



# BRIEFING

## People crossing the English Channel in small boats

---

AUTHORS: Peter William Walsh  
Mihnea V. Cuius  
PUBLISHED: 16/06/2025



This briefing examines the phenomenon of people crossing the English Channel in small boats. It reviews what we know about the numbers, characteristics, and motivations of people making this journey.

## Key Points

Around 37,000 people were detected crossing the English Channel in small boats in 2024, 25% more than the year before but fewer than in 2022. Small boat arrivals increased further in the first five months of 2025.

Between 2018 and 2024, citizens of six countries – Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Albania, Syria, and Eritrea – have made up 70% of people crossing in small boats.

Between 2018 and 2024, the asylum grant rate for people who arrived by small boat was 68%, higher than the grant rate for asylum applicants overall.

Around 5,000 people who arrived by small boat had been returned from the UK by the end of 2024, making up 3% of all arrivals. Most of these returns had been to Albania.

In 2024, 73 people died trying to cross the English Channel by small boat, more than in all previous years put together.

Increased enforcement on other irregular routes and the professionalisation of smuggling gangs may have contributed to the rise of small boat crossings.

Some people prefer to seek asylum in the UK for a variety of reasons, though their knowledge of asylum policy varies.

Increased enforcement, measures to deter migrants, and the introduction of safe and legal routes are the main types of policies proposed to reduce small boat crossings.

Italy, Spain, and Greece experienced more unauthorised arrivals by sea than the UK in 2024.

Bilateral deals and enforcement measures may have reduced unauthorised arrivals by sea in some European countries.

## Understanding the evidence

Since April 2022, the government has published provisional daily counts of small boat arrivals, which are derived from operational databases and are subject to revision. Finalised official statistics on small boat arrivals are published as part of the Home Office's Immigration System Statistics Quarterly Release.

Counts of small boat entries or other irregular entries refer to the number of people detected, and not the number of unique individuals. The same person may be detected multiple times, either under the same method of entry or under different methods (if an individual leaves the UK and then is detected re-entering). Such individuals will be counted multiple times in the statistics.

A 'small boat' is defined as one of a number of vessels used by individuals who cross the English Channel with the aim of gaining entry to the UK without a visa or permission to enter. The most common small vessels detected making these types of crossings are rigid-hulled inflatable boats (RHIBs), dinghies and kayaks. Statistics on small boats include individuals who were detected on arrival in the UK, and those detected in the Channel and subsequently brought ashore.

The data do not include those who arrive in the UK on larger vessels (e.g., yachts, motor cruisers, tugs, fishing vessels, ferries), those who arrive in the UK clandestinely on larger vessels not referenced above (including where hidden in a vehicle on a ferry), or individuals who arrive in the UK undetected. Nor do they include people who were prevented from departing France, or were intercepted by French authorities and returned to France.

This briefing also presents Home Office information on detected irregular entries other than by small boat. These statistics cannot be summed to infer the total number of people entering the UK irregularly. This is because they refer only to detected irregular entries. Because small boat arrivals are more likely to be detected than those using other methods of entry, statistics for different methods of entry cannot be directly compared. Moreover, changes in the number of irregular entrants detected could be a result of changes in operational activity or recording practices, and not only changes in the number of people attempting to enter the UK irregularly.

**Around 37,000 people were detected crossing the English Channel in small boats in 2024, 25% more than the year before but fewer than in 2022**

The number of small boat arrivals has increased substantially since 2018. While reports of people attempting to enter the UK by crossing the Channel go back [over fifty years](#), significant numbers did not begin to be detected until [late 2018](#).

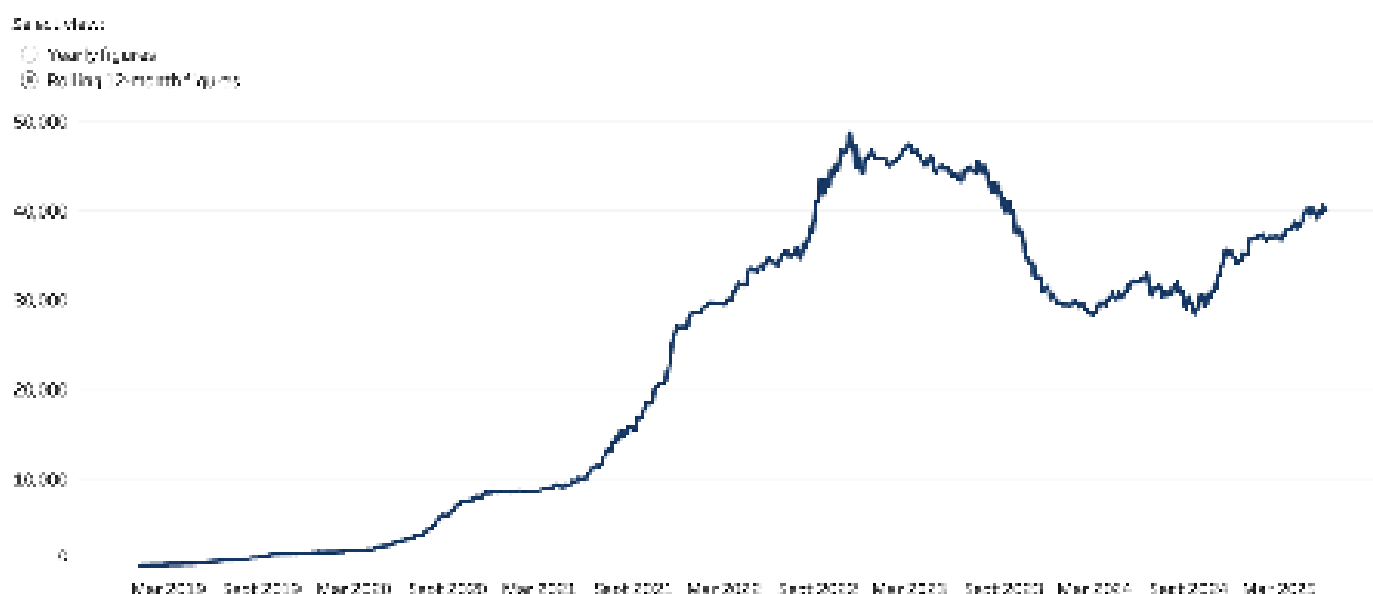
In 2024, around 37,000 people were detected crossing the Channel in small boats. That was a quarter more than the year before, and the second highest annual figure. In 2022, about 46,000 people crossed the Channel without authorisation (Figure 1).

