

Gloucestershire Migration Briefing

September 2025

This briefing contains an overview of the most recent publicly available information for the asylum route and main refugee schemes in Gloucestershire, using data from up to 30th June 2025.

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Key definitions

Migration is the movement of people from one place to another, to settle in a new location. It may be voluntary or involuntary. Reasons for migrating include economic, environmental and social issues. A **migrant** is a person who has moved away from their country of origin, usually for work, study or to join family.

A **refugee** is a person who has been forced to leave their home country to escape war, persecution, violence or national disaster and is not able to return until conditions are safe again. A refugee has a legal status that provides them with rights and protections. Ukrainians arriving through the Homes for Ukraine scheme are referred to as guests as they stay in homes of UK sponsors or hosts. Although they do not have refugee status in the UK, they are refugees by definition.

An **asylum seeker** is a person who is in the process of claiming protection in another country, having left their home country due to war, persecution, violence or national disaster. While waiting for a decision on their asylum claim, they will have limited rights in the country of asylum. Not every asylum seeker will be recognised as a refugee.

Facts about refugees and asylum seekers

- The UK is home to around 0.5% of the world's forcibly displaced refugees¹. This is less per capita than many of our European neighbours, such as France, Germany and the Netherlands.
- People seeking asylum make up around 7% of the total number of migrants to the UK each year².
- More than five times as many people migrate to the UK to study than claim asylum².
- There are 669,380 residents in Gloucestershire³. As of 30th June 2025, there were 2,665 refugees or asylum seekers entitled to support across the Homes for Ukraine, Resettlement, and Asylum routes. Overall, this equates to less than a half of one percent (0.40%, or 40 people per 10,000 settled Gloucestershire residents). The UK average is 0.45%⁴.
- While more men have historically sought asylum in the UK, many men are later joined by their partners and families. In fact, 81% of adults granted refugee family reunion visas are women, showing that refugee communities are diverse and include many women and families⁵.
- When asylum seekers arrive in the UK they are placed in asylum accommodation by the Home Office. Asylum accommodation is often basic, using budget hotels or repurposed buildings. People have no choice over where the Home Office places them, with rooms being small and often shared with others, with very little privacy.
- Asylum seekers receive very limited support from the Government while their asylum claim is being processed⁶:
 - Those housed in hotels receive £9.95 per week, around £1.42 per day, to cover essential items like clothing, toiletries, phone credit, and transport.
 - Those in dispersal accommodation receive £49.18 per week, which must cover food costs as well as all essential items.
 - As a result, asylum seekers will often rely on charities for support.
- Asylum seekers are not allowed to work while their claim is being processed due to Government rules. Once granted refugee status, they can work like anyone else and bring valuable skills and knowledge that benefit the whole of society. When legally employed, migrants directly support public services, with a particularly high proportion working in healthcare and in care roles.
- People seeking asylum are not eligible for council housing while their claims are being assessed. Once someone is granted refugee status, they can apply for social housing or rent privately, just like any other eligible resident. Being granted refugee status does not give automatic priority to social housing. All social housing applications are assessed based on need.

Further details on the statistics in this document are available here:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/abdfkmbf/dph-report-2024-migrant-data-evidence-for-inform.pdf>. Please note that national data is updated quarterly. A summary of the most up to date information is available below.

¹ <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download> (accessed 06/10/25)

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-june-2024/summary-of-latest-statistics> (accessed 06/10/25)

³ Office of National Statistics mid-2024 Population Estimates

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/immigration-system-statistics-regional-and-local-authority-data> accessed 01/10/25)

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/immigration-system-statistics-data-tables> (accessed 01/10/25)

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/asylum-support/what-youll-get> (accessed 06/10/25)

Resettlement Schemes

Since 2015, the UK has offered 'safe and legal' resettlement routes to almost half a million men, women and children seeking safety, as well as family members of refugees. These include the Afghan Resettlement Programme (ARP) and the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), as well as the Hong Kong BN(O) visa route, although Gloucestershire does not have any known arrivals via this scheme.

