

National statistics

# Summary of latest statistics

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023/summary-of-latest-statistics>

[‘Immigration system statistics, year ending March 2023’ contents page](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023>).

# 1. How many people come to the UK each year (including visitors)?

There were an estimated 118 million passenger arrivals from outside the Common Travel Area (CTA) in the year ending March 2023 (including returning UK residents). This was almost twice (+174%) as many as in the year ending March 2022 (43 million), when UK and global travel restrictions due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic were still in place. The latest passenger arrivals number is around four-fifths of the total number of arrivals in 2019 (146 million), the period immediately before the COVID-19 outbreak.

There were 3,057,654 visas granted in the year ending March 2023, 90% higher (1,449,071) than the year ending March 2022. This was primarily due to 944,957 (+155%) more grants of Visitor visas, but also due to more grants for:

- work visas (including dependants), up 211,285 (+76%) to 487,771
- study visas (including dependants), up 161,771 (+34%) to 632,006, including sponsored and short-term students

There have been a total of 172,500 applications for the BN(O) route since its introduction on 31 January 2021 up to the end of March 2023.

There have been a total of 139,144 grants of out of country BN(O) visas since its introduction on 31 January 2021 up to the end of March 2023. 113,500 people have arrived in the UK on the scheme since it began. Between January and March 2023, there were 9,729 grants of out of country BN(O) visas; 8,300 individuals arrived during this quarter.

There have been a total of 27,276 grants of in country BN(O) visas since its introduction on 31 January 2021 up to the end of March 2023. Between January and March 2023, there were 3,014 grants of in country BN(O) visas.

For further details see [‘How many people come to the UK each year \(including visitors\)?’](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023/how-many-people-come-to-the-uk-each-year-including-visitors) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023/how-many-people-come-to-the-uk-each-year-including-visitors>).

## 2. Statistics on Ukrainians in the UK

Since their introduction in March 2022, there have been 283,366 applications for a visa under Ukraine Visa Schemes, of these 225,278 have been granted and 169,300 arrivals have been identified to the year ending March 2023. In addition, there have been 24,593 extensions granted under the Ukraine Family Scheme and Ukraine Extension Scheme. For further details see [‘Statistics on Ukrainians in the](#)

UK' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023/statistics-on-ukrainians-in-the-uk>).

## 3. Why do people come to the UK?

### 3.1 Work

There were 299,891 grants to main applicants on work visas, 61% higher than in the year ending March 2022, largely due to increases in the 'Skilled Worker' visas.

'Skilled Worker' visa grants to main applicants have risen by 59% in the past year to around 69,423. 'Skilled Worker – Health and Care' visa grants to main applicants have risen over two and half times (+171%) to around 101,570, in part due to the [expansion in late 2021](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/biggest-visa-boost-for-social-care-as-health-and-care-visa-scheme-expanded) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/biggest-visa-boost-for-social-care-as-health-and-care-visa-scheme-expanded>) for 'Care Workers and Home Carers' and 'Senior Care Workers'.

Indian nationals were the highest nationality granted on both these routes.

For further details see ['Why do people come to the UK? To work'](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-to-work) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-to-work>).

### 3.2 Study

In the year ending March 2023, there were 477,931 sponsored study visas issued to main applicants, 22% more than in the year ending March 2022.

There were 138,532 grants to Indian nationals, an increase of 53,429 (+63%) compared to year ending March 2022 (85,103). Chinese nationals were the second most common nationality granted sponsored study visas in the year ending March 2023, with 100,397 visas granted.

The vast majority of Certificate of Acceptance (CAS) used (91%) were for sponsored study at higher education (university) institutions, with the total divided between:

- higher education (91%)
- further education (4%)
- independent schools (3%)
- English language schools (2%)
- other (1%)

Almost a quarter (24%) of all sponsored study related visas granted were to dependants of students (149,400), compared to 15% (72,062) in the year ending March 2022.

For further details see [‘Why do people come to the UK? To study’](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-to-study) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-to-study>).

### 3.3 Sponsorship licensing for work and study

At the end of March 2023, there were around 63,400 organisations and institutions registered as licensed sponsors for work and study.

Home Office management information indicates that there were 9,240 decisions on applications for sponsor licences between January to March 2023, 67% more than in January to March 2022 (5,547). Of these, 7,091 licenses were granted, and 2,149 applications were not granted (including both applications withdrawn and those rejected).

This data also shows that there were 30,295 decisions made in the year ending March 2023, compared to 17,932 in the year ending March 2022. Of the 30,295 decisions, 23,068 licences were granted (79% higher than the year before) and 7,227 were not granted (including both applications withdrawn and those rejected).

### 3.4 Family

There were 65,642 family-related visas granted, 59% more than in the year ending March 2022; over three quarters (79%) of family-related visas granted in the year ending March 2023 were to partners, with the remainder being for children or other dependants.

31,550 [EU Settlement Scheme permits](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/846379/euss-family-and-travel-permit-guidance-v3.0ext.pdf) ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/846379/euss-family-and-travel-permit-guidance-v3.0ext.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/846379/euss-family-and-travel-permit-guidance-v3.0ext.pdf)) were issued in the year ending March 2023 to family members of people from the EU, European Economic Area (EEA), and Switzerland granted or eligible for settled or pre-settled status through the EUSS on the basis of residence in the UK before the end of the transition period. A total of 121,767 visas have been issued under this scheme since it opened in March 2019. This includes both EUSS family and travel permits

For further details see [‘Why do people come to the UK? For family reasons’](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-for-family-reasons) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-for-family-reasons>).