Arrivals continued to increase in the first five months of 2025. From January to May, there were around 14,800 small boat crossings – the highest ever number for this period, and 42% more than in the same period in 2024. However, it is impossible at the time of writing to say if this indicates a sustained increase for the year. Historically, most crossings have occurred in the summer and autumn.

### Figure 1



Number of apples arriving by small boat, rolling 12 month period of daily cumulative arrivals by year, 2018 to May 2025



Source: H. J. G. van der Velden, *Handboek van de Nederlandse Handel en Industrie*, 1963, pp. 10–11. Monthly data are available from the Dutch Central Statistical Bureau, *Statistische Mededelingen*. The information on the number of companies in the *Handels- en Industrie-Adresboek* is derived from the company's own records, but may be slightly inflated, owing to the fact that, having been listed in annual issue Small companies have registered in the *Handels- en Industrie-Adresboek* (HIA), although not always, because larger firms, such as public utilities, banks, insurance companies, and industrial groups, do not have a different company name, but are included in the



The majority of those arriving in small boats are men over the age of 18 – around 76% of 2024 arrivals for whom this information was recorded. Another 14% of arrivals were children under 18. These proportions have been stable over time. One reason for the higher share of men is the danger associated with unauthorised migration. In many cases, female and minor children [join later](#) through family reunification routes.

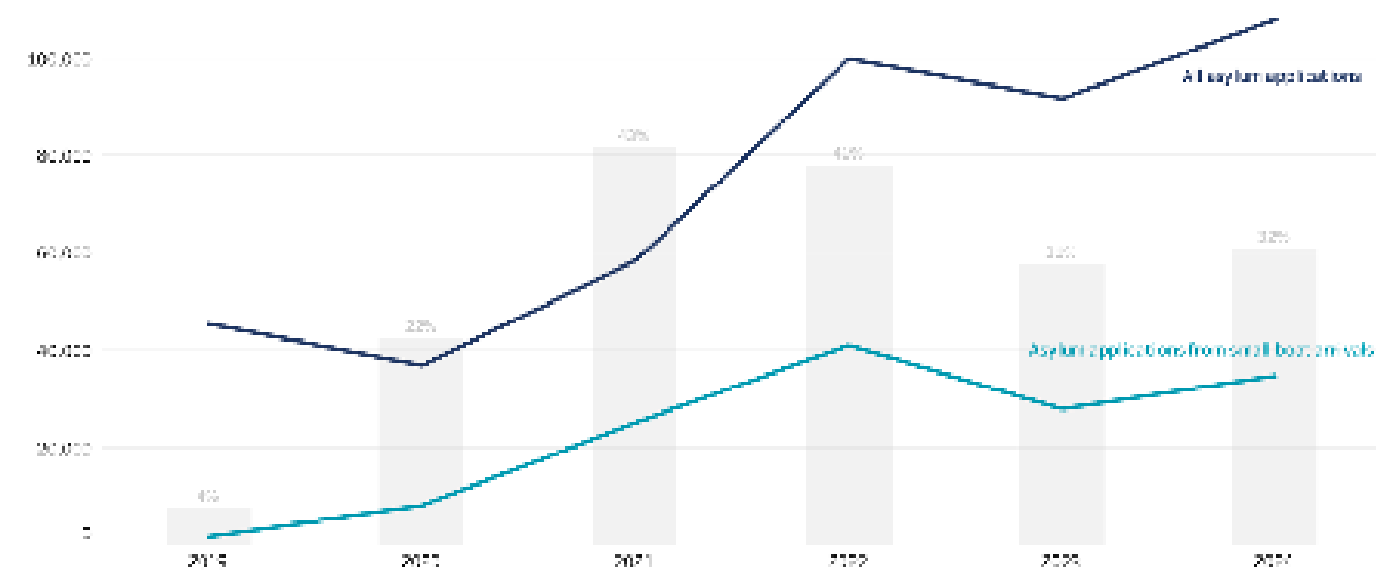
Most people who cross the Channel in small boats claim asylum once they are in the UK. In 2024, 99% of all those crossing either applied for asylum or were named as a dependant on an application. Among all arrivals since 2018, the share was 95%.

In recent years, small boat arrivals made up 30–40% of all people applying for asylum in the UK. The number of asylum applications increased sharply since 2020, reaching a record 108,000 in 2024. Only part of this growth is explained by people crossing the Channel by small boat. [Data](#) from the Home Office show that a large proportion of asylum seekers – 40% of those applying in 2024 – travelled to the UK legally on a work, study, or visitor visa.

**Figure 2**

### Small boat arrivals accounted for a third of all asylum applications in 2024

Number of asylum applications and small boat asylum applications as percentage of the total, by year



Source: Migration Observatory's analysis of Home Office irregular migration statistics, Tables int\_GIR and Arr\_GIR

