



## ICAR Statistics Paper 1

# KEY STATISTICS ABOUT ASYLUM SEEKER APPLICATIONS IN THE UK

February 2009 update



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This paper was first produced by ICAR in 2003 and has been subsequently updated in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008. The current version has been updated by Gabriela Quevedo and Jacob Lagnado.



## Introduction

This paper provides brief statistical information on the asylum process in the UK, i.e. the number of people applying for asylum, 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 annual and quarterly statistical bulletins, published by the [Research Development Statistics](#) (RDS)<sup>1</sup> within the Home Office –formerly IRSS-, which 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 is the main source of data on the 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)<sup>2</sup> 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, figures published in the quarterly web pages 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.

## The quality and reliability of Home Office statistics

With effect from 1 April 2008, and in accordance with the '[Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#)'<sup>2</sup>, official statistics can only be designated as 'National Statistics' following a formal assessment of their compliance with the UK Statistics Authority's '[Code of Practice for Statistics](#)'<sup>3</sup>. This means that all RDS statistical outputs are produced according to the framework for national statistics, as such, they must meet the following criteria: fit for purpose, methodologically sound, politically independent and transparently produced.

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<sup>1</sup> Further information about RDS available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.html>.

<sup>2</sup> **Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI)** (2007) [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#). London: National Archives. Available at: [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2007/pdf/ukpga\\_20070018\\_en.pdf](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2007/pdf/ukpga_20070018_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> **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>



The National Audit Office was asked by the Home Office to examine the reliability of its quarterly asylum statistics and a detailed report, [Asylum and migration: a review of Home Office statistics](#),<sup>4</sup> was published in May 2004. Whilst concluding that the asylum data and statistics are 'in most respects reliable', 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.

The Home Office initiated a [quality review](#)<sup>5</sup> of its immigration statistics publications, in accordance with the Code of Practice for National Statistics, which requires a review at least every five years. The review considered the quality and coverage of the statistics released in specific Home Office publications and was conducted by an independent consultant. The final [report](#),<sup>6</sup> identified three shortcomings in the basic data: an individual's progress through all the various control processes cannot readily be tracked; particular elements of data often need extensive quality assurance before they can be used to produce National Statistics; and the categories used to classify some variables are not always ideally suited to the needs of users of the statistics.

In 2007 the Border and Immigration Agency (BIA)<sup>7</sup> was created. In July a [review](#)<sup>8</sup> of BIA statistics was announced, following a National Statistics Quality Review (NSQR) on the control of immigration. As well as taking forward the NSQR's recommendations the review aimed to take account of new structural and policy changes such as the remit of the BIA. A key stated aim was to improve the breadth as opposed to the depth of statistical information with the expectation that this might make for a "more balanced perspective on the control of immigration". The consultation period ended in February 2008. The [Refugee Council](#) and [Immigration Law Practitioners Association](#) were among those who published their responses.<sup>9</sup>

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.

## 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

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<sup>4</sup> **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> .

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/immigpid.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> **Allnutt, D.** (2006) Review of Home Office Publications of Control of Immigration Statistics, National Statistics Quality Review Series, Report no. 46. London: Home Office. Available at: [http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs06/immig\\_review\\_06.pdf](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs06/immig_review_06.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> In April 2008 the UK Border Agency was created, bringing together the work previously carried out by the Border and Immigration Agency (BIA), Customs detection work at the border from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and UK Visa Services from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). Background information about the development of the UK Border Agency is available from the Cabinet Office's border review, Security in a Global Hub at [http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/border\\_review.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/border_review.aspx)

<sup>8</sup> Once this review is completed, it will be available at <http://www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/methodology-and-quality/quality/nat-stats-qual-revs/index.html>

<sup>9</sup> See Refugee Council policy response (2008) at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/bia-immig-stat-review-07.pdf> and ILPA submission to the review at <http://www.ilpa.org.uk/submissions/menu.html>



