

Quarterly asylum statistics

May 2020

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

APPLICATIONS:

- The number of applications for asylum in the UK decreased in Q1 2020 compared with each of the previous two quarters.

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

Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020
8,922	7,633	9,140	9,871	8,455

Applications by nationality:

- Compared with the corresponding quarter in 2019 there was a decrease in the number of applicants from seven of the top ten countries of origin, but quite a small change for some. The largest percentage increase was from Syria.

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

	Q1 2019	Q1 2020	% change
Iran	1,126	1,014	-10%
Albania	873	887	+2%
Iraq	874	599	-31%
Eritrea	573	534	-7%
Pakistan	496	414	-17%
India	387	380	-2%
Vietnam	373	364	-2%
Sudan	453	338	-25%
Afghanistan	317	319	+1%
Syria	242	292	+21%

Applications by location

- The proportion of applications made at ports and in-country has changed only marginally in the past year, and for in-country applications was 77% in Q1 2020.

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

	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020
In-country	7,283	6,140	7,099	7,341	6,527
Port	1,639	1,493	2,041	2,530	1,928
Total	8,922	7,633	9,140	9,871	8,455

DECISIONS:

- In Q1 2020 5,244 initial asylum decisions were made, excluding dependants; a small change compared with the previous two quarters.
- 51% of initial decisions in Q1 2020 were to grant asylum, compared with only 42% in Q1 2019. 4.2% of initial decisions in Q1 2020 were to grant Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave, a small increase from Q1 2019 and 43% were refusals, a decrease from earlier quarters.

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

	Q1 2019		Q2 2019		Q3 2019		Q4 2019		Q1 2020	
Decisions	5,462		5,011		5,217		5,100		5,244	
Refugee status	2,286	42%	2,285	46%	2,383	46%	2,450	48%	2,658	51%
Humanitarian Protection	134	2.5%	154	3%	161	3%	193	4%	226	4%
Discretionary Leave	24	0.4%	19	0.4%	15	0.3%	13	0.3%	10	0.2%
Other Grants	269	5%	136	2.7%	139	2.7%	143	2.8%	105	2.0%
Refused	2,749	50%	2,417	48%	2,519	48%	2,301	45%	2,245	43%

- Countries with an above average percentage of applicants granted protection in Q1 2020 included Iran, Eritrea, Sudan and Syria. Several countries had very high refusal rates.

Table 5: Asylum decisions by nationality, Q1 2020, top ten countries for number of decisions

	Decisions	Refugee status	Humanitarian Protection	Discretionary Leave	Other Grants	Refusals
Iran	839	598	2	0	8	231
Iraq	429	123	20	1	19	266
Eritrea	421	380	1	0	2	38
Sudan	398	359	1	0	1	37
Syria	262	240	2	0	0	20
Afghanistan	253	150	6	1	4	92
Pakistan	246	89	1	1	8	147
Albania	238	58	2	0	14	164
India	199	0	0	1	6	192
Nigeria	177	41	2	1	8	125

APPEALS:

- 2,060 appeals were determined in Q1 2020, a decrease from the previous four quarters.
- The proportion of appeals allowed was 41% in Q1 2020, while 53% were dismissed. The remainder were withdrawn.

Table 6: Appeals determined, by quarter

	Q1 2019		Q2 2019		Q3 2019		Q4 2019		Q1 2020	
Determined	2,654		2,389		2,377		2,205		2,060	
Allowed	1,044	39%	1,000	42%	1,028	43%	897	41%	836	41%
Dismissed	1,458	55%	1,226	51%	1,194	50%	1,120	51%	1,089	53%
Withdrawn	152	6%	163	7%	155	7%	188	8%	135	7%

ASYLUM SUPPORT:

- The total number of asylum seekers (including dependants) in receipt of Section 95 asylum support at the end of Q1 2020 was 44,244, a small increase from the previous two quarters.
- 2,856 of these asylum seekers were receiving subsistence only support at the end of Q1 2020.
- 41,388 of these asylum seekers were supported in dispersal accommodation at the end of Q1 2020
- The region of the UK with the largest number of people in dispersal accommodation at the end of Q1 2020 was the North West (9,659).
- 2,577 asylum seekers were in initial accommodation under Section 98 support at the end of Q1 2020, a decrease from the previous quarter.