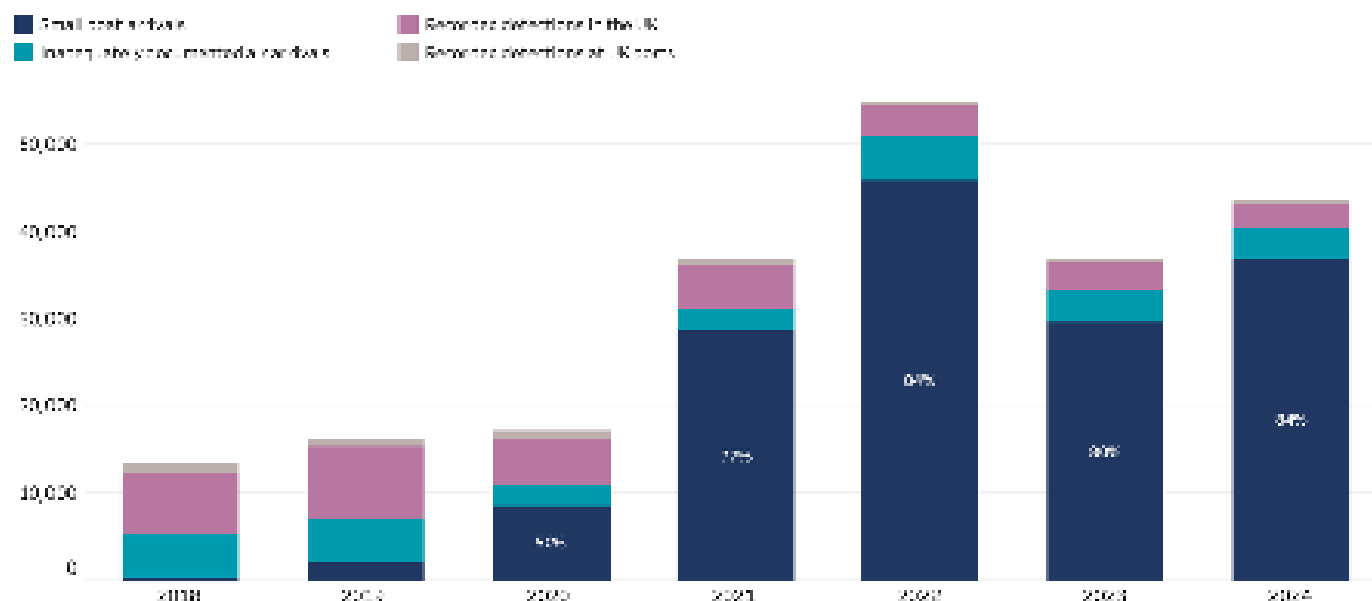
Note: Asylum applications from small boat arrivals refers to asylum applications lodged by people who arrived in the UK without authorisation after crossing the Channel in a small boat. Around 98.84% of all asylum seekers applied for asylum.



Some people also enter the UK through other unauthorised means, such as in lorries or containers. The sharp rise in small boat crossings means that overall unauthorised arrivals have increased, and that small boats now account for more than 80% of detected arrivals (Figure 3; though note that a higher share of boat arrivals are detected compared to other irregular arrivals).

Figure 3

**Small boats made up more than 80% of all detected unauthorised arrivals in the last three years**  
 Detected unauthorised arrivals to the UK, by mode of entry and year



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of Home Office Irregular migration statistics, 1st July 2024

Notes: Recorded detections in the UK refer to people detected by authorities outside ports who are believed to have entered the country without authorisation in the 72 hours prior to their detection. Some overlap between the different modes of irregular entry should be noted here. Unusually, because the detection of some irregular arrivals at entry points changes in their time of entry, some may enter the national territory via a route of irregular entry to record irregularities and not to change the number of people attempting to enter the UK irregularly.



## From 2018 to 2024, citizens of six countries – Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Albania, Syria, and Eritrea – have made up 70% of those crossing in small boats

A small number of nationalities make up a large share of people crossing the Channel in small boats. From 2018 to 2024, nationals of six countries accounted for 70% of all arrivals – Iran (17%), Afghanistan (15%), Iraq (12%), Albania (10%), Syria (9%), and Eritrea (8%).

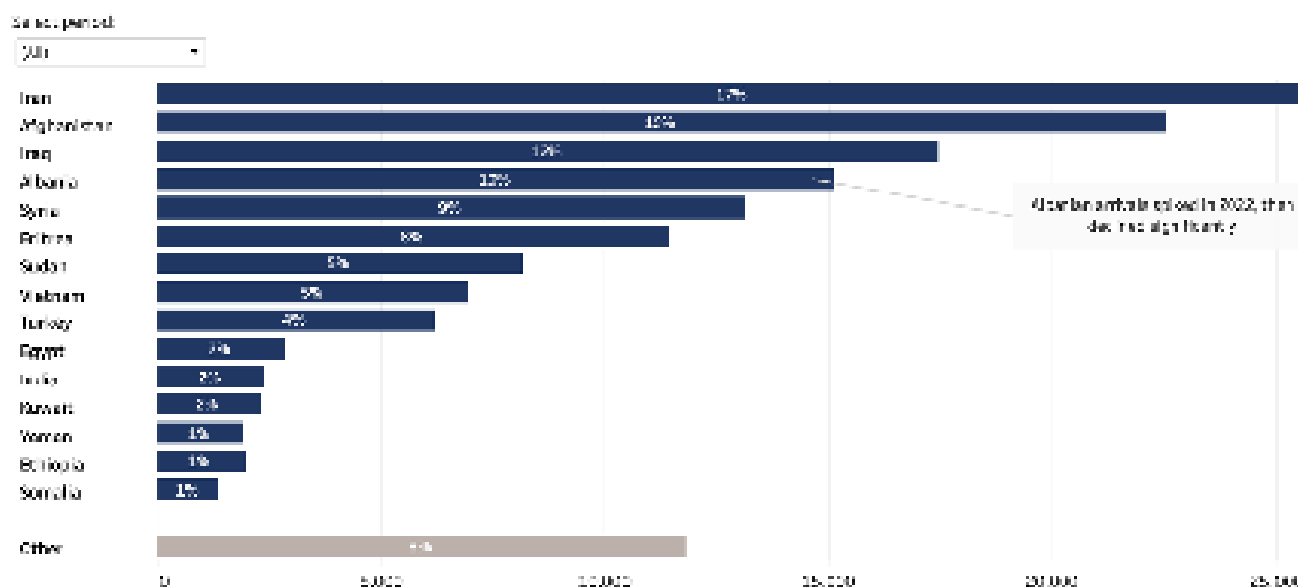
The most common nationalities have varied over time (Figure 4). A wide range of factors can shape these trends, including policy changes and developments in origin countries. Afghanistan was the top country of origin for small boat arrivals in both 2023 and 2024. There were also significant numbers of arrivals from Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Eritrea in every year since 2021. Numbers fluctuated more over time for other nationalities. For example, arrivals from Vietnam more than tripled in 2024 compared to the year before.