Afghan Resettlement Programme (ARP)

The Afghan Resettlement Programme was established in response to the UK's long-standing involvement in Afghanistan and the urgent humanitarian needs following the Taliban's return to power in 2021. It comprises two schemes: the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP). The ACRS is designed to support vulnerable individuals, including women and girls at risk and minority groups. Meanwhile, ARAP focuses specifically on Afghan citizens who worked for or with the UK government in Afghanistan along with their family members. Both schemes provide a pathway to indefinite leave to remain in the UK, along with access to public services and integration support.

On 1st July 2025, the government announced the closure of ARP to new applications. Whilst no further applications can be submitted, resettlement work continues with those received prior to the deadline still under consideration. The government has stated that arrivals will continue until the end of the current parliament, but it is anticipated that the scheme will begin to wind down prior to this.

Arrivals as of 30th June 2025 for each district under the Afghan schemes since 2021 can be seen in Figure 1 below.

Afghan Schemes Total Arrivals by District

Since scheme launch on 01/04/2021

● Cheltenham ● Cotswold ● Forest of Dean ● Gloucester ● Stroud ● Tewkesbury

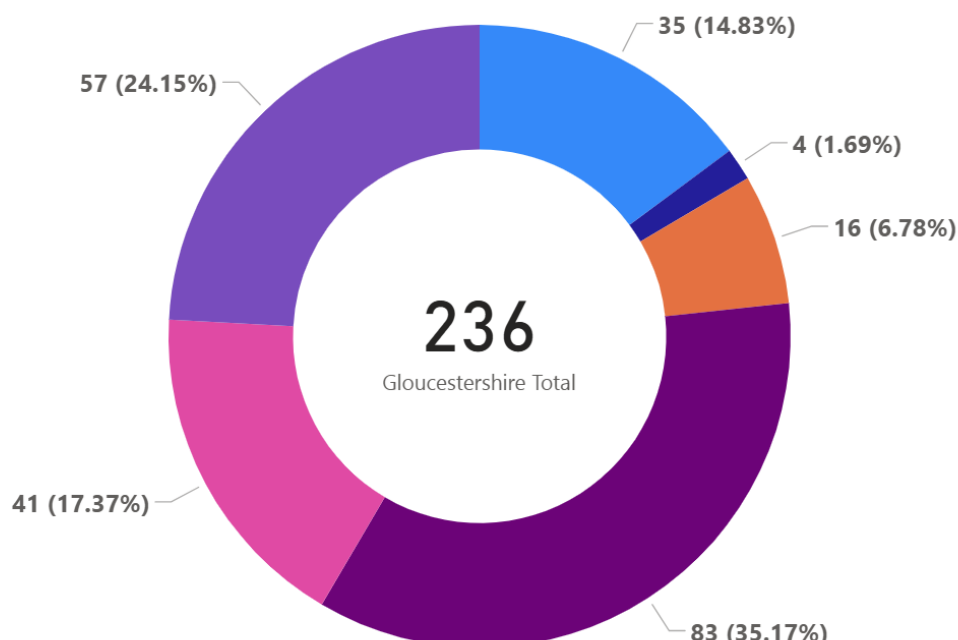


Figure 1: Chart showing total Afghan schemes arrivals by district since April 2021⁷

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/immigration-system-statistics-regional-and-local-authority-data> (accessed 06/10/25)

UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS)

The UK Resettlement Scheme is the UK’s global refugee resettlement programme, launched in 2021 to build on the legacy of earlier initiatives such as the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. Operated in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UKRS focuses on resettling refugees who are most in need of protection, including those with urgent medical needs and individuals facing extreme vulnerability. Refugees are referred by UNHCR based on established criteria and, upon arrival in the UK, they are granted indefinite leave to remain.

Arrivals as of 30th June 2025 for each district under the UK Resettlement scheme can be seen in Figure 2 below. In total, 59 refugees have arrived via the scheme.