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, the text and table on pages 17-18 of the 2005 asylum statistics<sup>10</sup> summarises the estimated outcomes of applications made in 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005, including outcomes of appeals at the former Immigration Appellate Authorities (IAA) –now Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT)- and the numbers of unsuccessful cases and corresponding removals.<sup>11</sup> Equivalent data showing estimated outcomes of applications made in 2006 and 2007 can be found on page 77, table 12.1 of the 2007 asylum statistics<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Heath, T., Jeffries, R. and Pearce, S. (2006) Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2005, 14/06, 22 August 2006. London: Home Office. Available at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs06/hosb1406.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> For further information on appeals refer to ICAR (2009) Decision Making and Appeals Process. London: ICAR. <http://www.icar.org.uk/9556/statistics/analysis-of-asylum-and-refugee-statistics.html> and the AIT at : <http://www.ait.gov.uk>

<sup>12</sup> Home Office (2008), Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2007, 11/08, 21 August 2008. London: Home Office. Available at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs08/hosb1108.pdf>.

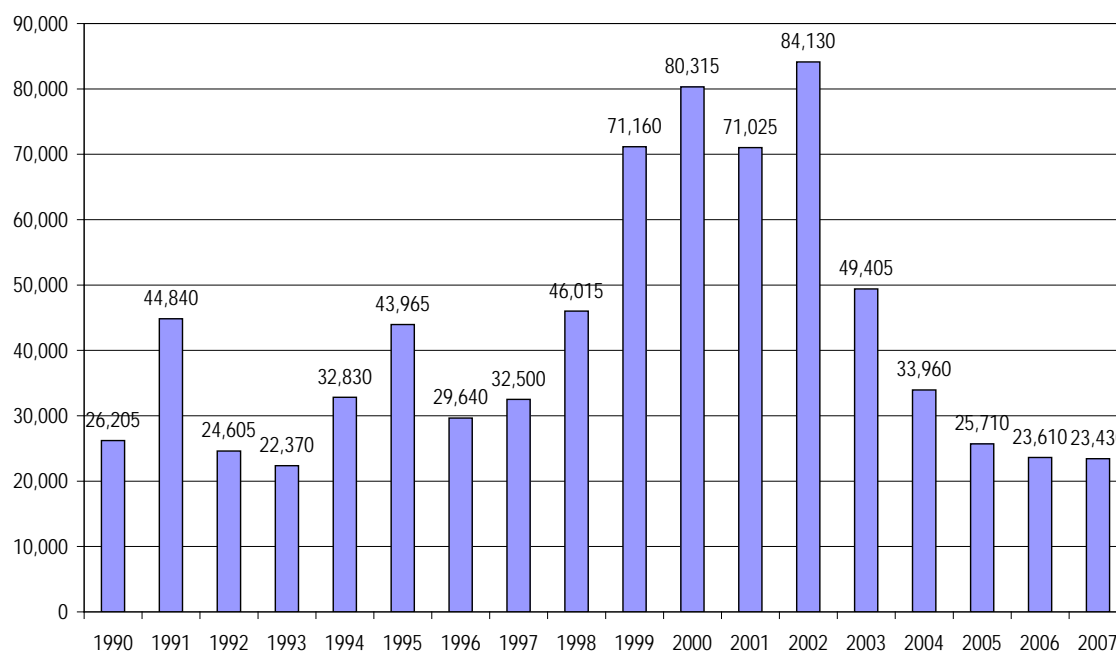


## How many asylum applications are made each year and what are the outcomes?

### Number of applications

During the nine years from 1990 to 1998 the number of applications for asylum in the United Kingdom averaged around 33,700 per year, ranging from 22,370 in 1993 to 46,015 in 1998. In 1999, the number of applications increased significantly to 71,160 and remained high in subsequent years, rising to 84,130 – the highest level ever – in 2002, before falling significantly to 49,405 in 2003. Applications continued to fall for the next two years, until levelling out at 23,430 recorded in 2007.