Most notably, there was a sharp rise in Albanian nationals crossing the Channel in 2022. That sudden increase was the source of political controversy, leading the UK government to respond by fast-tracking asylum and return procedures for Albanians. The number of Albanian nationals arriving by small boat fell from 12,700 in 2022 to less than 1,000 in each of the following years. It is difficult to know how much of this decline resulted from policy as opposed to other factors (for more details, see [Albanian asylum seekers in the UK and EU: a look at recent data](#)).

Figure 4

**Six nationalities have made up 70% of all small boat arrivals since 2018**

Number of small boat arrivals, by nationality and period, 2018 to 2021



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of Home Office irregular migration statistics, Table 10.01.

Notes: The top 15 nationalities between 2018 and 2024 are included. Other comprises all other nationalities.

**Between 2018 and 2024, the asylum grant rate for people who arrived by small boat was 68%, higher than the grant rate for all asylum applicants**

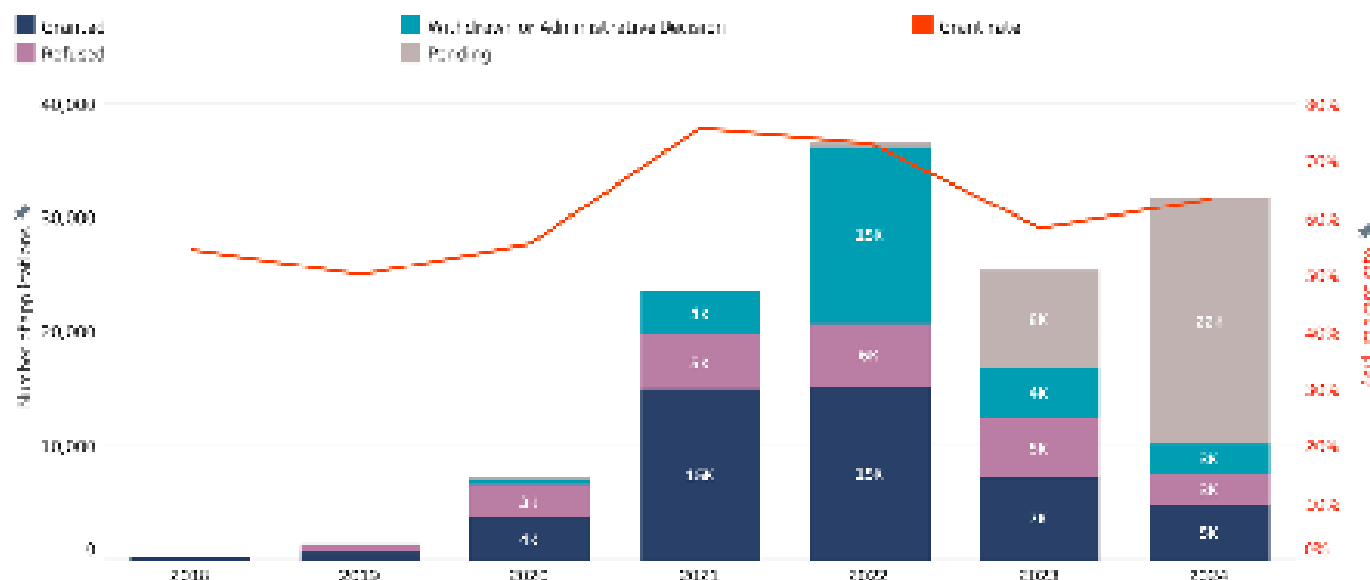
Since 2018, there have been around 126,000 asylum applications from small boat arrivals to the UK. A quarter – 30,500 applications – were still awaiting an initial decision at the end of 2024.

Excluding withdrawals and administrative decisions, around 68% of all initial decisions on asylum applications from people who arrived by small boat – a total of 47,000 – were grants of protection. That was higher than the grant rate for asylum applications generally, which stood at 57% for the 2018–24 period.

Between 2018 and 2024, around 27,000 asylum applications from small boat arrivals were withdrawn or received an administrative decision (see Understanding the Evidence). While some applications are withdrawn at the request of the applicant, most withdrawals are implicit – they happen if the applicant fails to meet certain [conditions](#), such as attending an interview or responding to Home Office letters within a five-day deadline. A recent [inspection](#) of asylum casework raised concerns about the number of asylum applications withdrawn in recent years, highlighting a lack of adequate quality control processes. here is evidence that many people whose asylum applications were initially withdrawn later re-enter the asylum system (for more details, see our briefing, [The UK's asylum backlog](#)).

Figure 5

**Around 47,000 asylum applications from people who arrived by small boat had resulted in a positive decision**  
 Number of initial decisions and asylum grant rate on asylum applications from small boat arrivals, by year of arrival  
 As of 31 December 2024 (‘main applicants only’)



Source: Home Office Immigration Statistics, Table Im\_2021

Note: Data include main applicants only, and not dependants. Data are current as of 31 December 2024. The asylum grant rate is calculated by excluding pending and withdrawn applications as well as administrative decisions. Numbers will change as more applications are processed.



More than a third of all small boat asylum applications that were withdrawn – around 10,000 – came from Albanian nationals, following a spike in arrivals in 2022 (Figure 6). Approximately 84% of all initial decisions on Albanian applications were withdrawals or administrative decisions. Between 2018 and 2024, only 38 applications from Albanians who arrived on small boats resulted in a grant of protection.

