



BRIEFING

Returns of unauthorised migrants from the UK

AUTHORS: Peter William Walsh
Mihnea Cuibus
PUBLISHED: 11/08/2025



This briefing examines returns of people without a legal right to be in the UK, including deportations and voluntary departures. It presents statistics on the numbers and characteristics of people who are returned from the UK.

Key Points

Returns from the UK increased by 25% in 2024, to the highest level since 2017

The decline in returns during the 2010s – and the increase since 2021 – have several potential explanations, including increased legal challenges, changes in costs and resources, and trends in the number of people referred to Immigration Enforcement

The top countries of nationality among people returned from the UK in 2024 were India, Albania, and Brazil

Around 48% of refused asylum seekers who applied between 2010 and 2020 had been removed from the UK by June 2024

Around 3% of people who arrived by small boat from 2018 to 2024 were returned from the UK during that period

Around 5,100 foreign national offenders were returned in 2024, making up 15% of all returns

Agreements with countries of origin do not always lead to more returns, though they may have an impact

After Brexit, EU nationals made up the majority of people refused entry at the UK border

Understanding the policy

This briefing uses the terms *return* to refer to the removal or departure of a foreign citizen whom the Home Office determines has no right to be in the UK.

In general usage, deportation refers to the removal of a foreign citizen from a country's territory. In UK legal terminology, however, deportation refers to a subset of government-enforced removals: of people with a criminal conviction, or those whose removal from the UK is determined to be conducive to the public good.

The Home Office is the government department responsible for removing – or aiding or monitoring the voluntary departure of – people who have no legal right to be in the UK. This includes:

1. People who have entered the UK without authorisation;
2. People who have stayed in the country longer than their visa permits, or who have otherwise breached the conditions of their visa;
3. Those being deported in the narrow sense defined above, such as due to a criminal conviction;
4. People who have been refused asylum and have no legal right to stay in the UK.

Before the end of free movement, EU citizens could be removed either for not exercising Treaty rights (i.e., if they were not a jobseeker, worker, self-employed person, self-sufficient, or a student), or on public policy grounds, such as due to a criminal conviction or for reasons of national security. Now that EU free movement to the UK has ended, EU citizens can be removed for the same reasons as non-British citizens from the rest of the world.

Even British citizens can be returned, but only if they are under 18 and their parents are subject to removal.

Most returnees are returned to their country of nationality. However, in some cases, a returnee is sent to a country other than their country of nationality. For example, before 1 January 2021, when the UK was party to the Dublin III Regulation, the UK could, in some circumstances, transfer asylum seekers to EU member states they had previously travelled through or where they had connections. The UK ceased to be a party to the Dublin III Regulation on 31 December 2021. More recently, the UK-France returns deal which entered into force in August 2025 will enable the UK to return a number of people who arrived by small boat to France.

On 1 January 2021, new rules on ‘inadmissibility’ were introduced – later modified as a result of provisions in the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 – to enable the Home Office to put on hold an asylum claim from an individual with a connection to a safe third country, during which the Home Office may try to remove the individual to that country. Small boat arrivals who will be returned to France under the new 2025 agreement will have their asylum claims declared inadmissible before being processed for removal.

The Illegal Migration Act 2023 introduced a ‘duty to remove’ unauthorised arrivals for the Home Secretary – originally envisaged to work alongside a deal with Rwanda to relocate such people to the East African country. However, the ‘duty to remove’ was never implemented and no one was forcibly relocated to Rwanda before the scheme was cancelled by the incoming Labour government in July 2024. Most provisions of the Act, including the duty, will be repealed by the upcoming Border Security, Asylum, and Immigration Bill 2025.

Understanding the evidence

Statistics on returns come from administrative data published by the Home Office, as part of its Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release. The data are for the number of returns rather than the number of unique individuals returned. Therefore, if one person were returned, say, twice in a given period, they would be counted twice in the statistics.

Home Office datasets break down returns into two broad types: *enforced* and *voluntary*.

Enforced returns refer primarily to the removal of people who have declined to leave the UK voluntarily, and where the Home Office enforces their departure. Enforced returns therefore reflect a high level of Home Office enforcement activity. There are three categories of enforced returns in the Home Office data: (1) *enforced removals from detention*, where the individual is removed from the UK directly from detention or within two days of leaving detention; (2) *other returns from detention*, where the individual is removed directly from detention or within two days of leaving detention and has notified the Home Office that they wish to make their own arrangements to leave the country, with the Home Office facilitating or monitoring the return (in this briefing these are called *voluntary returns from detention*); and (3) *non-detained enforced removals*, where the individual is removed more than two days after leaving detention, or where there was no period of detention prior to the enforced removal.

By contrast, *voluntary returns* are subject to a lower level of Home Office enforcement activity, or none at all. In Home Office statistics, two types of voluntary returns are facilitated or monitored by the Home Office: *assisted returns* and *controlled returns*. Assisted returns are where returnees voluntarily make an application to the Home Office's Voluntary Returns Service. The Home Office can then assist with documentation, arrange and pay for flights, and provide financial support for re-integration of up to £3,000. *Controlled returns* are where a person leaves the UK voluntarily at their own expense and who either notifies the Home Office prior to departure or has the Home Office oversee their departure. In this briefing, assisted returns and controlled returns are grouped together under the label *facilitated or monitored returns*, because these returns are actively facilitated or monitored by the Home Office.