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

	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020
Dispersed accommodation	42,602	42,182	41,214	40,702	41,388
Subsistence only	3,046	3,021	2,942	2,847	2,856
Initial accommodation	1,832	1,583	3,049	2,738	2,577

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

- At the end of Q1 2020 4,077 applicants, including dependants, were receiving Section 4 support.

Table 8: Numbers in receipt of Section 4 Support at the end of the quarter (incl. dependants).

	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020
Number supported	3,903	3,893	3,857	3,804	4,077

ENFORCEMENT & COMPLIANCE:

Removals (Asylum Applicants)

- In the year ending March 2020 2,780 asylum seekers were removed or departed voluntarily from the UK, a 26% decrease from the year ending March 2019 (3,765).
- 1,307 asylum seekers left via enforced removals from the UK in the year ending March 2020, a 35% decrease from the year ending March 2019 (2,023).
- 1,473 asylum seekers left under Voluntary Return schemes in the year ending March 2020, a 15% decrease from the year ending March 2019 (1,742).

Note: The most recent figures are often revised in subsequent statistical releases, usually upwards, so percentage decreases can change significantly when this happens.

Detention

Persons leaving detention

A total of 1,631 people were recorded as having been removed from the UK upon leaving detention, having been held solely under Immigration Act powers, in Q1 2020.

Persons Detained at the end of Q1 2020

- At the end of Q1 2020 a total of 895 persons were detained, at this point 1 child was in detention.
- 439 persons who had sought asylum at some stage were being detained solely under Immigration Act powers (49% of all immigration detainees)
- 57 children were recorded as entering detention in the year ending March 2020.

CHILDREN:

Applications by Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum

- The number of applications from unaccompanied children, excluding dependants, was 763 in Q1 2020, a decrease from the previous two quarters.

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

	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020
Applications	951	753	901	1.046	763

- Iran was the top country of origin for unaccompanied children (18% of all applications in Q1 2020). Vietnam accounted for 16%, Afghanistan for 13%, Sudan for 12%, Eritrea for 10%, Iraq for 9% and Albania for 5%. Together these seven countries accounted for over 80% of all applications in Q1 2020.

- In Q1 2020 88% of applicants were male, a similar percentage to the previous quarter.
- In Q1 2020 90 asylum applications by unaccompanied children were made by girls.
- There are a small number of applications recorded as sex unknown.

Table 10: Applications by unaccompanied children seeking asylum

	Total Applications	Applications by girls	% Female
Q1 2020	763	90	12%
Q4 2019	1,046	119	11%
Q3 2019	901	94	10%
Q2 2019	753	72	10%
Q1 2019	951	110	12%

For the detailed statistics on the main countries of origin for unaccompanied girls seeking asylum see the Refugee Council briefing on annual trends in statistics.

Age Disputed Cases

- The number of age disputed cases raised in Q1 2020 was 125, a decrease compared with the previous four quarters. Afghanistan (30), Eritrea (19), Iran (19), Sudan (15) and Vietnam (14), were the countries of origin with the largest number of age disputed cases in Q1 2020.

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

	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020
Applications	285	144	167	186	125

N.B. The Home Office statistics on age disputed cases do not include the category of those applicants who claim to be children but who are treated as adult, according to Home Office policy. This used to state that in the opinion of an Immigration Officer “their physical appearance and/or general demeanour **very strongly** indicates that they are **significantly** over 18 years and no other credible evidence exists to the contrary” but the wording has changed since June 2019 to “very strongly suggests that they are 25 years or over”.

Decisions

- If an unaccompanied child’s claim for international protection is refused, they may be granted UASC leave. Since 2013 this leave is granted in cases where the only reason for giving leave is that the applicant is a child who cannot be returned. It is not granted for anyone over the age of 17 and a half.

