

Quarterly asylum statistics

November 2020

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

The most recent period for which statistics have been published is the 3rd quarter of 2020, July to September. Many of the figures in quarters 2 and 3 show the impact of coronavirus and the lockdown restrictions and differ significantly from previous quarters as a result.

APPLICATIONS:

- The number of applications for asylum in the UK decreased sharply in Q2 2020 compared with previous quarters but rose again in Q3.

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

Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q3 2020
9,179	9,939	8,455	4,850	8,508

Applications by nationality:

- Compared with the corresponding quarter in 2019 there was an increase in the number of applicants from five of the top ten countries of origin. There were very large percentage increases for Sudanese and Stateless applicants. 'Stateless' has never featured in the top ten before Q2 2020.

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

	Q3 2019	Q3 2020	% change
Iran	1,401	1,092	-22%
Sudan	419	1,073	+156%
Eritrea	488	929	+90%
Iraq	652	692	+6%
Albania	829	515	-38%
Syria	311	462	+49%
Afghanistan	505	454	-10%
Stateless	152	337	+122%
Vietnam	369	246	-33%
Pakistan	523	241	-54%

Applications by location

- The proportion of applications made at ports and in-country has changed only marginally before Q2 2020 but increased hugely to 97% in-country in Q2 2020 and remained high, at 89%, in Q3.

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

	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q3 2020
In-country	7,136	7,405	6,527	4,716	7,566
Port	2,043	2,534	1,928	134	942
Total	9,179	9,939	8,455	4,850	8,508

DECISIONS:

- In Q3 2020 2,659 initial asylum decisions were made, excluding dependants; similar to Q2, and a large decrease compared with previous quarters.
- Only 24% of initial decisions in Q3 2020 were to grant asylum, much lower than previous quarters. 2.5% of initial decisions in Q3 2020 were to grant Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave, similar to Q3 2019 and 72% were refusals, a large increase from earlier quarters.

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

	Q3 2019		Q4 2019		Q1 2020		Q2 2020		Q3 2020	
Decisions	5,212		5,096		5,244		2,734		2,659	
Refugee status	2,382	46%	2,449	48%	2,658	51%	957	35%	632	24%
Humanitarian Protection	160	3%	192	4%	226	4%	94	3%	64	2.4%
Discretionary Leave	14	0.4%	13	0.3%	10	0.2%	12	0.4%	3	0.1%
Other Grants	140	2.7%	143	2.8%	105	2%	58	2%	55	2%
Refused	2,516	48%	2,299	45%	2,245	43%	1,613	59%	1,905	72%

- Countries with an above average percentage of applicants granted protection in Q3 2020 included Iran and Eritrea but refusal rates were generally high.

Table 5: Asylum decisions by nationality, Q3 2020, top ten countries for number of decisions

	Decisions	Refugee status	Humanitarian Protection	Discretionary Leave	Other Grants	Refusals
Iraq	359	23	10	0	11	315
Iran	350	99	0	0	0	251
Sudan	256	53	0	0	0	203
Albania	145	39	0	0	1	105
Eritrea	145	62	0	0	0	83
Afghanistan	142	50	2	0	1	89
Stateless	137	20	0	0	1	116
Pakistan	108	27	0	1	7	73
Syria	90	34	0	0	0	56
Yemen	80	5	7	0	0	68

APPEALS:

- 388 appeals were determined in Q3 2020, a decrease from Q2 and a large decrease from the previous quarters.
- The proportion of appeals allowed was 36% in Q3 2020, while 41% were dismissed. The remainder were withdrawn and the percentage withdrawn was higher than usual as happened also in Q2.

Table 6: Appeals determined, by quarter

	Q3 2019		Q4 2019		Q1 2020		Q2 2020		Q3 2020	
Determined	2,378		2,199		2,060		462		388	
Allowed	1,029	43%	898	41%	836	41%	169	37%	141	36%
Dismissed	1,197	50%	1,115	51%	1,089	53%	221	48%	161	41%
Withdrawn	152	7%	186	8%	135	7%	72	16%	86	22%

ASYLUM SUPPORT:

- The total number of asylum seekers (including dependants) in receipt of Section 95 asylum support at the end of Q3 2020 was 46,520, an increase from the previous four quarters.
- 4,131 of these asylum seekers were receiving subsistence only support at the end of Q3 2020.
- 42,389 of these asylum seekers were supported in dispersal accommodation at the end of Q3 2020
- The region of the UK with the largest number of people in dispersal accommodation at the end of Q3 2020 was North West England (9,958).
- 10,315 asylum seekers were in initial accommodation under Section 98 support at the end of Q3 2020, a very large increase from previous quarters.

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

	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q3 2020
Dispersed accommodation	41,214	40,702	41,388	42,289	42,389
Subsistence only	2,942	2,847	2,856	3,480	4,131
Initial accommodation (s98)	3,049	2,738	2,577	5,444	10,315

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

- At the end of Q3 2020 6,074 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).