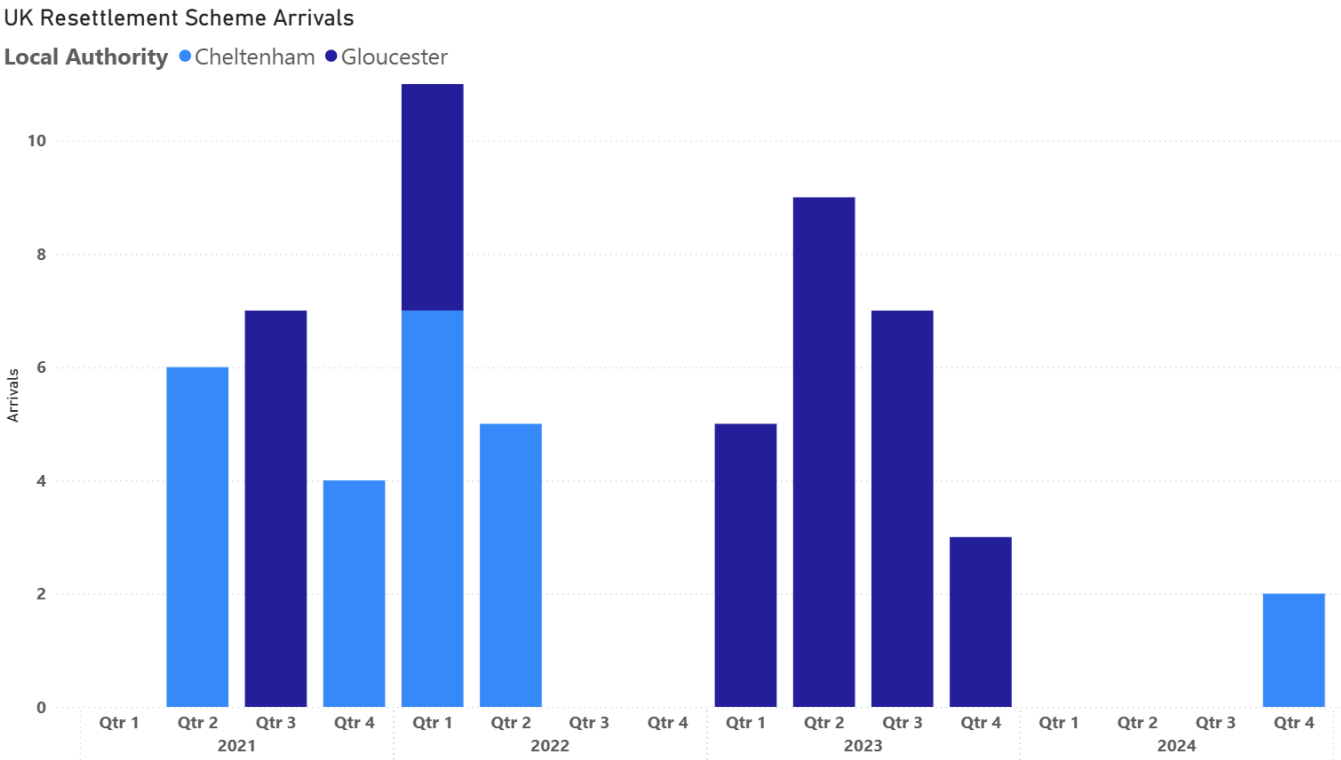


Figure 2: Chart showing UK resettlement scheme arrivals by district⁸

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/immigration-system-statistics-data-tables> (accessed 06/10/25)

Homes for Ukraine

The Homes for Ukraine (HFU) scheme was launched by the UK government in March 2022 as an emergency response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It offers Ukrainian nationals and their immediate family members a pathway to safety in the UK by allowing 'hosts' in the UK to sponsor them. Unlike traditional resettlement schemes, Homes for Ukraine is a community-led sponsorship model, enabling UK residents to offer accommodation for a minimum of six months.

Ukrainians who submitted applications prior to 3pm on 19th February 2024 were granted three years leave to remain, whilst applicants after that date are granted 18 months leave to remain. HFU visas entitle guests to access public services, employment, education, and benefits for duration of their visa, along with any integration support offered through their local authority. All HFU visa holders are entitled to apply for a further 18 months leave to remain under a subsequent visa scheme called Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE). UPE extends all permissions and entitlements granted to guests through the HFU scheme, including support for community-led hosted placements.

