

Suffolk Refugee Support

Refugee and asylum facts and figures (March 2026)



Global situation

- **117.3 million people** worldwide were forcibly displaced at the end of June 2025 as a result of persecution, conflict, violence and human rights violations
- Forced displacement globally has nearly **doubled** over the last decade
- **1 in every 70 people** on Earth is forcibly displaced from their home
- Sudan is the world's largest displacement and humanitarian crisis. The conflict has displaced more than **13 million people**, with millions of refugees in neighbouring countries.
- There are **42.5 million** refugees globally (i.e. outside the borders of their own country)
- **66% of refugees** live in countries neighbouring their own; 71% are hosted by low or middle income countries
- **2.3 million children** were born as refugees between 2018 and 2024
- **21 people per day** on average died on migration routes worldwide in 2025
- Refugees make up **less than 1%** of the UK's population

UK asylum situation

- In 2025 a total of **100,625** people applied for asylum in the UK, 4% lower than in 2024
- For comparison, in 2025 Germany had **163,000** asylum applications, France **152,000**, Spain **143,000** and Italy **134,000**
- The UK ranks **15th** in Europe (EU+) in terms of asylum applications per head of capita
- **41,472** people crossed the Channel in small boats in 2025
- The top 5 nationalities for small boat arrivals in 2025 were Eritrea, Afghanistan, Iran, Sudan and Somalia – all countries suffering **horrific conflict, violence 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
- The value of asylum support payments **fell 37%** in real terms between 2000 and 2024
- Asylum seekers are **not allowed to work** in the UK, unless they have been waiting more than 12 months and qualify for a role on the Skilled Worker List
- Asylum seekers cannot claim mainstream benefits or access council housing

- **9 out of the top 10** most common countries of origin for people seeking asylum in the UK are severely affected by climate change
- 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) can work, claim mainstream benefits and apply for social housing (subject to same criteria as other people)
- From March 2026, refugee status (following an asylum claim) is temporary and subject to review every 30 months, with a baseline waiting time of 20 years for permanent settlement
- 6,417 refugees were resettled in the UK in 2025 (92% under Afghan schemes), a fall of 19% from 2024. This represents **0.01% of the world's refugees**.
- Refugee Family Reunion in the UK is currently suspended, leaving children separated from their parents indefinitely with no prospect of being reunited
- Changes to government 'good character' guidance introduced in 2025 mean that anyone who arrived via a 'dangerous journey' will 'normally' be refused UK citizenship forever
- Around 264,000 people have come to the UK under Ukraine refugee schemes since 2022, **less than 5%** of the 6 million Ukrainian refugees recorded in European countries

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
- Around **1,700** Ukrainian refugees in total have arrived in Suffolk under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme (and Ukraine Family Scheme) since 2022
- There are approximately **200** asylum seekers in 'dispersal' accommodation in Suffolk, around half in Ipswich and half 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
- Around **375** refugees have arrived in Suffolk under resettlement schemes over the past decade – predominantly Afghan and Syrian and almost all in family groups