



BRIEFING

The UK's asylum backlog

AUTHORS: Mihnea Cuibus
Peter William Walsh
Madeleine Sumption
PUBLISHED: 28/04/2025



The UK has accumulated a large backlog of asylum cases. This briefing examines what we know about the asylum backlog, its causes, and its consequences.

Key Points

The UK continued to have a large asylum backlog at the end of 2024 – it stood at around 91,000 applications, 31% lower than the peak reached in 2022.

The backlog's decline stalled and briefly reversed in 2024 because fewer decisions were made in the middle of the year. The government says this pause in decisions was due to the Illegal Migration Act.

An additional appeals backlog has grown rapidly in the courts, reaching 42,000 applications at the end of 2024. The appeals backlog is a key barrier to reducing the number of asylum seekers accommodated in hotels.

The backlog contributed to the rising costs of the UK's asylum system, which reached £5.4bn in the 2023/24 financial year.

Slow decision-making affects asylum seekers, hampering integration.

Caseworker productivity has been a key driver of changes in the backlog.

Around 41,000 asylum applications were withdrawn in 2023 and 2024, some of which may eventually re-enter the system.

Afghan, Pakistani, and Iranian were the top nationalities of people in the asylum backlog at the end of 2024.

The UK had the fifth-largest asylum backlog in Europe at the end of 2024

Understanding the evidence

The asylum backlog is the number of asylum claims awaiting a decision – typically, an *initial decision* from the Home Office. The best data on the asylum backlog are found in the Home Office's [Immigration System Statistics quarterly release](#) (Tables Asy_D03 and Asy_10). Initial decisions can also be overturned on appeal, so some definitions of the backlog include cases awaiting the outcome of an appeal.

In any given period, the change in the size of the asylum backlog is driven by the number of new asylum applications, minus the number of “substantive decisions” and withdrawn applications. The backlog grows when more people apply than receive decisions (or are withdrawn). Conversely, the backlog shrinks when there are more decided and withdrawn applications than new applications.

Substantive decisions on asylum claims are either grants of protection or refusals. [Withdrawals](#) are counted as non-substantive initial decisions, and can be either explicit or implicit. Explicit withdrawals occur if the claimant notifies the Home Office that they no longer wish to pursue their asylum claim. Implicit withdrawals are made by the Home Office if the claimant fails to maintain contact with the Home Office or provide up-to-date details, leaves the UK prior to the conclusion of their application, fails to complete an asylum questionnaire within the provided deadline, or fails to attend reporting events or personal interviews. Although withdrawals may thus be viewed as non-substantive decisions, they nonetheless remove cases from the asylum backlog. In August 2023, [new immigration rules](#) allowed officials to classify a broader range of asylum claims as withdrawn.

Depending on what is included, there are different counts of the asylum backlog.

The most commonly used count is applications awaiting an initial decision from the Home Office (an administrative decision) and therefore excludes those awaiting the outcome of an appeal to an immigration tribunal (a judicial decision). Other counts include asylum applications at any stage of the administrative or judicial process, and hence include applications awaiting an initial government decision, as well as those awaiting the outcome of an appeal. Some figures cited in public debates include people whose asylum claims have been refused and have exhausted all rights of appeal but have yet to leave the country.

We also separately include figures on the number of asylum cases pending before the First-tier Tribunal, what we term the 'appeals backlog'. Most appeals will relate to refused claims, though some positive decisions may also be appealed, for instance if an applicant received another form of leave instead of an asylum grant. Data are extracted from the Ministry of Justice's [Tribunal Statistics Quarterly](#), Table FIA_04.

The asylum backlog figure is larger if family members are included. Each asylum application requests protection for a 'main applicant', and some include requests for protection for the main applicant's close family members, known as 'dependants'. These dependants include a partner and any children under 18, but not parents, siblings, extended family, or adult children. The dependants on an application receive the [same outcome](#) as the main applicant.

Because only one asylum decision is taken per application, this briefing generally refers to applications rather than people – that is, main applicants only. There are, however, some circumstances where it makes more sense to speak of the number of people in the backlog, such as in discussions around the number of asylum seekers in need of accommodation.

Finally, the Home Office publishes data on the asylum 'work in progress' (the 'WIP'). This is the widest measure of the backlog and refers to the total number of people in the asylum system: (1) applicants awaiting an initial decision; (2) those awaiting an appeal outcome; (3) individuals recorded as having absconded; (4) those whose claims have been treated as implicitly withdrawn due to their failure to complete an asylum questionnaire or attend a substantive asylum interview; and (5) unsuccessful asylum applicants awaiting removal from the UK. As of 30 June 2024, the asylum WIP stood at [224,742](#).

Understanding the policy

The Illegal Migration Act 2023 (IMA) contained a provision that prevented people who arrived in the UK without authorisation on or after 7 March 2023 from being granted protection. In theory, such applications could be refused, and claims made by people who arrived legally in the UK were unaffected by the Act. In practice, however, the provision meant that the Home Office was unable to process most asylum applications submitted after the cut-off date. One of the main issues was that Home Office databases were [unable to distinguish](#) asylum applications made by people who arrived in the UK without authorisation. After entering government in July 2024, the Labour government [said that](#) this was the reason for a sharp slowdown in asylum decision-making. The same month, the new Home Secretary disapplied the IMA provision, restarting processing of all asylum applications.

There are several different approaches to dealing with asylum backlogs:

- **Increasing the resources** dedicated to processing cases, such as increasing the number of asylum decision-makers;
- **Increasing the efficiency** of the asylum process, such as by simplifying guidance or introducing caseworker specialisation;
- **Prioritising applications** from groups with particularly high or low success rates to make faster decisions on those cases;
- **Granting status** to people with longstanding, unprocessed claims without assessing their asylum claim.

The Home Office strategy to reduce the backlog has focused on the first three of these categories.

First, the previous government sharply increased the number of asylum caseworkers it employs – staff numbers doubled in a year, reaching 2,500 at the start of 2024. Numbers fell slightly by the end of the year, to around 2,100, though remained above pre-2024 levels.

Second, the Home Office introduced simplified procedures for certain types of asylum casework. In May 2023, a PACE (Prioritising Asylum Customer Experience) programme was rolled out across all asylum teams. During a pilot in Leeds in 2022, the programme experienced relative success, the rate of asylum decision-making increasing from an average of 1.3 to 2.7 weekly decisions per caseworker.

