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# Regional Report on Migration [January 2024]

**UK Migration Statistics and Trends**

1. The latest ONS migration statistics show that [net migration was estimated at 672,000 for the year ending June 2023](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/longterminternationalmigrationprovisional/yearendingjune2023) indicating slowing immigration and rising emigration. While the main driver of immigration is study but immigration for work increased too and people arriving through humanitarian routes decreased. Higher revised estimates of 745,000 for 2022 mean a new record high in net migration. (Source: ONS)
2. This [briefing](https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/press/ons-revises-last-years-net-migration-figure-up-to-745000-but-estimates-that-it-fell-to-just-over-670000-in-most-recent-figures/) from Migration Observatory analyses the latest ONS data. However, the Migration Observatory also published a report predicting that [net migration is likely to reduce over the next few years according to this analysis](https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/reports/why-are-the-latest-net-migration-figures-not-a-reliable-guide-to-future-trends/), potentially returning to pre-Brexit levels of about 300,000 by 2030. This is due to factors such as a fall in arrivals from Ukraine and Hong Kong, and students returning home. (Source: Migration Observatory)
3. Key points from the [Home Office quarterly migration statistics](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-september-2023) for the year ending September 2023 include:

* Over twice as many health and care skilled worker visas were issued (compared to the previous 12 months) with India, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe the top nationalities.
* Family-related visas issued more than doubled.
* The number of people arriving via small boats so far this year is lower than the equivalent period in 2022.
* Little change in the number of asylum claims at just over 75,000. Top nationalities are Afghan, Iranian, Albanian and Indian.
* The number of grants of refugee status are the highest since 2002.
* An increase in asylum decisions means the ‘legacy backlog’ (pre-28 June 2022) has fallen but ‘flow asylum cases’ have increased, with over 125,000 cases awaiting an initial decision. There has been a fourfold increase in applications treated as withdrawn. (Source: Home Office)

1. The British Red Cross published a new [interactive visual data tool](https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/we-speak-up-for-change/state-of-the-nation-the-uk-asylum-system) on asylum and modern slavery claims. (Source: Red Cross)
2. Migration Yorkshire’s [data dashboard](https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/statistics) is updated with the latest local and national data. (Source: Migration Yorkshire)

**UK borders and immigration policy**

1. The [Home Secretary announced new plans to cut net migration](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-unveils-plan-to-cut-net-migration) and tighten requirements for visas including increasing the minimum salary threshold to sponsor dependents under the family route from £18,600 to £38,700, increasing the minimum salary under the skilled worker route from £26,200 to £38,700 and removing the ability to sponsor dependents on the health and social care visa. The government has published a new [factsheet](https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2023/12/08/reducing-net-migration-factsheet-december-2023/) with an overview of the new measures to reduce net migration. There’s also a new parliamentary briefing [this briefing on the changes](https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9920/?utm_source=HOC+Library+-+Research+alerts&utm_campaign=c94cd42add-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_12_13_08_00&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a9da1c9b17-c94cd42add-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D&mc_cid=c94cd42add&mc_eid=1edc537b10). (Sources: Home Office, House of Commons Library)
2. This [analysis by Migration Observatory](https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/commentaries/how-will-new-salary-thresholds-affect-uk-migration/) considers what the increased salary thresholds could mean for migration numbers. (Source: Migration Observatory)
3. [The Supreme Court ruled the Rwanda policy unlawful](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-67423745) on the grounds of the risk of refoulement, thereby breaching UK and international law. (Source: BBC)
4. The government signed a [new treaty with Rwanda](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-rwanda-treaty-provision-of-an-asylum-partnership) and published the [Safety of Rwanda Bill](https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3540) which seeks to address issues found by the Supreme court. There’s a new [parliamentary briefing](https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9568/?utm_source=HOC+Library+-+Research+alerts&utm_campaign=1787bcd07c-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_12_07_08_00&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a9da1c9b17-1787bcd07c-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D&mc_cid=1787bcd07c&mc_eid=1edc537b10) with more detail on the new Bill. (Sources: Gov.uk, House of Commons Library)
5. On Channel Crossings there are some new reports:

