7: Pending asylum cases received since April 2006, thousands



Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants only. 2. 'Pending' cases are those asylum applications, including fresh claims, lodged since 1 April 2006 which are still under consideration at the end of the reference period.

Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2020](#), table Asy_D03

According to the new series, the total number of pending asylum cases received since 2006 was 44,451 at the end of June 2020. This was around 19,000 more than at the end of June 2018 and was the highest number of pending cases at the end of any quarter since the new series started in June 2010.

2.7 How many dependents accompany asylum seekers?

In 2019 the total number of dependants accompanying or subsequently joining main asylum applicants prior to an initial decision being made

was 9,800, compared with 8,979 in 2018. Including dependants, the total number of individuals who applied for asylum during 2019 was 44,494, up by 16% from 2018 (34,435) and the highest since 2003.

In 2019 the number of main applicants and dependants was 1.25 times the number of main applicants alone. This ratio has been relatively stable over time: typically there is around one dependent for every four main applicants for asylum in each year.⁸

2.8 Where do asylum seekers live?

The only data available on the location of asylum seekers is for those who are receiving government support. Data is available by region and Local Authority.

These figures capture asylum seekers who are being supported by the state under Section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. Section 95 support is a weekly stipend which is means-tested, so it is not received by asylum seekers who have sufficient means of their own.

Most of these supported asylum seekers are also provided with accommodation. The asylum seeker is not given a choice as to location and the Home Office's policy is to disperse them around the country.

At the end of June 2020:

- There were 42,289 asylum seekers receiving section 95 support in the UK, of whom 48,809 were living in dispersal accommodation.⁹
- The North West had the highest number of dispersed asylum seekers relative to its population (13 supported asylum seekers in every 10,000 inhabitants), while the South-East had the lowest relative number (fewer than 1 in every 10,000 inhabitants).
- Glasgow was the local authority with the most dispersed asylum seekers (3,756 or 59 per 10,000 residents), followed by Birmingham (1,577 or 14 per 10,000)
- 233 of the 381 local authorities listed (61%) contained no dispersed and supported asylum seekers.¹⁰

The full list of supported asylum seekers by region and local authority can be found in the online Annex (an Excel file).

⁸ [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2020](#), table Asy_D01

⁹ [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2020](#), table Asy_D11

¹⁰ Some local authorities in Northern Ireland have been grouped here so the total may not match other lists of local authorities.

3. Resettlement

3.1 What is resettlement?

The previous section dealt with applications for asylum by people already in the UK. The UK can also grant asylum or other forms of humanitarian protection to people living outside the UK, who are then resettled to the UK.

Resettlement to the UK operates through different schemes, rather than one overarching system. As at June 2020, there were four resettlement schemes in operation:

- Gateway Protection Programme (GPP) (2004- present)
- Mandate Resettlement Scheme (1995- present)
- Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) (2014 – present)
- Vulnerable Children’s Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) (2016 – present).

All four schemes operate in partnership with UNHCR, which processes asylum applications and determines refugee status before passing candidates onto the UK Government for selection for one of the schemes.

The GPP and Mandate Scheme are worldwide and the latter is for recognised refugees who have a close family member in the UK willing to accommodate them.

The VPRS is specifically for Syrian nationals and the VCRS is for children from the Middle East and North Africa.

3.2 How many people are resettled to the UK?

Between the start of 2014 and the end of March 2020, 26,308 people were resettled to the UK under the four schemes listed above. During the same period, around 91,300 people were granted asylum or another form of humanitarian leave to remain through the UK’s in-country asylum process.¹¹

This means that resettlement accounted for just under a quarter (22%) of the people granted humanitarian protection in the UK in the last five years (2014-2019).

Of those resettled since 2014, the majority (20,007 people) came through the VPRS. The VCRS resettled 1,826 people during this time. Half (49%) of all those resettled since 2014 were children.

¹¹ [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2020](#) Asy_D01 (initial decisions) and Asy_D04 (appeals). Includes main applicants and dependants.

The GPP and Mandate schemes have been in operation for longer: since 2004 and 2008, respectively. To date, the GPP has resettled 9,939 individuals (an average of 621 per year) and the Mandate scheme, 472 (an average of 39 per year).