Third, in February 2023, the Home Office introduced Streamlined Asylum Processing (SAP) in order to deal with manifestly well-founded applications more rapidly. Under the process, citizens of six countries – Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen – typically had their asylum claim determined on the basis of a completed questionnaire rather than a face-to-face interview. SAP procedures only applied to applications submitted before 7 March 2023, and the government has not provided any indication that it planned to extend it to more recent applications. As of early 2025, there were only limited SAP procedures in place for applications from children coming from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Sudan, and South Sudan.

The Home Office also created a dedicated unit to process Albanian asylum claims, which had increased sharply in 2022. For more details, see the Migration Observatory commentary, [Albanian asylum seekers in the UK and EU](#).

A 2020 [review](#) of asylum practices in Europe argued that fast-tracking the least and most manifestly well-founded cases could be an effective way to reduce the number of people in an asylum backlog. However, it argued this could negatively impact applicants who are not fast-tracked if resources are diverted to more straightforward cases, leading to longer wait times for other applicants. The UNHCR has also [argued](#) that where cases are fast-tracked because they are considered less likely to succeed, governments need safeguards that remove certain applicants from the 'fast track' if their cases are more complex.

In addition to the measures already implemented, some proposals to reduce the backlog involve granting status to people without full consideration of their asylum claims. This would typically be restricted to those who have been waiting a long time for a decision. For example, in 2022, Ireland granted status to all applicants who had been waiting for an asylum decision for at least two years as part of a wider regularisation programme. A UK example is the 'backlog clearance' exercise, initiated in 2006 and [continued](#) under the Coalition government after 2010, which granted status to some people with long-standing asylum claims.

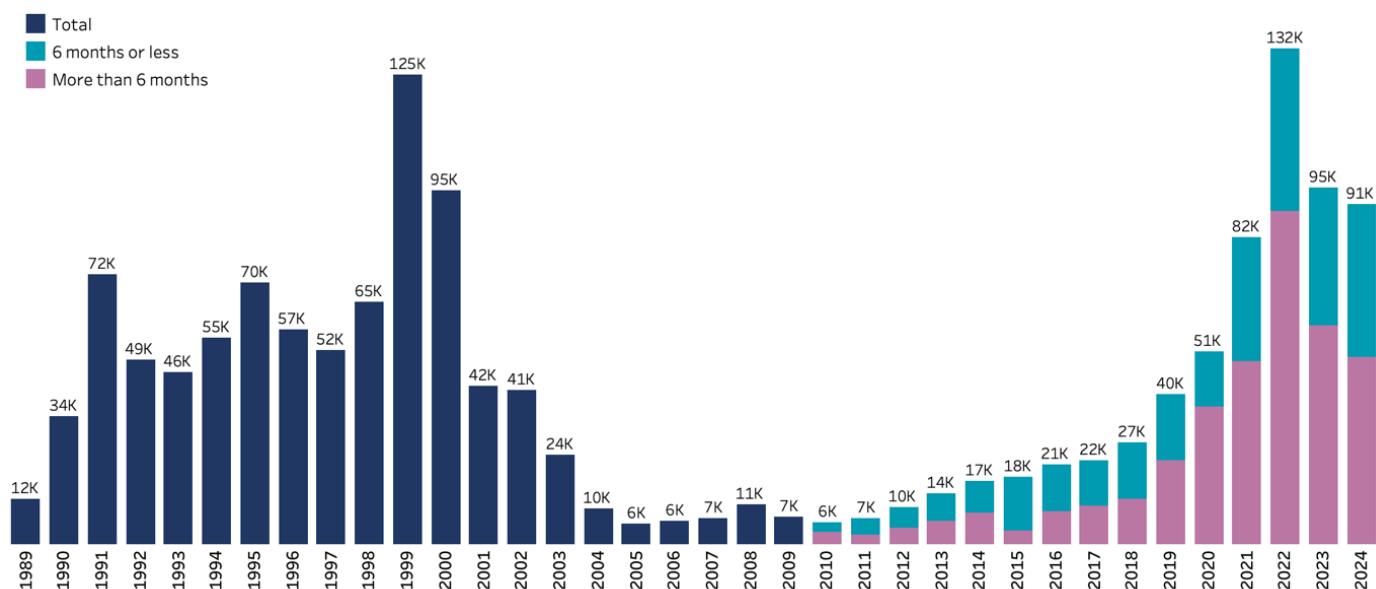
The UK continued to have a large asylum backlog at the end of 2024 – it stood at around 91,000 applications, 31% lower than the peak reached in 2022

The UK's asylum backlog – defined here as the total number of asylum applications awaiting an initial decision – stood at around 91,000 on 31 December 2024. That was 31% lower than the record levels reached in 2022, though still high by historical standards (Figure 1). Of those waiting for an initial decision, around 50,000 people (55%) had been waiting for more than six months.

The backlog had increased rapidly between 2019 and 2022, reaching an all-time high of 132,000 applications. It then fell significantly the following year. However, the decline in the backlog slowed considerably in 2024 – in fact, it increased in the third quarter before falling again in the last three months of the year.

Figure 1

At the end of 2024, the UK's asylum backlog stood at 91,000 applications – 31% lower than the 2022 peak
Number of asylum applications awaiting an initial decision as of 31 December, by year, 1989 to 2024 (main applicants only)



Sources: For 1992 to 1997: Home Office (Watson & Danzelman, 1998), Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 1997, Table 1.1; for 1998 to 2004: Home Office Statistical Bulletin, Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2007, p. 26; for 2005 to 2009: Home Office, Control of immigration: Statistics United Kingdom 2009, p.65; for 2010 to 2024: Home Office, Asylum applications awaiting a decision, Asy_D03.

Notes: Main applicants only, excluding family members ("dependants"). Counts before 2012 are rounded to nearest hundred. The Home Office notes that data for 1998 are not directly comparable with figures for later years, though no explanation is provided. Data before 2010 does not include details on the duration of wait.



