

ICAR Statistics Paper 1

KEY STATISTICS ABOUT ASYLUM SEEKER APPLICATIONS IN THE UK

December 2009 update



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This paper was first produced by ICAR in 2003 and has been subsequently updated annually. The current version was updated by Gabriela Quevedo.

Introduction

This paper provides brief statistical information on the asylum process in the UK, i.e. the number of people applying for asylum, where they come from and their demographic profile, the outcome of those applications, and how the figures compare with the number of asylum applications in other western European countries. Most of the information is derived from the latest annual (2008, published in August 2009¹) and quarterly (Q2 and Q3 2009) statistical bulletins, published by the [Research Development Statistics](#) (RDS)² unit within the Home Office. These bulletins provide a range of statistical data relating to asylum applications, initial decisions and appeals, and related issues such as asylum support, detention and removals. Unless otherwise stated, the Home Office figures cited in this paper (apart from percentages) are rounded to the nearest 5.

About Home Office statistics

The Home Office RDS unit is the main source of data on the UK asylum process and flows of individuals through it. Throughout the asylum process, administrative data is entered into a number of computerised databases, which are supported by a small number of manual systems. The Case Information Database (CID) records information on applications, decisions, appeals, removals (including voluntary assisted returns), persons held in detention and persons leaving detention. The Asylum Seekers Support System Database (ASYS) records details of asylum seekers applying and receiving support.

The quarterly and annual asylum statistics only contain a subset of the data that is collected by the RDS. However, as part of National Statistics, the department is obliged to balance user needs with the resources that are required in order to expand the data available to the public. In addition to data included in its regular publications, more detailed breakdowns may be available on request, subject to available resources. Contact details are provided within all RDS publications.

Revised figures

The figures produced by the Home Office and other agencies are subject to possible future revision and, in the past, some of the revisions have been significant. In general, quarterly figures published online are revised in the following annual bulletin. In recent years the size of revisions has fallen over time as new electronic data systems have been developed and efforts have been made to monitor and improve data quality.

2009 saw a number of developments in the collection of entry and exit data,³ including an agreement between the Home Office and ONS to share data from the e-Borders pilot system (Project Semaphore) for research purposes. The International Passengers Survey (IPS) has also been redesigned and will be reviewed to ensure it remains optimal in terms of the balance of sampling between ports.

¹ **Home Office** (2009), Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom 2008, 14/09, August 2009. London: Home Office. Available at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/hosb1409.pdf>. Supplementary excel tables available at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/hosb1409supp.xls>

² Further information about RDS available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.html>

³ **ONS** (2009): [Migration Statistics Improvement Work Programme Update, August 2009](#)

The quality, availability and reliability of asylum and migration statistics

The **Office for National Statistics (ONS)** became independent in April 2008 and is overseen by the Statistics Board of the UK Statistics Authority. ONS is the body responsible for ensuring that asylum and immigration statistics produced by the Home Office comply with the UK Statistics Authority's '[Code of Practice for Statistics](#)'⁴ The legal framework for this is set out in the '[Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#)' which establishes that any national statistic output must be 'fit for purpose, methodologically sound, politically independent and transparently produced'.

Following the creation of the Border and Immigration Agency (BIA),⁵ a review of BIA statistics was announced in July 2007,⁶ and a subsequent consultation took place until February 2008. In the user consultation, a number of issues regarding the quality and availability of asylum and immigration statistics were highlighted:

- **The Immigration Law Practitioners Association (ILPA)** emphasized⁷ the need to preserve a capacity to compare any future data series with those of the past and encouraged the production of more cohort data⁸, which is important for monitoring processes. ILPA also noted the increasing number of Parliamentary Questions and Freedom of Information Requests that BIA was receiving, which showed how, in some areas of BIA operations, there had been little or no data available to meet the expectations and needs of stakeholders.
- **The Refugee Council** noted⁹ that figures about the 'New Asylum Model' (NAM)¹⁰ could no longer be provided because they did not meet ONS quality control, which in turn made it harder to scrutinise NAM adequately.

The contents of the quarterly asylum bulletin were reviewed following this user consultation and as a result the information is now grouped by key operational area of the UK Border Agency – i.e. border control, asylum, managed migration, and enforcement and compliance.¹¹

The National Audit Office (NAO) is the governmental office that audits central government accounts, in terms of the value for money achieved. In [2004](#)¹², it was

⁴ UK Statistics Authority (2009) Code of Practice for Official Statistics. London: Statistics House. Available at: <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-official-statistics.pdf>

⁵ The Border and Immigration Agency (BIA) was replaced in April 2008 by the UK Border Agency, bringing together the work previously carried out by, Customs detection at the border from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and UK Visa Services from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). For more background see http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/border_review.aspx

⁶ Available at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/bia-immig-stat-review-07.pdf>

⁷ The ILPA submission to the review is available at <http://www.ilpa.org.uk/submissions/BIA%20stats%20review.doc>

⁸ Cohort data refers to information that follows the behaviour of a specific group (cohort) of people over a period of time.

⁹ See Refugee Council policy response (2008) at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/bia-immig-stat-review-07.pdf>

¹⁰ NAM is a description used to distinguish new measures implemented by UKBA in 2007 to deal more quickly and effectively with asylum applications. Unresolved asylum claims (legacy cases) that had not been allocated a case owner prior to 5th March 2007 (when NAM was implemented) are dealt with by the 'Case Resolution Directorate' (CRD)

¹¹ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs08/asylum-stats-proposal-0508.pdf>

asked by the Home Office to examine the reliability of its quarterly asylum statistics. The report identified 'several weaknesses in the process of compiling statistics and in their presentation, some of which impact on other items in the published statistics'.