A third type of voluntary return, called *independent returns* in this briefing (and *other verified returns* in the Home Office datasets) refers to departures that are made independently of the authorities. These returns refer to people who have not notified the authorities that they are leaving and may have had no contact with immigration enforcement officials. In these cases, the Home Office knows the person has left the country primarily due to data matching processes. For example, visa records may show that a person has an expired visa and exit checks confirm that the individual has left the UK.

Importantly, data for the most recent two years (or eight quarters) of voluntary returns are likely to be undercounted. This is because independent returns (*other verified returns* in the datasets) are initially undercounted and later revised upwards, as in some cases it takes time to identify people who have left the UK without informing the authorities. Therefore, comparisons over time involving the most recent two years for which there are data should be made with caution.

Another category of returns is port returns, labelled in the datasets *individuals refused entry at port and subsequently departed*. People in this category have been denied legal permission to enter the UK on arrival and have left the country. Because people removed in this way have not passed through border controls into the UK, we exclude them from counts of returns in this briefing.

All returns statistics in this briefing include both main applicants and their dependants. The Home Office data do not separate these categories, so it is not possible to determine the number of returns of families.

In its published statistics, the Home Office includes counts of the number of people who made an asylum claim prior to their enforced or voluntary return. This [includes](#) not only asylum seekers whose claim has been refused and who have exhausted all rights of appeal, but also those granted some form of asylum-related protection, but who have then been removed for other reasons, such as criminal behaviour.

In 2020, the Home Office [revised](#) its returns statistics from 2007 onwards due to improved data-matching and a more accurate categorisation of returns as enforced or voluntary.

Returns from the UK increased by 25% in 2024, to the highest level since 2017

Around 34,000 people were returned from the UK in 2024 – the most since 2017, and 25% more than in 2023. Returns fell sharply in the second half of the 2010s, declined further during the pandemic, then began to partially recover. However, numbers remained lower than a decade before.

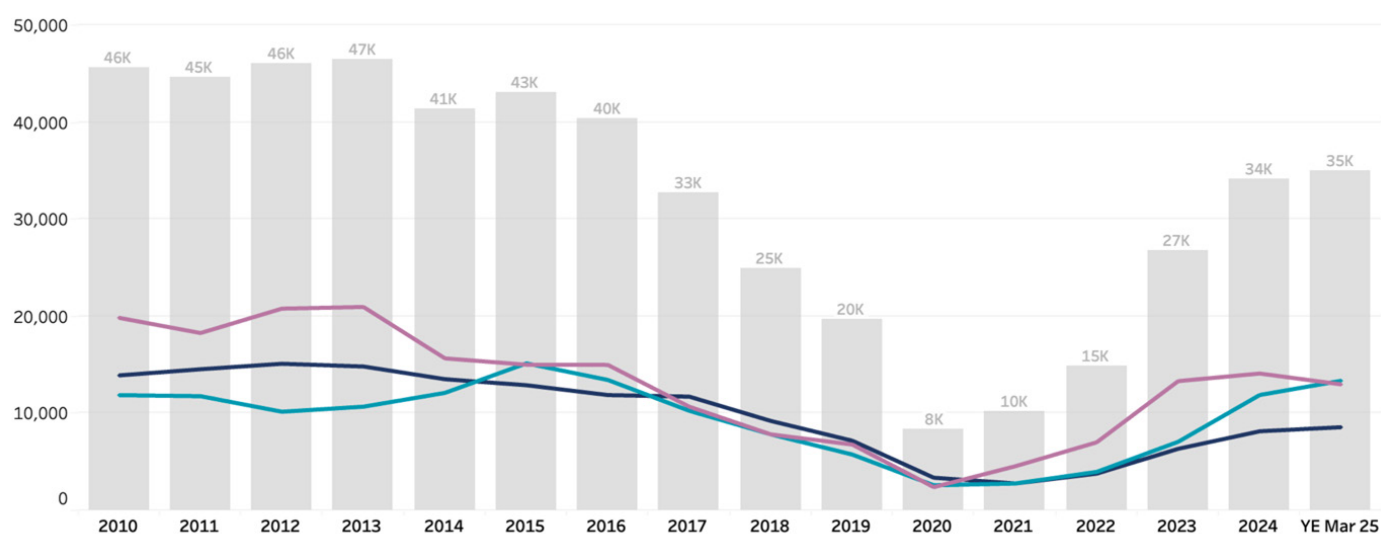
Enforced returns – around 8,200 in 2024, or 24% of the total – have increased more slowly in recent years, and have declined the most over the long run. Most people are detained ahead of an enforced return – around 96% in 2024 (for details, see [Immigration Detention in the UK](#)).

Voluntary returns have outnumbered enforced returns since 2007. In 2024, they made up 76% of the total – though these include both returns facilitated or monitored by the government (11,900 or 35%) and independent returns that happen without any involvement from the authorities (14,100 or 41%). The Home Office [prefers voluntary returns](#), in part because they are much cheaper (one [estimate](#) from 2013 put the average cost of a voluntary return at around £1,000, compared to £15,000 for an enforced return).

Figure 1

Total returns increased 25% in 2024, to the highest level since 2017

Number of returns, by year and type (Enforced, Voluntary: facilitated or monitored, Voluntary: independent, Total)



Source: Home Office Immigration Statistics, Table Ret_D01.

Notes: Voluntary returns are broken down into two categories here - Facilitated or monitored (including assisted and controlled returns) and Independent (other verified returns). The latter occur without any involvement from authorities and are later verified based on administrative data.