Fewer decisions made during the middle of the year explain why the backlog's decline stalled and briefly reversed in 2024

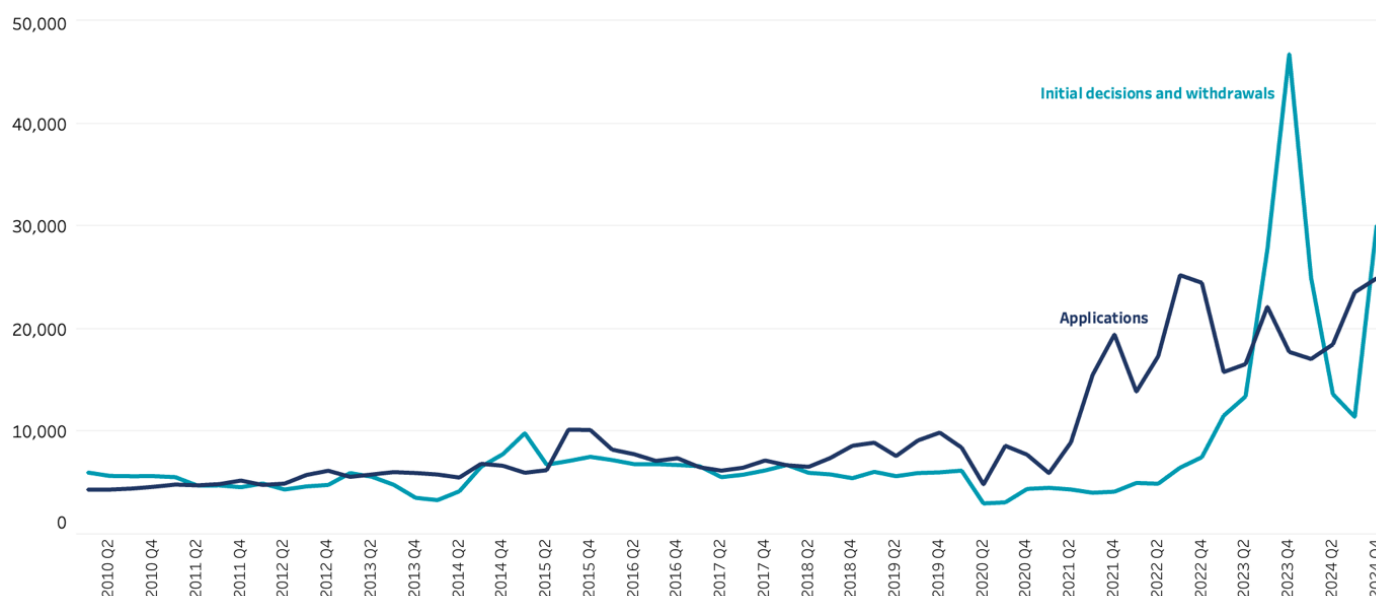
The slower decline in the backlog during 2024 is explained by a combination of fewer decisions being made during the year and a record number of asylum applications in the UK. Decision-making slowed considerably in the first nine months of the year (Figure 2).

The government has [attributed](#) this slowdown in decision-making to a provision in the Illegal Migration Act that prevented people who arrived in the UK without authorisation on or after 7 March 2023 from being granted protection. In practice, this prevented applications submitted after this date from being processed. In July 2024, the new Home Secretary issued a statutory instrument that disapplied this provision in the Illegal Migration Act, thereby restarting the processing of applications. The number of initial decisions and withdrawals recovered in the final quarter of 2024, to around 30,000.

Figure 2

The number of initial decisions fell sharply in the first three quarters of 2024, then partly recovered

Number of asylum applications and initial decisions, by quarter, 2010 Q1 to 2024 Q4 (main applicants only)



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of Home Office Immigration Statistics, Tables Asy_D01 and Asy_D02.

Notes: Decisions comprise grants and refusals.



Before 2023, the backlog increased because decision-making did not keep pace with the number of applications – in large part because fewer decisions were being made per caseworker, as discussed further below. This trend reversed after the Home Office hired more caseworkers and introduced new processes to streamline processing, including deciding certain asylum cases based on a written questionnaire rather than an interview (see Understanding the Policy).

An additional appeals backlog has grown rapidly in the courts, reaching 42,000 applications at the end of 2024

The initial decision backlog is not the only backlog in the UK's asylum system. Asylum seekers have the right to appeal initial decisions in specialist immigration courts. A combination of more decisions and a smaller asylum grant rate means that the number of refusals has increased sharply in recent years, from around 6,000 in 2022 to 44,000 in 2024. As a result, the number of pending appeals before the First-tier asylum tribunal has also risen six-fold in two years – to 42,000 at the end of 2024.

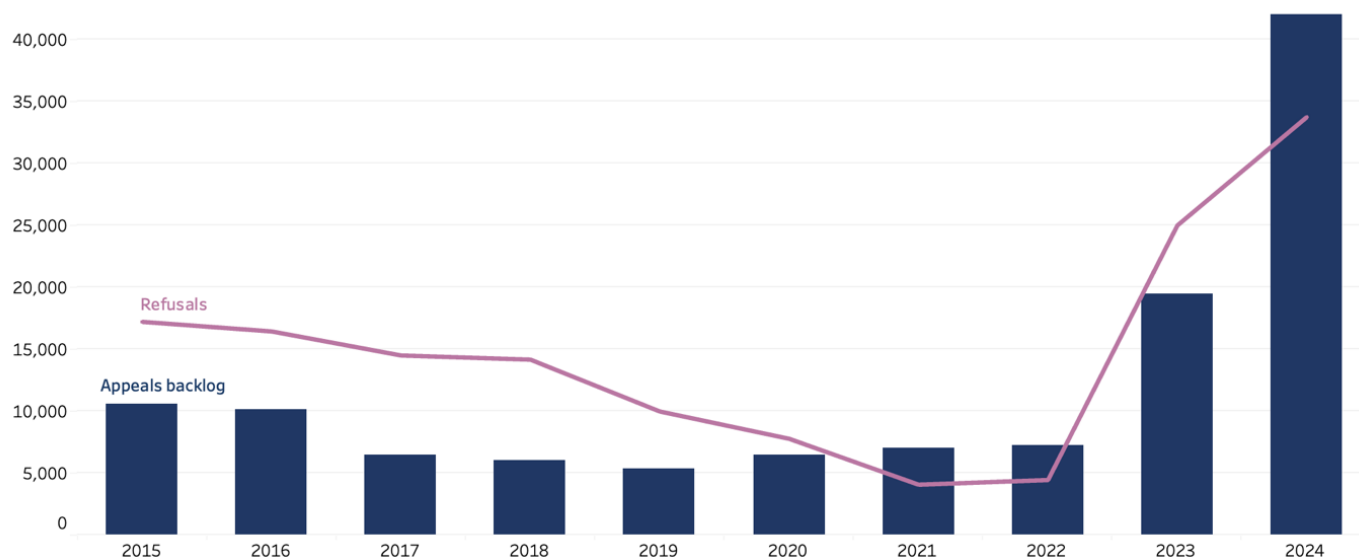
Around 16,000 asylum appeals were decided in 2024. Although that was 76% more than the year before, it was significantly lower than the 37,000 new appeals lodged in 2024. The number of new appeals will remain high as more initial decisions are made and refusals appealed. This suggests the appeals backlog is likely to [continue growing](#) significantly in 2025.

