

Migrant and Asylum seeker population in Gloucestershire

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1. Background

Collating and understanding data are critical public health tools for supporting refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. By analysing health data, public health teams and others that work with or support refugees and asylum seekers to understand health needs and health inequalities impacting this population, and to understand what works to address these needs. There is however wide variation in the availability, depth and quality of data for those seeking humanitarian protection between different schemes. In this deep dive we present the national, regional and local data that we use in Gloucestershire to support our refugee and asylum programmes.

For more detail on these programmes, and the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in Gloucestershire please read our [Director of Public Health Annual Report 2024](#).

2. National data

The Refugee Council¹ estimates that the UK houses approximately 1% of the world's refugees who have been forcibly displaced. The UN Refugee Agency² highlight that the majority of refugees, as much as 85%, live in low- and middle-income countries, rather than wealthy, economically developed countries like the UK.

According to the UN Refugee Council, in 2021 the UK received the 18th largest number of asylum applications (44,190) out of the EU+ countries (EU, EEA and Switzerland) when measured per head of population. Whereas Germany and France received the highest number of asylum applications at (127,730) and (96,510) respectively.

The University of Oxford Migration Observatory³ highlights that in 2023, grants of asylum accounted for 7% of immigration to the UK with refugees accounting for 4%.

Asylum is not the only route for people seeking humanitarian protection to migrate to the UK and there have been many resettlement schemes over the past five decades which are detailed on the Gov.Uk website⁴. A small subset of these schemes are reported on in this deep dive.

¹ <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/helping-refugees-in-the-uk/> [accessed 01/01/2025]

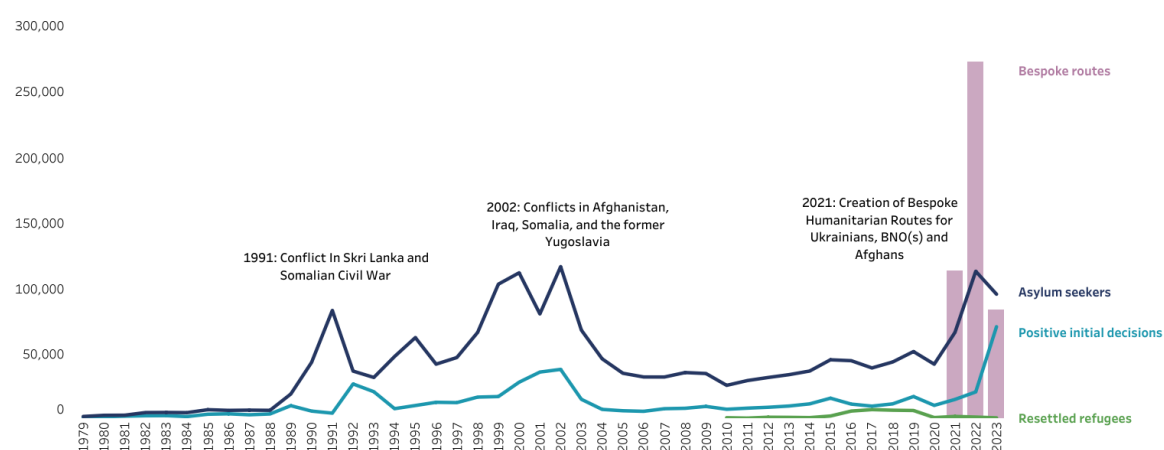
² [Asylum in the UK | UNHCR UK](#) [accessed 01/01/2025]

³ [Asylum and refugee resettlement in the UK - Migration Observatory - The Migration Observatory](#) [accessed 01/01/2025]

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/resettlement-policy-statement/resettlement-policy-guidance-accessible-version#introduction> [accessed 01/01/2025]

The Migration Observatory provides helpful information and analysis on the complex patterns of migration over time. Figure 1 shows the changing nature of international migration to the UK over the last five decades. This gives a sense of the overall scale and key geopolitical events which have caused the migration to the UK over time.

Figure 1: Number of people who claimed asylum, positive initial decisions, refugee resettled and people offered bespoke humanitarian routes to the UK, 1979-2023. (Source: The Migration Observatory, accessed November 2024).



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of Home Office Immigration Statistics: for asylum seekers and positive initial decisions, 1979–2000: Table as_02 (June 2019), and for 2001–2022, Table Asy_D02 (December 2023). For resettled refugees (including the Afghan resettlement scheme): Table Asy_D02 (December 2023). For Ukrainian and BNO Schemes: Table Vis_D01 (December 2023). For BNO visas issued within the UK: Table Ex_D01 (December 2023).