The number of visas applied for and approved, and numbers arrived in Gloucestershire under the HFU scheme can be seen in Figure 3 below. As of 30th June 2025, 2692 visas have been applied for and 2134 visas have been issued, an approval rate of 79.3%. 1885 Ukrainians have arrived, but only 23 were during the last quarter.

The number of HFU arrivals by Gloucestershire district can be seen in Figure 4 below. The highest number of arrivals has been seen in Stroud (415), closely followed by Cheltenham (390) and Cotswold (363).

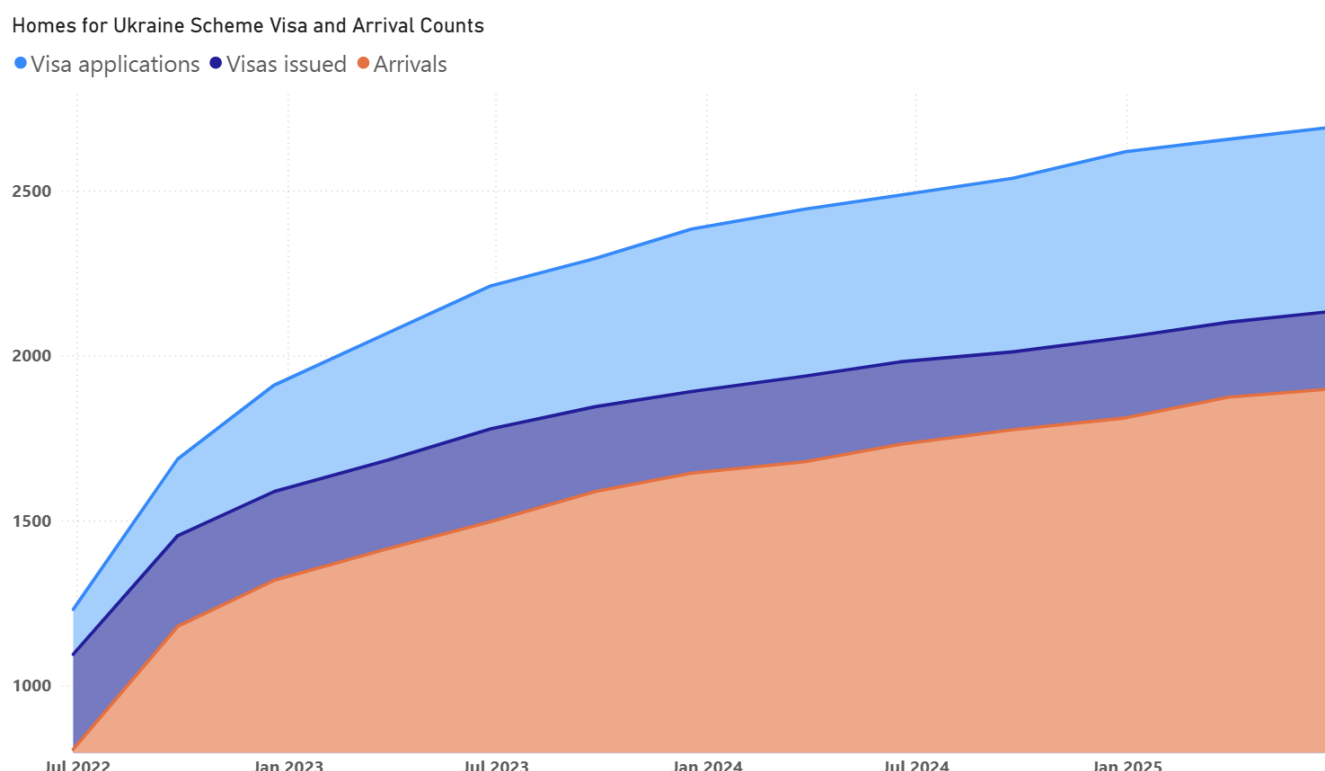


Figure 3: Chart showing Total HFU Visa and Arrival Counts for Gloucestershire⁹

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/immigration-system-statistics-regional-and-local-authority-data> (accessed 06/10/25)