There are significant challenges in increasing the processing of asylum appeals. Judges and hearing rooms are needed, as well as legal representation for both the Home Office and claimants. The government began [recruiting](#) more judges to address the backlog last year, though most are not expected to be in post until the second half of 2025. To increase the availability of lawyers, a consultation was [launched](#) in January aiming to increase legal aid fees – which have been fixed at the same level since 1996 – by the end of 2025.

Figure 3

The appeals backlog reached 42,000 at the end of 2024, after the number of refusals increased sharply

Number of negative initial decisions on asylum applications, and number of open asylum cases before a First-tier Tribunal, by year



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of Home Office Immigration Statistics, Table Asy_D02, and Tribunal Statistics Quarterly, Table FIA_4.

Notes: Refusals include main applicants only. Appeals only include First-tier Tribunals and not higher courts.



Of the 10,000 appeals that received a substantive decision in 2024, 47% were successful and resulted in the overturning of the Home Office's initial decision.

The backlog has contributed to the rising costs of the UK's asylum system, which reached £5.4bn in the 2023/24 financial year

For the government, one of the main problems with large backlogs – for both initial decisions and appeals – is that they increase the cost of the UK's asylum system. Overall, the UK spent around £5.4bn on its asylum system in the 2023/24 financial year, more than twice as much as in 2021/22.

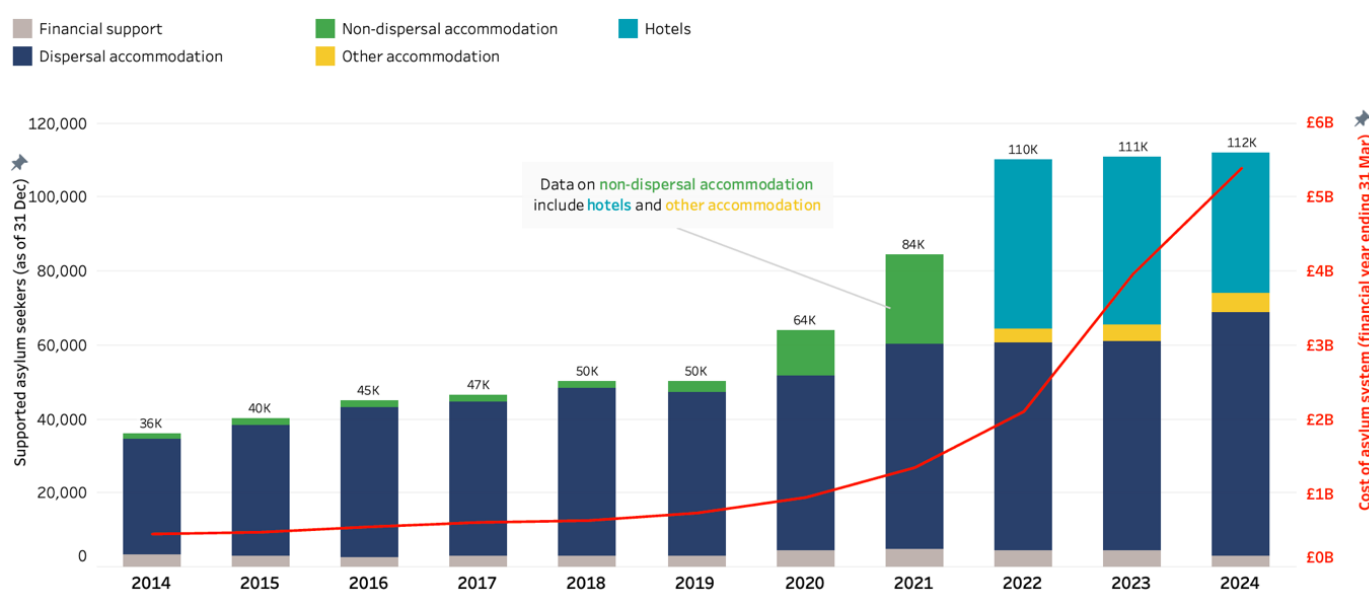
Asylum seekers are generally not allowed to work while their applications are pending. Those who are destitute require support from the government, primarily in the form of accommodation. In addition, they receive £49.18 per week in [asylum support](#) to cover food and other living costs. This is reduced to £8.86 per week for those living in hotels that provide meals.

Large backlogs led to a sharp increase in the supported asylum population, to 112,000 people at the end of 2024. When more accommodation is needed than the Home Office has available, contingency accommodation has to be used – in practice, this has mostly meant hotels. Around 38,000 asylum seekers were being temporarily housed in hotels at the end of 2024, a slight decrease compared to the year before. The Labour government has [pledged](#) to end the use of hotels for housing asylum seekers, though has not offered a timeline for doing so. Achieving this would require a sharp decline in both backlogs, a meaningful expansion of longer-term dispersal accommodation, or both.

Figure 4

The cost of the UK's asylum system rose to £5.4bn in the 2023/24 financial year

Number of asylum seekers in receipt of support, by type of support (as of 31 Dec), and costs of asylum system (year ending 31 Mar)



Source: Home Office Immigration Statistics, Table Asy_D09, and UK Visa and Immigration Transparency data, Table ASY_04.

Notes: Data on supported population refer to the situation on 31 December of each year. Data on costs are for financial years ending 31 March. Before 2022, non-dispersal accommodation was not broken down by subcategories, and includes hotels. Other accommodation includes initial accommodation and other accommodation. Financial support refers to asylum seekers who receive financial support but no government-provided accommodation.