Chart 1: Applications for asylum in the UK excluding dependants<sup>13</sup>



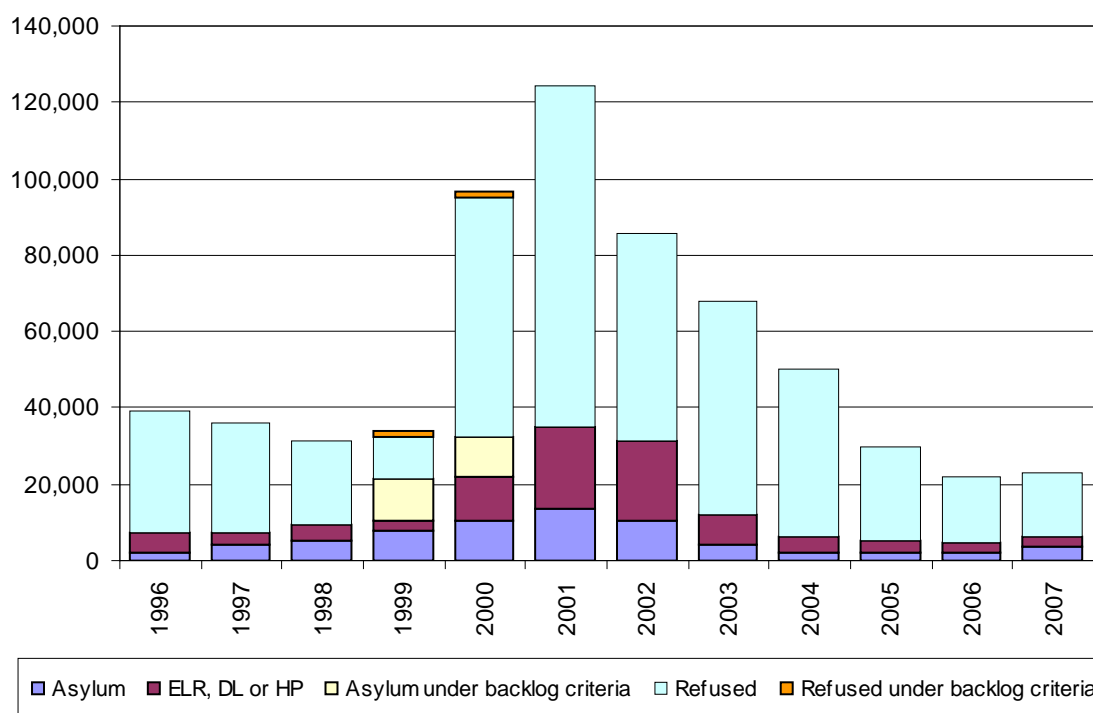
<sup>13</sup> Matz D., Hill R., and Heath, T. (2001) Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2000, 17/01, 25 September 2001, table 1.2. London: Home Office. Available at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hosb1701.pdf> and Bennett, K., Heath, T., and Jeffries, R (2007), Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2006, 14/07, 21 August 2007, London: Home Office. Available at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/hosb1407.pdf>, table 2.1. Spouses and children under 18 are counted as dependants.



## Application outcomes (excluding decisions following appeal outcomes)

The number of people granted asylum or exceptional leave to remain (ELR)<sup>14</sup> remained below 10,000 a year between 1994 and 1998 before increasing from 1999 onwards, then falling again between 2003 and 2006. This increase and subsequent fall is in line with a similar rise and fall in applications and also record levels of initial decisions in 2000 and 2001 (including measures in 1999 and 2000 taken to reduce the backlog of pre-1996 and pre-1993 applications that remained unresolved). In 2007, the number of people granted asylum rose from 2,285 to 3,800.

Chart 2: Asylum decisions excluding dependants 1996-2007<sup>15</sup>



<sup>14</sup> Exceptional leave to remain was replaced by humanitarian protection (HP) and discretionary leave (DL) from 1 April 2003. Thus figures for 2003 to 2006 indicate combined grants of ELR, HP and DL.