Homes for Ukraine Scheme Total Arrivals by District

● Cheltenham ● Cotswold ● Forest of Dean ● Gloucester ● Stroud ● Tewkesbury

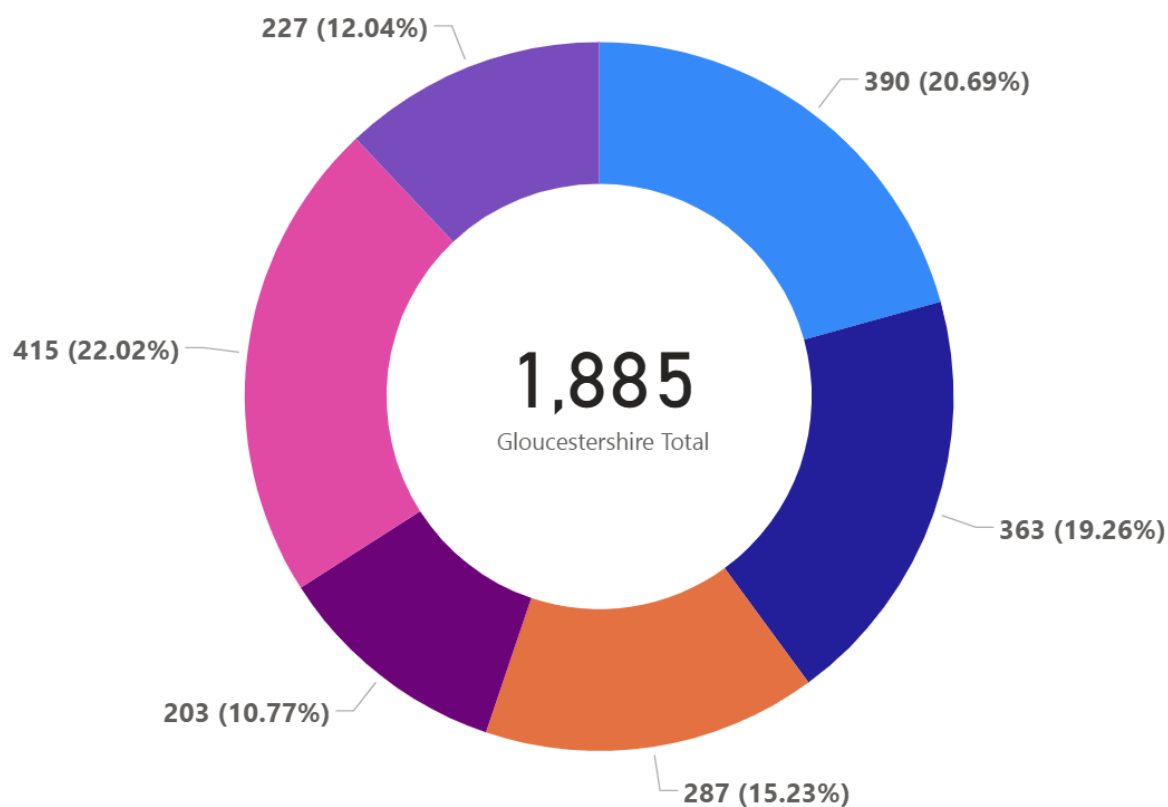


Figure 4: Chart showing total HFU arrivals by district¹⁰

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/immigration-system-statistics-regional-and-local-authority-data> (accessed 06/10/25)

Asylum Route

Asylum accommodation in the UK is provided by the Home Office to individuals who have claimed asylum and are destitute or at risk of destitution. Individuals seeking asylum are housed in either contingency (hotel) or dispersal accommodation, managed by private contractors on behalf of the Home Office. The current and previous government have consistently expressed a desire to end the use of hotel accommodation, which is significantly more expensive and less suitable for long-term living. However, rising demand and limited housing stock have led to slow progress.