## 4. How many people do we grant protection to?

The UK offered protection (in the form of refugee status, humanitarian protection, alternative forms of leave and resettlement) to 22,648 people (including dependants) in the year ending March 2023. This number is around a third (31%) fewer than the number in the year ending March 2022. Resettlement accounted for

4,414 (19%) of the people offered protection in the year ending March 2023. The resettlement data here includes those who have been resettled under 'Pathway 1', 'Pathway 2' and 'Pathway 3' of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, or relocated under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy.

There were 75,492 asylum applications (main applicants only) in the UK in the year ending March 2023, 33% more than the number in the year ending March 2022. This is higher than at the peak of the European Migration crisis (36,546 in year ending June 2016) and is the highest number of applications for 2 decades (since 2003).

In the year ending March 2023, there were 19,706 initial decisions made on asylum applications, 35% more than in the previous year. This suggests a return to pre-pandemic levels of decisions (20,766 decisions were made in 2019). Just under three-quarters (74%) of the initial decisions in the year ending March 2023 were grants (of refugee status, humanitarian protection or alternative forms of leave). Since 2021, the grant rate has been between 72% and 77% - substantially higher than in pre-pandemic years when only around a third of initial decisions were grants. Prior to this, the previous high was over 30 years ago: 82% in 1990. Of the top 10 nationalities applying for asylum, nearly half have a grant rate above 80% (Afghanistan 98%, Syria 99%, Eritrea 99%, and Sudan 83%). This rise in grant rate is in part because of the low number of refusals (including third country refusals, which have been affected by the UK leaving the EU), although the overall grant rate can vary for a number of reasons.

For further details see [‘How many people do we grant protection to?’](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023/how-many-people-do-we-grant-protection-to?)  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023/how-many-people-do-we-grant-protection-to?>).

## **5. How many people continue their stay in the UK or apply to stay permanently?**

### **5.1 Extension of temporary stay in the UK**

There were 640,418 grants of extension in the UK (including both main applicants and dependants) in the year ending March 2023, 53% more than in the year ending March 2022. Three quarters of the increase in extensions in the latest year (75% of 221,276) were for work.

### **5.2 Settlement**

There were 126,313 grants of settlement in the UK in the year ending March 2023, 15% more than in the year ending March 2022.

### **5.3 EEA nationals and their family members**



Documents issued under European law are no longer valid as evidence of a right of residence in the UK unless an application to the EU Settlement scheme (EUSS) was made on or before 30 June 2021. Applications received before 1 January 2021 are still being processed. More information is available on the relevant [visas and immigration pages on GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/uk-residence-card) (<https://www.gov.uk/uk-residence-card>).

Statistics of decisions on applications for residence documents relating to EEA citizens and qualifying non-EEA family members in the UK under EU law can be found for 2004 to March 2023 in tables [EEA 01](#) and [EEA 02](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023/list-of-tables#european-economic-area-eea>) and for 2006 to March 2023 in the form of a [a detailed dataset](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/managed-migration-datasets#european-economic-area-eea>). When the last applications for these documents are decided the data tables will no longer be updated but will still be available for reference.

The Home Office publishes regular updates to [EU Settlement Scheme numbers](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/eu-settlement-scheme-statistics>). The latest data show that 7.2 million applications to the EU Settlement Scheme had been received up to 31 March 2023, of which 7.1 million had been concluded.

## 5.4 Citizenship

There were 200,362 applications for British citizenship in the year ending March 2023, 11% more than in the year ending March 2022.

There were 47,607 applications for citizenship by EU nationals, 11% fewer than in the year ending March 2022. There were 152,755 applications for citizenship made by non-EU nationals, 20% more than in the year ending March 2022.

There were 181,480 grants of British citizenship in the year ending March 2023, 7% fewer than in the year ending March 2022.

A quarter (25%, or 44,476) of the grants of British citizenship were to EU citizens, 22,623, or 34%, fewer than in the year ending March 2022. There were 137,004 grants of British citizenship to non-EU citizens, 8,770, or 7%, more than in the year ending March 2022.

For further details see [‘How many people continue their stay in the UK?’](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023/how-many-people-continue-their-stay-in-the-uk-or-apply-to-stay-permanently>).

# 6. How many people are detained or returned?

## 6.1 Immigration detention

20,416 people entered immigration detention in the year ending March 2023, 20% fewer than in the year ending March 2022.

At the end of March 2023, there were 1,591 people held in immigration detention (including those detained under immigration powers in prison). This was 10% higher than at the end of March 2022.

19,102 people left detention in the year ending March 2023, which was 24% fewer than in the year ending March 2022. 44% had been detained for 7 days or less, compared with 73% in the year ending March 2022. 77% of those leaving detention in the year ending March 2023 were bailed. Bail was mostly granted due to an asylum (or other) application being raised.

## 6.2 Returns

In 2022, there were 3,860 enforced returns, 46% fewer than in 2019 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (7,198), but 39% more than in 2021 (2,780). The majority (77%) of enforced returns in 2022 were of Foreign National Offenders (FNOs) and around half (47%) of enforced returns were EU nationals.

Following the pandemic, FNO returns increased slightly due to returns of non-EU nationals (mainly Albanians). However, FNO returns in 2022 remain 40% lower than pre-pandemic levels (3,079, down from 5,128 in 2019).

For further details see [‘How many people are detained or returned?’](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023/how-many-people-are-detained-or-returned?) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023/how-many-people-are-detained-or-returned?>).

### We welcome your feedback

If you have any comments or suggestions for the development of this report, please provide feedback by emailing [MigrationStatsEnquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:MigrationStatsEnquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk). Please include the words ‘PUBLICATION FEEDBACK’ in the subject of your email.

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See section 6 of the [‘About this release’](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023/about-this-release) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-march-2023/about-this-release>) section for more details.

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