As a result of this consultation, in November 2008 the UK Borders Agency published [Asylum Performance - 2007](#) in which it compares performance to targets, particularly in relation to removals. The report claims the number of refugee claims is at its lowest level since 1993.

Freedom of Information Requests

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives any person legal rights of access to information which is held by a public authority. Any member of the public can put in a request through the website: <http://www.whatdotheyknow.com/> and the answer should be disclosed promptly, i.e. not later than 20 working days after the organisation has received the request.

The Ministry of Justice is the body responsible for freedom of information policy in the UK. For guidance on how to make a freedom of information request, please refer to <http://www.justice.gov.uk/requestinginformation.htm>

ICAR has recently made two requests to the UK Border Agency under the Freedom of Information Act:

1. Disaggregated data on those nationalities, and corresponding asylum applications, excluding dependants, 1999 to 2008 within the category 'Other Americas'.
2. Disaggregated data on those nationalities, and corresponding asylum applications, excluding dependants, 2008 within the category 'Other Middle East'.

The tables are presented in the appendix at the end of this document.

Cohort data

It is important to recognise that asylum figures usually relate to the number of events of a given type (for example, asylum applications and the granting or refusal of asylum) occurring within a particular time period (e.g. a calendar year or a calendar quarter) or at a particular point in time. These events do not necessarily relate to the same group of individuals (i.e. an individual may apply for asylum in one calendar year and then be granted asylum, or have their application refused, in another).

However, the Home Office has published some figures relating to applications and outcomes for the same group, or 'cohort', of people. For example, Table 2.8 of the 2008 statistics (page 65) summarizes the estimated outcomes of applications made in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008. This includes outcomes of appeals at the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) and the numbers of unsuccessful cases and

¹² **Comptroller and Auditor General** (2004) Asylum and migration: a review of Home Office statistics, HC 625, 2003- 2004, London: National Audit Office. Available at: <http://www.nao.org.uk/idoc.ashx?docId=78b5bf9a-171a-4965-a6c8-7fbc3d3d352e&version=-1>

corresponding removals. Equivalent data showing estimated outcomes can be found in previous annual statistics bulletins.

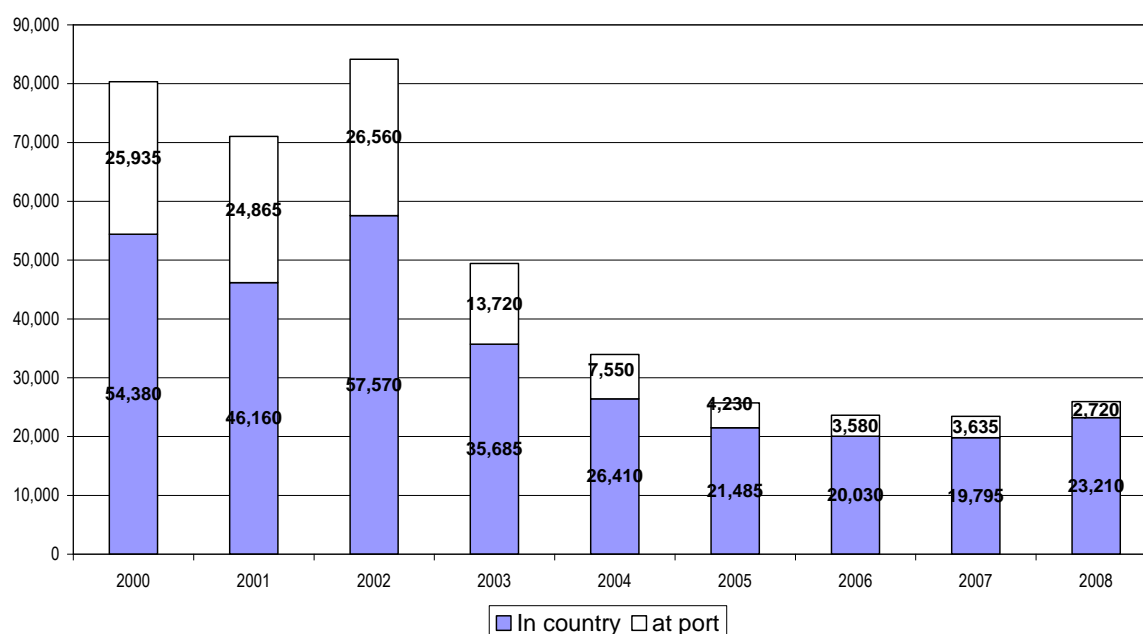
Of the cohort of principal applicants that applied for asylum in 2008 (25,930), 5,710 (22 per cent) were granted refugee status, Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave at initial decision, and then a further 1,625 (6 per cent) were allowed at appeals by the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT). 5,340 cases were still awaiting confirmation of an initial decision when the statistics were compiled.

How many asylum applications are made each year and what are the outcomes?

Number of applications

Excluding dependants, the United Kingdom received 25,930 applications for asylum in 2008, of which 23,210 were made in country and 2,720 at port. This is an 11% increase over 2007 (23,430). As shown in Chart 1, in the last decade the highest level of applications was received in 2002 (84,130). In subsequent years, the numbers of asylum applicants fell significantly. It is worth noting that 2008 is the first year since 2002 when an increase has been observed in the number of asylum applications received in the UK.