<sup>15</sup> Home Office (2008), [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 2006 inclusive. These data on decisions by year of outcome are taken from table 1.1 in the Home Office annual asylum statistics publication. 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. 2007 figures are provisional. 2005 and 2006 figures are revised.



Table 1<sup>19</sup>: Applications and Home Office decisions (excluding decisions following appeal outcomes)  
1999 – 2007<sup>20</sup>

		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Number of asylum applications		71,160	80,315	71,025	84,130	49,405	33,960	25,710	23,610	23,430
Number of initial decisions		33,720	109,205	120,950	83,540	64,940	46,020	27,395	20,930	21,775
Number of total decisions		33,720	96,400	124,205	85,575	67,740	50,360	29,885	21,745	22,890
Number (and %) of applicants granted: <sup>16</sup>	Asylum (including reconsidered cases)	7,815	10,595	13,490	10,255	4,300	2,085	2,225	2,285	3,800
	Asylum (excluding reconsidered cases)	7,815 (36%)	10,375 (13%)	11,450 (11%)	8,270 (12%)	3,865 (6%)	1,565 (4%)	1,940 (7%)	2,170 (11%)	3,545
	ELR, DL or HP <sup>17</sup> (all awards)	2,465 (12%)	11,420 (13%)	21,600 (17%)	21,015 (25%)	7,550 (11%)	4,205 (8%)	2,930 (10%)	2,410 (11%)	2,335 (10%)
Total percentage granted refugee status, ELR, DL or HP		48%	26%	28%	37%	17%	12%	17%	22%	27%
Number (and %) refused asylum, ELR, HP and DL		11,025 (52%)	62,720 (74%)	89,115 (72%)	54,305 (63%)	55,890 (83%)	44,070 (88%)	24,730 (83%)	17,050 (78%)	16,755 (73%)
Number of appeals <sup>18</sup> received by Home Office		6,615	46,190	74,365	51,695	46,130	35,110	4,935	N/A	N/A
Number of appeals received by IAA/AIT		7,775	28,935	47,905	64,125	70,575	47,000	24,835	14,920	14,055

## 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.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> These figures include outcomes of asylum applications that may not have been made in the same year.

<sup>17</sup> Humanitarian protection (HP) and discretionary leave (DL) replaced exceptional leave to remain (ELR) from 1 April 2003.

<sup>18</sup> Since April 2005, appeals have been lodged directly with the AIT.

<sup>19</sup> Figures relate to principal applicants only i.e. they do not include dependants.

<sup>20</sup> Tables 1.1, 1.2 and 7.1 in Bennett et al (2007) and in Home Office- IRS (2008)

<sup>21</sup> 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>



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 publications 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. Home Office 2007 figures state that 6,800 asylum cases were still awaiting an initial decision at the end of 2007, and figures for the last quarter of 2008 show this figure to have risen to 9,400<sup>22</sup>. The total of asylum work in progress in the AIT at the end of 2007 was 4,000.

Therefore, at the end of 2007, it was **estimated** that **10,800** asylum seekers still had their applications '**in the system**'<sup>23</sup>. This figure can be calculated by putting together the number of cases awaiting an initial decision at the end of 2007 (6,800) **with** the number of cases in progress in the AIT for the same period (4,000)<sup>24</sup>. It is important to highlight that the estimate excludes asylum seekers who are at the later Judicial Review stage (270 were granted permission to apply for Judicial Review at the end of 2007)<sup>25</sup>, 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 (9,140 at end of 2007<sup>26</sup>), while others will be awaiting removal or have lost contact with the asylum system.

## 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 - 2007**.

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. The published data show that over the period 2000 to 2006, the number of appeals brought by the Secretary of State and allowed by the IAA/AIT was higher than the number of appeals brought by appellants and allowed by the IAA/AIT.

Estimates for 2005-2007 are given below:<sup>27</sup>

- Of the **25,710 applicants for asylum in 2005**, the Home Office estimates that, including appeals at the IAA/AIT, **62% will result in refusals, or withdrawals; 17% will result in grants of asylum;** and 11% will result in grants of ELR, HP or DL.