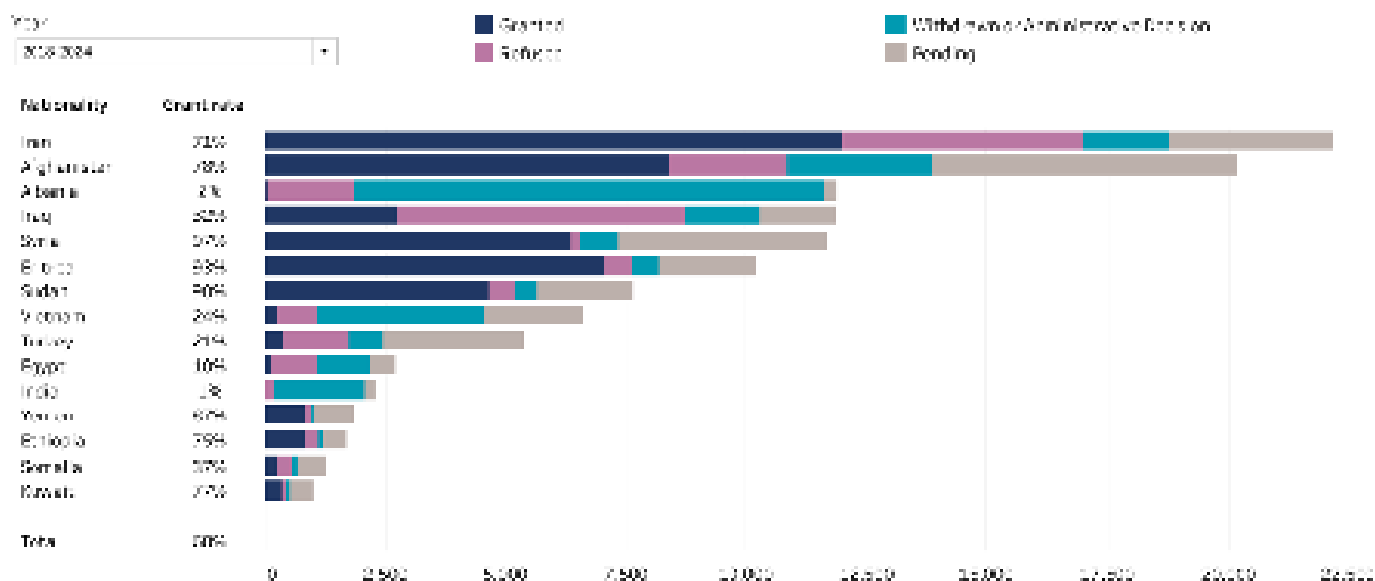
Some of the top nationalities among small boat arrivals have very high asylum grant rates, such as Syrians, Eritreans, and Sudanese. However, others are much more likely to be refused – including Albanians but also citizens of Iraq, Vietnam, Turkey, or India.



Figure 6

### The asylum grant rate varies widely among top small boat nationalities

Number of initial decisions and grant rate on asylum applications from small boat arrivals, by period of arrival and nationality (initial applicants only)



Source: Home Office Immigration Statistics, Tables 10, 2021.

Note: This includes initial decisions only, and not appeals. The asylum grant rate is calculated by dividing the number of granted asylum applications by the total number of initial decisions. The number will change as more applications are processed.



## Around 5,000 people who arrived by small boat had been returned from the UK by the end of 2024

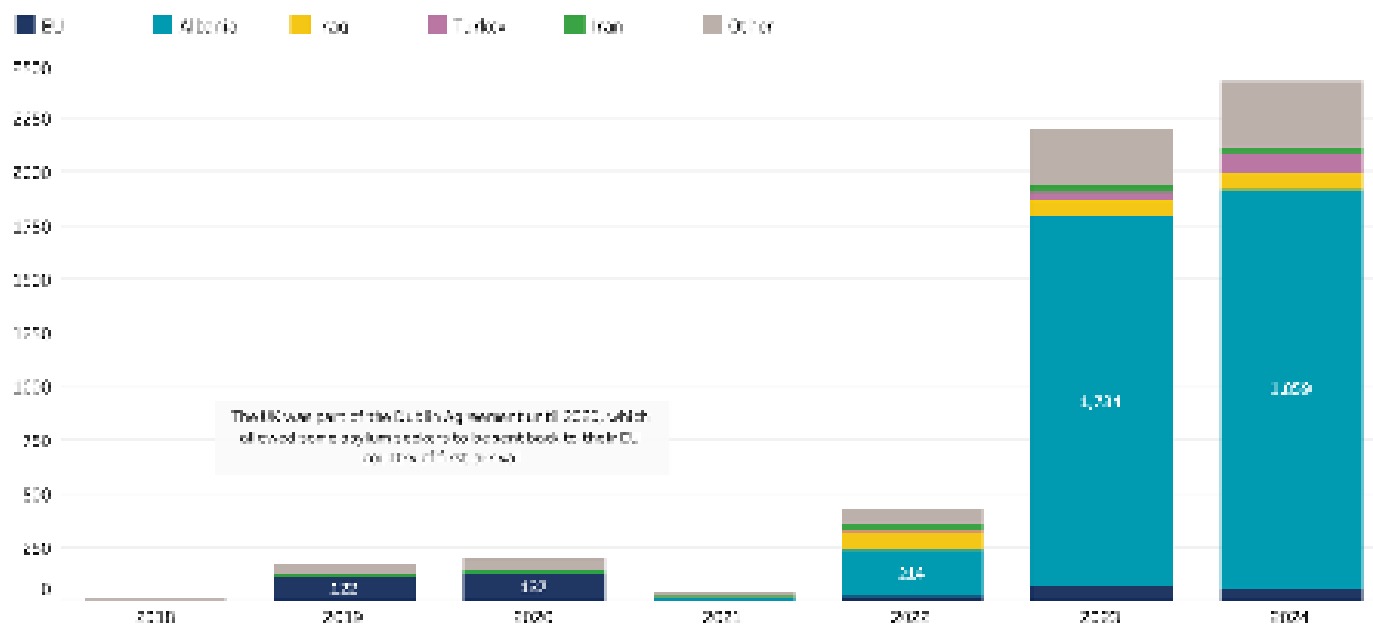
Relatively few people who arrived to the UK by crossing the Channel in a small boat were subsequently returned to another country – a total of around 5,000 between 2018 and 2024, or around 3% of all arrivals. However, annual numbers have increased over time. In the same period, around 22,000 asylum applications from small boat arrivals were refused (though this refers to initial decisions, and some of these individuals will eventually be granted status on appeal and not become eligible for removal).

Most returns of small boat arrivals have been to Albania – 3,800 or 76% of the total. The government prioritised the processing of Albanian asylum applications after arrivals spiked in 2022, and overall returns to the country increased sharply after a returns agreement was signed the same year. However, around 11,600 applications from Albanian nationals who arrived by small boat were either rejected or withdrawn between 2018 and 2024 – which would indicate that the majority may remain in the UK without authorisation.