Chart 1: Applications for asylum in the UK excluding dependants 2000-08¹³

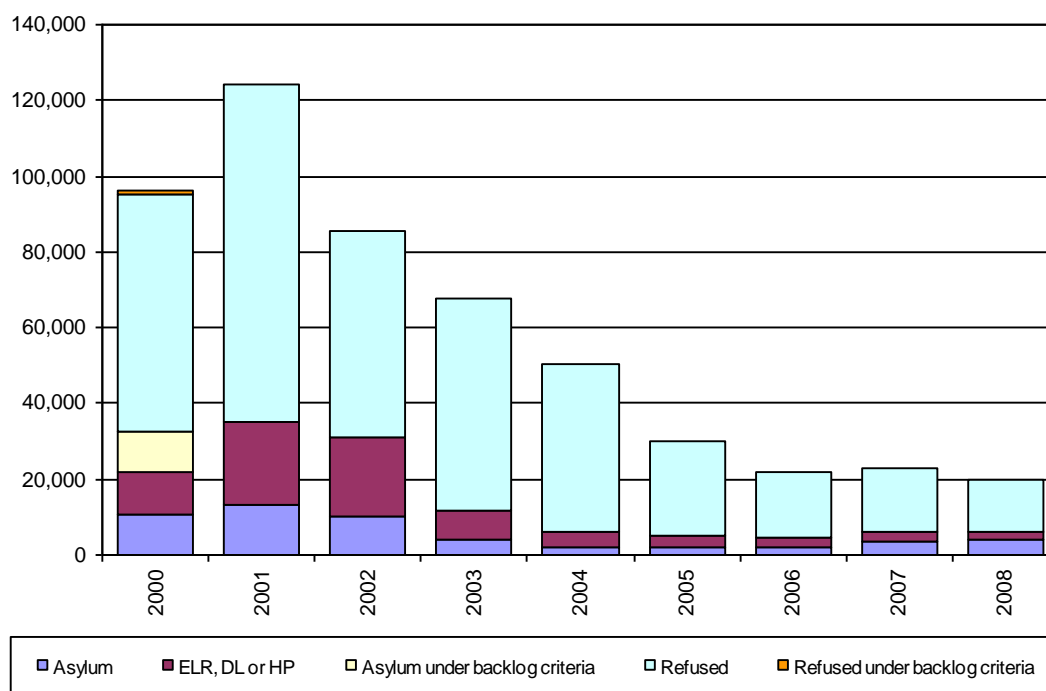


Application outcomes (excluding decisions following appeal outcomes)

In 2008, the number of people granted asylum at the initial decision stage was 3,935, 135 more than in 2007 (3,800). This is a small increase (3.5%), which is levelled out by the fact that the number of people granted Humanitarian Protection (HP) or Discretionary Leave (DL) decreased from 2,335 in 2007 to 2,220 in 2008. In other words, the number of people granted some form of leave to remain as refugees only rose from 6,135 in 2007 to 6,155 in 2008 which represents an increase of 0.32%.

¹³ Home Office (2009), [op cit](#), Figure 2.1, p.20. Spouses and children under 18 are counted as dependants.

Chart 2: Asylum decisions excluding dependants 2000-2008¹⁴



Outcomes for applicants by year of application

It is difficult to state precisely how many applicants from a given year are ultimately granted some form of leave to remain. As stated above, this is because the data on decisions released by the Home Office does not necessarily relate to applications made in the same year and excludes the outcome of appeals. Similarly, the published data on appeal outcomes in a given year may relate to decisions and applications made in a previous year.¹⁵

However it is preferable that the available 'period based' data on outcomes is published quickly and regularly, rather than only publishing data once all applications made in a given year have gone through the decision and, where applicable, appeals process. This would require waiting until all the decisions have been made for that year before publishing any data.

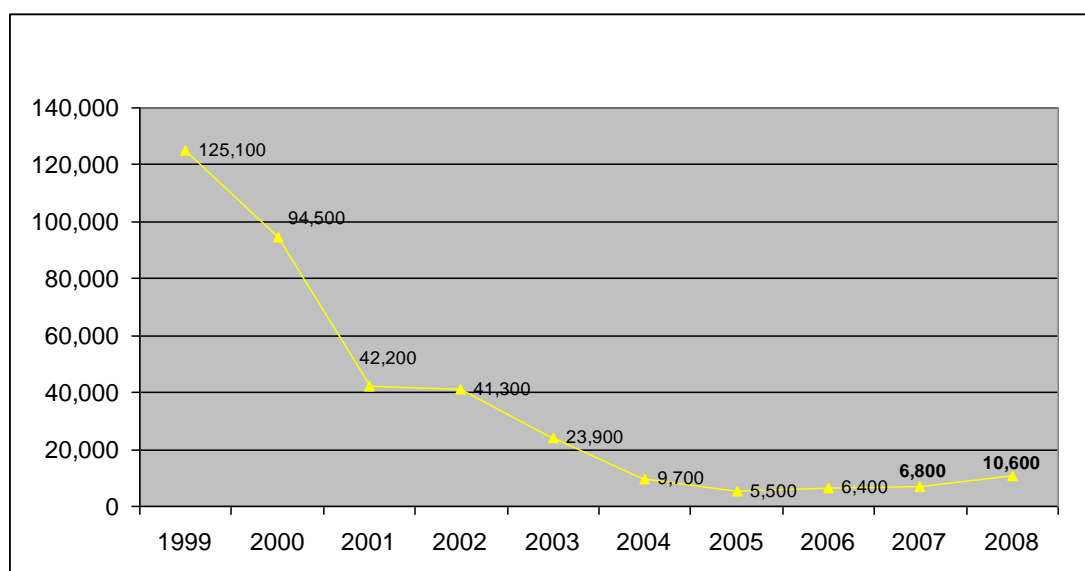
The annual asylum statistics feature a decisions outcome table that includes 'reconsidered cases'. The reconsidered cases included in these figures only relate to those cases that are reconsidered before an appeal is sent to the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT). The figures are not adjusted to include the outcome of appeals, and relate to decisions made in each year, rather than to the cohort of applications made in each year.