Most people returned from the UK are men – between 70% and 78% in any given year between 2005 and 2024. Similarly, most returnees are aged 18 to 49 – 79% to 88% of the total, depending on the year. This may simply reflect the composition of the irregular migrant population in the UK, though current data cannot establish whether some groups of people, such as men, are more likely to be removed than others.

The decline in returns during the 2010s – and the increase since 2021 – have several potential explanations

It remains unclear exactly why returns declined so much during the 2010s, before partially rebounding in the early 2020s. Several factors have been put forward to explain these changes:

- **Legal challenges.** An increase in legal challenges to removal is likely to have played a role in the initial decline, though data remain limited. A report from the [National Audit Office](#) showed that 52% of enforced return attempts were cancelled in 2019, up from 11% in 2013 – a rise “mostly explained” by last-minute asylum claims and legal challenges. The Home Office [indicated](#) that at least one legal issue was raised in 73% of detentions in 2019, with the majority of these being unsuccessful.
- **Changes in referrals to Immigration Enforcement.** One potential reason for the decline in returns during the 2010s is that fewer people eligible for removal were referred to the authorities. For instance, one group of people who are referred to Immigration Enforcement are those who apply for an extension of stay in the UK and are refused. Refusals of extensions of stay fell by 93% between 2013 and 2020, driven by a lower refusal rate. This may have meant there were fewer opportunities to conduct relatively straightforward returns, involving people who may not have lived in the UK for long periods. Similarly, the increase in returns after 2021 may have partly resulted from more recent migrants becoming liable for removal, after a sharp increase in both legal and unauthorised migration to the UK. Recent migrants will generally be easier to remove than people who have lived in the UK for a long time and developed connections here.
- **Costs and resources.** Fewer resources and higher costs likely contributed to the decline in returns during the 2010s. Funding for Immigration Enforcement fell by 23% in real terms between 2014/15 and 2020/21. Costs were also driven up by legal challenges and the high cost of enforced removals, which often require chartered flights and trained staff, limiting the number of possible returns within a given budget. Conversely, increased resources likely contributed to the recent rise in returns. Immigration Enforcement funding grew by 25% in real terms between 2020/21 and 2023/24, more than reversing the previous cuts. The government provided a further boost in the second half of 2024 by [redeploying](#) 1,000 staff to Immigration Enforcement.
- **Administrative problems and delays.** Administrative factors can also affect returns, though their impact is hard to quantify. Delays in processing further submissions – additional claims for protection on asylum or human rights grounds – from refused asylum seekers were a significant barrier to removals, according to a 2015 [inspection](#). A UNCHR [audit](#) of a small sample of cases found that it took the Home Office on average more than 9 months to adjudicate further submissions. Numbers on further submissions are limited but the Home Office [reported](#) that at least one legal issue – most often an asylum claim – was raised in 73% of detentions in 2019. Similarly, growing [delays](#) in asylum processing may have made some removals harder, as people may develop stronger ties in the UK over time which make them eligible to remain on human rights grounds (in particular, the right to a family life). Some return operations were also hampered by inefficient IT and case management systems, as indicated by a 2023 [report](#) on foreign national offenders.
- **Cooperation with origin countries and third countries.** Cooperation from origin countries is often essential for returns, particularly to secure travel documents. A 2014-15 inspection [report](#) found that the inability to obtain documents was the most common reason officials decided against detaining individuals liable for removal. Measuring changes in cooperation is difficult as it often arises from informal relationships rather than formal agreements. The impact of Brexit is likely to have been minimal – the decline in returns predates it, and, in practice, few people were returned under the Dublin Agreement (an average of 560 a year between 2008 and 2020).

The initial decline thus seems to have been driven by a combination of increased legal challenges, administrative delays, resource constraints, and fewer people being referred to Immigration Enforcement. The subsequent increase in returns may have resulted from a bounce-back from low numbers during the pandemic, budget increases, and higher immigration. The latter will have increased the number of recently arrived migrants, who are easier to return. For more details, see [Deportation and removal: what is driving the numbers?](#)

The top countries of nationality among people returned from the UK in 2024 were India, Albania, and Brazil

Five countries of nationality accounted for 61% of the roughly 34,000 people returned from the UK in 2024 – India, Albania, Brazil, Romania, and China.

In general, nationalities with large populations living in the UK – such as Indian or Romanian – are also more common among returnees. However, some countries of nationality are overrepresented among people returned from the UK. The most notable example is Albania – the number of returned Albanians increased sharply after 2020, driven by a new [bilateral agreement](#) and a spike in the number of small boat arrivals during 2022 (for more details, see [Albanian asylum seekers in the UK and EU](#)).

Table 1

The top 5 nationalities accounted for 61% of all returns in 2024

Number of people returned from the UK, top 10 nationalities in 2024

Nationality	Total returns (2024)	Enforced returns (2024)	Voluntary returns (2024)	Trend 2010-24
India	7,395	406	6,989	
Albania	5,505	2,624	2,881	
Brazil	4,850	585	4,265	
Romania	1,903	1,518	385	
China	1,333	99	1,234	
Nigeria	1,141	72	1,069	
Pakistan	918	108	810	
Poland	522	480	42	
Uzbekistan	445	16	429	
Honduras	403	12	391	
Total	34,201	8,169	26,032	

Source: Home Office Immigration Statistics, Table Ret_D01.



