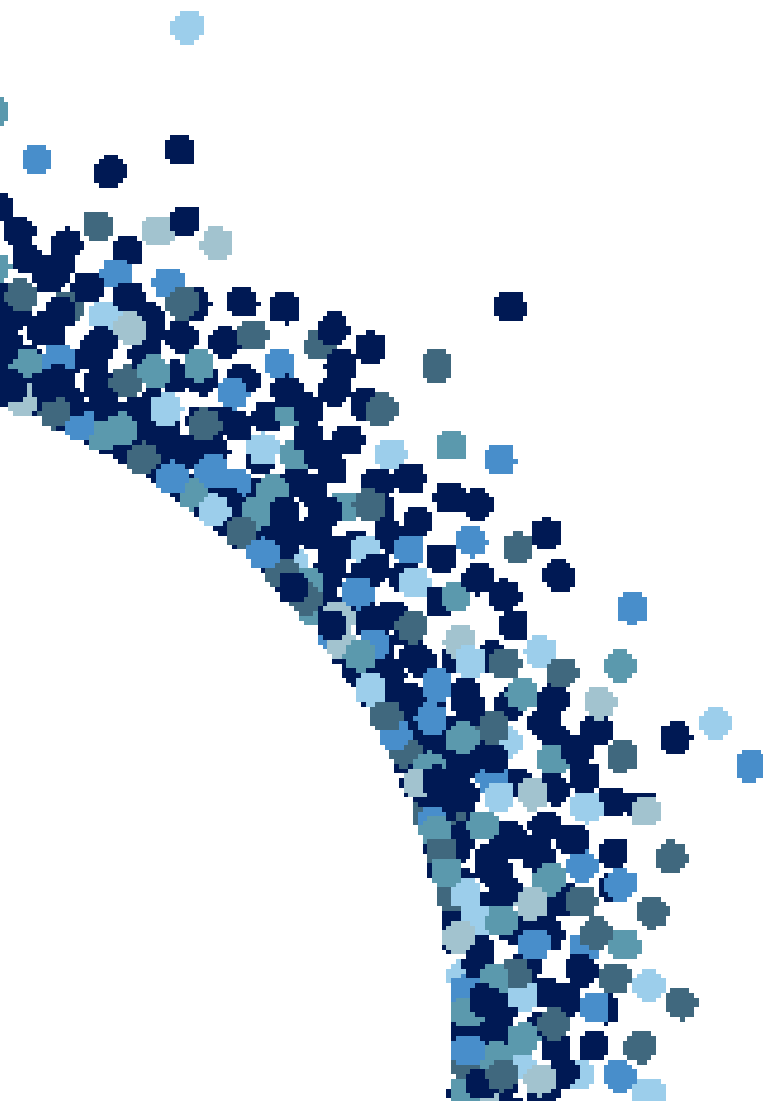




BRIEFING

People crossing the English Channel in small boats



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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 46,000 people were detected crossing the English Channel in small boats in 2022.

In the first half of 2023, the number of detected crossings was about 11,500 – a fall of 10% compared to the first half of 2022.

Nationals of five countries – Iran, Albania, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria – made up 71% of those crossing in small boats between 2018 and March 2023.

Ninety two percent of people arriving in small boat from 2018 to March 2023 claimed asylum; of the small share who had received a decision by March 2023, 86% received a grant of protection.

Available data provide no clear or single explanation for the rise in popularity of the small boat route, though one plausible reason is that enforcement activity has made other irregular methods of entry less viable.

Eight percent of people arriving via small boats from 2018 to March 2023 were referred to the UK's modern slavery system.

Research on the motivations of asylum seekers finds several reasons that some people prefer to claim asylum in the UK, and knowledge of UK asylum policy is not one of them.

Greece, Italy, and Spain have all experienced large numbers of unauthorised arrivals by sea since 2014, with numbers fluctuating over time.

Border enforcement measures may have reduced the number of migrants in some European countries, but their effects are unclear.

A range of policies have been proposed to tackle small boat arrivals in the UK.

The number of Albanian small boats arrivals, who made up the largest group crossing the Channel in 2022, fell by 88% in the first quarter of 2023 compared to the same period a year before.

Understanding the evidence

Since 2018, there has been a sharp rise in the number of people arriving in the UK irregularly after crossing the English Channel in small boats. In response, the UK government has introduced a number of policies to tackle small boat arrivals.

In March 2021, the government published its [New Plan for Immigration](#), a collection of changes of the UK's asylum system that aimed, in part, to address small boat arrivals. The main vehicles for this policy statement include the Nationality and Borders Act 2022, the policy to send asylum seekers to Rwanda, and the Illegal Migration Bill 2023. Collectively, these policies aim to deter people from travelling to the UK by small boat. For more information on these policies, see the Migration Observatory's briefing, [UK policies to deter people from claiming asylum](#).

Government policy to address small boat arrivals has also included co-operation with France. A [report](#) by the House of Commons Library provides a timeline of UK-French cooperation on tackling irregular migration. The Government also cooperates with Albania on enforcement activities and the return of people who have not claimed asylum or have had their claims refused.

On 4 January 2023, the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, made "stopping the boats" one of five [key policy pledges](#). This has included strengthening cooperation with France, and legislation.