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<sup>22</sup> Home Office (2008a): Control of Immigration, Quarterly Statistical Summary, United Kingdom July 2008 – September 2008, available at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs08/immig308.pdf>  
Office, p. 8, available at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs08/immig308.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Home Office (2008), *op cit*, p. 16.

<sup>24</sup> *ibidem*, paragraph 40, p.16. Figure is rounded to the nearest thousand.

<sup>25</sup> *ibidem*, p.53. Table 7.3

<sup>26</sup> *ibidem*, paragraph 49, p.18.

<sup>27</sup> *ibidem*, p 77, table 12.1.



- Of the **23,610 applicants for asylum in 2006**, the Home Office estimates that including appeals at the AIT, 59% will result in refusals or withdrawals, **20% will result in grants of asylum**; and 10% will result in grants of ELR, HP or DL.
- Of the **23,430 applicants for asylum in 2007**, the Home Office estimates that including appeals at the AIT, 50% will result in refusals or withdrawals, **19% will result in grants of asylum**; and 9% will result in grants of ELR, HP or DL.

These figures show that a majority of asylum applicants are granted neither asylum nor short term protection, and that between 28% and 30% are given some form of status.



## 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.<sup>28</sup>

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

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.

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<sup>28</sup> [ibidem](#), p 11.

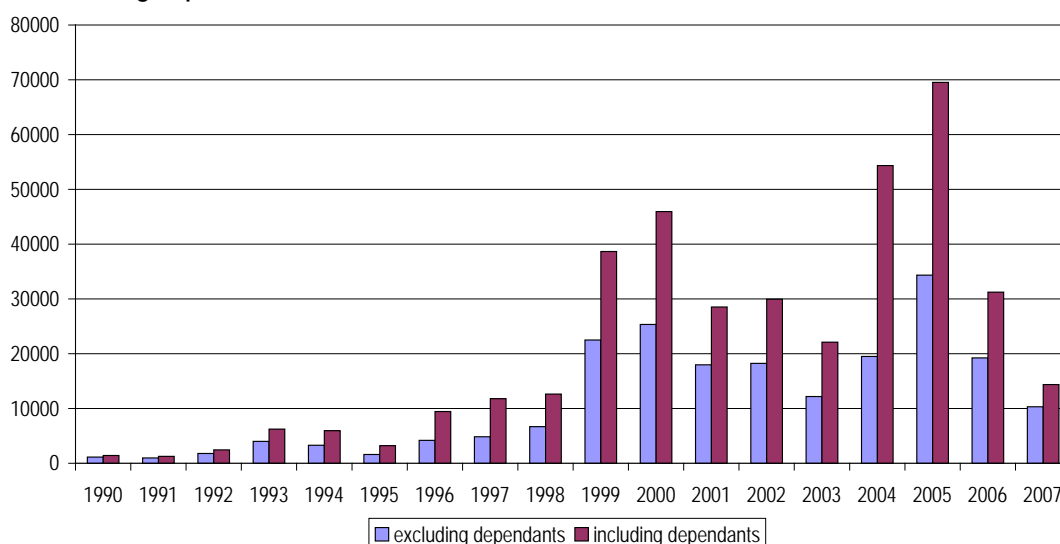


## How many asylum seekers are granted settlement in the UK?

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 by the Home Office. 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.

Since August 2005, all refugees, other than those arriving in the UK under managed migration resettlement schemes such as the Gateway programme<sup>29</sup>, have been granted five years' limited leave rather than Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR). At the end of this period they are entitled to apply for settlement. HP has been brought in line with refugee leave, and as such those granted HP may also apply for settlement after five years. For DL, the time limit of six years before applying for settlement still remains.<sup>30</sup>

**Chart 3: Total grants of settlement as refugees under exceptional leave arrangements, excluding and including dependants<sup>31</sup>**




The numbers of asylum seekers granted settlement (indefinite leave to remain) between 1990 and 2007, are shown in Chart 3 with separate figures excluding and including dependants granted settlement at the same time as the principal applicant. The figures include 'cases reconsidered' but do not include those granted asylum at the appeal stages of the asylum process.