Returns fell significantly among many nationalities between 2014 and 2024. This includes some countries of nationality to which the UK still returns comparatively large numbers of people, such as China (-52%), Nigeria (-50%), Pakistan (-84%), and Nepal (-60%). Sharp declines in returns during the same period were also seen among citizens of Bangladesh (-98%), Sri Lanka (-97%), and Afghanistan (-99%). In comparison, total returns fell by 18% in the decade to 2024.

There were also some countries of nationality for which returns increased during this period. Along with Albania, these include Brazil, and several Eastern European (Romania, Bulgaria), Central Asian (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan), and Latin American countries (Honduras, Colombia).

Around 48% of refused asylum seekers who applied between 2010 and 2020 had been removed from the UK by June 2024

In 2024, around 9,200 people who had previously claimed asylum were returned from the UK – the highest number since 2011, after three years of fast growth. These figures include refused asylum seekers who had exhausted all avenues of appeal, those granted protection but who were removed for other reasons such as criminal behaviour, and people who left voluntarily before receiving a decision.

Asylum returns made up a record share of all returns in 2024, at 27%. Returns of asylum seekers fell more rapidly than other types in the 2010s, driving down their share to a low of 13% in 2016. However, this type of return then increased faster than others in the period after the pandemic.

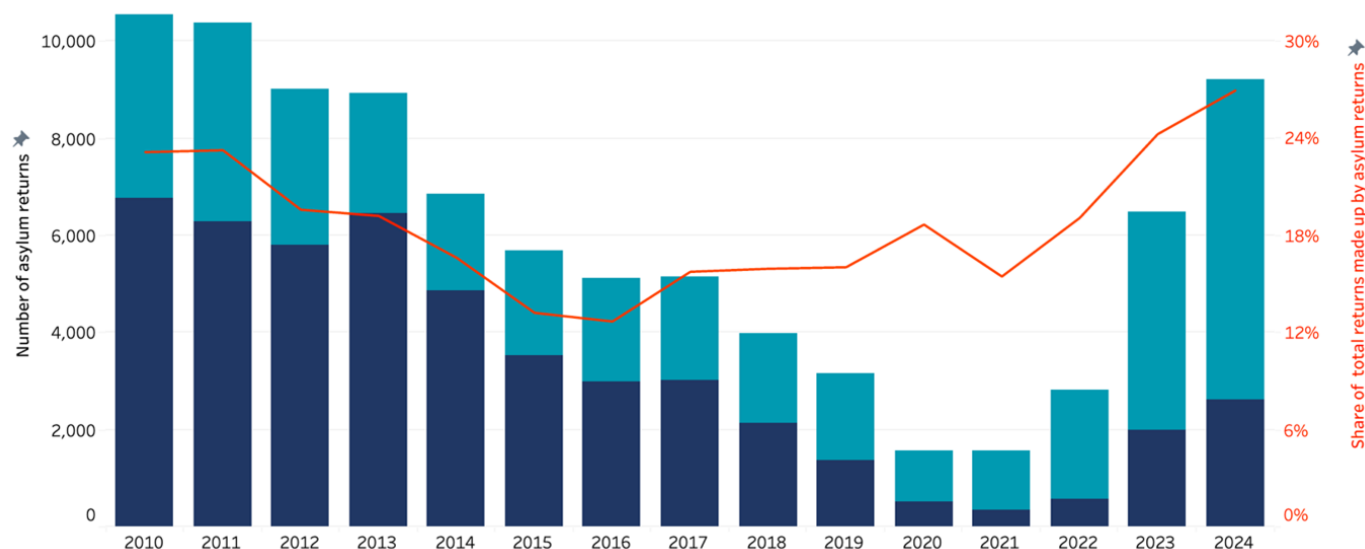
Recent increases in asylum returns were driven by voluntary departures. These made up 71% of all asylum returns in 2024, and a majority of the total in every year after 2019. In the early 2010s, around two-thirds of asylum returns were enforced, though their number fell gradually since.

Figure 2

Returns of previous asylum seekers more than tripled between 2022 and 2024

Number of previous asylum seekers returned, by year and type (Enforced, Voluntary)

Share of total returns made up by previous asylum seekers, by year



Source: Home Office Immigration Statistics, Table Ret_05.

Notes: Data include all returns of people who had previously applied for asylum. This includes refused asylum seekers but also people who had been granted protection and then returned for other reasons, such as criminality.