The UK's modern slavery system: the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

In recent years, some politicians have argued that the UK's modern slavery system is being abused by those arriving via small boat to prevent their removal. The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the UK's system for identifying and providing support to potential victims of human trafficking and modern slavery. The NRM process consists of three main stages:

- 1. Identification.** Potential victims of trafficking or slavery are **identified** by a number of First Responder organisations, including Border Force, Immigration Enforcement, and NGOs, such as the Refugee Council. When a potential victim is identified, they are referred to the NRM.
- 2. Reasonable grounds decision.** The Home Office then makes a decision as to whether there are "reasonable grounds" to believe that the individual is a victim of trafficking or slavery. If the decision is positive, the potential victim is granted temporary permission to remain in the UK for 45 days while their case is investigated further.
- 3. Conclusive grounds decision.** After the end of the 45-day period, the Home Office makes a conclusive grounds decision: a final decision as to whether the individual is a victim of trafficking or slavery. If the decision is positive, the victim may be granted a further period of permission to remain in the UK and access to ongoing support. If the conclusive grounds decision is negative, the individual may be returned to their country of origin.

Understanding the evidence

Since April 2022, the government has published provisional daily counts of small boats arrivals, which are derived from operational databases and are subject to revision. Finalised official statistics on small boat arrivals are published quarterly, as part of the government's [statistics on irregular migration](#).

Counts of small boat entries or other irregular entries refer to the number of people detected, but 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 to the UK, detected in the Channel and subsequently brought to the UK.

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.

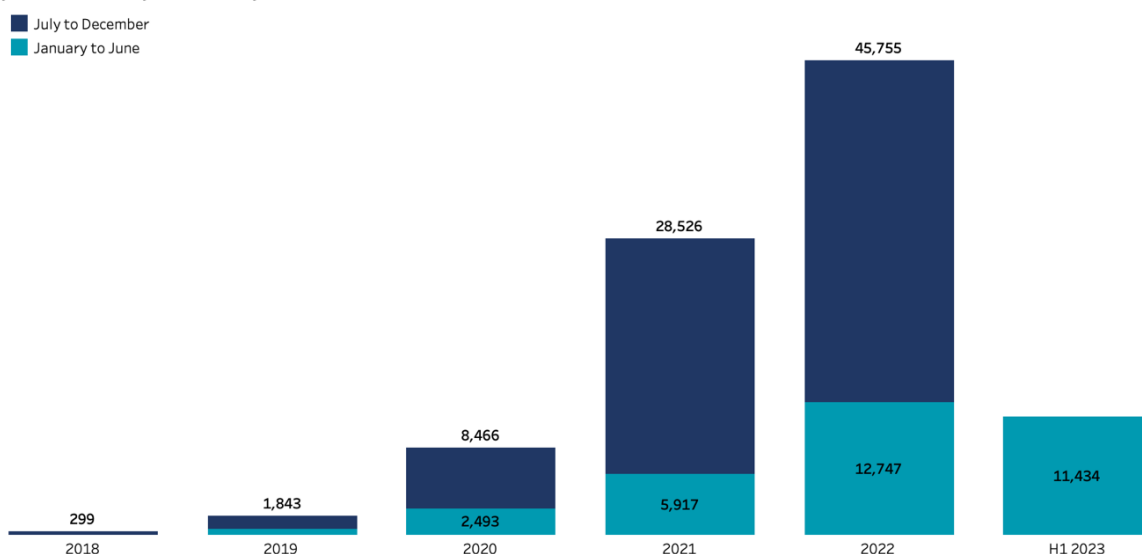
Around 46,000 people were detected crossing the English Channel in small boats in 2022; in the first half of 2023, the number was around 11,500, a decline of 10% compared to the first half of 2022

The overall number of small boat arrivals has increased substantially in the last few years. While reports of people attempting to enter the UK by crossing the Channel go back at least twenty years, it was not until 2018 that significant numbers began to be detected.

According to the latest data from the Home Office, 45,755 people reached the UK in 2022 after crossing the English Channel in small boats. In the first half of 2023 (January to June), the number of small boat arrivals was down 10% (at 11,434) compared to the same period in 2022. At the time of writing in July 2023 it was not possible to say if this decline indicated a more sustained trend. Historically, most crossings have occurred during the second half of the year (Figure 1), and particularly during the summer. There can also be large, short-term fluctuations in the number of people crossing the Channel due to factors including local weather conditions.

Figure 1. Number of people detected crossing the English Channel in small boats

By semester and year, January 2018 to June 2023



Source: Home Office irregular migration statistics (year ending March 2023, Irr_D01) and Home Office data on daily small boat arrivals.

Notes: Counts refer to those detected on arrival to the UK in a small boat, or who were detected in the Channel by UK authorities and subsequently brought to the UK, having travelled in a small boat. "Small boat" includes rigid-hulled inflatable boats (RHIBs), dinghies and kayaks, but not larger vessels, such as go-fast craft, yachts, motor cruisers, tugs, and fishing vessels, which the Home Office says are "rarely used" by irregular migrants.