National Picture

Across the UK, as of June 30th 2025, there were 34,314 asylum seekers in contingency accommodation and 66,234 asylum seekers in dispersal accommodation. Contingency numbers are down 1.0% from the previous quarter, and up 7.1% from the end of June 2024. Dispersal numbers are down 0.6% from the previous quarter, and up 7.2% from the end of June 2024¹¹.

The most common route of entry into the UK for those claiming asylum is via small boat, although this only makes up 39% of the overall total. A further 37% have arrived on official visas or via other leave and claimed asylum afterwards. The most common nationalities claiming asylum currently are Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Eritrea, Bangladesh, India, Sudan, and Syria; together accounting for over half (51.7%) of all claims¹².

Across the UK for the year ending 30th June 2025, there were 51,997 grants of protection or other leave on initial decisions, and 57,905 claims were refused at initial decision, a grant rate of 47.3%. Successful initial decisions are down 23.5% from the same time last year and unsuccessful initial decisions are up 13.8% from the same time last year. The increase in unsuccessful decisions for those arriving by small boat is even more dramatic at 63.2%. Overall, the total number of initial decisions made has decreased 7.5% from the same time last year, though decisions on small boat arrivals have seen an increase of 7.7%¹².

The most common nationalities refused asylum currently are India, Brazil, and Albania; all with success rates under 5%, and together accounting for 10.8% of all decisions. Across the UK for the year ending 30th June 2025, asylum related returns have increased by 31.1% relative to the same time last year. Enforced returns are up 26%, and voluntary returns are up 33%¹².

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/immigration-system-statistics-regional-and-local-authority-data> (accessed 06/10/25)

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/immigration-system-statistics-data-tables> (accessed 06/10/25)

Local Picture

On the whole, Gloucestershire is representative of the average national picture and that of the South West. As of 30th June 2025, there were 185 individuals in receipt of asylum support in contingency accommodation in Gloucestershire, an increase of 79.6% on the previous quarter, and 340 housed in dispersal accommodation, an increase of 6.3% on the previous quarter¹³.

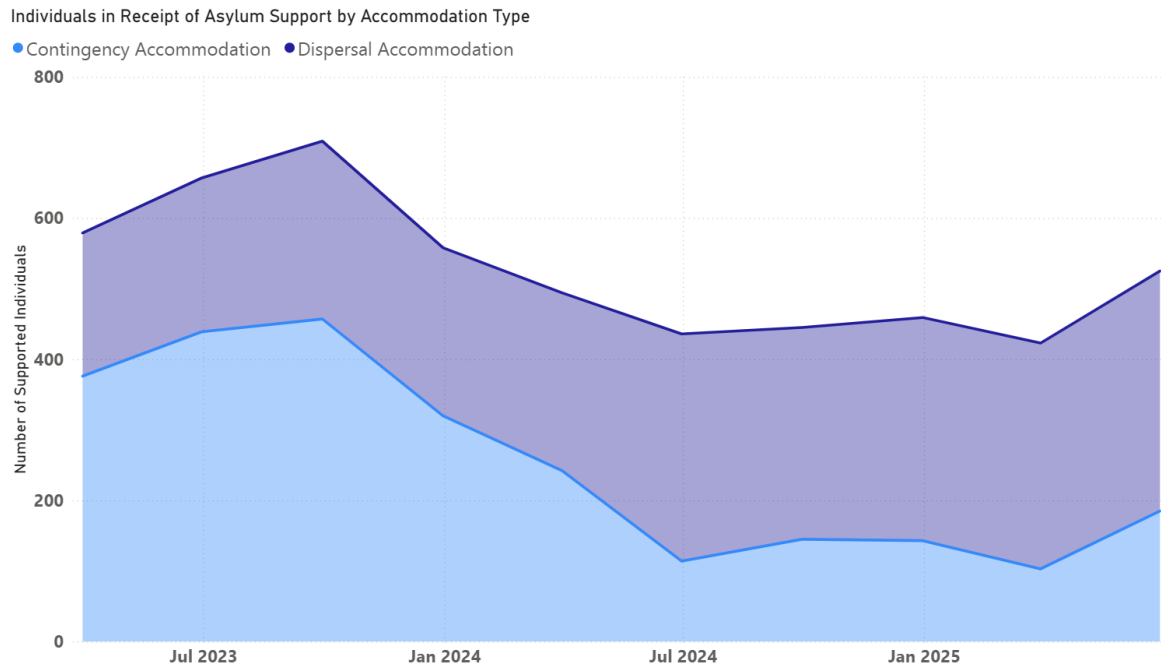


Figure 5: Chart showing number of individuals in receipt of asylum support by accommodation type¹³