Historically, the UK's policy on resettlement has been to introduce specific resettlement schemes in response to particular humanitarian crises. The Refugee Council offers a summary of previous resettlement schemes in the UK:

“The UK has also received refugees through specific programmes in response to emergency situations, including 42,000 Ugandan Asians expelled from Uganda from 1972-74, 22,500 Vietnamese displaced persons from 1979-92, over 2,500 Bosnians in the early 1990s, and over 4,000 Kosovars in 1999.”

Refugee Council (2004) [Resettling to the UK: The Gateway Protection Programme](#)

The VPRS target is to resettle 20,000 Syrians by 2020. The VCRS target is 3,000 people from the Middle East and North Africa, including children and their families by 2020.¹²

Calais clearance: the ‘Dubs amendment’

As at the end of January 2018, “over 220” unaccompanied children had been resettled from elsewhere in Europe under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 (the ‘Dubs amendment’). As at January 2018, had been resettled.¹³

Between October 2016 and the end of 2018, the UK resettled a further 549 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who had family in the UK from elsewhere in the EU in response to the clearance of camps around Calais.¹⁴

3.3 Where do resettled people live?

The number of people resettled under the VPRS is available by region and Local Authority. These are Syrian nationals.

Northern Ireland had the most resettled Syrians, relative to its population (10 resettled for every 10,000 inhabitants), followed by the North East (7 for every 10,000 inhabitants). Coventry resettled the most in terms of numbers (576) and Gateshead resettled the most relative to its population: 21 for every 10,000 inhabitants).

The full list of Syrians resettled since 2014 by region and local authority can be found in the online Annex (an Excel file).

¹² [HC169822](#), 06 September 2018

¹³ See, for example [HC208393](#), 21 January 2019.

¹⁴ See [HC198760](#), 12 December 2018

4. Asylum in the European Union

4.1 Asylum applications in EU countries

The number of asylum applications in EU countries has increased during the last five years. This increase has been partly, but not wholly, driven by the refugee crisis arising from the Syrian civil war.

Chart 8 below shows the number of people applying for asylum in EU countries in each month from January 2009 to July 2020. These figures include both main applicants and dependents.

Chart 8: Total monthly asylum applications in EU countries, thousands



Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants and dependants. 2. Figures on asylum applications in Croatia are included from January 2013; however, the numbers are small (see table below). Source: Eurostat, Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex: monthly data [[migr_asyappctzm](#)]

The total number of people applying for asylum in EU countries increased from a monthly average of 22,000 in the year ending 2010 to 60,000 in 2019.

Asylum applications in EU countries reached their highest level in October 2015 at 172,000, falling to 101,000 in January 2016. They increased again to 138,000 in August 2016 before falling to a low of 35,000 in January 2020.

The table below shows the number of asylum applications received in European Union countries during the last five calendar years. Total asylum applications in EU countries stood at 1.32 million in 2015 and fell to 669,000 in 2018 before rising slightly to 740,300 in 2019.

In 2019, Germany received the largest number of asylum applicants among EU countries (165,600), followed by France (128,900), Spain (117,800), Greece (77,300), and United Kingdom (44,800). Together, these top five countries received 72% of asylum applications in the EU28.