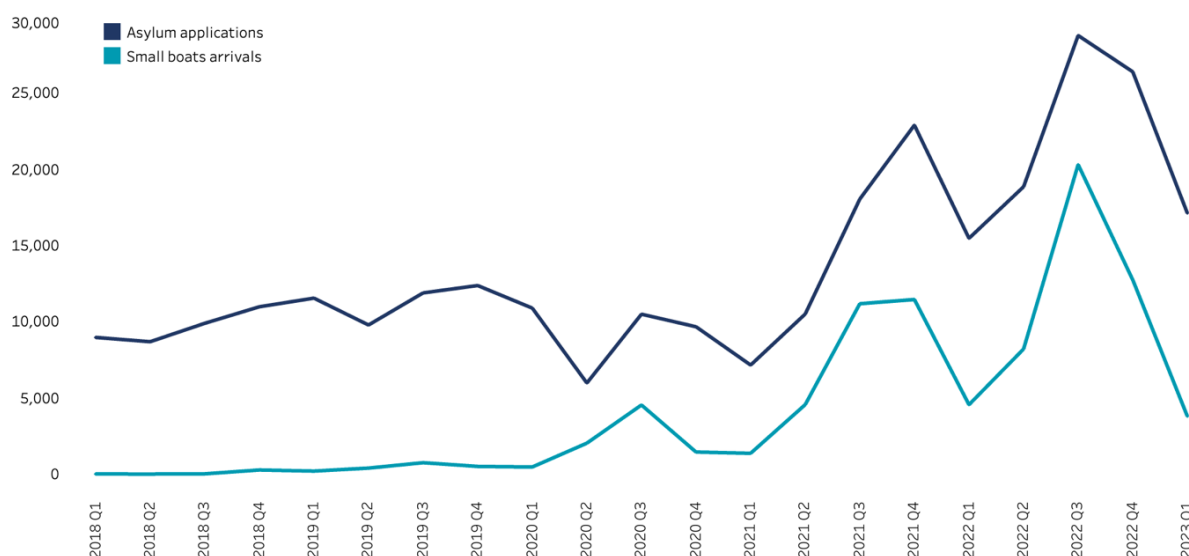


The majority of those arriving in small boats are men (male, 18 or over, excluding those of unknown age or sex) – 76% (32,269) in the year to March 2023. Another 16% (6,743) of arrivals in the same period were children (under 18). These proportions have been stable over time, and similar to those observed in asylum applicants more broadly (65% and 18%, respectively, in the year to March 2023). One reason for the higher share of men among asylum seekers more broadly is the danger associated with irregular migration journeys. In many cases, female and minor family members [join later](#) through family reunification routes.

Most people who cross the Channel in small boats claim asylum once they are in the UK. According to the [Home Office](#), 92% (80,989) of all those crossing the Channel from 2018 to March 2023 either applied for asylum themselves or were named as a dependant (partner or child) on an application. The total number of people seeking asylum has also increased in the last two years, along with the number of small boats arrivals (Figure 2). Almost 90,000 people applied for asylum in the UK in 2022, 52% more than the previous year. A large proportion of this growth is driven by applicants arriving in small boats, although most asylum applicants have not been small boat arrivals. In 2022, small boat arrivals accounted for 45% of total asylum claims, compared to a negligible proportion before 2020.

Figure 2. Small boats arrivals and asylum applications

By quarter of arrival or claim, Q1 2018 to Q1 2023



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of Home Office irregular migration statistics, year ending March 2023, Irr_D01 and Home Office immigration system statistics, year ending March 2023, Asy_D01.

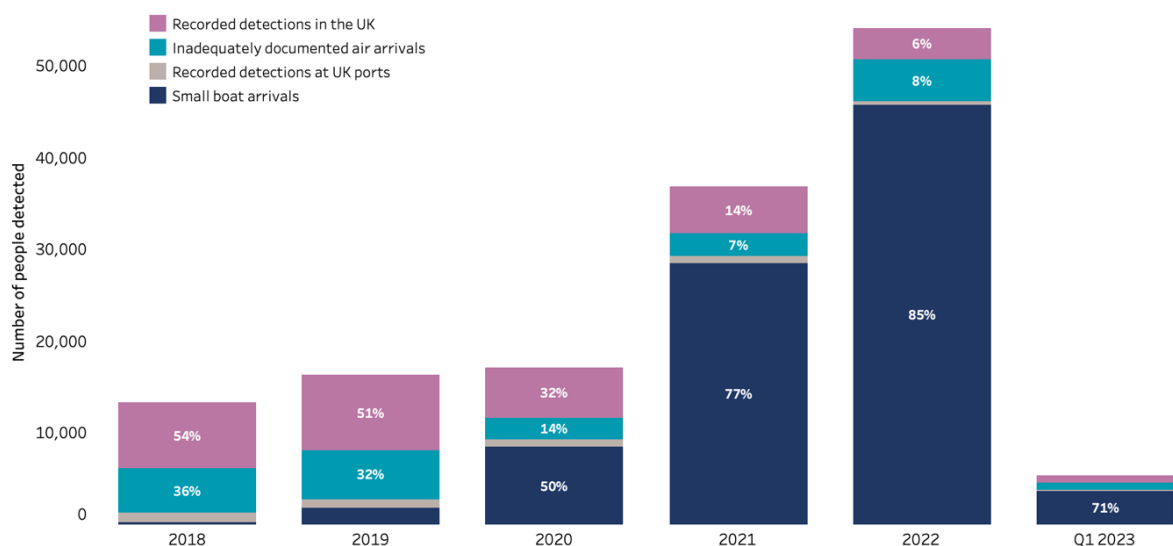
Note: Asylum applicants refers to all people claiming asylum and not just those who arrived via small boat.



A number of people enter the UK through irregular means other than small boats, such as in lorries or containers. From 2020, the sharp rise in small boats arrivals drove a large increase in overall irregular entries, with numbers more than tripling. Correspondingly, the proportion of small boats arrivals among detected irregular entries went from 2% in 2018 to more than 85% in 2022 (although note that a higher share of boat arrivals are detected compared to other irregular arrivals). The proportion fell slightly in the first quarter of 2023, to 71% of all irregular arrivals.

Figure 3. Detected irregular arrivals to the UK

By mode of entry, 2018 to March 2023



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of Home Office irregular migration statistics, Irr_D01.