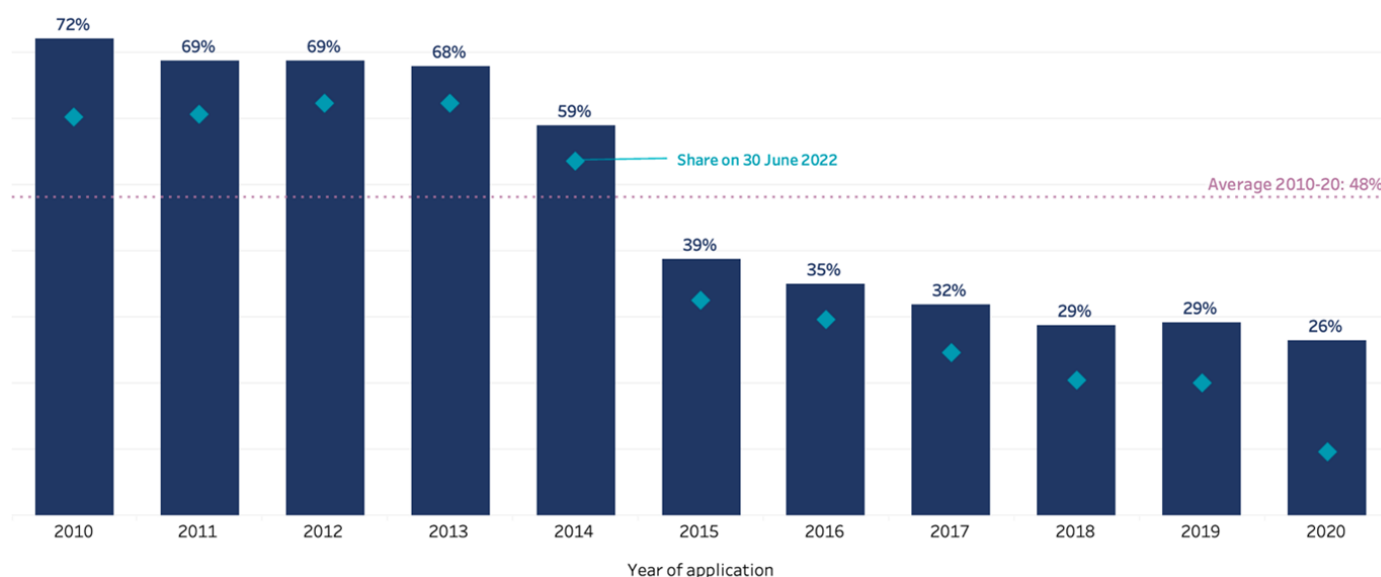


In theory, people who are refused asylum and have exhausted all rights of appeal do not have a right to stay in the UK and are liable for removal. However, in recent years many refused asylum seekers were not returned from the UK. Of all asylum applications submitted between 2010 and 2020 which were subsequently refused, around 48% had resulted in a return from the UK by 30 June 2024, either enforced or voluntary.

The more recent the asylum claim, the less likely the claimant is to have been returned following a refusal. This makes sense, because the government has had longer to return refused claimants who submitted their claims in earlier years. Of those who submitted an asylum claim in 2010 and had been refused, 72% had been returned by 30 June 2024. That fell to 26% for those who claimed asylum in 2020 and were subsequently refused. Past trends suggest these figures may rise moderately over time as more refused asylum seekers are returned from the UK.

Figure 3

Around 48% of refused asylum seekers who applied between 2010 and 2020 had been returned by 30 June 2024
Percentage of refused asylum applications that resulted in a return by 30 June 2024, by year of application



Source: Home Office Immigration Statistics, Table Asy_D04.

Notes: Data include both enforced and voluntary returns. Percentage is calculated by dividing the total number of returns by the number of refused applications.



Around 3% of people who arrived by small boat from 2018 to 2024 were returned from the UK during that period

A small proportion of people who arrived in the UK by small boat between 2018 and 2024 – 5,000 people or 3% of all arrivals – were returned during that period (for more details, see [People crossing the English Channel in small boats](#)). Around 139,000 people who arrived by small boat between 2018 and 2024 applied for asylum, of which 30,000 had been refused protection by 31 March 2025. Another 56,000 received positive decisions and 20,000 had their applications withdrawn.

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.

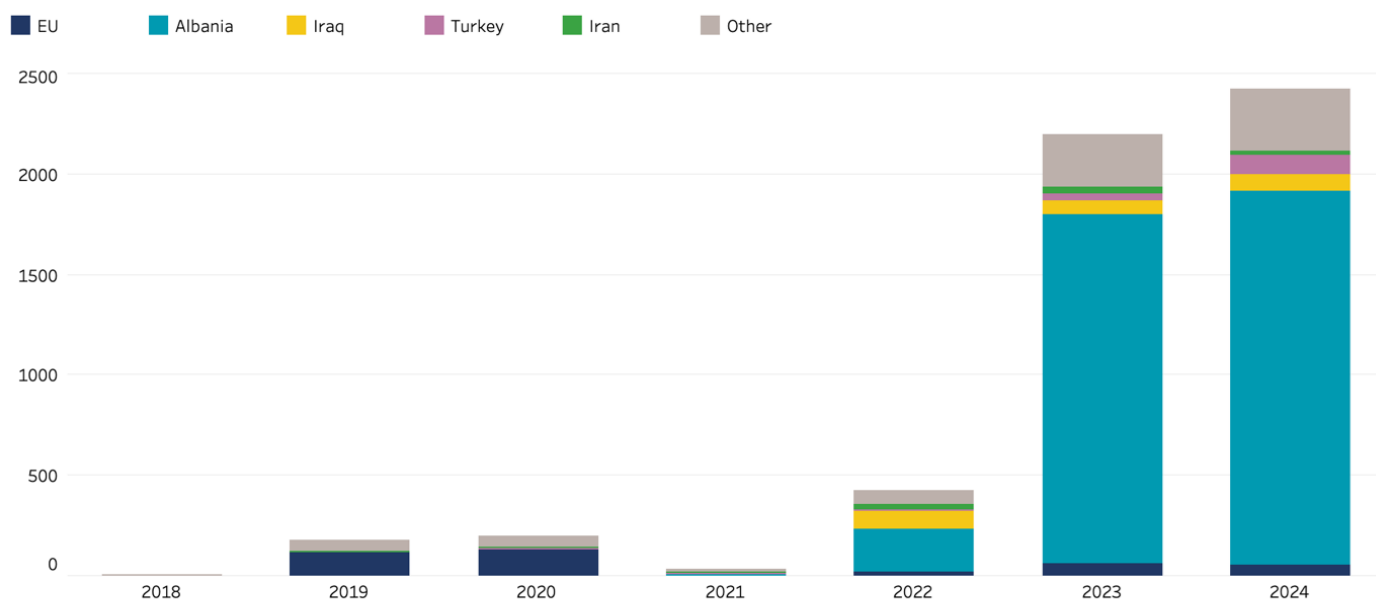
In 2019 and 2020, most small boat returns were to EU countries like France and Germany. After Brexit and the UK's withdrawal from the Dublin system, such returns fell and did not substantially recover (see [Understanding the Policy](#)).