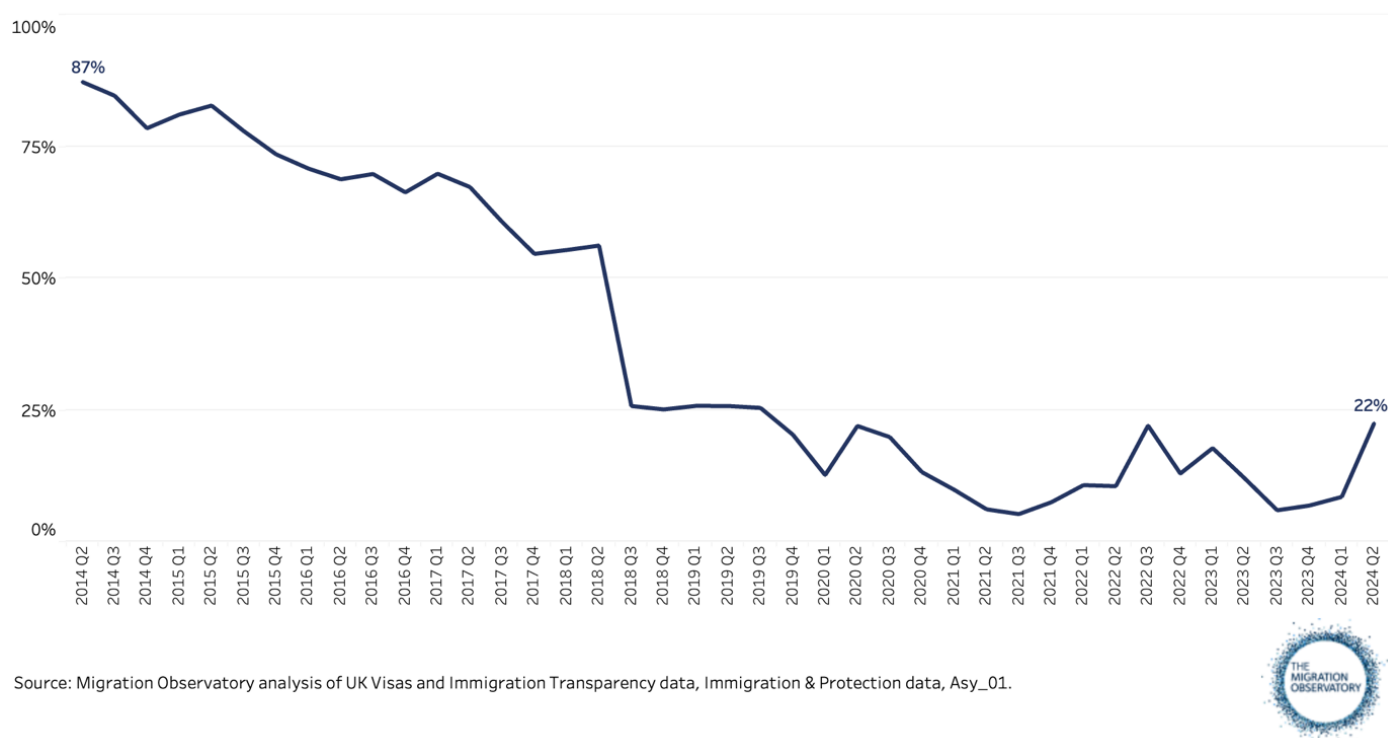
Slow decision-making hampers integration among asylum-seekers

Waiting times for asylum applicants have increased substantially in recent years. Only 22% of people who applied for asylum in the second quarter of 2024 received an initial decision within 6 months, down from 87% a decade before.

Figure 5

In recent years, only a small percentage of asylum applications received an initial decision within 6 months

Percentage of asylum applications receiving an initial decision within 6 months, by quarter of application (main applicants only)

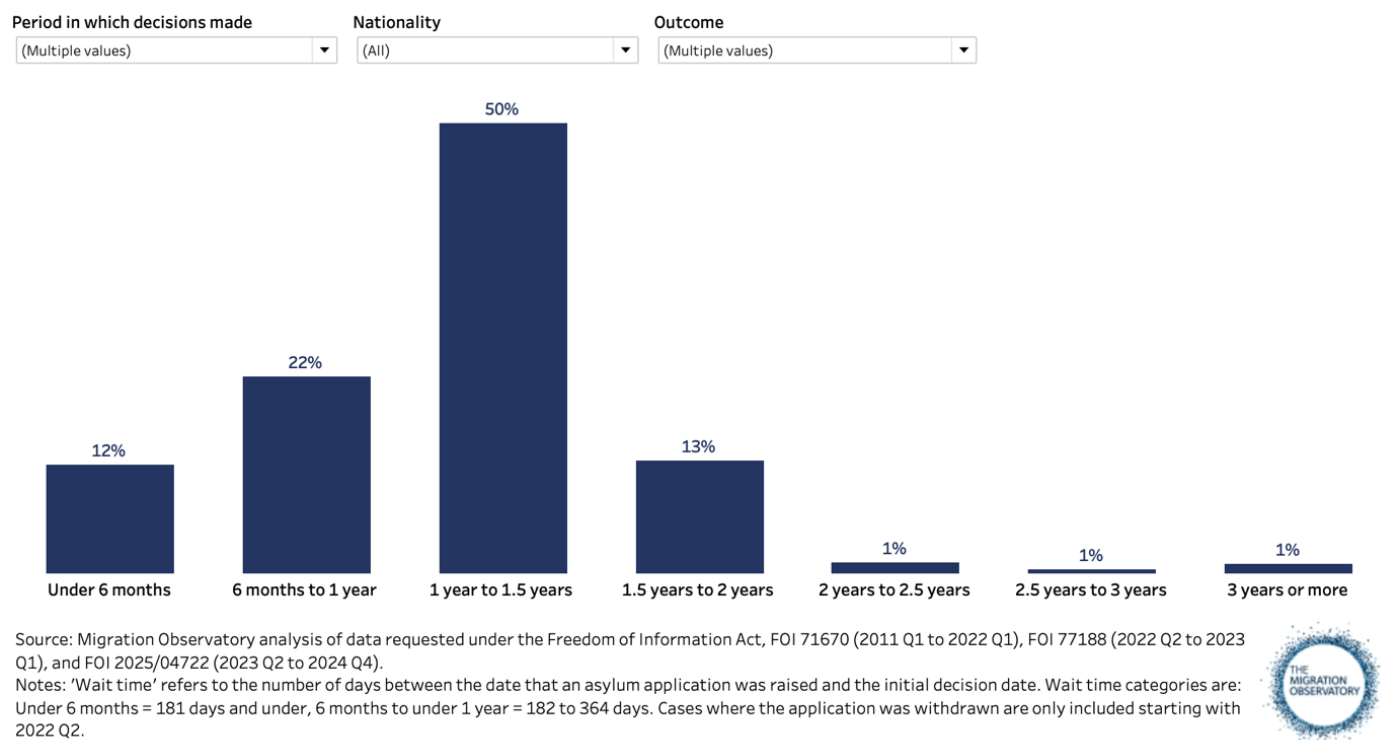


Long delays are also visible when looking at wait times among asylum applicants who received an initial decision in recent years. The average wait time for an asylum application that received an initial decision in 2024 was 413 days, though this had fallen from 735 days in 2023. Around two thirds of all substantive initial decisions made in 2024 had taken more than a year (Figure 6).