Figure 7

**Most returns of small boat arrivals have been to [Albania](#)**

Number of people who arrived by small boat and were subsequently returned, by year of return and destination



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of data from EO (41113/2025).

Dates of return refer to the year a person was returned, not the year of arrival. Data include both enforced and voluntary returns.

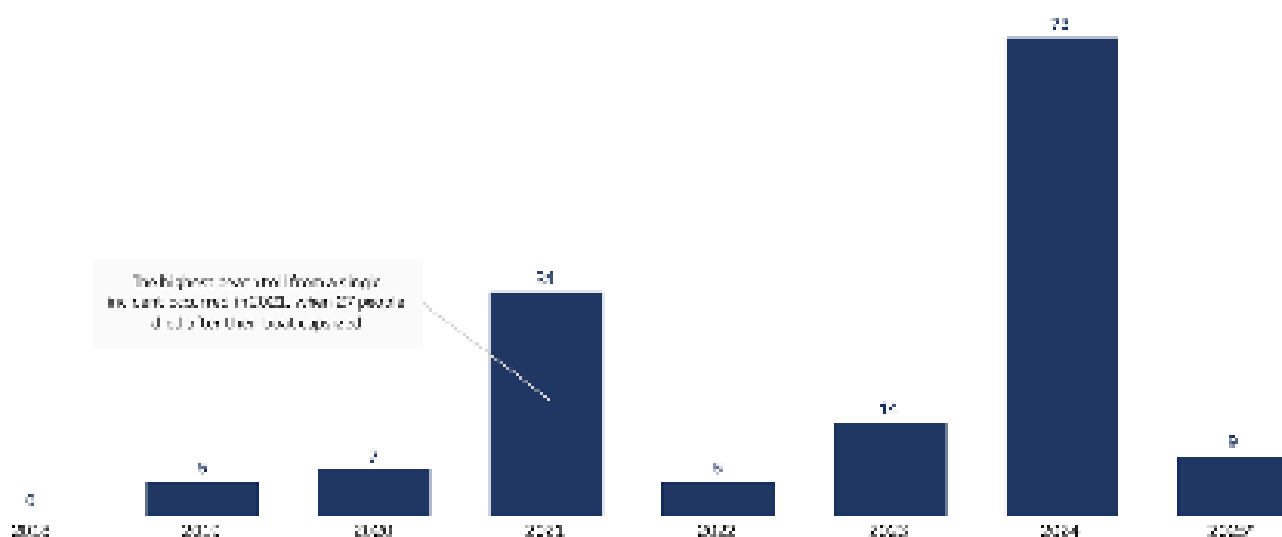
**In 2024, 73 people died trying to cross the English Channel by small boat, more than in the previous six years combined**

Attempts to cross the English Channel by small boat have become more deadly over time. In 2024, there were 73 confirmed deaths related to such crossings – a record number, and five times more than the year before. A total of 147 people died in the Channel between 2018 and April 2025. This rises to 236 when considering other deaths related to migration in the area, such as accidents involving people who try to board lorries bound for the UK. These figures may understate the true toll, as not all incidents are reported.

Two factors may have played a role in the rise in deaths over time, particularly in 2024. One likely factor is that the number of people in each boat has grown significantly, from an average of 13 in 2020 to 53 in 2024. While this partly reflects the use of larger boats by smugglers, reports suggest many boats are used beyond their capacity, making accidents more likely. Another factor could be [increased enforcement](#) by the authorities. Beaches in Northern France have been subject to more patrols, meaning that some journeys may have become longer and more dangerous – reports indicate that small boats are more likely to depart from [further along the coast](#), or even canals or rivers [inland](#).

Figure 8

In 2024, more people died trying to cross the English Channel by sea than in all previous years put together  
Number of deaths related to attempts to cross the English Channel by sea, by year



Source: IOM Missing Migrants Project.

Notes: Figures for 2025 are for January-April only. Data only include confirmed deaths related to attempts to cross the English Channel by sea. Other deaths related to attempts to reach the UK, such as by car, are not included.



## Increased enforcement of other unauthorised routes and the professionalisation of smuggling gangs have contributed to the rise of small boat crossings

Increased enforcement of other unauthorised modes of entry, such as lorries and trains, is likely to have contributed to the initial rise of the small boat route into the UK. After 2014, the British and French governments invested in enhanced security in and around French ports and the Eurotunnel. Measures included more perimeter fencing, additional CCTV, increased patrols, CO2 detectors, thermal imaging, and heartbeat monitors. Several organisations have argued these measures led to more people crossing in small boats – including the UK's [Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration](#), the [UN Refugee Agency](#), and the [Institute for Public Policy Research](#), a think tank.

Another contributing factor has been the expansion of smuggling operations across the Channel. Smuggling groups have become larger and increasingly professionalised in recent years, and were able to capitalise on their initial experience as enforcement measures were progressively tightened. There is some evidence that the price of crossing the Channel declined over time, although estimates are uncertain and can vary significantly. According to some [sources](#), prices fell from around €14,000 in 2018 to [well under](#) €4,000 in 2024.

## People may choose to seek asylum in the UK for a variety of reasons, though their knowledge of asylum policy varies

There is limited evidence on why Channel migrants decide to come to the UK. Several factors appear to play a role in their decision, such as the presence of friends and family members [in the UK](#). The most common nationalities crossing the Channel have [larger diaspora populations](#) in the UK rather than France. Other reasons [include](#) language and cultural links to the UK, perceptions of the UK as safe and welcoming, as well as negative experiences in other European countries.

Much debate has focused on whether UK policies affect the decisions of those seeking to cross the Channel. In general, academic research finds that small variations in policy between countries are not the most important factor influencing how many people claim asylum in destination countries. Global developments, such as conflict and instability in countries of origin, appear to be more important. Unauthorised migrants' destination countries may also be [influenced](#) in some cases by the decisions of their smugglers.