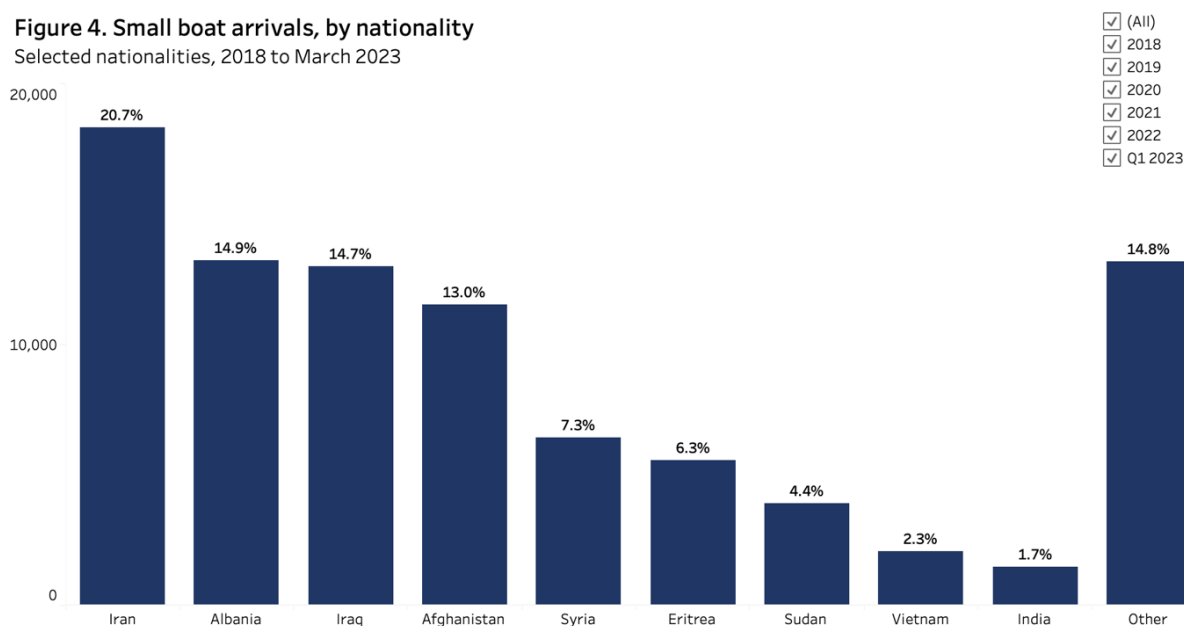
Notes: Comparisons between the different methods of irregular entry should be made with caution, because the detection rates across methods of entry differ. Changes in the number of irregular entrants detected could be a result of changes in operational activity or recording practices, and not only changes in the number of people attempting to enter the UK irregularly.



Since 2018, the nationals of five countries – Iran, Albania, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria – made up 71% 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 March 2023, 71% of total arrivals (62,513) had one of five nationalities – Iranian (21%), Albanian (15%), Iraqi (15%), Afghan (13%), or Syrian (7%). The most common nationalities have changed over time (Figure 4) in response to a wide range of factors, including developments in origin countries. In the first quarter of 2023, the latest for which data are available, the largest group of arrivals were Afghans (23.7%), followed by Indians (17.7%) and Iranians (14.1%). Notably, it was not until the end of 2022 that significant numbers of migrants from India started being detected over the Channel – there were 670 arrivals in the first quarter of 2023, compared to only 32 in the same period of 2022 (Figure 5).

Figure 4. Small boat arrivals, by nationality
Selected nationalities, 2018 to March 2023



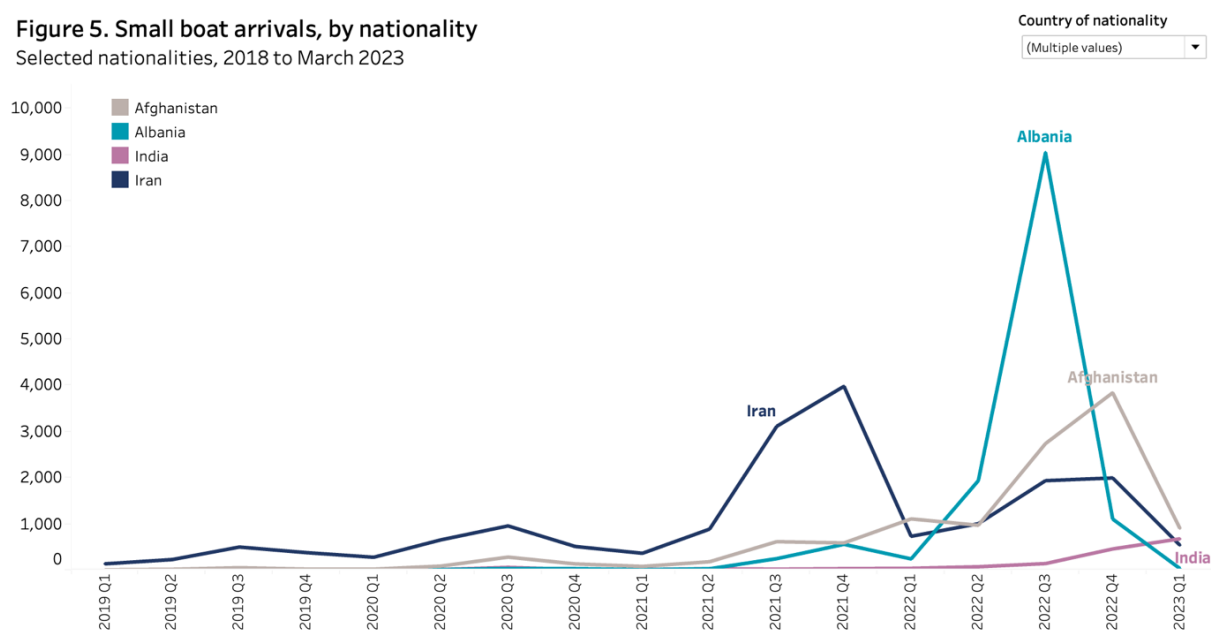
Source: Migration Observatory analysis of Home Office irregular migration statistics, Irr_D01.