Figure 6

A third of initial decisions made in 2024 took less than a year

Wait time for an initial asylum decision, by quarter, outcome, and nationality (main applicants only)



Long waits for asylum decisions can have negative impacts on asylum seekers' well-being and future prospects. First, long waiting times mean [worse long-term employment outcomes](#) for asylum seekers who go on to receive protection. Longer bans on working for asylum applicants are also associated with [lower employment rates](#) in the future among this group. Second, long delays in processing can [exacerbate social exclusion](#) and contribute to [mental health issues](#) among asylum seekers. In addition, long waiting times can make it [more difficult to remove](#) asylum seekers who are eventually refused protection, since there are more chances for them to form families and other ties. These ties make it more likely they will have a successful application to remain in the UK under human rights laws.

Caseworker productivity has been a key driver of the size of the backlog

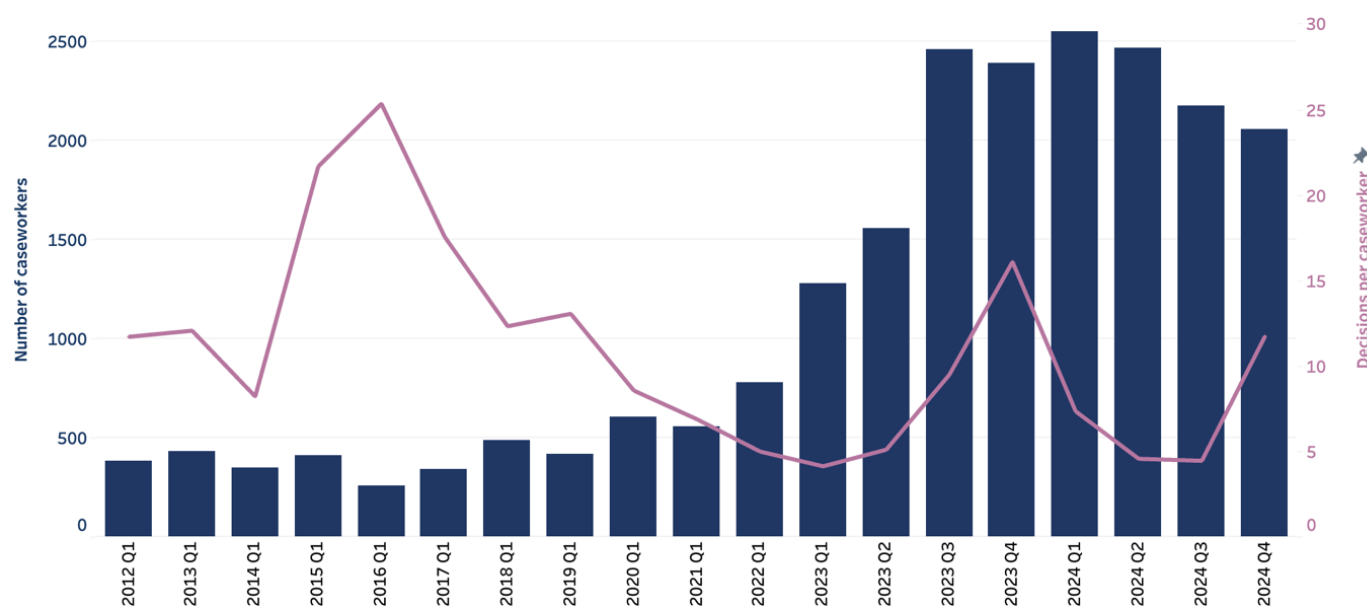
In response to the growing backlog, the Home Office significantly increased the number of staff processing asylum claims, known as asylum caseworkers. Their number rose to 2,500 at the start of 2024, from a low of 260 in 2016. It declined slightly in 2024, to around 2,100 by the end of the year.

The productivity of caseworkers – the average number of substantive decisions made by caseworkers each quarter – declined by more than six times between 2016 and 2022, contributing to a growing backlog. Productivity partly recovered in 2023, only to decline again in the first part of 2024 as many asylum applications could not be processed due to the Illegal Migration Act (see Understanding the Policy). Restarting processing led to another recovery in productivity at the end of 2024 – on average, each caseworker made around 12 decisions in the final quarter, similar to 2023 but notably lower than the levels seen in the mid-2010s. It is important to note that the amount of time caseworkers take to make decisions does not necessarily reflect their performance. Making accurate decisions also matters, and decisions that are made more quickly could be less accurate.

Figure 7

The productivity of asylum caseworkers declined in the first part of 2024 before partly recovering

Number of asylum caseworkers and average number of decisions per caseworker, by quarter, 2012 Q1 to 2024 Q4



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of (1) UK Visas and Immigration Transparency Data, Immigration and Protection Q3 2023, ASY_04; and (2) Home Office immigration statistics quarterly release, year ending September 2023, Asy_D02.

Note: Average number of decisions was calculated by dividing the number of initial decisions made in a quarter by the number of asylum caseworking staff employed at the end of the quarter. Initial decisions include grants of protection and refusals, and exclude withdrawals.