On 4 August 2025, a [new returns deal with France entered into force](#), which will allow the UK to return some people who arrive by small boat in exchange for accepting an equal number of asylum seekers from France. Returns were slated to begin later in August, though it remained unclear at the time of writing how many people will be returned under this scheme. Unconfirmed [reports](#) suggested that around 50 people a week may be returned to France during an initial pilot phase, though the Home Secretary [denied](#) numbers were fixed (for more details, see our commentary on [The UK-France small boats returns deal](#)).

Figure 4

Around 5,000 people who arrived by small boat had been returned by the end of 2024, most of them 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 FOI 04113/2025.

Notes: Years refer to the year a person was returned, not the year of arrival. Data include both enforced and voluntary departures.



Around 5,100 foreign national offenders were returned in 2024, making up 15% of all returns

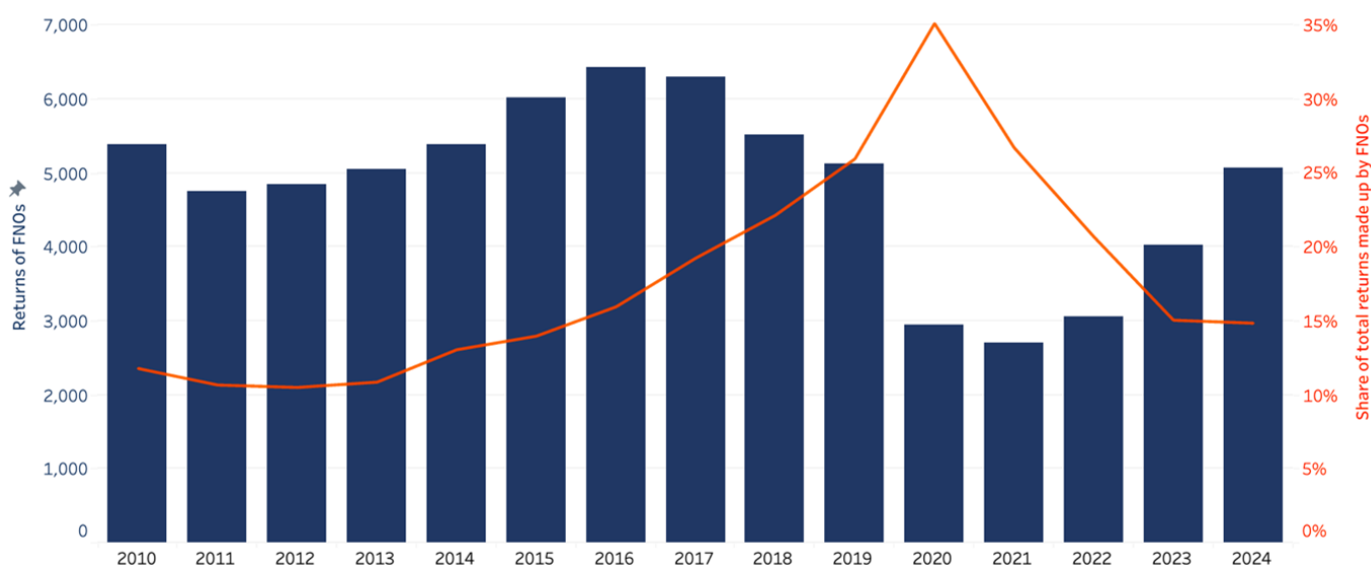
In 2024, around 5,100 foreign national offenders (FNOs) were returned from the UK. An FNO is someone who is not a British citizen and has been convicted either in the UK of any criminal offence, or abroad of any serious criminal offence. Returns of FNOs increased by 66% between 2022 and 2024, reaching levels similar to those seen in the 2010s.

FNOs accounted for 15% of all returns in 2024. The share of FNO returns increased during the 2010s as numbers remained relatively stable while overall returns fell, and peaked at 35% in 2020.

Figure 5

In 2024, returns of foreign national offenders reached levels similar to those seen in the 2010s

Number of foreign national offenders (FNOs) returned and **share** of total returns made up by FNOs, by year



Source: Home Office Immigration Statistics, Table Ret_D04.

Notes: A foreign national offender is someone who is not a British citizen and has been convicted in the UK for any criminal offence, or abroad for a serious criminal offence. Data include both enforced and voluntary returns.