¹⁴ Home Office (2009), [op cit](#), Table 1.1. These figures show decisions by the year of outcome and include 'cases reconsidered' for which the initial decision was made between 2000 and 2007 inclusive. The figures for the numbers of decisions in each year are adjusted to include reconsidered cases and prevent double-counting of decisions. The 'backlog criteria' relates to measures taken in 1999 and 2000 to reduce the backlog of asylum applications made prior to 1996. 2008 figures are provisional. 2007 figures are revised.

¹⁵ ICAR (2009) Statistics Paper 2: Decision Making and Appeals Process. London: ICAR. Available at: <http://www.icar.org.uk/9556/statistics/analysis-of-asylum-and-refugee-statistics.html>

As shown in Chart 3, the number of asylum cases awaiting an initial decision in any given year has been systematically decreasing since 1999. However, from 2006 onwards these figures started to rise again, and at the end of December 2008, approximately 10,600 asylum applications were awaiting an initial decision, compared with 6,800 in December 2007.

Chart 3: Asylum cases outstanding¹⁶ excluding dependants 2000-2008¹⁷



The latest figures (Q3 2009) at the time of this update show that the number of cases (excluding dependants) recorded as awaiting an initial decision was 9,300, compared with 9,500 at the end of September 2008.¹⁸ The total number of asylum cases in progress at the AIT at 30 September 2009 was 5,000.¹⁹

Therefore, as of September 2009, it could be estimated that 14,300 asylum seekers still had their applications 'in the system'. This figure can be calculated by putting together the number of cases awaiting an initial decision for Q3, 2009 (9,300) with the number of cases in progress in the AIT for the same period (5,000).

It is important to highlight that this estimate excludes asylum seekers who are at the later Judicial Review stage (310 were granted permission to apply for Judicial Review at the end of 2008),²⁰ and also excludes refused asylum seekers who have come to the end of the process either because no appeal was lodged or because they have exhausted their appeal rights. Some of these will be receiving government 'Section 4' support (10,295 at end of 2008),²¹ while others will be awaiting removal or have lost contact with the asylum system.

¹⁶ This refers to the number of cases awaiting initial decision outcome at end of 2008.

¹⁷ Figures are rounded to the nearest 100, and may not sum to the totals shown because of independent rounding.

¹⁸ Home Office (2009a): Control of Immigration, Quarterly Statistical Summary, United Kingdom July – September 2009, p.13. Available at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/immig309.pdf>

¹⁹ *ibidem*. Figures based on a snapshot of work in progress, at the end of September 2009, from the AIT database ARIA. Figures rounded to the nearest thousand.

²⁰ Home Office (2009), *op.cit.*, p.91, Table 5.4.

²¹ *ibidem*, p.26.

Table 1: Applications and Home Office decisions (excluding decisions following appeal outcomes) 2000 – 2008²²

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	
Number of asylum applications	80,315	71,025	84,130	49,405	33,960	25,710	23,610	23,430	25,930	
Number of initial decisions	109,205	120,950	83,540	64,940	46,020	27,395	20,930	21,775	19,400	
Number of total decisions (following appeal outcomes)	96,400	124,205	85,575	67,740	50,360	29,885	21,745	22,890	19,855	
Number (and %) of applicants granted ²³	Asylum (including reconsidered cases)	10,595	13,490	10,255	4,300	2,085	2,225	2,285	3,800	3,935
	Asylum (excluding reconsidered cases)	10,375 (13%)	11,450 (11%)	8,270 (12%)	3,865 (6%)	1,565 (4%)	1,940 (7%)	2,170 (10%)	3,545 (16%)	3,725 (19%)
	ELR, DL or HP ²⁴ (all awards)	11,420 (13%)	21,600 (17%)	21,015 (25%)	7,550 (11%)	4,205 (8%)	2,930 (10%)	2,410 (11%)	2,335 (10%)	2,220 (11%)
Total percentage granted refugee status, ELR, DL or HP	26%	28%	37%	17%	12%	17%	22%	27%	31%	
Number (and %) refused asylum, ELR, HP and DL	62,720 (74%)	89,115 (72%)	54,305 (63%)	55,890 (83%)	44,070 (88%)	24,730 (83%)	17,050 (78%)	16,755 (73%)	13,700 (69%)	
Number of appeals ²⁵ received by Home Office	46,190	74,365	51,695	46,130	35,110	4,935	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Number of appeals received by IAA/AIT	28,935	47,905	64,125	70,575	47,000	24,835	14,920	14,060	10,660	

²² Home Office (2009), [op.cit.](#) Figures relate to principal applicants only i.e. they do not include dependants.

²³ These figures include outcomes of asylum applications that may not have been made in the same year.

²⁴ Humanitarian protection (HP) and discretionary leave (DL) replaced exceptional leave to remain (ELR) from 1 April 2003

²⁵ Since April 2005, appeals have been lodged directly with the AIT.