There was a sharp rise in Albanian nationals crossing the Channel in 2022, which drove much of the overall increase in arrivals that year (Figure 5). Over 12,000 arrived in small boats that year, compared to only 800 making the trip a year earlier. This sudden increase was the source of political controversy, leading the UK Government to respond with a [pledge](#) to fast-track the removal of unauthorised Albanian arrivals and cooperate with the Albanian government on enforcement activity. In the winter of 2022-3 the number of Albanians crossing in small boats dramatically declined (Figure 5), with only 28 making the crossing in the first quarter of 2023, compared to 235 the year before. It is difficult to know how much of the decline results from policy vs. other factors, or whether the number of Albanians will increase again in future.

Figure 5. Small boat arrivals, by nationality

Selected nationalities, 2018 to March 2023



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of Home Office Immigration Statistics, Irregular migration to the UK, Table Irr_D01.

Notes: Counts refer to those detected on arrival to the UK in a small boat, or who were detected in the Channel by UK authorities and subsequently brought to the UK, having travelled across the English channel in a small boat. "Small boat" includes rigid-hulled inflatable boats (RHIBs), dinghies and kayaks, but not larger vessels, such as go-fast craft, yachts, motor cruisers, tugs, and fishing vessels, which the Home Office says are "rarely used".



For more information on Albanian small boat arrivals, see [Albanian asylum seekers in the UK and EU: a look at recent data](#).

92% of small boat arrivals from 2018 to March 2023 claimed asylum; of the small share who had received a decision by March 2023, 86% received a grant of protection

Since 2018, when small boats arrivals started to be routinely recorded, [around 81,000 small boat arrivals \(92%\) claimed asylum in the UK](#) or were named as a dependant on an application.

Given the UK's large [asylum backlog](#), only 13% of these applications received an initial decision by the end of March 2023. Of these, 86% – about 7,600 – were granted refugee status or some other form of permission to stay. The Home Office arrives at a [different figure](#) – 64% – because they include "third country refusals" as refusals. In these cases, the UK does not consider a person's asylum claim because of a connection to a safe third country. However, current evidence suggests that very few are removed and many are later admitted to the asylum system, and have their claim heard. Our preferred measure thus excludes this category from the calculation.

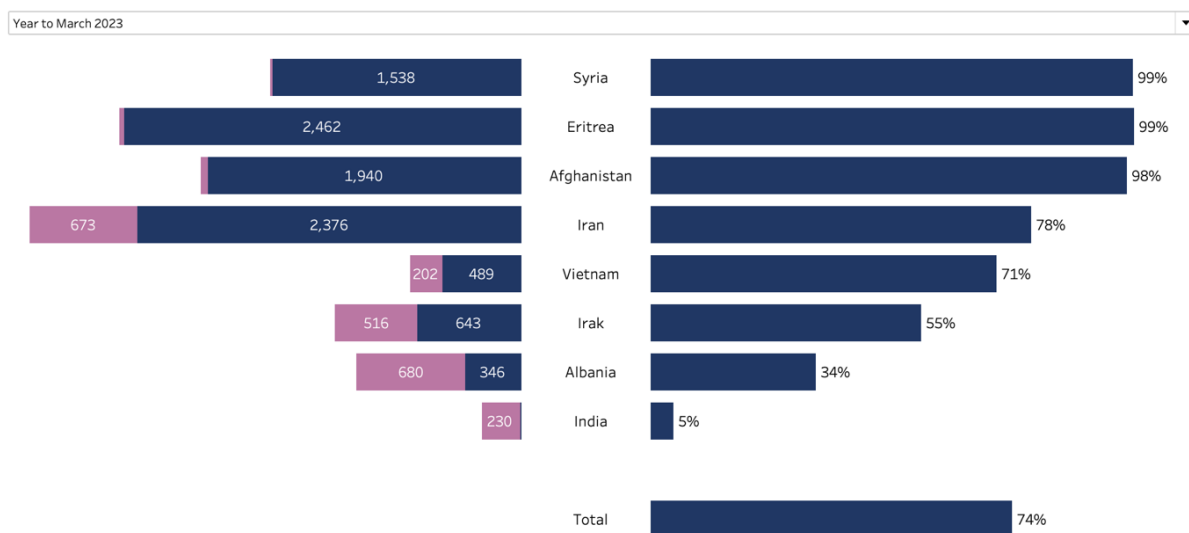
The grant rate for people arriving in small boats to date has been higher than the average grant rate for all asylum applications, although this could change over time as more applications are processed. In the year to March 2023, 74% (14,607) of all decisions (19,706) on asylum applications were grants of refugee status or other permission to stay.