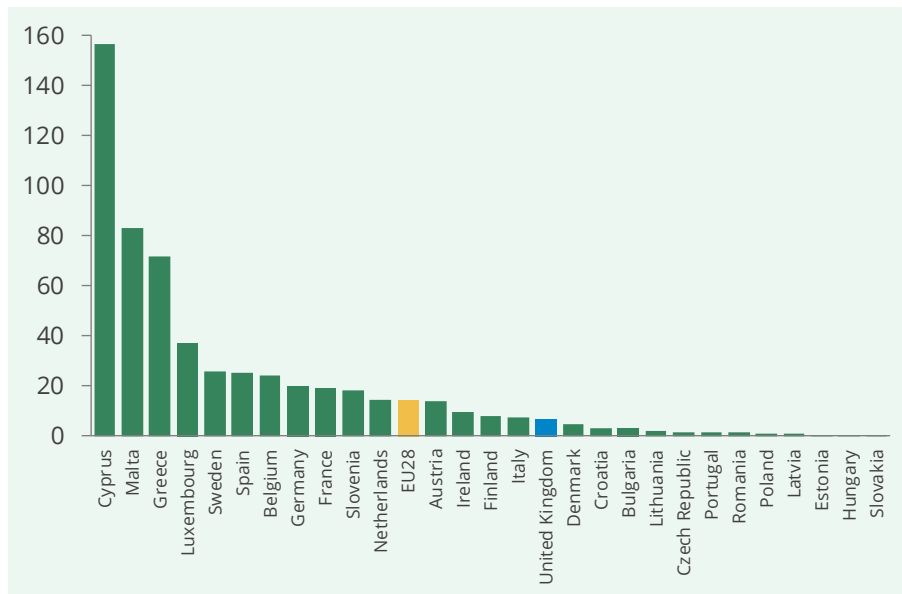
ASYLUM APPLICATIONS					
EU28 countries, 2015-19					
Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Austria	88,200	42,300	24,700	13,700	12,500
Belgium	44,800	18,300	18,300	22,500	27,500
Bulgaria	20,400	19,400	3,700	2,500	2,200
Croatia	200	2,200	1,000	800	1,400
Cyprus	2,300	2,900	4,600	7,800	13,700
Czech Republic	1,500	1,500	1,400	1,700	1,900
Denmark	21,000	6,200	3,200	3,600	2,700
Estonia	200	200	200	100	100
Finland	32,300	5,600	5,000	4,500	4,500
France	76,200	84,300	99,300	120,400	128,900
Germany	476,600	745,200	222,600	184,200	165,600
Greece	13,200	51,100	58,700	67,000	77,300
Hungary	177,100	29,400	3,400	700	500
Ireland	3,300	2,200	2,900	3,700	4,800
Italy	83,500	123,000	128,900	60,000	43,800
Latvia	300	400	400	200	200
Lithuania	300	400	500	400	600
Luxembourg	2,500	2,200	2,400	2,300	2,300
Malta	1,800	1,900	1,800	2,100	4,100
Netherlands	45,000	20,900	18,200	24,000	25,200
Poland	12,200	12,300	5,000	4,100	4,100
Portugal	900	1,500	1,800	1,300	1,800
Romania	1,300	1,900	4,800	2,100	2,600
Slovakia	300	100	200	200	200
Slovenia	300	1,300	1,500	2,900	3,800
Spain	14,800	15,800	36,600	54,100	117,800
Sweden	162,600	28,800	26,300	21,600	26,300
United Kingdom	40,400	39,700	34,800	38,800	44,800
EU15	1,105,200	1,186,900	683,700	621,600	685,700
EU25	1,301,600	1,237,400	702,700	641,700	714,900
EU27	1,323,200	1,258,700	711,200	646,400	719,700
EU28	1,323,500	1,292,700	735,000	669,000	740,300

Source: Eurostat, Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex Annual aggregated data [[migr_asyappctza](#)]

Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants and dependants.

2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and may not sum to the totals shown due to independent rounding.

Chart 9: Asylum applications per 10,000 population in EU countries, 2019













Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants and dependants. 2. Population is for 1 Jan 2019.
Source: Eurostat, Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex Annual aggregated data [[migr_asyappctza](#)], Population by age and sex [[demo_pjan](#)]

Chart 9 shows the number of asylum applications in EU countries per 10,000 population in 2019. During this period Cyprus had the largest number of asylum applications per 10,000 people (156), followed by Malta (83), Greece (72), Luxembourg (37), and Sweden (26).

In 2019, there were five asylum applications for every 10,000 people resident in the UK. Across the EU28 there were 14 asylum applications for every 10,000 people. The UK was therefore below the average among EU countries for asylum applications per head of population, ranking 17th among EU28 countries on this measure.

4.2 From where do asylum seekers come to the EU?

The table below shows the ten largest groups of foreign nationals applying for asylum in EU countries in 2017. The largest groups were nationals of Syria (79,000), Afghanistan (59,200), Venezuela (45,000), Iraq (35,200), and Colombia (32,000).

ASYLUM APPLICATIONS BY NATIONALITY			
EU28 countries, 2019			
Nationality	Number	As % of all applications	
Syria	78,545	10.9%	
Afghanistan	59,150	8.2%	
Venezuela	45,405	6.3%	
Iraq	35,170	4.9%	
Colombia	32,305	4.5%	
Pakistan	29,645	4.1%	
Turkey	25,595	3.5%	
Nigeria	25,465	3.5%	
Iran	24,395	3.4%	
Albania	23,275	3.2%	
All applications	721,485	100.0%	-

Source: Eurostat, Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex Annual aggregated data [[migr_asyappctza](#)]

Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants and dependants.

2. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.

The top ten countries of nationality for asylum applicants in the EU accounted for 54% of all asylum applications in 2017.

4.3 Grants of asylum in EU countries

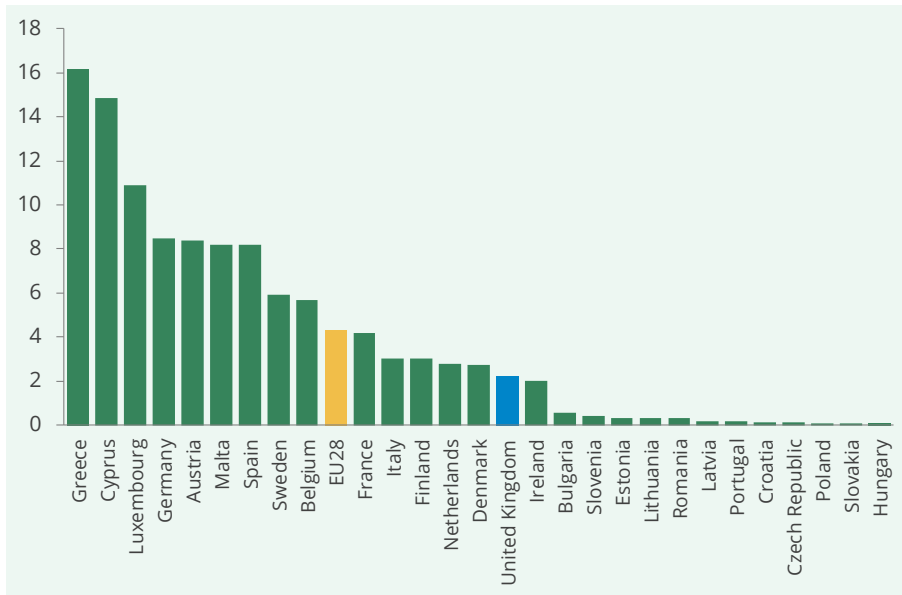
The table below shows first instance decisions on asylum applications in EU countries in 2019, including the number of grants and refusals. Here, grants include all positive decisions on asylum applications, not just those granted refugee status.

In 2019, Germany granted the largest number of positive asylum decisions among EU countries (70,300), followed by Spain (38,400), and France (28,100).

FIRST INSTANCE DECISIONS ON ASYLUM APPLICATIONS			
EU28 countries, 2019			
Country	Grants	Refusals	Total
Austria	7,425	6,465	13,890
Belgium	6,530	10,640	17,170
Bulgaria	400	850	1,250
Croatia	55	265	320
Cyprus	1,300	1,975	3,275
Czech Republic	135	1,255	1,390
Denmark	1,575	1,455	3,030
Estonia	45	45	90
Finland	1,665	3,180	4,845
France	28,140	85,750	113,890
Germany	70,320	83,855	154,175
Greece	17,350	15,350	32,700
Hungary	60	650	710
Ireland	975	895	1,870
Italy	18,375	75,110	93,485
Latvia	35	120	150
Lithuania	90	230	325
Luxembourg	670	510	1,180
Malta	405	635	1,040
Netherlands	4,845	8,095	12,940
Poland	265	1,730	1,995
Portugal	170	570	745
Romania	585	730	1,315
Slovakia	35	55	90
Slovenia	85	130	215
Spain	38,420	19,615	58,035
Sweden	6,055	14,645	20,700
United Kingdom	15,000	13,460	28,460
EU15	217,515	339,595	557,115
EU25	219,970	346,420	566,395
EU28	221,015	348,255	569,270

Source: Eurostat, First instance decisions on applications by citizenship, age and sex: quarterly data [[migr_asydcfstq](#)]. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Chart 10: Positive first instance asylum decisions per 10,000 population in EU28 countries, 2019



Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants and dependants. 2. First instance decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made during the same period.