Home Office estimates

In order to overcome the problem of relating asylum outcomes to specific cohorts of applicants when seeking to obtain a clear percentage of those granted some form of status and those rejected, the Home Office has published estimates of the outcomes of the applications made from 2000 - 2008.

The estimates include the effect of the outcomes of appeals at the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) as well as initial decisions and cases reconsidered by the Home Office, and are based on cases where outcomes have been recorded. Comparable figures are not available for those cases that were successful after appeal to the Immigration Appeal Tribunal or higher courts.

Estimates for 2005-2008 are given below:²⁶

- Of the 25,930 applicants for asylum in 2008, the Home Office estimates that including appeals at the AIT, 47% will result in refusals or withdrawals, 19% will result in grants of asylum; and 9% will result in grants of ELR, HP or DL.
- Of the 23,430 applicants for asylum in 2007, the Home Office estimated that including appeals at the AIT, 56% would result in refusals or withdrawals, 22% will result in grants of asylum; and 10% will result in grants of ELR, HP or DL.
- Of the 23,610 applicants for asylum in 2006, the Home Office estimated that including appeals at the AIT, 62% would result in refusals or withdrawals, 21% will result in grants of asylum; and 11% will result in grants of ELR, HP or DL.
- Of the 25,710 applicants for asylum in 2005, the Home Office estimated that, including appeals at the IAA/AIT, 65% would result in refusals, or withdrawals; 18% will result in grants of asylum; and 11% will result in grants of ELR, HP or DL.

These figures show that a majority of asylum applicants are refused asylum and that only between 28% and 30% are given some form of status.

²⁶ Home Office (2009), [op.cit.](#), Table 2.8, p.65.

Do the figures include the dependants of those seeking asylum?

The figures in Charts 1 and 2 exclude dependants. For annual data up to 2001, the Home Office estimated the number of dependants. However in the published asylum data for 2002 - 2007, figures for dependants at application and outcome stages are recorded and the number of dependant applicants is also disaggregated by age, gender and nationality.²⁷

- In 2008, the number of dependants was 5,385. Therefore, including dependants, the number of asylum applications in 2008 was 31,315.
- In 2007, the number of dependants was 4,870. Therefore, including dependants, the number of asylum applications in 2007 was 28,300.
- In 2006, the number of dependants was 4,710. Therefore including dependants, the number of asylum applications in 2006 was 28,320.
- In 2005, the number of dependants was 5,130. Therefore including dependants, the number of asylum applications in 2005 was 30,840.

The statistical information available on dependants is in the majority of cases for those whose information is recorded at the same time as the principal applicant or before the initial decision on the principal applicant is made. Information on dependants who are recorded on the CID database after the initial decision is made is also included.

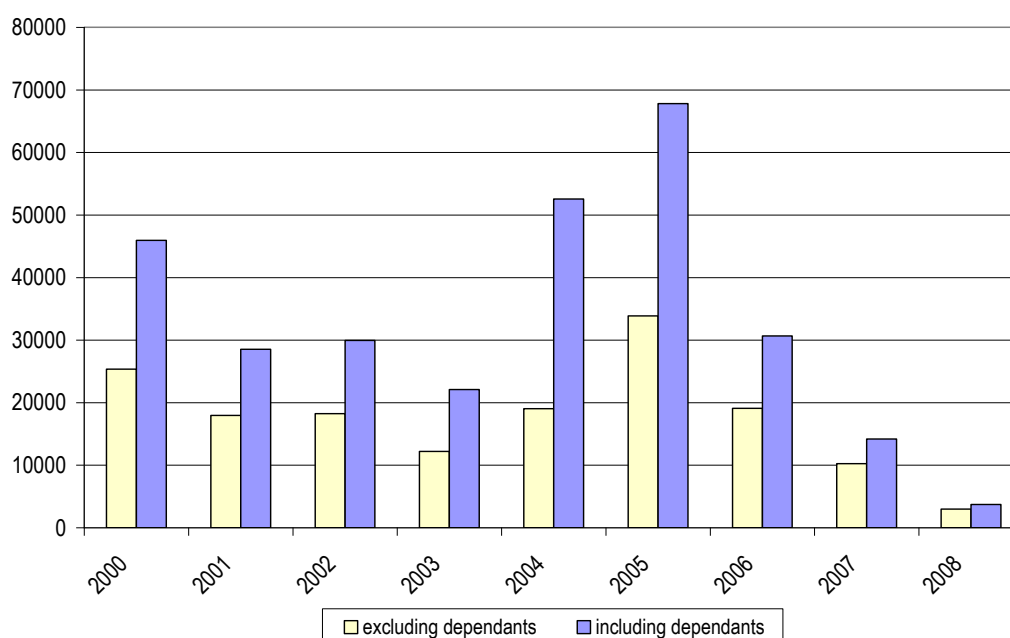
However, figures for the number of dependants joining those with refugee status through family reunion are not available, as they are not asylum seekers themselves and are joining a family member under different immigration procedure. Such dependants are nevertheless included within overall totals for grants of settlement to spouses and dependants.

²⁷ Home Office (2009), [op.cit.](#) p 59.

How many asylum seekers are granted settlement in the UK?