The likelihood of people being granted asylum or other permission to stay varies widely by nationality (Figure 6). Some of the most common nationalities among Channel migrants, notably Afghan, Iranian, Eritrean, and Syrian, have a higher-than-average likelihood of being granted asylum or other permission to stay. Other common nationalities, however, such as Iraqis or Albanian, have a lower likelihood of being granted protection – 55% and 34%, respectively, in the period from 2018 to March 2023 (note that these figures include all asylum applicants, not just those arriving in small boats).

Note that in late 2022, there was a spike in the number of Albanian nationals withdrawing their asylum applications after arriving in small boats. Of all asylum applications submitted by Albanian nationals arriving in small boats since 2018, [almost 22% \(2,309\) had been withdrawn](#) by March 2023. This is much higher than the average (5%) for all asylum seekers arriving in small boats. Applications can [be considered withdrawn](#) for various reasons, including if the person asks to withdraw the application; if they are detected leaving the UK; or if they do not maintain contact with the Home Office while their claim is pending.

Figure 6. Asylum initial decisions and grant rates

By year and nationality, 2018 to March 2023



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of Home Office Asylum immigration system statistics, Asy_D02.

Note: Third country refusals are included here for easier replicability; there is no substantive difference in grant rates when excluding these from calculations, with the exception of 2020. Excludes withdrawn applications.



Available data provide no clear or single explanation for the rise in popularity of the small boat route

In 2019, the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration [reported](#) that Home Office officials believed that the emergence of the small boat route as an established method of entering the UK irregularly was a consequence of the work done by the UK and French in making other methods of irregular entry more difficult (p. 55). The Institute for Public Policy Research, a think tank, has made similar arguments based on its interviews with expert stakeholders.

Indeed, since 2014 the UK and French governments have invested in enhanced security in and around French ports and the Eurotunnel to prevent stowaways on lorries and trains bound for the UK. These measures include more perimeter fencing and lighting, additional CCTV, more guards and dogs conducting more frequent patrols, CO2 scanners, infra-red motion detection, and vehicle screening cameras (Bolt, 2020, p. 34).

The representative to the UK of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has [argued](#) that more stringent controls on road travel, and the coronavirus pandemic, have had the effect of closing off lorry and air routes to the UK, leading to more people using alternative means, including crossing the Channel in small boats.

Another contributing factor has been the expansion of smuggling operations across the Channel – smuggler groups have become [larger and increasingly professionalised](#) in recent years, and were able to capitalise on their experience as enforcement measures were progressively tightened. Other possible explanations include a [perception](#) that the UK will not be able to return asylum seekers to France because it no longer participates in the Dublin system (although few people were returned under Dublin in recent years), or a deterioration in UK–France enforcement cooperation post–Brexit. However, it is very difficult to disentangle the different potential drivers and identify which have been most important.

Research on the motivations of asylum seekers finds several reasons some prefer to claim asylum in the UK

There is little evidence on why people cross the English Channel in small boats. The Director General of Immigration Enforcement, Tyson Hepple, has [said](#) that Channel migrants are asked why they came to the UK, but those data are not routinely published.

Research on the motivations of asylum seekers and the factors influencing the decisions about where to apply for asylum has found that:

- **Policy is not the most important factor influencing changes in the number of people claiming asylum.** Global developments, such as conflicts in countries of origin, appear to be statistically more important.
- **Decisions about where and how to move depend on a range of factors.** The presence of friends and family members in the UK^{1,2}, plays an important role. For example, the most common nationalities crossing the Channel have larger diaspora populations in the UK rather than France³. Other factors include language and cultural links², perceptions of the UK as safe, welcoming, and democratic², as well as negative experiences in other European countries^{3,4}.
- **Prospective asylum seekers often know little about the policies that will face them when they arrive.** The information they have may be inaccurate or misleading and not particularly detailed. In some cases, research also suggests that the decision to come to the UK is influenced more by smugglers, agents, or handlers than by the migrants themselves⁵.

France’s Interior Minister, Gérald Darmanin, has [suggested](#) that Britain’s liberal labour market regulations act as a pull factor for Channel migrants, “because you can work without identity papers in England and that creates a demand”. There is little evidence to indicate that the UK’s lack of an ID card system acts as a draw to migrants. In the UK, as in France, all employers must check the immigration status of prospective employees. In fact, [World Bank data](#) suggest that the “informal economy”—which includes undeclared activities of many different forms and is [more likely to rely on the employment of people without work authorisation](#)—makes up a smaller share of GDP in the UK than in France: 12% in the UK as opposed to 14% or 15% in France, depending on the method used (for a definition of informality, which includes forms of work other than the employment of irregular migrants, see this World Bank [report](#) on the informal economy).

For more information on the motivations of asylum seekers, see our briefing on [UK policies to deter people from claiming asylum](#).

1. Bouhenia M, Farhat J B, Coldiron M E, Abdallah S, Visentin D, Neuman M, Berthelot M, Porten K and Cohuet S (2017) ‘[Quantitative survey on health and violence endured by refugees during their journey and in Calais, France](#)’, *International Health*, 9(6).