	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q3 2020
Number supported	3,857	3,804	4,077	5,357	6,074

ENFORCEMENT & COMPLIANCE:

Removals (Asylum Applicants)

- In the year ending June 2020 2,216 asylum seekers were removed or departed voluntarily from the UK, a 38 decrease from the year ending June 2019 (3,555).
- 999 asylum seekers left via enforced removals from the UK in the year ending June 2020, a 46% decrease from the year ending June 2019 (1,835).
- 1,217 asylum seekers left under Voluntary Return schemes in the year ending June 2020, a 29% decrease from the year ending June 2019 (1,720).

Note: The most recent figures are often revised in subsequent statistical releases, usually upwards, so percentage decreases can change significantly when this happens. The figures up to September 2020 have not yet been published.

Detention

Persons entering and leaving detention

In the year ending September 2020 a total of 17,219 people were recorded as entering detention of whom 10,759 were asylum cases. In the same period 18,040 people left detention of whom 11,496 were asylum cases. Some people may have been in detention more than once.

Persons Detained at the end of Q3 2020

- At the end of Q3 2020 a total of 990 persons were detained, at this point no children were in detention.
- 565 persons who had sought asylum at some stage were being detained solely under Immigration Act powers (57% of all immigration detainees)
- 36 children were recorded as entering detention in the year ending September 2020.

CHILDREN:

Applications by Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum

- The number of applications from unaccompanied children, excluding dependants, was 848 in Q3 2020, similar to previous quarters other than Q2.

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

	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q3 2020
Applications	921	1.066	763	118	848

- Sudan was the top country of origin for unaccompanied children (26% of all applications in Q3 2020). Afghanistan accounted for 17%, Eritrea for 15%, Vietnam for 11%, Iraq for 5% and Iran for 4%. Together these six countries accounted for nearly 80% of all applications in Q3 2020.

- In Q3 2020 only 8% of applicants were female, a slightly lower percentage than usual.
- In Q3 2020 71 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
Q3 2020	848	71	8%
Q2 2020	118	3	2.5%
Q1 2020	763	90	12%
Q4 2019	1,066	122	11%
Q3 2019	921	99	11%

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 Q3 2020 was 325, a large increase compared with the previous four quarters. Sudan (121), Eritrea (53), Afghanistan (42), Ethiopia (18) and Vietnam (14) were the countries of origin with the largest number of age disputed cases in Q3 2020.

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

	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q3 2020
Applications	170	189	125	31	325

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. A smaller number of decisions than usual were made in Q3 2020.

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
Q3 2020	98	77	1	0	6	0	14
Q2 2020	39	32	1	0	0	3	3
Q1 2020	323	263	11	1	28	1	19
Q4 2019	410	330	19	0	31	1	29
Q3 2019	463	355	22	0	53	0	33

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
Q3 2020	129	57	6	0	0	0	66
Q2 2020	40	30	1	0	0	0	9
Q1 2020	244	142	7	0	0	0	95
Q4 2019	223	125	9	0	0	0	89
Q3 2019	263	154	11	1	0	1	96

ASYLUM APPLICATIONS (DEPENDANTS):

- In Q3 2020 there were 1,719 dependants included in asylum applications.
- 1,260 of the dependants were under 18 years old and 957 were female.

Table 14: Dependants included in asylum applications

	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q3 2020
Number of main applicants	9,140	9,871	8,455	4,850	8,508
Number of dependants	2,696	2,419	2,114	939	1,719

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
Q3 2020	1,624	922	702
Q2 2020	131	79	52
Q1 2020	2,006	1,077	929
Q4 2019	2,305	1,119	1,186
Q3 2019	1,878	917	961

The number of cases dealt with has increased from the very small number of cases dealt with in Q2 2020 but that may be due to a significant backlog of applications.

WOMEN AND GIRLS:

- In Q3 2020, there were 1,596 applications where the main applicant was a woman or girl. This represents 19% of all applications, a slightly lower figure than previous quarters.

Table 16: Applications by women or girls by quarter

	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q3 2020
Total	9,140	9,871	8,455	4,850	8,508
Female	2,292	2,515	2,236	1,087	1,596
% Female	25%	25%	26%	22%	19%

- 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 Q3 2020 China, Nigeria, and the Philippines have high percentages.

Table 17: Female applicants from the top ten applicant producing countries Q3 2020

	Female Applicants	Total	% Female
Iran	125	1,092	11%
Sudan	20	1,073	2%
Eritrea	233	929	25%
Iraq	106	692	15%
Albania	134	515	26%
Syria	34	462	7%
Afghanistan	27	454	6%
Stateless	78	337	23%
Vietnam	61	246	25%
Pakistan	41	241	17%

Table 18: Top ten countries for female applicants Q3 2020

	Female Applicants	% Female of total application
Eritrea	233	25%
Albania	134	26%
Iran	125	11%
Iraq	106	15%
China	94	61%
Nigeria	86	57%
Stateless	78	23%
Vietnam	61	25%
Pakistan	41	17%
Philippines	39	81%

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-september-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.