The settlement figures produced by the Home Office indicate the number of asylum applicants that are given Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) in the UK. Since August 2005²⁸ all refugees, other than those arriving in the UK under managed migration resettlement schemes such as the Gateway Programme,²⁹ have been granted five years' limited leave rather than ILR. At the end of this period they are entitled to apply for settlement. Humanitarian Protection has been brought in line with refugee leave, and as such those granted HP may also apply for settlement after five years. For Discretionary Leave to Remain (DL), the time limit of six years before applying for settlement still remains.³⁰

Chart 4: Total grants of settlement to asylum applicants, excluding and including dependants, 2000-2008³¹



The numbers of asylum seekers granted settlement (Indefinite Leave to Remain) between 2000 and 2008 are shown in Chart 4, with separate figures excluding and including dependants granted settlement at the same time as the principal applicant.

²⁸ Until August 2005 individuals recognised as refugees were also awarded indefinite leave to remain in the UK. Those granted Humanitarian Protection (HP) were eligible to apply for settlement after three years and those on Discretionary Leave (DL) were normally eligible to apply for indefinite leave to remain after completing six years in this category.

²⁹ See ICAR's navigation guide on resettlement programmes and the UK: <http://www.icar.org.uk/9562/navigation-guides/navigation-guides.html> See also the Home Office guide on claiming asylum: <http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/asylum/claimingasylum/humanrightsapps/>

³⁰ Home Office (2009) *op cit*, p. 98 (Explanatory note 2.7, 2.8).

³¹ Home Office (2009), *op cit*, table 4.4, p. 79 and previous annual statistics.

The figures include cases won upon appeal or reconsideration, and in the data from 2004-8, grants of settlement under the Family ILR exercise or 'amnesty'.³²

Chart 4 reflects the higher number of decisions taken in later years, measures introduced to clear the number of cases awaiting initial decisions and a number of changes to the rules regarding the qualifying criteria for settlement, in particular in 1999 and 2000.

Sizing the refugee population

Although cumulative totals of these 'settlement' figures are often used to estimate the size of the refugee population in the UK, this method is problematic. The numbers of those with refugee status or other forms of protection who subsequently leave the UK are not recorded and the settlement figures for dependants reproduced above only include those who are granted settlement at the same time as the principal applicant.

Figures for the number of dependants of refugees joining those granted settlement afterwards through family reunion channels are not separately identified within data for grants of settlement to dependants and spouses. While such dependants are not classified as refugees so do not technically form part of the refugee population, they are likely to be considered part of a refugee community in qualitative terms. This is in contrast to dependants that accompany asylum seekers who are awarded refugee status.

Unsuccessful applicants

There are no absolute figures for the number of unsuccessful asylum applicants that, after coming to the end of the asylum process, either remain in the country or leave the UK voluntarily without participating in a formal return scheme. Such individuals do not have refugee status and so do not officially form part of the refugee population.

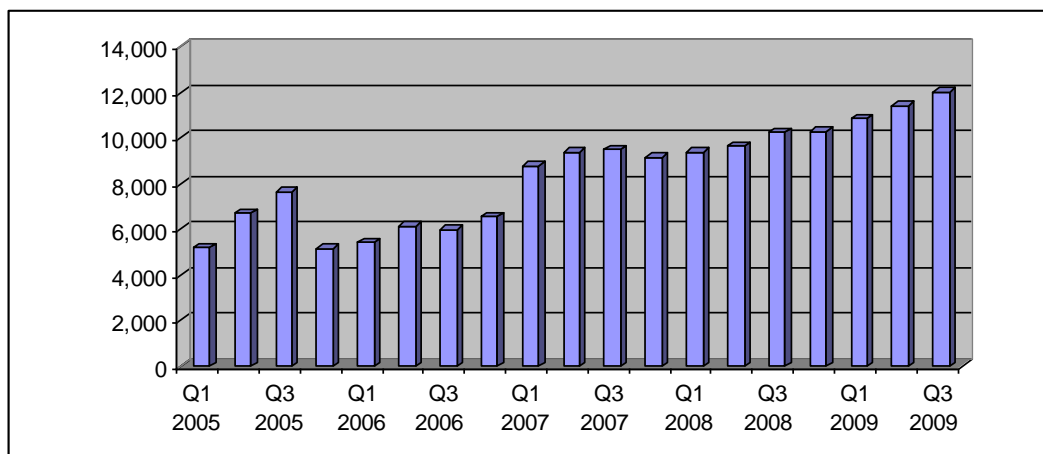
However, in 2005 the Home Office began to publish figures for the numbers of individuals receiving 'hard case' support under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. Individuals receiving this support have had their asylum application refused, would be otherwise destitute and are temporarily unable to leave the UK for specific reasons, such as there being no current viable route of return to their country of origin.³³

³² The Family ILR Exercise, announced by the Home Secretary on October 2003, allows certain asylum-seeking families who have been in the UK for four or more years to stay.

³³ Other reasons include: being unable to leave the UK by reason of a physical impediment to travel or some other medical reason; being unable to leave the UK because there is no current viable route of return to the country of origin; taking reasonable steps to leave the UK or place themselves in a position in which they can leave the UK; permission has been obtained to proceed with a judicial review against a decision relating to the person's asylum claim; or the provision of support is otherwise necessary to avoid a breach of the person's human rights.

In December 2008 there were 10,295 applicants in receipt of Section 4 support, and at the end of the third quarter of 2009 there were 12,020 applicants, excluding dependants, in receipt of Section 4 support, 18 per cent higher than in Q3 2008 (10,220)³⁴

Chart 5: Number of applicants in receipt of section 4 support: first quarter (Q1) 2005 to third quarter (Q3) 2009



How do the figures compare with those for other countries?