Research on asylum seekers' motivations find that they have [varying levels of knowledge](#) about the policies that will face them when they arrive, or [recent changes](#) to such policies. Prospective migrants are generally aware of both the [risks](#) involved in an unauthorised journey – such as death, violence, or abuse – and the potential economic [benefits](#) of reaching their destination. However, limited information means that many [underestimate](#) risks and overestimate their chances of obtaining legal status.

One policy factor that may have [influenced](#) people's decision to cross the Channel is that the UK is no longer part of the [Dublin](#) system. Before Brexit, this allowed for some asylum seekers to be returned to their EU country of first arrival, as well as information sharing on asylum applications made in other member states. In [interviews](#), migrants in Northern France [often](#) cite the departure from Dublin as a reason for wanting to seek asylum in the UK, particularly if they had already been refused protection in the EU. However, it is unclear how big a role this played in their decision-making. In practice, few people were returned under Dublin when the UK was still a member – an average of 560 a year between 2008 and 2020.

Another argument – made by France's previous [Interior Minister](#), among others – has been that Britain's liberal labour market regulations and lack of ID cards attract migrants. However, there is little evidence that the UK's lack of an ID card system acts as a draw to migrants. As in France, British employers can be fined or imprisoned if they are found to have hired someone without permission to work and did not check their immigration status. In fact, data from the [World Bank](#) suggest that the [informal economy](#) – which includes many undeclared activities and is likely to [rely](#) on the employment of people without work authorisation – is smaller in the UK than in France, relative to the economy.

## **Increased enforcement, measures to deter migrants, and the introduction of safe and legal routes are the main types of policies proposed to reduce small boat crossings**

Three main types of policies have been proposed to tackle small boat arrivals in the UK.

First is increased enforcement to disrupt the smuggling networks, thereby restricting the 'supply' of smuggling services. The Labour government's main approach – and its promise to 'smash the gangs' – falls into this category. It has introduced several new policies – [increased staffing](#), [more cooperation](#) with European police forces, new security agreements with countries such as [Iraq](#) and [Serbia](#) to tackle smuggling routes, and a new [Border Security Command](#) to coordinate investigations. In addition, a new [Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill](#) was introduced in Parliament to give authorities expanded powers, such as the ability to search people and seize their belongings more easily. Many of these measures are a continuation of those taken by the previous Conservative government – for example, increased [coordination](#) with French authorities and deals with countries such as Albania.

There is [some evidence](#) that enforcement can have an impact on the number of people claiming asylum in some settings, although measures to reduce small boat crossings through such means also face challenges. Leaders of smuggling networks tend to [operate outside Europe](#), in countries where there is little international law enforcement co-operation with the UK. When a smuggler is apprehended, they can typically be quickly replaced. There are limited costs involved in setting up a new smuggling operation, and few barriers to entry. [Studies](#) have highlighted that smuggling operations across the Channel are not driven by large gangs with centralised control and clear hierarchical structures. Instead, they operate as loose networks with localised operations that specialise in different aspects of the business, such as recruiting migrants or securing equipment. Because of the high demand for crossings, there are strong financial incentives for new actors to fill any gaps created by successful enforcement.

The second type of approach is [deterrence](#) – altering the incentives of migrants who want to reach the UK in order to reduce demand for crossings. This was a central focus of previous Conservative governments. Deterrence policies aimed to restrict the rights of asylum seekers after they arrive, such as the [Illegal Migration Act 2023](#) (IMA), which prevented people who entered the UK without authorisation from being granted protection. Most notably, [an agreement was signed with Rwanda](#) to relocate asylum seekers there. However, this was delayed by legal challenges, and no asylum seekers were forcibly relocated to Rwanda by the time of the 2024 Election. The scheme was cancelled by Labour, and most provisions of the IMA will be repealed by the new Border Security Bill.

Despite Labour's initial focus on enforcement, [reports](#) emerged in April 2025 that the government was trying to negotiate a new agreement with France, which would allow it to return some people who arrived by small boat, in exchange for accepting asylum seekers who had family ties to the UK. As with the Rwanda scheme, the goal would be to deter people from crossing the Channel in the first place. The deterrent effect of schemes to send asylum seekers either to the EU or to Rwanda would likely depend on the number of asylum seekers relocated there. A significant deterrent effect may require a relatively large number of people arriving by small boat to be removed under the scheme.

Third and finally, civil society proposals have focused on providing 'safe and legal routes' for people to claim asylum in the UK, so they do not have to make dangerous crossings by boat. These include creating or expanding refugee resettlement programmes, expanding visa routes for refugees to join family members in the UK, providing additional humanitarian visas, or creating an option to apply for asylum from overseas. There is limited evidence that providing safe and legal routes has a large impact reducing the number of asylum seekers arriving without authorisation. For example, an [analysis](#) of US policies facilitating lawful border crossings between 2011 and 2023 found that the practice of allowing a limited number of legal arrivals explained only 9% of the monthly variation in illegal ones. In practice, it is likely that legal routes will reduce the use of unauthorised routes only if they allow a very large number of people to access them. For example, few Ukrainians have been detected crossing the Channel in small boats due to the uncapped visa scheme for this group, whereas Afghans, who have a limited resettlement scheme available to them, have been one of the most common nationalities making the crossing.

## Italy, Spain, and Greece experienced more unauthorised arrivals by sea than the UK in 2024

Greece, Italy, and Spain have all received large numbers of [people arriving without authorisation](#) by boat since 2014. Italy experienced most irregular arrivals over the Mediterranean in 2024, around 67,000 – though numbers were 58% compared to a year before. Spain received 64,000 people and Greece 54,000. This compares to the approximately 37,000 arrivals over the Channel in the UK.