Chart 3 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

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

<sup>30</sup> Home Office (2008) *op cit.* p 79 (Explanatory note 6).

<sup>31</sup> Heath, T. and Hill, R. (2002) *Asylum statistics United Kingdom 2001*, 09/02, 31 July 2002, table 12.1. available at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb902.pdf> and Home Office(2008), *op. cit.* p. 78, table 13.1.



criteria for settlement, in particular in 1999 and 2000. Data from 2004 to 2007 includes the effect of the Family ILR exercise.<sup>32</sup>

## 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 government-sponsored return scheme. Such individuals do not have refugee status and are not refugees, so do not 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.<sup>33</sup> In December 2007 there were 6,705 applicants in receipt of Section 4 support, and at the end of the third quarter of 2008 there were 10,220, 8 per cent higher than in the third quarter of 2007 (9,500).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> 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.

<sup>33</sup> 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.

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



## How do the figures compare with those for other countries?

The most recent annual application figures for European countries are given in Table 2. Data on the number of applications per 1,000 of population are also given. For statistics on refugee populations worldwide, refer to UNHCR's yearly publication on [global refugee trends](#).<sup>35</sup> The UK received 0.46 asylum applicants per 1,000 people in 2007, just below the average for the total of Europe at 0.48.

Table 2: Asylum applications, including dependants, in 2007<sup>36</sup>

Country	Number of applications	Applications per 1,000 of population <sup>(1)</sup>
Cyprus	6,800	6.79
Sweden	36,200	3.98
Malta	1,400	3.45
Greece	25,100	2.24
Switzerland	10,800	1.45
Austria	11,900	1.43
Norway	6,500	1.38
Belgium	12,700	1.20
Ireland	4,000	0.91
Luxembourg	400	0.85
Slovakia	2,600	0.49
France	29,200	0.47
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>28,300</b>	<b>0.46</b>
Netherlands	7,100	0.43
Denmark	2,200	0.40
Hungary	3,400	0.34
Finland	1,500	0.28
Italy	14,100	0.24
Germany	19,200	0.23
Slovenia	400	0.21
Poland	7,100	0.19
Czech Republic	1,900	0.18
Spain	7,500	0.17
Bulgaria	1,000	0.13
Romania	700	0.03
Lithuania	100	0.03
Portugal	200	0.02
Estonia	-	0.01
Latvia	-	0.01
<b>Total Europe</b>	<b>242,300</b>	<b>0.48</b>

<sup>35</sup> UNHCR (2008) Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons UNHCR: Geneva. Available at : <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/STATISTICS/4852366f2.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> Home Office (2008), [op cit](#). p. 33 , table 2.5.



Sweden received more asylum applications than any other European Union<sup>37</sup> country in 2007 (16% of the total EU27), followed by France with 13% and the UK with 13%. However, when the relative size of domestic population is taken into account, the UK ranks 11<sup>th</sup> amongst European Union countries in terms of asylum seekers per head of population, and 13<sup>th</sup> amongst the total of Europe.

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 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. Table 3 provides a snapshot of this for a selection of countries with respect to number of refugees and asylum seekers per head of the population and the country's rank on the United Nations Development Index.

**Table 3: Comparing refugee and asylum 'burdens'**

Country	Number of refugees <sup>38</sup>	Number of asylum applications (2006) <sup>39</sup>	Refugees and asylum seekers as proportion of population <sup>40</sup>	Human Development Index - rank <sup>41</sup>
Syria <sup>42</sup>	1,503,769	2,236	9.5	105 <sup>th</sup>
Iran	963,546	520	13.9	84 <sup>th</sup>
Pakistan	887,273	2,183	10.8	139 <sup>th</sup>
Germany	578,879	30,303	15.8	23 <sup>th</sup>
Tanzania	435,630	948	1.5	152 <sup>nd</sup>
United Kingdom	299,718	41,948	18.1	21 <sup>th</sup>
United States	281,219	40,449	5.3	15 <sup>th</sup>
France	151,789	58,196	3.4	11 <sup>th</sup>
Norway	34,522	11,259	9.9	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Brazil	3,783	590	0.0	70 <sup>th</sup>
Czech Republic	2,037	3,347	0.5	35 <sup>th</sup>

<sup>37</sup> European Union countries are those categorised as EU27, namely, 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. The 'total' of Europe includes Norway and Switzerland.