Note: Beneficiaries of the Afghan resettlement schemes (ARAP and ACRS) have been included under the bespoke humanitarian routes figure and excluded from the resettlement data. 'Other leave' comprises grants of humanitarian protection, discretionary leave, leave under family or private life rules, UASC leave, leave outside the rules, Calais leave, and exceptional leave to remain. Grants are at initial decision; the number of people granted some form of asylum-related leave will be higher if appeals are taken into account. Resettlement data are for refugees resettled under the VPRS, VCRS, Gateway Protection Programme and Mandate Scheme.



While the right to seek asylum and refugee status are legal rights, the data showing the patterns of those arriving in the UK is only part of the picture. How people feel about migration is very important for helping asylum seekers and refugees fit in and keeping society united. In a 2024 British Future report⁵ the research company Ipsos found that slightly more people in the UK still think immigration (i.e. work, study, family, seeking asylum or humanitarian protection) has a more positive impact on Britain (40%) than negative (37%) but there is evidence that opinions are becoming more negative.

2.1 Asylum

The level of public concern around asylum is disproportionate to its share of total immigration numbers. More than five times as many people migrate to the UK each year to study than claim asylum⁶, yet the public estimates that there are

⁵ [Tracker-report.Wave17.Final_.Embargo19.9.24.pdf](#) [accessed 01/01/2025]

⁶ [Immigration system statistics data tables - GOV.UK](#) [accessed 01/01/2025]

twice as many asylum-seekers as international students. On average the public thinks that people seeking asylum make up more than a third of total immigration (37%) while the actual proportion is around 7%. One in five people (22%) think asylum makes up more than half of total UK immigration and four in ten migration sceptics (42%) think this is the case.

In 2023 there were 91,811 applications for asylum to the UK (see Table 1). This is more than a three-fold increase since 2013 and approximately 7% of all migration in that year⁷.

From 2013 to 2020 there was a gradual increase in numbers, with a large increase in 2021 and a further rise to current levels in 2022. In 2023, there were 4,656 applications from unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) in the UK - these applications made up about 6% of the total asylum applications for that year.

Table 1: the total number of people (including main applicants and dependents) applying for asylum in the UK between 2013 and June 2024 (Asy_D01) (4).

Year	Number of Asylum applications
2013	29,875
2014	32,344
2015	39,968
2016	39,357
2017	34,435
2018	38,483
2019	45,537
2020	36,986
2021	58,532
2022	99,939
2023	91,811

2.2 Decisions for asylum applications

The Migration Observatory⁸ calculated the percentage of applicants who receive a positive decision for asylum-related protection as 66% (for main applicants only) between 2018 and 2020 inclusive. This included applicants who appealed the initial decision they received. In the year ending March 2022 however, the percentage of positive decisions reached 75%. These percentages, despite

⁷ [Immigration system statistics data tables - GOV.UK](#) [accessed 01/01/2025]

⁸ [Share of successful asylum claims reach a 30-year high, new Home Office data reveal - Migration Observatory - The Migration Observatory](#) [accessed 01/01/2025]

fluctuation, show that a large proportion of people who seek asylum and other forms of protection in the UK are eligible to receive it by UK government and human rights definitions.