* IPPR have published a [policy response report on Channel Crossings](https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/charting-new-waters). They say measures from government to reduce small boats crossings have been ineffective, and that focus should be increasing safe and accessible routes to claims asylum and improving relations with France and the EU.
* [The Refugee Council published an updated report on Channel Crossings](https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/latest/news/almost-three-quarters-of-those-crossing-the-channel-would-be-allowed-to-stay-in-the-uk-as-refugees/), revealing that around three quarters of those crossing the Channel would go on to acquire refugee status. However, it says that provisions in the Illegal Migration Act could see up to 27,000 refugees denied status every year.
* A research [report](https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/latest/news/rwanda-plan-and-illegal-migration-act-will-increase-dangerous-journeys-and-drive-refugees-underground/) from the Refugee Council says the Rwanda scheme will not deter asylum seekers from crossing the Channel in small boats.
* A new [report](https://www.safepassage.org.uk/news/routes-to-safety-a-new-approach-to-people-crossing-the-channel-report) calls for safe routes for people to travel to the UK to seek asylum. (Sources: IPPR, Refugee Council, Safe Passage)

1. There’s also new briefings from Migration Observatory on [work visas and migrant workers](https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/work-visas-and-migrant-workers-in-the-uk/) and [family migration to the UK](https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/family-migration-to-the-uk/). (Source: Migration Observatory)

**Asylum**

1. [Asylum support rates](https://www.gov.uk/asylum-support/what-youll-get) are to increase from £47.39 to £49.10 per week from 8 January 2024. However, the weekly allowance for those granted Section 95 in full-board accommodation will reduce from £9.58 to £8.86. Other changes include an increase in additional rates for pregnant mothers and children aged 1 to 4 to £5.25 per week, and £9.25 for children under 1 years old. (Source: gov.uk)
2. The government announced the [closure of up to 50 asylum hotels by January 2024](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-hotels-exit-summary-information/asylum-hotel-summary-and-faq) as the Home Office works its way through cutting down the asylum backlog. The [LGA issued a statement](https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/lga-response-announcement-fifty-hotels-will-be-closed-asylum-seekers-january) in response to the news highlighting the impact on local authorities. (Sources: Gov.uk, LGA)
3. An [inspection into the use of asylum contingency accommodation](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-independent-chief-inspector-of-borders-and-immigration-has-launched-a-new-inspection-of-contingency-asylum-accommodation) has been launched by the Independent Chief Inspector for Borders and Immigration. (Source: Gov.uk)
4. A new [report](https://asylummatters.org/app/uploads/2023/12/Asylum-Matters-Surviving-in-Poverty-Report-A4-SINGLES-Dec-2023.pdf) by Asylum Matters examines the poverty experienced by those living on asylum support (Source: Asylum Matters)

**Ukraine scheme**

1. New research says [Ukrainians are four times more likely than UK nationals to become homeless](https://www.hw.ac.uk/news/articles/2023/research-finds-risk-of-homelessness-is-four.htm) due to factors including host-guest relationship breakdowns under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and a lack of rental deposits and guarantors. (Source: Herriot Watt University)
2. The [National Audit Office (NAO) published a report on the Homes for Ukraine scheme](https://www.nao.org.uk/reports/investigation-into-the-homes-for-ukraine-scheme/) which has cost £2.1 billion and supported 131,000 arrivals. Among its findings, it notes the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has not obtained clear data on how councils have spent funding or on homelessness relating to those leaving hosting placements, while safeguarding continues to be key risk. (Source: NAO)