Source: Eurostat, First instance decisions on applications by citizenship, age and sex: quarterly data [[migr_asydcfstq](#)]

Chart 10 shows the number of positive asylum decisions granted at first instance per 10,000 population in EU countries in 2019. During this period Greece granted the largest number of positive first instance asylum decisions per 10,000 people (16) and Hungary the fewest (0.06).

In 2019, the UK granted two positive asylum decisions at first instance for every 10,000 people. Across the EU28 there were 13 such grants for every 10,000 people. The UK was therefore below the average among EU countries for positive first instance asylum grants per head of population, ranking 16th among EU28 countries on this measure.

4.4 Recognition rates by nationality in the EU

The table below shows recognition rates at first instance decision for the largest national groups whose asylum applications to EU countries were decided in 2019.

The recognition rate is the share of positive decisions in the total number of asylum decisions at a particular stage of the asylum procedure. As the Eurostat [glossary of statistics](#) explains:

Calculation of the overall recognition rate for all stages of the asylum procedure cannot be made due to lacking information linking the outcomes at first instance and final on appeal for each person concerned.

The figures here relate to the first instance decision and do not include decisions made on asylum appeals.

RECOGNITION RATE AT FIRST INSTANCE ASYLUM DECISION				
Top 20 nationalities by number of asylum decisions, EU28, 2019				
Nationality	Grants	Refusals	<i>Recognition rate</i>	Total FI decisions
Syria	59,620	10,130	85%	69,750
Venezuela	37,230	1,455	96%	38,690
Afghanistan	19,410	16,305	54%	35,720
Iraq	13,595	19,285	41%	32,885
Nigeria	4,795	26,055	16%	30,850
Pakistan	3,085	21,935	12%	25,020
Albania	1,450	18,965	7%	20,415
Georgia	750	17,995	4%	18,745
Iran	7,570	11,125	40%	18,695
Turkey	9,180	8,150	53%	17,330
Bangladesh	1,220	14,785	8%	16,005
Guinea	2,485	11,505	18%	13,990
Somalia	5,645	5,715	50%	11,360
Russia	2,525	8,690	23%	11,220
Eritrea	9,135	2,005	82%	11,140
Ukraine	960	8,415	10%	9,375
Côte d'Ivoire	1,615	7,410	18%	9,025
Mali	1,325	7,195	16%	8,520
Senegal	580	7,555	7%	8,135
Morocco	665	6,930	9%	7,600
All nationalities	221,025	348,570	38.8%	569,600

Source: Eurostat, First instance decisions on applications by citizenship, age and sex: quarterly data [[migr_asydctstq](#)]

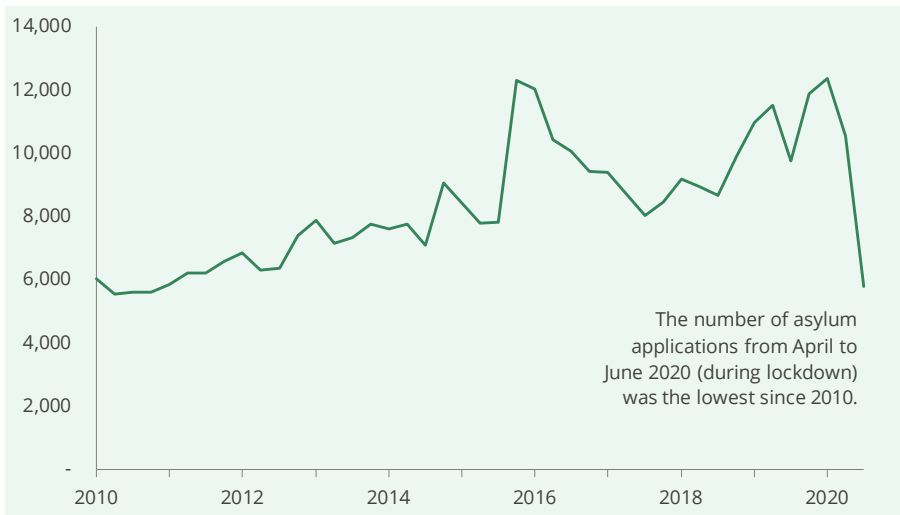
In 2019, 85% of Syrian nationals were granted a positive asylum decision at first instance. By contrast, 4% of Georgian nationals were granted a positive asylum decision at first instance. Among all nationalities the recognition rate at first instance was 39%.