2.3 Characteristics of those applying for asylum

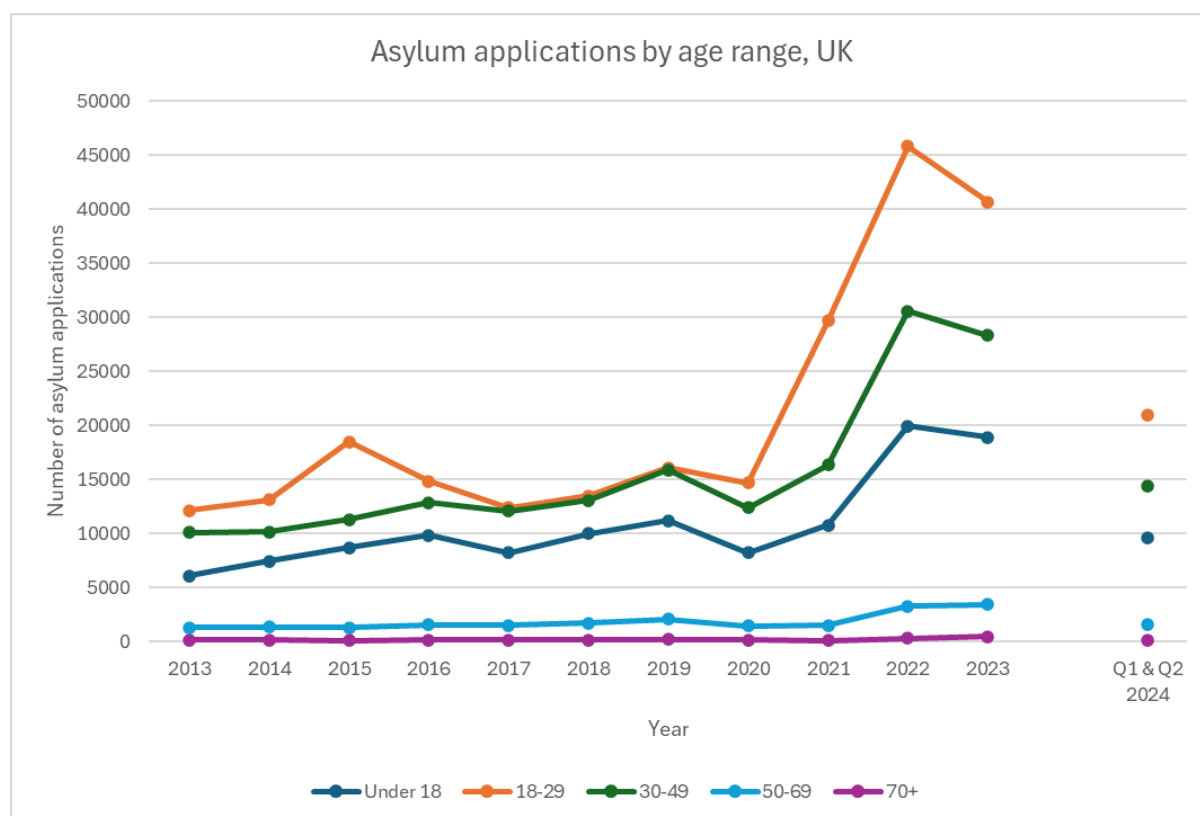
Home Office data is limited in its breakdown of protected characteristics (for example, religion, disability, or sexual orientation) for people seeking asylum. However, available Gov.UK data⁹ shows that demographically, asylum seekers tend to be younger and male. Data (see Table 2 and Figure 2) shows that across the period 2013 to June 2024, young people (aged 18 to 29) accounted for the highest number of asylum applicants (main applicant and dependents), followed by people aged 30 to 49. The lowest number of applications are from people aged 50+ plus.

Table 2: Asylum applications (main applicants and dependents) in the UK by age range, 2013 to 2024 (Asy_D01) (4)

Year of application	Under 18	18-29	30-49	50-69	70+	Unknown age	Total
2013	6,104	12,148	10,133	1,322	163	5	29,875
2014	7,459	13,143	10,159	1,387	190	6	32,344
2015	8,704	18,489	11,289	1,339	144	3	39,968
2016	9,849	14,835	12,881	1,604	181	7	39,357
2017	8,259	12,399	12,089	1,529	157	2	34,435
2018	9,987	13,515	13,084	1,725	169	3	38,483
2019	11,216	16,090	15,874	2,122	233	2	45,537
2020	8,239	14,709	12,401	1,469	166	2	36,986
2021	10,814	29,663	16,372	1,543	137	3	58,532
2022	19,928	45,784	30,568	3,297	358	4	99,939
2023	18,898	40,662	28,315	3,457	478	1	91,811
Q1 & Q2 2024	9,589	20,935	14,439	1,595	196	1	46,755

⁹ [How many people do we grant protection to? - GOV.UK](#) [accessed 01/01/2025]