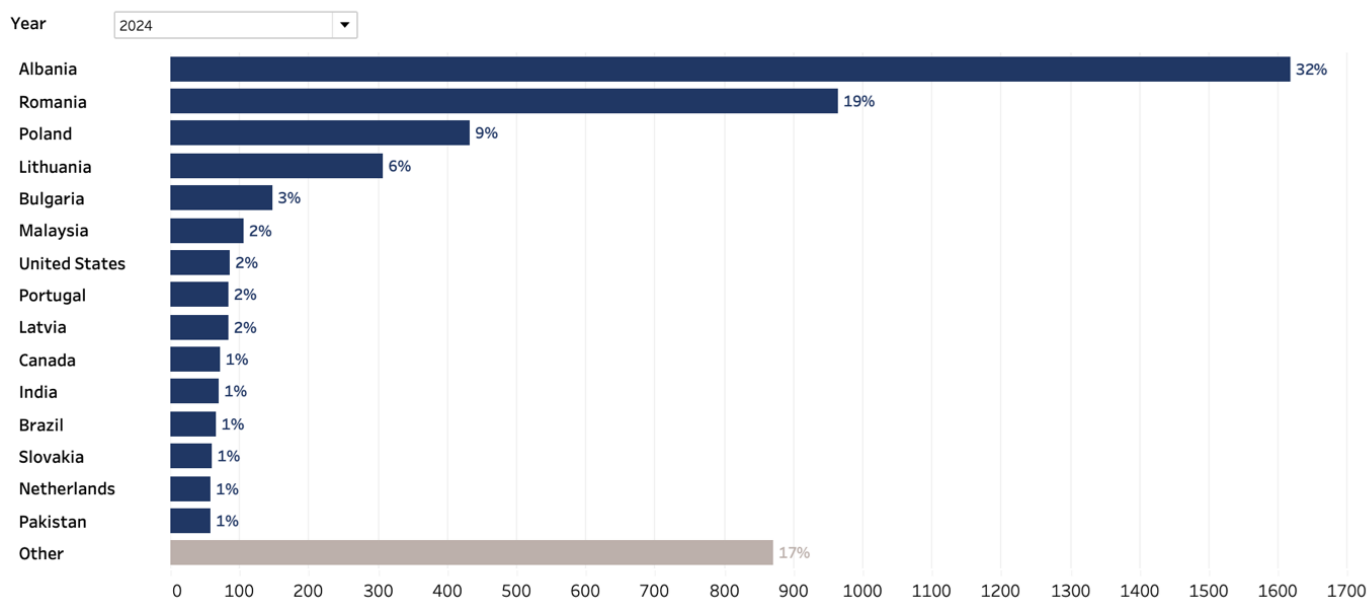
Albanians accounted for 32% of all FNO returns in 2024, followed by Romanians (19%) and Poles (9%). These top nationalities are also those with the highest numbers among [the UK's prison population](#). Albanians were top nationality among FNO returns in every year after 2022, when numbers began increasing following a bilateral returns agreement between the Albanian and British governments.

The share of EU citizens among FNO returns increased from 18% in 2010 to 69% in 2019, before falling to 49% in 2024. FNOs made up 60% of all returns of EU nationals in 2024, though this fell from a high of 98% in 2020. This is in part the consequence of EU non-FNO returns having increased now that EU nationals do not have the implicit right to reside in the UK as they did under free movement.

Figure 6

Albanians and Romanians made up half of all FNO returns in 2024

Number of foreign national offenders (FNOs) returned, top 15 nationalities



Source: Home Office Immigration Statistics, Table Ret_D03.

Notes: A foreign national offender is someone who is not a British citizen and has been convicted in the UK for any criminal offence, or abroad for a serious criminal offence. Data include both enforced and voluntary returns.

**Agreements with countries of origin do not always lead to more returns, though they may have an impact**

One approach to increasing returns is to negotiate agreements with countries of origin. Such deals can streamline procedures, make it easier to obtain travel documentation, and incentivise cooperation. As of 2024, the UK had 18 formal return or readmission agreements in force (for more details, see [Deportation and removal: what is driving the numbers?](#))

A formal deal, however, is neither sufficient nor necessary to ensure a high number of returns. [Several studies](#) found they had little to no effect on overall return rates in the EU. In the UK, many returns are to countries it does not have a formal agreement with, such as Romania or Brazil which together accounted for 48% of all returns in 2024. In some cases, such as Albania or India, returns rose sharply after new agreements were signed, though it remains unclear how much of the increase can be attributed to these deals. In other cases, the UK returns very few people to countries it does have an agreement with, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo or Somalia. Some agreements, such as the one signed with Pakistan in August 2022, did not lead to a noticeable increase in returns.

After Brexit, EU nationals made up the majority of people refused entry at the UK border

Around 23,000 people were refused entry to the UK in 2024, at ports of entry in the UK or juxtaposed controls in Belgium, France, or the Netherlands. Of these, 54% were EU nationals and 26% of the total were Romanian citizens.