The most recent annual asylum application figures for European countries are given in Table 2. Data on the number of applications per 1,000 of population are also given. The UK received 0.51 asylum applicants per 1,000 people in 2008, just above the European average at 0.48.

³⁴ Home Office (2008a) [op cit](#), p. 11.

Table 2: Asylum applications in Europe,³⁵ including dependants, in 2008³⁶

Country	Number of applications	Applications per 1,000 of population
Malta	2,600	6.33
Cyprus	3,900	3.70
Norway	14,400	3.02
Sweden	24,400	2.64
Switzerland	16,600	2.18
Greece	19,900	1.77
Austria	12,800	1.53
Belgium	14,000	1.31
Luxembourg	500	0.95
Ireland	3,800	0.85
Netherlands	13,400	0.82
Finland	4,000	0.76
France	35,200	0.57
Italy	31,200	0.52
United Kingdom	31,300	0.51
Denmark	2,400	0.43
Hungary	3,100	0.31
Germany	22,100	0.27
Poland	7,200	0.19
Slovakia	900	0.17
Czech Republic	1,700	0.16
Slovenia	200	0.12
Spain	4,500	0.10
Bulgaria	700	0.10
Lithuania	200	0.06
Romania	1,100	0.05
Portugal	200	0.02
Latvia	100	0.02
Estonia	*	0.01
Total Europe	241,300	0.48

France received more asylum applications than any other European Union country in 2008 (15 per cent of the EU27 total), (16% of the total EU27), followed by the UK (13 per cent of the EU27 total). However, as shown in table 2, when the relative size of domestic population is taken into account, the UK ranks 15th amongst the total of Europe in terms of asylum seekers per head of population.

It is difficult to assess the relative 'burden' of asylum and refugee numbers experienced by different countries around the world. A number of factors, such as

³⁵ Europe includes here all European Union countries categorised as EU27 plus Norway and Switzerland. EU27 countries are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

³⁶ Home Office (2009), [op.cit.](#) p. 60, Table 2.3.

population, population density, national income or capacity of public services can impact upon a country's ability to manage and support large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers. Some countries may receive a large number of refugees and asylum seekers but have a low population density or high national income, and so able to deal with the potential social and financial impact; on the other hand, other countries may experience a greater impact from a smaller number of refugees and asylum seekers due to having a small population or underdeveloped public services.

A measure of the relative impact of hosting refugees can be obtained by comparing the refugee population with the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)/ Purchasing Power Parity [PPP] per capita of a country. Table 3 provides a snapshot of the top ten countries with the highest number of refugees per 1 USD GDP. Among the 25 countries with the highest relative contribution in hosting refugees, all are developing countries, including 15 least developed countries.³⁷ The United Kingdom does not figure in this table, as it ranks 43rd in this list with 8 refugees per 1 USD GDP (PPP) per capita. The first developed country is Germany at 26th place with 16 refugees per 1 USD GDP (PPP) per capita. For further statistics on refugee populations worldwide, refer to UNHCR's yearly publication on [global refugee trends](#).³⁸

Table 3: Indicators of host country capacity and contributions

Country	Refugees to GDP (PPP) per capita	
	Rank	Ratio
Pakistan	1	733
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	2	496
United Rep. of Tanzania	3	262
Syrian Arab Rep.	4	257
Chad	5	230
Kenya	6	211
Uganda	7	144
Nepal	8	116
Jordan	9	102
Ethiopia	10	98

Source: UNHCR 2008 Global trends

What are the main nationalities of those seeking asylum in the UK?

The main countries of origin of asylum applicants in 2008 were Afghanistan (14%), Zimbabwe (12%), Iran (9%), Eritrea (9%), Iraq (7%) Sri Lanka (6%), China (inc.

³⁷ For the full table see UNHCR 2008 Global Trends, Table 24,(Excel annexes), available at: http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/08-TPOC-TB_v5_external_PW.zip . See also: Asylum Levels and Trends in Industrialized Countries First Half 2009: Statistical overview of asylum applications lodged in Europe and selected non-European countries, 21 October 2009 Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/4adebca49.html>

³⁸ UNHCR (2008) Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons UNHCR: Geneva. Available at : <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/STATISTICS/4852366f2.pdf>

Taiwan) (5%), Somalia (5%), Pakistan (5%) and Nigeria (3%). In that year over two thirds (74%) of all applications for asylum in the UK were from nationals of these countries. Many of these nationalities have featured consistently in the top ten for the last five years, suggesting that a significant number of asylum applicants in the UK originate from protracted refugee situations.

Table 4: Top ten nationalities of asylum applicants 2004-2008³⁹

2004		2005		2006		2007		2008	
Iran	3,455	Iran	3,150	Eritrea	2,585	Afghanistan	2,500	Afghanistan	3,505
Somalia	2,585	Somalia	1,760	Afghanistan	2,400	Iran	2,210	Zimbabwe	3,165
China	2,365	Eritrea	1,760	Iran	2,375	China	2,100	Iran	2,270
Zimbabwe	2,065	China	1,730	China	1,945	Iraq	1,825	Eritrea	2,255
Iraq	1,715	Afghanistan	1,580	Somalia	1,845	Eritrea	1,810	Iraq	1,850
Pakistan	1,710	Iraq	1,415	Zimbabwe	1,650	Zimbabwe	1,800	Sri Lanka	1,475
DRC	1,475	Pakistan	1,145	Pakistan	965	Somalia	1615	China (inc. Taiwan)	1400
India	1,405	DRC	1,080	Iraq	945	Pakistan	1030	Somalia	1345
Afghanistan	1,395	Zimbabwe	1,075	Nigeria	790	Sri Lanka	990	Pakistan	1230
Sudan	1,305	Nigeria	1,025	India	680	Other M. East & North Africa	825	Nigeria	820

The Home Office [statistical bulletins](#)⁴⁰ provide further detail on the nationality of those seeking asylum in the UK, and information about conditions in asylum seekers' countries of origin is available from the [Country of Origin Information Service](#).⁴¹

ICAR's refugee population navigation guides also provide detailed statistical data for specific populations, visit <http://www.icar.org.uk/navigationguides> for more information.