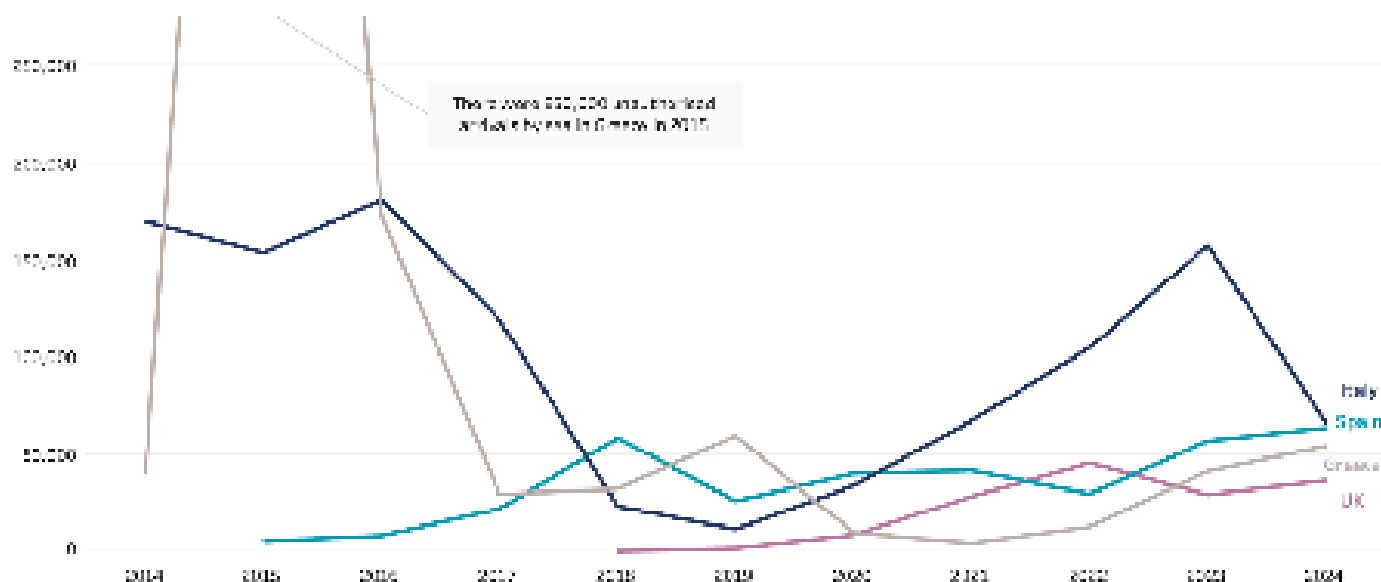
The number of boat arrivals in other countries has varied widely over time. Yet in recent years they remained significantly lower than during the refugee crisis of the mid-2010s. Greece and Italy together received more than a million unauthorised sea arrivals in 2015 alone.

Unauthorised crossings in the Mediterranean have led to considerably more deaths than in the English Channel, although the latter route has become more dangerous over time. According to the [IOM](#), around 32,000 died in the Mediterranean between 2014 and 2024. This compared to 332 people who died in and around the English Channel during the same period.

As well as fewer unauthorised arrivals by sea, the UK also receives fewer asylum applications than some other large European countries. In 2024, a record number of 108,000 people applied for asylum in the UK – compared to 251,000 in Germany, 159,000 in Italy, 166,000 in Spain, and 158,000 in France (for more details, see our briefing, [Asylum and refugee resettlement in the UK](#)).

**Figure 9**

**The UK experienced fewer unauthorised arrivals by sea than other European countries in recent years**  
Number of migrants arriving without authorisation by sea, by year and country



Sources: British UK Home Office, Irregular migration to the UK, [Tackling\\_2011](#), [Frontex](#) (annual), [IOM](#) (CR Operations), [Doris Ramm](#), [Mediterranean in Motion](#).  
Note: The numbers for Spain include arrivals to the Canary Islands.



## Bilateral deals and enforcement measures may have reduced unauthorised arrivals by sea in some European countries

In response to increases in irregular arrivals by sea, European governments introduced new measures to control migration. This included restrictions on the rights and eligibility of asylum seekers in [Greece](#) and [Italy](#), as well as efforts by the [Spanish](#) and [Italian](#) governments to curtail search-and-rescue operations by humanitarian NGOs. [Frontex](#), the EU's shared border and coast guard agency, was also significantly expanded after 2015.

However, the main focus has been on reaching bilateral deals with key neighbours. This includes EU agreements with [Turkey](#) in 2016, [Libya](#) in 2017, [Tunisia](#) and [Mauritania](#) in 2023, and [Egypt](#) in 2024. Further agreements with Jordan and Morocco were being [negotiated](#) as of early 2025, after [increased cooperation](#) on migration with the latter since 2017.

These deals vary in scale and scope, though have a similar principle at their core: the EU provides direct funding and other assistance – training and equipment for police forces, logistical support, expanded access to visas, or refugee resettlement programmes – while its neighbours promise to control the flow of migrants over the Mediterranean. Some of the measures implemented include crackdowns on smuggling gangs, expanded patrols, and pushbacks at sea by coast guards. Some of the EU's agreements have been [criticised](#) by human rights [organisations](#) for contributing to abuse against migrants.

The EU's bilateral deals may have had some impact in reducing unauthorised migration across the Mediterranean, although the effects are hard to measure. The number of crossings to Italy, Greece, and Spain fell sharply after bilateral agreements were signed — at least initially. However, the number of people arriving by sea has fluctuated in recent years. For example, arrivals in Italy peaked in 2016, declined rapidly after the agreement with Libya was signed in 2017, then rose quickly between 2021 and 2023 – only to fall again in 2024 after another agreement was reached with Tunisia, where many of the previous routes from Libya had relocated. However, it is difficult to determine exactly how much of these declines were due to changes in policy, as opposed to other factors.

## Acknowledgements

*With thanks to **CJ McKinney** for assisting with a previous update.*



## 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](http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk)

---

### About the authors

Peter William Walsh  
Senior Researcher  
[peter.walsh@compas.ox.ac.uk](mailto:peter.walsh@compas.ox.ac.uk)

Mihnea V. Cuibus  
Researcher  
[mihnea.cuibus@nuffield.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mihnea.cuibus@nuffield.ox.ac.uk)

### Press contact

Rob McNeil  
Head of Media and Communications  
[robert.mcneil@compas.ox.ac.uk](mailto:robert.mcneil@compas.ox.ac.uk)  
+ 44 (0)1865 274568  
+ 44 (0)7500 970081

---

### Recommended citation

Walsh, P. W. & Cuibus, M. V. (2025) *People crossing the English Channel in small boats*. Migration Observatory briefing, COMPAS, University of Oxford