<sup>38</sup> Refugees are defined here according to the UNHCR definition as "persons recognized as refugees under the 1951 UN Convention/1967 Protocol, the 1969 OAU Convention, in accordance with the UNHCR Statute, persons granted a complementary form of protection and those granted temporary protection." See UNHCR (2008), *op cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>39</sup> UNHCR (2008), *op cit.*, tables 1 and 9.

<sup>40</sup> Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN Secretariat (2007): World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision Population Database, available at <http://esa.un.org/unpp/index.asp?panel=1>

<sup>41</sup> UNDP (2008) Human Development Indices, A statistical update 2008. Available at: [http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDI\\_2008\\_EN\\_Content.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDI_2008_EN_Content.pdf). The figures are for 2006. "The HDI is the original and best-known human development composite index. It is a summary measure of a country's average achievement in attaining: a) along and healthy life (as measured by life expectancy at birth). b) access to knowledge (today measured by two indicators: the adult literacy rate and the combined gross enrolment ratio (GER) in primary, secondary and tertiary education) c) a decent standard of living (as measured by the GDP per capita expressed in purchasing power parity [PPP] US dollars)" (UNDP 2008 *op. cit.*, p. 7).

<sup>42</sup> Refugee figures for Iraqis in Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic are Government estimates.



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

The main countries of origin of asylum applicants in 2007 were **Afghanistan (11%), Iran (9%), China (9%), Iraq (8%), Eritrea (8%) Zimbabwe (8%), Somalia (7%), Pakistan (4%), Sri Lanka (4%), and other M. East & North Africa (4%).** In that year over two thirds (71%) 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 2002-2007<sup>43</sup>

2002		2003		2004		2005		2006		2007	
Iraq	14,570	Somalia	5,090	Iran	3,455	Iran	3,150	Eritrea	2,585	Afghanistan	2,500
Zimbabwe	7,655	Iraq	4,015	Somalia	2,585	Somalia	1,760	Afghanistan	2,400	Iran	2,210
Afghanistan	7,205	China	3,450	China	2,365	Eritrea	1,760	Iran	2,375	China	2,100
Somalia	6,540	Zimbabwe	3,295	Zimbabwe	2,065	China	1,730	China	1,945	Iraq	1,825
China	3,675	Iran	2,875	Iraq	1,715	Afghanistan	1,580	Somalia	1,845	Eritrea	1,810
Sri Lanka	3,130	Turkey	2,390	Pakistan	1,710	Iraq	1,415	Zimbabwe	1,650	Zimbabwe	1,800
Turkey	2,835	India	2,290	DRC	1,475	Pakistan	1,145	Pakistan	965	Somalia	1615
Iran	2,630	Afghanistan	2,280	India	1,405	DRC	1,080	Iraq	945	Pakistan	1030
Pakistan	2,405	Pakistan	1,915	Afghanistan	1,395	Zimbabwe	1,075	Nigeria	790	Sri Lanka	990
Serbia and Montenegro	2,265	DRC	1,540	Sudan	1,305	Nigeria	1,025	India	680	Other M. East & North Africa <sup>44</sup>	825

The Home Office [statistical bulletins](#)<sup>45</sup> 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](#).<sup>46</sup>

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

<sup>43</sup> Home Office (2008), [op. cit.](#) p. 37, table 4.1. Figures do not include dependents.

<sup>44</sup> From this category, 780 cases correspond to Nigerian nationals.

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html>

<sup>46</sup> [http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country\\_reports.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html)