³⁹ Home Office (2009), op. cit, supplementary tables, Table 2.a. Figures do not include dependents.

⁴⁰ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html>

⁴¹ http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html

Appendix: Data obtained by ICAR via Freedom of Information Request

Applications (1) received for asylum in the United Kingdom, excluding dependants, by country of nationality within Other Americas, 1999 to 2008

Country of nationality	Number of principal applicants									
	1999 (2)	2000 (2)	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 (P)
Anguilla	:	:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Antigua and Barbuda	:	:	*	*	-	-	*	*	-	*
Argentina	*	*	5	10	*	*	5	-	-	*
Aruba	:	:	-	-	-	-	-	*	-	-
Bahamas	*	-	-	-	*	-	-	-	-	-
Barbados	*	-	*	-	-	-	-	*	-	*
Belize	-	-	-	*	*	-	-	-	*	-
Bermuda (GBR)	:	:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bolivia	35	30	40	65	70	15	15	15	15	20
Bouvet Island	:	:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brazil	85	50	35	55	40	30	20	10	30	35
Canada	:	:	5	5	5	5	5	*	*	*
Cayman Islands	:	:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chile	15	10	5	*	10	5	*	*	*	-
Costa Rica	5	-	*	*	-	*	*	*	*	-
Cuba	15	10	15	25	20	15	15	15	15	5
Dominica	-	-	-	-	-	5	*	*	*	-
Dominican Republic	:	:	*	5	5	*	-	-	*	*
El Salvador	*	-	-	-	-	*	-	*	*	-
French Guyana	:	:	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	*
Grenada	*	*	-	-	-	*	-	5	*	*
Guadeloupe	:	:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Guam	:	:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Guatemala	*	*	-	20	10	-	-	-	5	*
Guyana	5	5	5	10	10	5	5	*	5	10
Haiti	-	*	*	-	-	*	*	-	*	*
Honduras	5	-	5	*	*	-	-	-	-	*
Martinique	:	:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mexico	-	*	5	5	*	*	-	5	*	*
Montserrat	:	:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Netherlands Antilles	:	:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nicaragua	*	-	*	-	*	*	-	*	-	5
Panama	*	-	*	5	*	-	-	-	-	*
Paraguay	*	*	-	-	5	-	-	*	-	-
Peru	20	10	15	10	5	5	10	5	*	*
Puerto Rico	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands	:	:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
St. Kitts And Nevis	:	:	-	-	-	-	*	-	*	*
St. Lucia	:	:	*	*	5	5	5	5	5	5
St. Pierre and Miquelon	:	:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	:	:	*	-	*	*	*	*	*	*
Surinam	10	-	-	*	-	*	-	-	-	-
Trinidad And Tobago	5	*	5	5	15	10	5	5	*	15
Turks and Caicos Islands (GBR)	:	:	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Uruguay	-	-	*	-	-	*	-	*	-	-
USA	:	:	10	10	10	5	5	10	10	15
Venezuela	15	10	15	15	15	10	10	10	5	-
Virgin Islands (US)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Americas (countries not listed) (3)	20	25	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Total Other Americas	240	155	170	240	230	130	100	95	115	130

(1) Figures rounded to the nearest 5 (- = 0, * = 1 or 2) and may not sum to the totals shown because of independent rounding.

(2) May exclude some cases lodged at Local Enforcement Offices between January 1999 and March 2000.

(3) From 1999 to 2000 data files do not list the countries of nationality for a minority of applications.

(P) Provisional figures.

: Not applicable / not available

Asylum applications (1) received in the United Kingdom, excluding dependants, and initial decisions (2) on applications, 2008

Other Middle East	Applications	Decisions								
		Total decisions	Grants of asylum	Grants of humanitarian protection	Grants of discretionary leave	Total refusals	Certified refusals	Other refusals	3rd ctry refusals(3)	Non-compliance refusals(4)
Saudi Arabia	10	15	-	-	-	15	-	-	-	-
Yemen	35	35	10	5	-	20	-	20	-	-
United Arab Emirates	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Qatar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Palestine	290	210	10	-	15	180	5	100	35	40
Oman	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lebanon	55	35	*	*	*	30	*	25	*	5
Kuwait	210	140	65	-	*	75	-	70	5	-
Jordan	15	15	-	-	-	15	-	15	-	-
Israel	10	10	-	-	*	10	5	5	-	-
Bahrain	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	625	460	85	5	15	345	10	235	40	45

(1) Provisional figures (other than percentages) rounded to the nearest 5 (- = 0, * = 1 or 2) and may not sum to the totals shown because of independent rounding.

(2) Information is of initial decisions, excluding the outcome of appeals or other subsequent decisions.

(3) Refused on the grounds that the applicant had arrived from a safe third country.

(4) Paragraph 340 of Immigration Rules. For failure to provide evidence to support the asylum claim within a reasonable period, including failure to respond to invitation to interview.