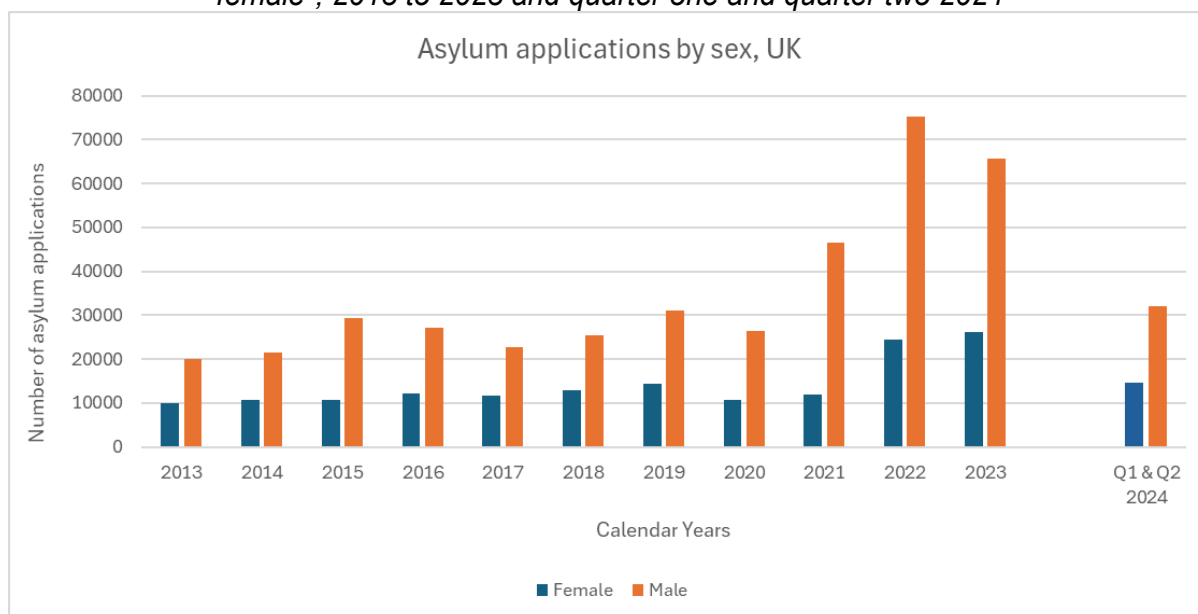
Figure 2: Asylum applications (main applicants and dependents) in the UK by age range, 2013 to 2023, and quarter one and two 2024



Notes: Numbers for unknown sex have not been included in Figure 2 due to very small numbers.

There was consistently a higher proportion of males consistently between 2013 to June 2024 (422,849 males compared with 170,416 females) and this difference has increased considerably in the past few years. However, it is important to recognise that the gender balance of those granted protection becomes more even over time, as men are joined by female partners and families. According to the migration observatory, 81% of adults receiving refugee family reunion visas were women.

Figure 3: Asylum applications (main applicants and dependents) in the UK, split by male / female*, 2013 to 2023 and quarter one and quarter two 2024



Notes: numbers for unknown sex were too small to show in Figure 3

2.4 Country of origin of those applying for asylum

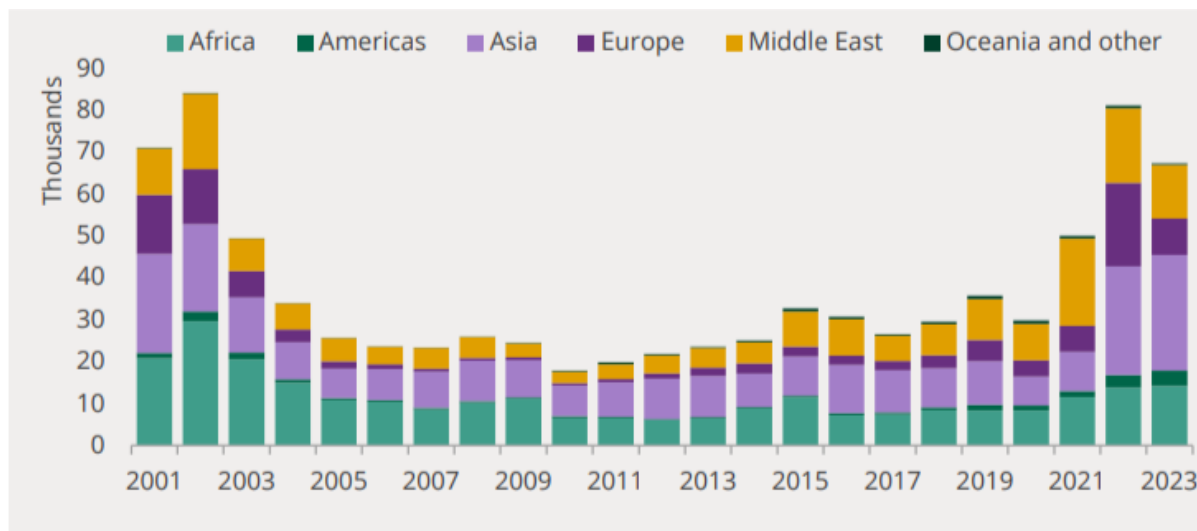
The UK Home Office reports annually on the top 20 nationalities (by country) of people (main applicant only) applying for asylum in the UK each year¹⁰. Due to changing geopolitical drivers such as conflict, there are large reductions and increases every year in the number of applications by country.