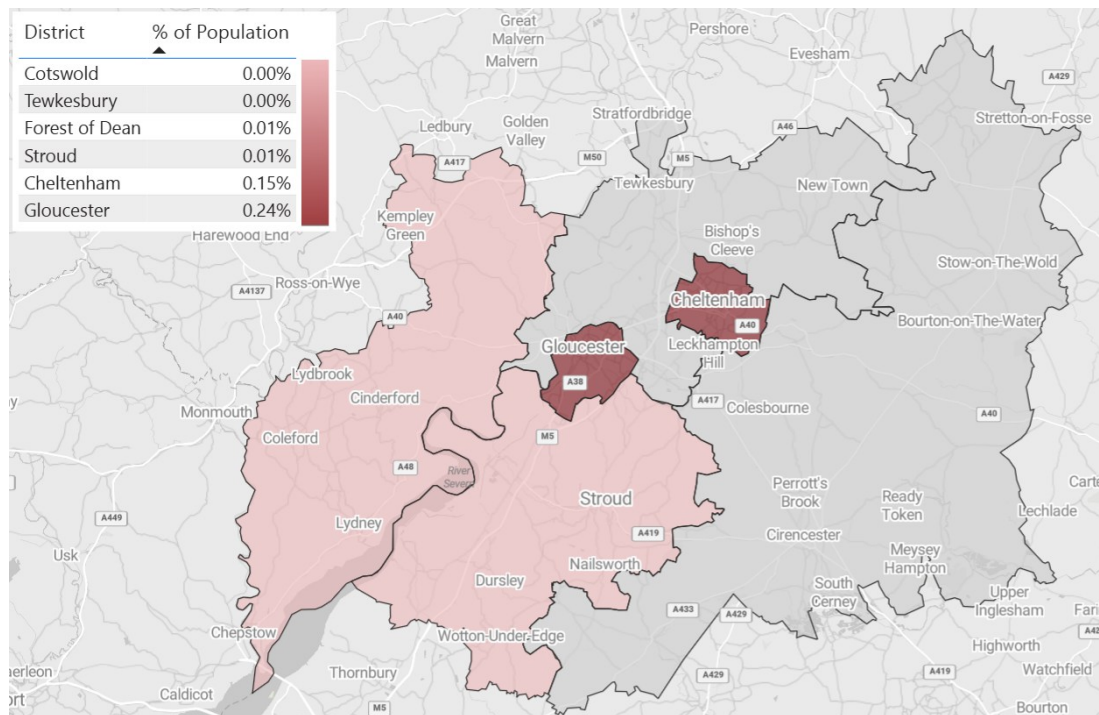


Figure 6: Map showing individuals in receipt of asylum support as proportion of area populations¹³

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/immigration-system-statistics-regional-and-local-authority-data> (accessed 06/10/25)

The number of individuals in receipt of asylum support as a percentage of the local population can be seen in Figure 6. Counts of those in receipt of asylum support can be seen in Table 1 below. As of 30th June 2025, the greatest proportion was seen in Gloucester, with those receiving asylum support making up less than quarter of a percent (0.24%) of the local population, followed by Cheltenham at 0.15% of the local population. In contrast, Cotswold did not have anyone in receipt of asylum support.

District area	Dispersal	Contingency
Cheltenham	75	108
Cotswold	0	0
Forest of Dean	6	0
Gloucester	249	77
Stroud	6	0
Tewkesbury	4	0
TOTAL	340	185

Table 1: Number of asylum seekers supported by district and accommodation type¹⁴

Future Updates

This briefing will be updated quarterly.

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/immigration-system-statistics-regional-and-local-authority-data> (accessed 06/10/25)