

Suffolk Refugee Support - Refugee and asylum facts and figures (September 2025)



Global situation

- **123.2 million people** worldwide were forcibly displaced at the end of 2024 as a result of persecution, conflict, violence and human rights violations
- Forced displacement globally has almost doubled over the last decade
- **1 in every 67 people** on Earth is forcibly displaced from their home
- More than one third of all forcibly displaced people globally are Sudanese (14.3 million), Syrian (13.5 million), Afghan (10.3 million) or Ukrainian (8.8 million)
- The war in Sudan is the world's largest displacement crisis. A total of **14.3 million people** were displaced at the end of 2024.
- Children account for 29% of the world's population, but **40%** of forcibly displaced people
- There are **42.7 million** refugees globally (i.e. outside the borders of their own country)
- **67% of refugees** live in countries neighbouring their own; 73% are hosted by low or middle income countries
- Refugees make up approximately **0.75%** of the UK's population

UK asylum situation

- In 2024 there were **84,231** asylum applications in the UK (relating to **108,138** people including family members)
- By comparison, in 2024 Germany had **235,925** asylum applications, Spain **165,398**, France **158,512** and Italy **154,824**
- The UK ranks **17th** in Europe (EU+) in terms of asylum applications per head of capita
- **36,816** people crossed the Channel in small boats in 2024
- In the year to June 2025, the top 5 nationalities for small boat arrivals were Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iran, Syria and Sudan – all countries suffering horrific conflict or oppression
- Between 2018 and 2024, **68% of all initial decisions** on asylum applications from people who arrived by small boat were grants of protection, with many more successful on appeal
- At least **78** people died attempting to cross the Channel in 2024, making it the deadliest year on record – at least 225 people have died making this journey since 2018
- **48%** of asylum appeals in 2024 were successful - initial decision-making is often poor quality

- Asylum seekers are **not allowed to work** in the UK, unless they have been waiting more than 12 months and qualify for an immigration salary list role
- Asylum seekers cannot claim mainstream benefits or access council housing
- Asylum seekers receive **£9.95** per week in catered accommodation (such as hotels), and **£49.18** in uncatered 'dispersal' accommodation (e.g. shared houses)
- **Everyone** has the right to seek asylum – it is a universal human right
- Asylum seekers **are not required** to claim asylum in the first safe country they reach
- There are **no safe, legal routes** to the UK for the purpose of claiming asylum

UK refugee situation

- Refugees (including refugees arriving on resettlement/Ukraine schemes) are allowed to work, can claim mainstream benefits and apply for social housing
- **7,815** refugees were resettled in the UK in 2024, 91% under Afghan programmes
- Refugees arriving through resettlement schemes are given indefinite leave to remain (ILR) in the UK from day one, and can apply for British citizenship after 5 years
- People receiving refugee status are granted 5 years, and can then apply for ILR
- Refugees who arrived in the UK through irregular routes have previously needed to wait 10 years to be considered for citizenship, but recent government guidance would deny citizenship forever to anyone arriving via a 'dangerous journey'
- Around **227,000** people have come to the UK under Ukraine refugee schemes, **under 4%** of the 6 million Ukrainian refugees recorded in European countries as of July 2024

Suffolk situation

- We estimate there are several thousand settled refugees in Suffolk (i.e. those here longer term), the largest community being Kurdish and many having British citizenship
- There are approximately **1,100** Ukrainian refugees in Suffolk under the Homes for Ukraine scheme (plus a limited number who arrived on the Ukraine Family Scheme)
- There are around **130** asylum seekers in 'dispersal' accommodation in Suffolk, mostly families and mainly in Ipswich, but with growing numbers elsewhere in the county
- There is no asylum contingency accommodation currently in Suffolk – i.e. **no hotels**
- There are around **300** unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and care leavers in Suffolk
- There are around **300** refugees in Suffolk who arrived under resettlement schemes – predominantly Afghan and Syrian and almost all in family groups