There is no definitive explanation for the decline in caseworker productivity between 2016 and 2023, though plausible explanations include:

- **Administrative problems and staff turnover.** A 2021 [inspection](#) of the UK's asylum casework revealed a number of key administrative problems, including inadequate digital systems, insufficient training, low morale, and high staff turnover. Few caseworkers spent more than 24 months in the role, although it took 12–18 months for them to achieve full proficiency. Annual turnover improved after the Home Office introduced measures to increase retention, including bonus payments for caseworkers who stay in their jobs for more than a year – it [fell](#) to 25% in the 2022/23 financial year, from a high of [46%](#) in 2021/22. Yet other issues – like low morale and inefficient IT systems – have persisted and were again highlighted by an [inspection](#) in late 2023.
- **The end of the six-month 'customer service standard'.** Until early 2019, the Home Office had an internal target – the 'customer service standard' – to process 98% of straightforward cases within six months. While the lack of a service standard may have exacerbated delays, caseworker productivity started declining three years before it was abandoned. It is possible that abandoning the service standard was partly a consequence of slower decision-making rather than one of its main causes.
- **New rules on inadmissibility.** In 2021, the government implemented new rules on 'inadmissibility', aiming to remove asylum seekers if the Home Office believes they could and should have claimed asylum in another country. These rules added two more steps to the asylum process, which may have increased processing times. The Home Office first assesses individuals for inadmissibility, then tries to find a safe country to accept an individual it deems to be inadmissible. If a person cannot be removed within six months, their asylum claim would normally be considered in the UK. In theory, one could argue that removing people to have their claims considered elsewhere would reduce the backlog. In practice, however, less than 0.01% of those assessed for inadmissibility had been removed from the UK as of the end of 2023 (for more detail, see the Migration Observatory's commentary, [UK policies to deter people from claiming asylum](#)).

- **The suspension of the Detained Fast Track process.** In 2015, a series of [legal challenges](#) forced the government to [suspend](#) an accelerated process of dealing with asylum claims called the Detained Fast Track (DFT). This allowed the Home Office to detain any adult applicant if it believed a decision on their claim was possible within 14 days. The vast majority of claims processed under the DFT were refused – around [99% between 2008 and 2010](#). These rapid decisions brought down average processing times. While the suspension of the DFT may have contributed to the slowdown in decision-making, it is unlikely to be its primary cause. From 2005 to 2014, fast-tracked applications only [made up](#) 5–18% of yearly asylum applications.

On the other hand, several factors are likely to have contributed to increased productivity in 2023. The Home Office introduced simplified procedures for certain types of asylum casework. One of the most significant changes was the introduction of Streamlined Asylum Processing (SAP) to deal more rapidly with applications from nationalities with very high grant rates. However, this was limited to children or adults who submitted their application before 7 March 2023, and it is unclear if there are any plans to extend SAP to more recent adult applications (see Understanding the Policy). After a sharp rise in asylum applications from Albanians in 2022, the Home Office also temporarily created a dedicated unit to process these claims. In addition to simpler procedures, the Home Office also imposed [individual performance targets](#) for decision makers.

Around 41,000 asylum applications were withdrawn in 2023 and 2024, many of which may eventually re-enter the system

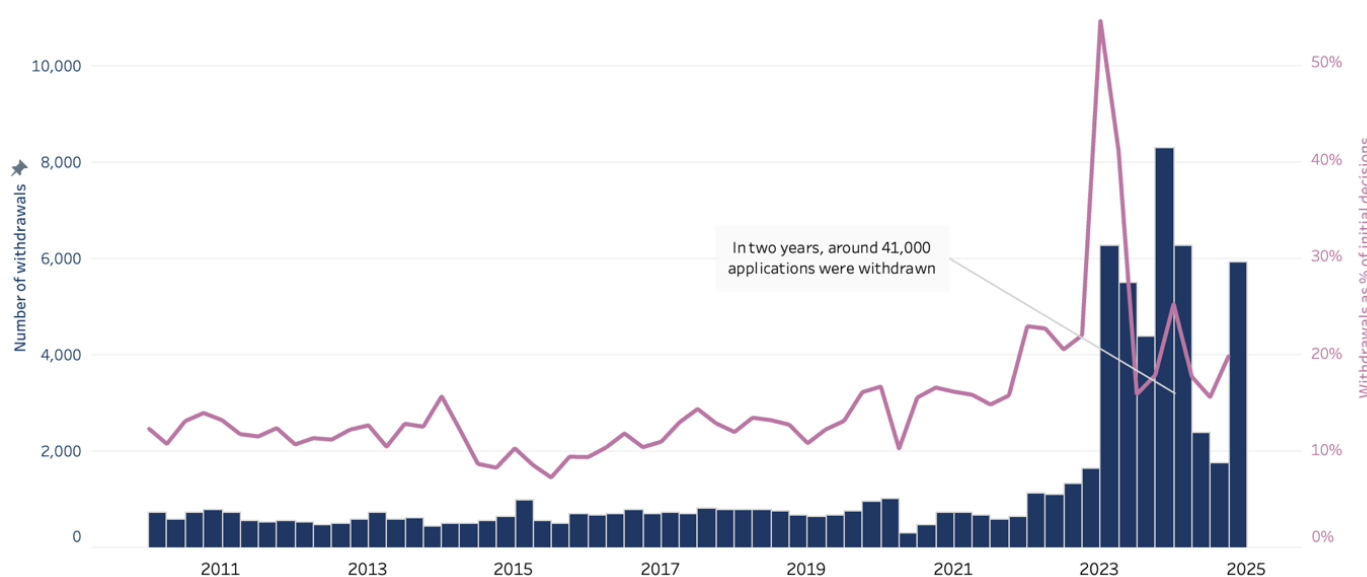
A large number of applications have been withdrawn from the UK asylum system in recent years. While some applications are withdrawn at the request of the applicant, other withdrawals are automatic. This happens if certain conditions are met, such as the applicant lacking an address, or where the applicant fails to respond to letters within a five-day deadline.

In 2024, around 16,000 asylum applications were withdrawn – around a fifth of all initial decisions. That was 32% lower than the 24,000 applications withdrawn the previous year. The share of withdrawals among all initial decisions increased slightly over time, from around 10–12% in the 2010s. There was also a brief spike in the share of withdrawals in 2023, which may have been connected to the goal of clearing the ‘legacy backlog’ by the end of that year (see Understanding the Policy).

Figure 8

Around 16,400 asylum applications were withdrawn in 2024 – a fifth of all initial decisions

Number of withdrawals and withdrawals as a share of all initial decisions, by quarter



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of Home Office Immigration Statistics, Table Asy_D02.

Notes: Initial decisions include withdrawals, refusals, and grants of protection.



In the short run, withdrawals help the government as they reduce the size of the backlog and the number of people supported in asylum accommodation. However, they have also raised concerns. A 2023 [inspection](#) by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) called the situation “unacceptable”, because many applications had been withdrawn without adequate quality assurance checks. There is evidence that some people whose asylum applications were initially withdrawn later re-entered the asylum system. A January 2024 [letter](#) from the Home Office showed that half of all asylum cases withdrawn in the year ending 30 September 2023 had subsequently re-entered the asylum process and had either resulted in a grant of legal status (15%), or were pending an initial decision (35%). Another 32% remained in the UK, with authorities trying to re-establish contact with them.