2. Robinson V and Segrott J (2002) [Understanding the decision-making of asylum seekers](#), Home Office.

3. IPPR, [Understanding the rise in Channel crossings](#).

4. The Human Rights Observers Project, [Forced Evictions in Calais and Grand-Synthe](#), 2019

5. Crawley 2010

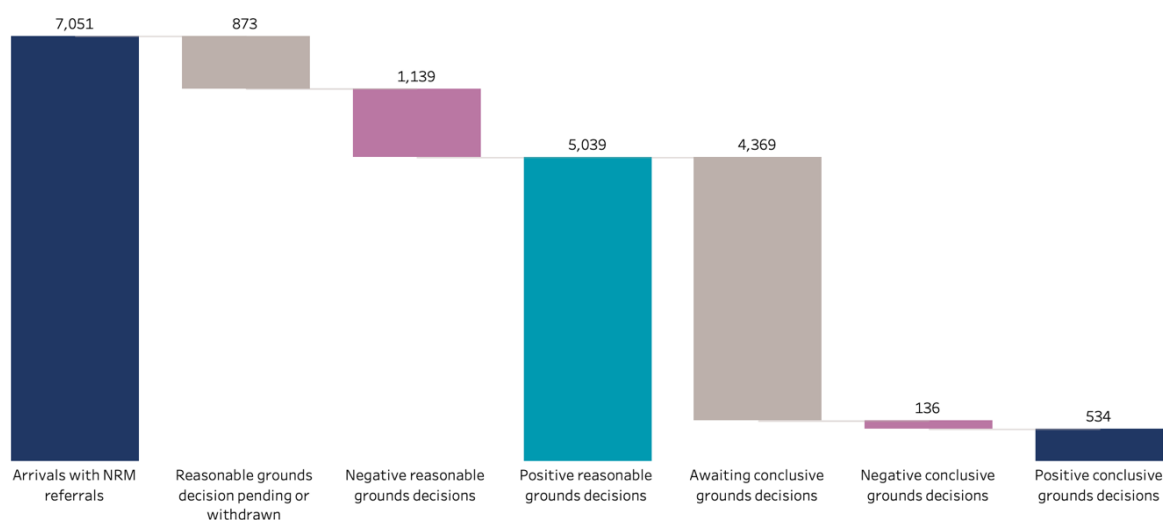
Eight percent of people arriving via small boats from 2018 to March 2023 were referred to the UK’s modern slavery system

The UK government has [said](#) that people are abusing the modern slavery system to prevent their removal from the UK.

From 2018 to March 2023, of the roughly [88,000 people](#) who arrived via small boat, around 7,000 had been referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM; for more details see Understanding the Policy, above) – or around 8%. This number may increase with time as more people from this cohort are identified as potential victims of modern slavery and referred to the NRM.

Of those who had received reasonable grounds decisions by the end of March 2023 (6,178), in 82% (5,039) of cases the Home Office determined that there were reasonable grounds to believe these individuals were modern slavery victims. Of 670 who had received conclusive grounds decisions by March, 80% were confirmed as victims of modern slavery (534 people). This is similar to the average for all NRM referrals. Note that this number will also change over time as more people who arrived by small boat receive conclusive grounds decisions. These data are presented in Figure 7.

Figure 7. People arriving via small boat and the outcomes of their modern slavery cases
2018 to March 2023 arrivals, outcomes as of March 2023



Source: Home Office irregular migration statistics.

Notes: Referrals withdrawn or closed includes some cases where contact with the individual has been lost; these may be reopened if the individual makes contact in future. Cases awaiting reconsideration includes both those awaiting a new reasonable grounds decision and those awaiting a new conclusive grounds decision. Cases awaiting a conclusive grounds decision include those awaiting a reasonable grounds decision.



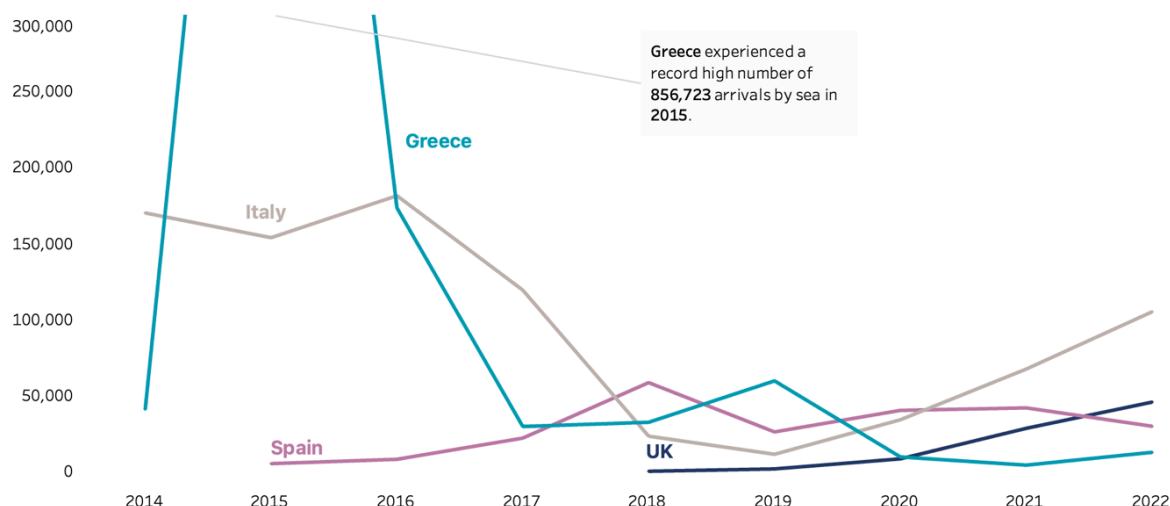
Greece, Italy, and Spain have all experienced large numbers of unauthorised arrivals by sea since 2014, with numbers fluctuating over time

The UK is not the only country experiencing large numbers of unauthorised arrivals of migrants by boat. Since 2014, Greece, Italy, and Spain have all received many arrivals.