Appendix 1: Asylum during lockdown

The UK went into 'lockdown' as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic in mid-March 2020. This limited people's ability to travel in and out of the UK and to travel around the country. The number of new asylum applications fell sharply in the quarter April to June 2020, compared with previous quarters. During this time there were 5,789 applications, which was the lowest number in a quarter since 2010.

Prior to this, the quarterly number of applications had been at a 13-year high of 12,358 between October and December 2019.

Chart 11: Asylum applications, main applicants and dependents, per quarter since 2010



Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2020](#), table Asy_D01. Shows main applicants only.

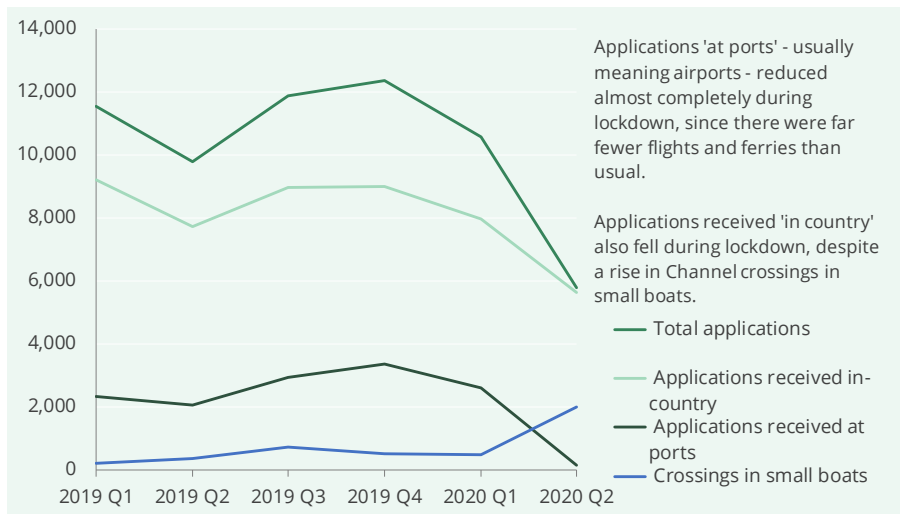
The Home Office noted,

"The UK has continued to accept asylum applications throughout the pandemic. However, restrictions in the UK, across Europe and the rest of the world are likely to have limited the ability of some migrants, who may have gone on to claim asylum in the UK, from doing so."¹⁵

The fall in the number of asylum applications was chiefly due to a fall in the number of applications being made 'at ports' or, in other words, at the UK border immediately on arrival by plane, ferry, or train. As the chart below shows, the number of in-country applications also declined. The decline appears to have been partly offset by a rise in the number of people crossing the Channel in small boats, most of whom will have applied for asylum 'in country'.

¹⁵ Home Office, [Statistics relating to COVID-19 and the immigration system](#), May 2020

Chart 12: Location of asylum applications, quarterly figures since 2019, and Channel crossings for comparison

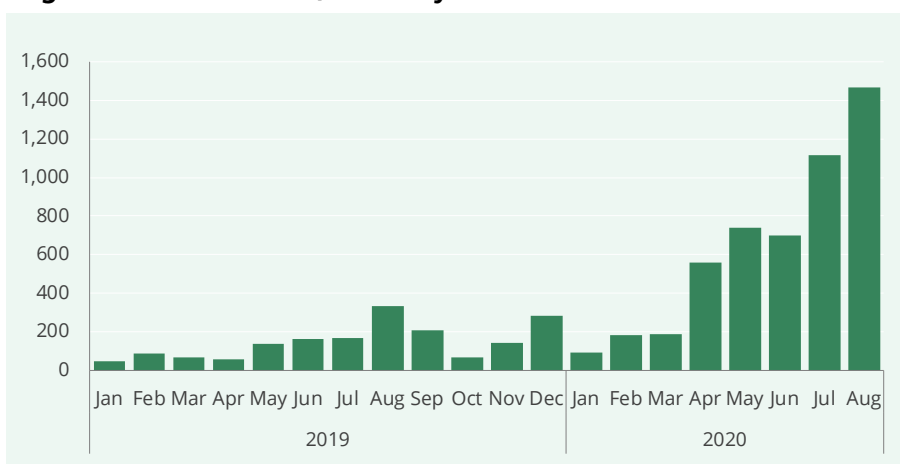


Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2020](#), table Asy_D01. Shows main applicants only.