Table 12: Initial asylum decisions on unaccompanied children aged 17 and under by Quarter

	Total	Refugee status	Humanitarian Protection	Discretionary Leave	UASC Leave	Family or Private Life	Refusals
Q1 2020	323	263	11	1	28	1	19
Q4 2019	410	330	19	0	31	1	29
Q3 2019	460	353	22	0	53	0	32
Q2 2019	521	401	22	0	41	2	55
Q1 2019	431	297	16	0	47	39	32

Table 13: Initial asylum decisions on unaccompanied children who have reached the age of 18 by Quarter

	Total	Refugee status	Humanitarian Protection	Discretionary Leave	UASC Leave	Family or Private Life	Refusals
Q1 2020	244	142	7	0	0	0	95
Q4 2019	224	125	9	0	0	0	90
Q3 2019	263	154	11	1	0	1	96
Q2 2019	331	153	18	3	0	2	155
Q1 2019	474	205	25	1	0	78	165

ASYLUM APPLICATIONS (DEPENDANTS):

- In Q1 2020 there were 2,114 dependants included in asylum applications.
- 1,568 of the dependants were under 18 years old and 1,168 were female.

Table 14: Dependants included in asylum applications

	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020
Number of main applicants	8,922	7,633	9,140	9,871	8,455
Number of dependants	2,258	1,873	2,506	2,291	2,114

For the detailed statistics on dependants see the Refugee Council briefing on annual trends in statistics.

FAMILY REUNION:

Adults who have been granted refugee status or humanitarian protection are entitled to apply for family reunion. Immediate family members, defined as spouses or partners and children under the age of 18 are eligible to apply for entry to the UK.

Table 15: Family reunion entry clearance visa grants by quarter

	Total	Under 18	18 and Over
Q1 2020	2,006	1,077	929
Q4 2019	2,371	1,151	1,220
Q3 2019	1,370	666	704
Q2 2019	1,735	885	850
Q1 2019	1,607	817	790

The majority of the outstanding family reunion applications at the end of Q1 2020 have been waiting for a decision for less than 6 months.

WOMEN AND GIRLS:

- In Q1 2020 there were 2,236 applications where the main applicant was a woman or girl. This represents 26% of all applications, a similar figure to previous quarters.

Table 16: Applications by women or girls by quarter

	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020
Total	8,922	7,633	9,140	9,871	8,455
Female	2,258	2,023	2,292	2,515	2,236
% Female	25%	27%	25%	25%	26%

- The proportion of female applicants varies considerably from country to country. For a very small number of countries there are more female than male applicants whereas in many countries the percentage of female applicants is low. Among the countries with the largest number of female applicants in Q1 2020 China, Nigeria, Vietnam and El Salvador have high percentages.

Table 17: Female applicants from the top ten applicant producing countries Q1 2020

	Female Applicants	Total	% Female
Iran	201	1,451	14%
Albania	250	1,002	25%
Iraq	142	743	19%
Vietnam	180	495	36%
Pakistan	114	460	25%
Eritrea	118	428	28%
Afghanistan	44	423	10%
China	183	413	44%
India	60	401	15%
Sudan	32	323	10%

Table 18: Top ten countries for female applicants Q1 2020

	Female Applicants	% Female of total application
Albania	213	24%
Iran	157	15%
Iraq	152	25%
Eritrea	151	28%
China	138	50%
Vietnam	123	34%
Pakistan	116	28%
Nigeria	112	50%
El Salvador	79	35%
India	60	16%

NOTE

The full detailed statistics covering the most recent period can be found on the Gov.UK website via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2020/list-of-tables>

For older statistics follow this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office/series/migration-statistics>

About the Refugee Council

The Refugee Council is one of the leading organisations in the UK working with asylum seekers and refugees. We give help and support to asylum seekers and refugees, and also work with them to ensure their needs and concerns are addressed by decision-makers.