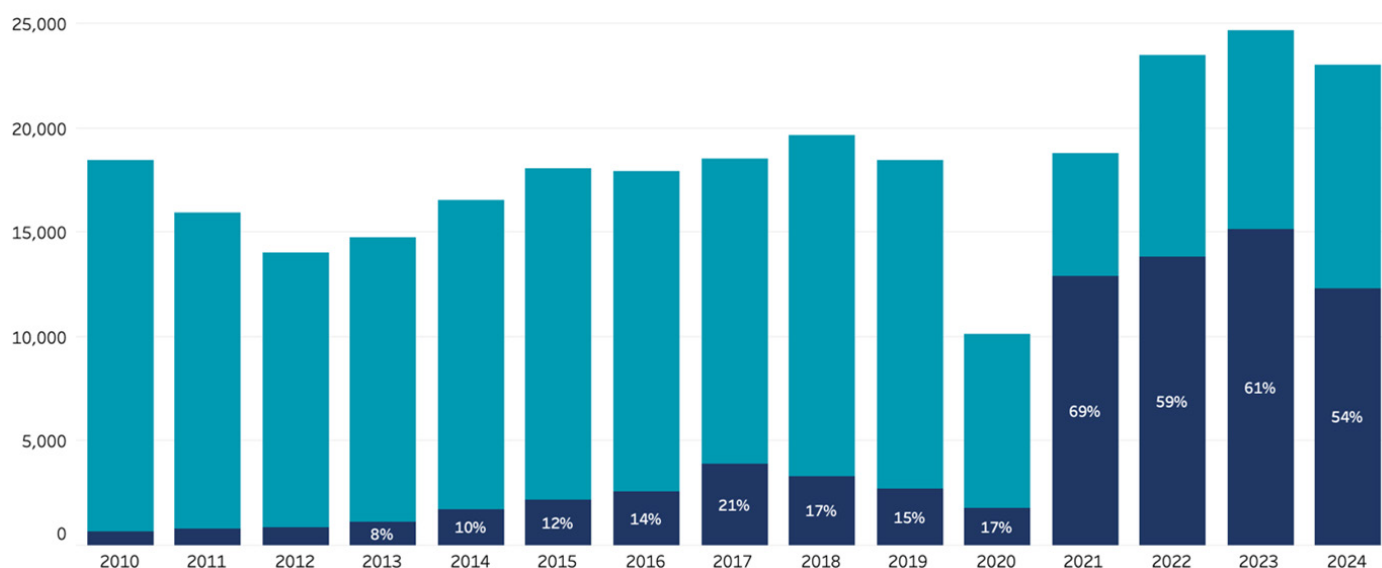
The end of free movement greatly broadened the circumstances under which border officers could refuse entry to EU citizens. As a result, the number of EU citizens refused entry to the UK at air, sea, and rail ports increased sharply after 2021. In contrast, the number of non-EU citizens refused entry at the border has declined significantly over time. This decline may partly be due to the Home Office more extensively [screening](#) passengers before they travel to the UK.

Several factors affect the number of people refused entry to the UK, including overall travel volumes, decision-making by border officers, and travellers' knowledge and understanding of changes in the rules. EU citizens do not require a visa to enter the UK to visit, but border officers have the discretion to turn them away if they believe that they are likely to violate immigration rules, such as by working without authorisation.

Figure 7

The number of EU nationals refused entry at the UK border increased sharply after Brexit

Number of people refused entry at the UK border, by year and nationality (EU and non-EU)



Source: Home Office Immigration Statistics, Table Ret_D01.



Evidence Gaps and Limitations

There are many evidence gaps that make it difficult to get a full picture of deportations and returns. First, published statistics provide relatively little information on the circumstances under which people return other than whether they had previously claimed asylum in the UK. There are no published statistics on returns by original visa or entry type (e.g., whether people entered without permission, or overstayed visit, work, study, or other visas).

Second, there is also no information on how long returnees had been in the UK without permission before their departure. Anyone who overstays a visa and then leaves the country, either via enforced or voluntary return, can be included in returns statistics – regardless of the length of overstay. This means we do not know the extent to which returned individuals had lived and worked without authorisation in the UK for a substantial period, as opposed to those who overstayed their visa for only a few days.

A third major problem is the limited data on how many people are potentially subject to removal action. Using current statistics, it is hard to know whether the 2010s decline in returns (and the subsequent increase) results primarily from changes in the number of people being identified by Immigration Enforcement, as opposed to a different share of those who were identified by Immigration Enforcement (or otherwise known to the Home Office) leaving the country. This matters because it affects how we interpret the figures. For example, declining returns could, in theory, result from higher compliance (e.g. fewer people overstaying), or less successful enforcement. More detailed data are needed to determine this.

In response to freedom of information requests, the Home Office said it did not hold data on the following: the cost of enforced vs. voluntary returns; the number of people issued notices of liability to remove who were subsequently granted legal status (e.g., following a human rights claim); the number of foreign national offenders of different nationalities who had been removed vs. not removed after finishing a prison sentence; and the number of people detained ahead of removal (as opposed to detained for initial processing). In early 2025, it declined to provide data on the number or nationalities of people arrested in immigration raids, or updated figures on the number of legal challenges raised in detention and their outcomes – on the basis that it intended to publish the figures in future, though no additional data had been released at the time of writing.

In addition, relatively little is known about the personal or demographic characteristics of those returned, beyond their age, sex, and nationality. Age, sex, and specific nationality breakdowns are not provided for the returns of asylum seekers; and for FNOs, only nationality breakdowns are provided. Nor are data regularly published on how long returnees have lived in the UK for, where they lived, whether they were settled residents, or whether they were labour, student, or family migrants.

Acknowledgements

*With thanks to **CJ McKinney** for providing valuable feedback on previous drafts 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

Peter William Walsh
Senior Researcher
The Migration Observatory
peter.walsh@compas.ox.ac.uk

Mihnea V. Cuibus
Researcher
The Migration Observatory
mihnea.cuibus@nuffield.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

Walsh, P. W. & Cuibus, M. (2025) *Returns of unauthorised migrants from the UK*. Migration Observatory briefing, COMPAS, University of Oxford