Afghan, Pakistani, and Iranian were the top nationalities in the asylum backlog at the end of 2024

At the end of 2024, the top nationality of applicants awaiting an initial asylum decision was Afghan (10%), followed by Pakistani (9%) and Iranian (7%). Applications from some nationalities will be easier to process than others. For example, applications from Syrian nationals were temporarily [put on hold](#) in December 2024 after the fall of the Assad regime.

The composition of the backlog has changed in recent years (see Figure 9). At the end of 2022, Albanian was the most common nationality among people waiting for an initial decision. The number of pending Albanian asylum applications fell sharply in 2023 after their processing was prioritised by the Home Office and the number of new applicants dropped sharply.

Figure 9

At the end of 2024, the top three nationalities in the asylum backlog were Afghan, Pakistani, and Iranian
Number of asylum applications awaiting an initial decision, by date and nationality (main applicants only)



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of Home Office immigration statistics, Asylum applications awaiting a decision, Asy_D03.
Notes: Main applicants only, excluding dependants.



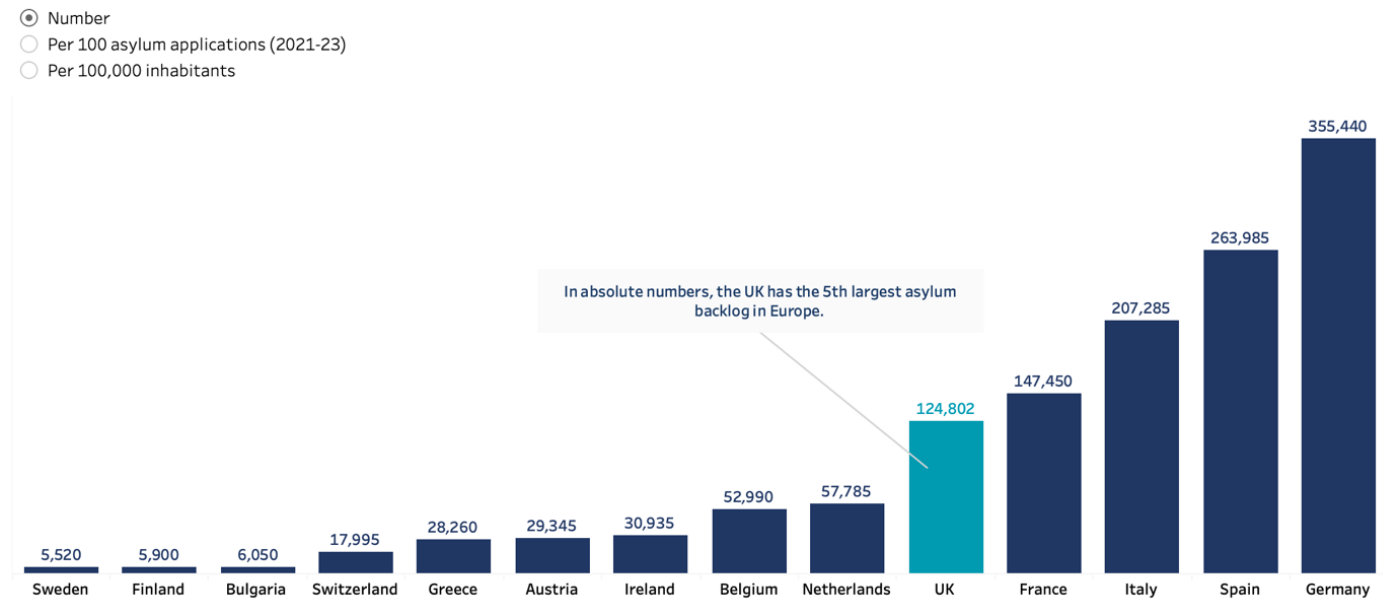
The UK had the fifth-largest asylum backlog in Europe at the end of 2024

Other European countries also have large asylum backlogs. As of 31 December 2024, [Eurostat](#) data showed that Germany had the largest initial decision asylum backlog in Europe (referring to people rather than applications and so comprising both main applicants and dependants). That was followed by Spain, Italy, and France. With almost 125,000 people awaiting an initial decision, the UK had the fifth-largest backlog in Europe.

The UK’s asylum backlog is smaller than that of other European states if we consider its population. In large part, though, this is because the UK receives fewer applications relative to its population than some of its peers. Compared to the number of applications received in the previous three years, the UK’s backlog was the eighth largest in Europe (Figure 10).

Figure 10

At the end of 2024, the UK had the fifth-largest asylum backlog in Europe
Number of people awaiting an initial decision on their asylum claim, as of 31 December 2024, by country (main applicants and dependants)



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of Eurostat data, Persons subject of asylum applications pending, migr_asypentzm (for EU countries), and Home Office Immigration Statistics, Asy_D03 (for the UK).
Note: Data is individually collected by each national statistical agency, meaning the data may not be directly comparable.



Acknowledgments

Special thanks go to **CJ McKinney** for detailed comments on a draft of this briefing.



The Migration Observatory

Based at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford, the Migration Observatory provides independent, authoritative, evidence-based analysis of data on migration and migrants in the UK, to inform media, public and policy debates, and to generate high quality research on international migration and public policy issues. The Observatory's analysis involves experts from a wide range of disciplines and departments at the University of Oxford.



COMPAS

The Migration Observatory is based at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford. The mission of COMPAS is to conduct high quality research in order to develop theory and knowledge, inform policy-making and public debate, and engage users of research within the field of migration.

www.compas.ox.ac.uk

About the authors

Mihnea Cuibus

Researcher, The Migration Observatory
mihnea.cuibus@nuffield.ox.ac.uk

Peter William Walsh

Senior Researcher, The Migration Observatory
peter.walsh@compas.ox.ac.uk

Madeleine Sumption

Director, The Migration Observatory
madeleine.sumption@compas.ox.ac.uk

Press contact

Rob McNeil

Head of Media and Communications
robert.mcneil@compas.ox.ac.uk
+ 44 (0)1865 274568
+ 44 (0)7500 970081

Recommended citation

Cuibus, M., Walsh, P. W. & Sumption, M. (2025) *The UK's asylum backlog*. Migration Observatory briefing, COMPAS, University of Oxford