**Trafficking and Modern Slavery**

1. [A new report on adult sexual exploitation](https://www.changing-lives.org.uk/policy-and-research/stage-project) by the STAGE project, brings together charities in Yorkshire and the North East. It highlights the additional precarities experienced by those with insecure immigration status. (Source: Changing Lives)
2. A Home Affairs Committee [report](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5804/cmselect/cmhaff/124/summary.html) expresses concern that the government is no longer treating modern slavery as a priority as a result of its focus on irregular migration. The report is critical of leaving the role of Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner vacancy for 18 months, and of the delay in developing a new modern slavery strategy. It also cites a change in ministerial responsibility. (Sources: UK Parliament)
3. The IOM carried out [analysis of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 on the National Referral Mechanism](https://unitedkingdom.iom.int/news/ioms-analysis-national-referral-mechanism-data-following-introduction-nationality-and-borders-act) and found that foreign nationals were far more likely to receive a negative reasonable grounds decision than UK nationals in the first six months of this year. Other concerns include waiting times for decisions, people with criminal convictions excluded from support, and the high rate of negative decisions. (Source: International Organization for Migration)

**Children and Young People**

1. The Children’s Commissioner [report](https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2023/11/Unaccompanied-children-in-need-of-care-PDF.pdf) says that vulnerable unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are not receiving the care they need, citing Home Office data showing that in some cases pregnant girls and survivors or rape sexual violence were housed in interim hotels. (Source: Children’s Commissioner)

**Refugee Resettlement**

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1. The government is [consulting local authorities on their capacity to support resettled refugees](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-consults-on-safe-and-legal-routes-for-refugees?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=83d5ab75-8598-4ead-84bc-cad7dd368a80&utm_content=daily) in light of plans for an annual cap on people arriving via ‘safe and legal routes’. The requirement to carry out this consultation was included in the Illegal Migration Act 2023. (Sources: Home Office)

**EU Nationals**

1. New Home Office [guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eu-settlement-scheme-apply-for-an-administrative-review?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=8ebc2aef-649f-4e88-8fef-db95754792a4&utm_content=weekly) confirms that EU nationals and their family members who have their EUSS claims refused on or after 5 October 2023 can no longer apply for an administrative review. (Source: Home Office)
2. The Independent Monitoring Authority (IMA) published [guidance on extension of pre-settled status](https://ima-citizensrights.org.uk/faqs/#:~:text=in%20the%20EU%3F-,euss%20reforms,-Why%20has%20the) and wider changes to the EUSS process. (Source: IMA)
3. [The Upper Tribunal ruled that destitute EU nationals with pre-settled status should be eligible for Universal Credit](https://cpag.org.uk/welfare-rights/resources/test-case/destitute-eu-nationals-pss-can-rely-eu-charter-fundamental-rights) based on the rights under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The impact of the judgement is unclear as the Secretary of State might seek permission to appeal to the Supreme. (Source: Child Poverty Action Group)
4. A Migration Observatory [report](https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/commentaries/outstanding-issues-facing-the-eu-settlement-scheme/) focuses on outstanding issues related to the EU Settlement Scheme, including the backlog of undecided applications and late applications. (Source: Migration Observatory)
5. A new report focuses on [migration of EU nationals to the UK post-Brexit](https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/eu-migration-to-and-from-the-uk/). (Source: Migration Observatory)

**Hong Kong BN(O) route**

1. New [research](https://www.welcomehk.org/research/hk-to-uk) says that Hongkongers are settling in well overall but some need further support to improve English and access meaningful employment matching their skills. (Sources: British Future)

**No Recourse to Public Funds**

1. A briefing on people living with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) highlights that [at the end of 2022, 665,000 people of Indian nationality had the condition attached to their visa](https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/deprivation-and-the-no-recourse-to-public-funds-nrpf-condition/), higher than any other nationality. (Source: Migration Observatory)
2. [A report on destitution in the UK](https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/destitution-uk-2023) recommends local authorities should be resourced to ensure people with no recourse to public funds can access emergency help when needed. (Source: Joseph Rowntree Foundation)
3. A briefing by Praxis looks at [free childcare and the no recourse to public funds condition](https://www.praxis.org.uk/briefings/childcare). (Source: Praxis)

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