In 2022, Italy received around 105,000 unauthorised arrivals over the Mediterranean, while Spain received about 30,000 and Greece 13,000. This compares to the approximately 46,000 arrivals over the Channel in the UK. At the peak of irregular arrivals in 2015, Greece and Italy together received over a million unauthorised arrivals by sea, with Greece detecting a record high of over 850,000 crossings.

The number of boat arrivals in other countries has also varied widely over time. Numbers in Italy and Greece fell by 2017–18 as border enforcement was increased (more on policy responses in the section below), but these decreases were not sustained permanently. Italy saw a rapid increase in arrivals from 2019 to 2022 – a trend similar to that seen in the UK (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Number of migrants arriving without authorisation by sea
By year and country of arrival, 2014 to 2022



Source: For Greece, Italy, and Spain: UNHCR Operational Data Portal, Mediterranean Situation. For the UK: Home Office Irregular Migration Statistics, Irr_D01.

Notes: The counts for Spain include sea arrivals to the Canary Islands.



Data from the International Organization for Migration’s [Missing Migrants Project](#) suggest that more than 200 people have died at sea while trying to reach the UK since 2014, according to an estimate from May 2023. During the same period, the number of deaths in the Mediterranean was around 27,000.

The UK continues to receive fewer applicants for asylum than some other large European countries. In 2022, the UK received around 89,000 applications for asylum. This is comparable to Italy (84,285), and fewer than Spain (118,000), France (156,000), and Germany (244,000). Of roughly 1.1 million people who claimed asylum in the UK and EU-27 in 2022, 8% claimed asylum in the UK.

For more information on the UK asylum system, including in comparative perspective, see our briefing on [Asylum and refugee resettlement in the UK](#).

Border enforcement measures may have reduced the number of migrants in some European countries, but their effects are unclear

In response to the 2015 increase in irregular maritime arrivals, European governments introduced new border enforcement measures, particularly through bilateral deals with key neighbours. Some measures aimed at deterring migrants, such as restricting asylum seekers' rights, were also implemented.

Greece experienced the highest numbers of arrivals across the Mediterranean, with over 850,000 in 2015. The main response was [the EU-Turkey statement](#), signed in 2016. Turkey agreed to help prevent further crossings and accept returns, in exchange for more than €6bn in humanitarian aid and the resettlement of some Syrian refugees from Turkey. Greece also [tightened its asylum eligibility rules](#), expanding its definition of safe third countries.

In Italy, unauthorised arrivals by sea peaked at over 180,000 in 2016. A series of deals with the Libyan government and other organisations in 2017 increased policing in exchange for financial and logistical support. This strategy was criticised following alleged [human rights violations](#) against migrants in Libya. Additionally, measures to prevent boat arrivals and restrict asylum seekers' rights [were introduced](#) starting in 2019, including port closures, fines, and criminal investigations against humanitarian NGOs. Over time, the government has also gradually [curtailed search-and-rescue operations](#) in the Mediterranean.

Spain took a similar approach after a rise in unauthorised arrivals in 2017-18. It asked Morocco to prevent departures while providing funding to the country's border control. The government also reduced previous search-and-rescue operations and refused navigation permits to NGO rescue ships.

Border security was also the focus of a limited response at the European level – [Frontex](#), the EU's shared border and coast guard agency, was significantly expanded.

The implementation of these policies coincided with decreases in the number of unauthorised arrivals by sea. The number of crossings [fell sharply](#) in Italy, Greece, and Spain after bilateral agreements were signed, for example—at least initially. However, it is difficult to determine how much of this decline is due to the change in policy, as opposed to other factors. The number of people arriving by sea has been volatile in recent years, with Italy seeing sharp increases in boat arrivals.

A range of policies have been proposed to tackle small boat arrivals in the UK

There is widespread agreement across government, civil society, and the UN that the phenomenon of small boat arrivals should be addressed. However, the proposals for how to do this vary widely.

Government responses have focused primarily on [deterrence](#) and physical enforcement. Enforcement strategies have included operational cooperation with France (e.g. funding French patrols on beaches) and with Albania (including an agreement for returning refused asylum seekers or people who have not claimed asylum there). Deterrence policies have included policies to reduce the rights of asylum seekers after they arrive, most recently through [the Illegal Migration Bill](#) which aims to prevent people who enter through irregular routes from receiving an asylum decision; as well as [an agreement with Rwanda](#) to relocate asylum seekers there. While there is [some evidence](#) that physical enforcement activities to prevent people from reaching a country's territory can have some impact on asylum applications, the [academic evidence](#) on whether changes to asylum applicants' rights affects their choices to move is less convincing.

By contrast, civil society proposals have focused on providing 'safe and legal routes' for people to claim asylum, so they do not have to make dangerous crossings by boat. [For example](#), these have included expanding or creating new refugee resettlement, 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. While there is evidence that liberal legal routes can reduce the use of irregular routes, more restrictive policies may not have the same effect if people unable to find a place on a given scheme continue to use irregular routes. For example, no Ukrainians have been detected crossing the channel in small boats due to the uncapped visa scheme for this group, whereas Afghans – who have a very small resettlement scheme available to them – have been one of the largest nationalities crossing in small boats.

Other proposed responses offer a mix of policies. The UN has [proposed](#) a combination of tackling smuggling networks and an expansion of safe routes. The Labour Party has [argued in favour of new deals](#) with European countries that would allow Britain to return Channel migrants to countries they previously passed through, along with a [crackdown on smuggling and changes to schemes](#) for refugee resettlement. Others have proposed that the UK should [rejoin the EU's Dublin agreement](#), which allows asylum seekers to be returned to countries they have passed through; this would also create a small safe route into the UK for children and other family members.

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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.

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