Although there are no statistics on the number or percentage of people arriving by boat who have applied for asylum, it can be assumed that most have applied. The number of arrivals by boat increased steeply from April 2020 onwards. Between April and August, inclusive, around 4,600 people entered the UK by crossing the Channel in small boats. Around 460 people arrived in this manner in the first 3 months of 2020 and around 1,800 did so in the whole of 2019.

These figures are estimates based on a combination of data released by the Home Office and data supplied to the House of Commons Library by the BBC, much of which has been confirmed by the Home Office.

Chart 13: Persons recorded having crossed the Channel to England in small boats, monthly total



Source: BBC data; [HC37575 'Undocumented migrants: English Channel'](#), answered on: 27 May 2020.

Resettlement flights were also paused during lockdown.

Appendix 2: Data table

ASYLUM APPLICATIONS AND INITIAL DECISIONS, MAIN APPLICANTS 1984-2019						
Year	Applications	Initial decisions	Total grants	Grants		Refusals
				Asylum grants	Other grants	
1984	2,905	1,431	1,084	453	631	347
1985	4,389	2,635	2,133	574	1,559	502
1986	4,266	2,983	2,450	348	2,102	533
1987	4,256	2,432	1,797	266	1,531	635
1988	3,998	2,702	2,206	628	1,578	496
1989	11,640	6,955	6,070	2,210	3,860	890
1990	26,205	4,025	3,320	920	2,400	705
1991	44,840	6,075	2,695	505	2,190	3,380
1992	24,605	34,900	16,440	1,115	15,325	18,465
1993	22,370	23,405	12,715	1,590	11,125	10,690
1994	32,831	20,988	4,487	827	3,660	16,501
1995	43,963	27,006	5,705	1,294	4,411	21,301
1996	29,642	38,962	7,293	2,239	5,054	31,669
1997	32,502	36,044	7,100	3,986	3,114	28,944
1998	46,014	31,571	9,255	5,346	3,909	22,316
1999	71,158	21,307	10,283	7,816	2,467	11,024
2000	80,315	97,547	21,868	10,373	11,495	75,679
2001	71,027	120,949	31,641	11,449	20,192	89,308
2002	84,132	83,540	28,408	8,272	20,136	55,132
2003	49,407	64,941	11,074	3,863	7,211	53,867
2004	33,960	46,021	5,558	1,563	3,995	40,463
2005	25,712	27,393	4,739	1,941	2,798	22,654
2006	23,608	20,930	4,472	2,168	2,304	16,458
2007	23,431	21,775	5,743	3,545	2,198	16,032
2008	25,932	19,398	5,893	3,727	2,166	13,505
2009	24,487	24,287	6,742	4,188	2,554	17,545
2010	17,916	20,264	5,198	3,579	1,619	15,066
2011	19,865	17,382	5,651	4,393	1,258	11,731
2012	21,843	16,774	6,059	5,223	836	10,715
2013	23,584	17,665	6,664	5,789	875	11,001
2014	25,033	19,783	8,151	7,334	817	11,632
2015	32,733	28,623	11,422	10,085	1,337	17,201
2016	30,747	24,895	8,465	7,324	1,141	16,430
2017	26,547	21,269	6,779	6,103	676	14,490
2018	29,504	21,084	6,931	6,139	792	14,153
2019	35,737	23,879	10,038	9,401	1,395	9,970

Notes to Table

1. Figures are for main applicants only. 2. Other grants include humanitarian protection, discretionary leave, and grants under family and private life rules, which relate to the introduction of a new approach to Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, from 9 July 2012; Leave Outside the Rules, which was introduced for those refused asylum from 1 April 2013; and UASC leave, which was introduced for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children refused asylum but eligible for temporary leave from 1 April 2013. From April 2003, exceptional leave to remain was replaced with humanitarian protection and discretionary leave. 3. Figures from 1989 to 1993 are rounded to the nearest five and may not sum due to independent rounding. 4. Initial decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period. 5. Some people refused asylum at initial decision may be granted leave to remain following an appeal.

Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2020](#), tables Asy_D01 and Asy_D02

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