The House of Commons Library use Home Office data to report on the nationalities by regional groupings (see Figure 4 below), which shows that for the previous two years, 2022 and 2023, an increased proportion were from Asia and Europe¹¹.

¹⁰ [Immigration system statistics data tables - GOV.UK](#) [accessed 01/01/2025]

¹¹ [Asylum statistics - House of Commons Library](#) [accessed 01/10/2025]

Figure 4: Region of origin of asylum applicants (main applicant only), by year of application 2001 to 2023



Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants only.

Source: Home Office, [Immigration Statistics, year ending June 2024](#), table Asy_D01

2.5 Public attitudes towards asylum

Public attitudes and feelings towards people seeking asylum and refugees can be complicated by a lack of accurate information available publicly. For example, in the previously mentioned British Future report, on average the population believed that 38% of all migrants are seeking asylum¹² (while the officially reported proportion was 7% for 2023), while one in five people in the UK think that asylum makes up more than 50% of UK migration.

The British Future report highlights that these people often confuse general migration with those seeking humanitarian protection. They found that when 7 out of 10 people surveyed think about migration, they are thinking about those seeking refugee status as opposed to those migrating for work, study, or to rejoin family. This rises to very high levels (84%) amongst those who strongly agree that migration is negative for the UK – labelled ‘migration sceptics’ in the British Future report.

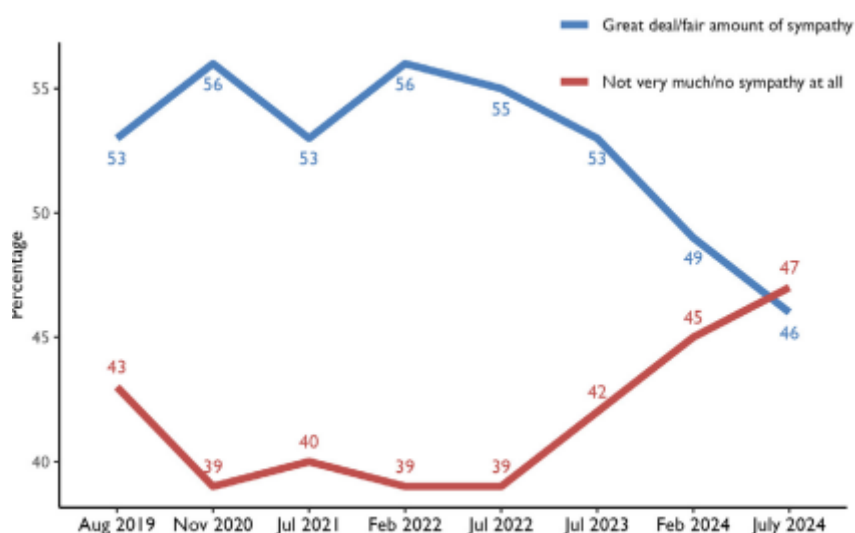
Public attitudes to migrants seeking humanitarian protection are extremely diverse and complex and the British Future report highlights some of the data and discussion around social and economic concerns of the communities’ receiving migrants, including compassion towards those seeking asylum and

¹² [British Future report, \[accessed 01/10/2025\]](#)

refugees, and concerns about the capacity of housing and public services needed for extra people in their area. These opinions and debates are shaped by social media and media information and misinformation, as well as a wide range of political opinion.

Compassion and sympathy towards asylum seekers and refugees is an important reason they are welcomed by society. However, evidence from the British Future Migration tracker (Figure 5) shows that levels of public sympathy towards people crossing the channel (as a subgroup of migrants who are likely to be very vulnerable and who predominantly go on to claim asylum) since 2019 have gradually reduced.

Figure 5: Tracking public sympathy for people crossing the Channel since 2019 Question: How much sympathy, if any, do you have for the migrants attempting to cross the English Channel by boat to come to Britain?



2.6 Homes for Ukraine scheme

Since the Ukraine visa schemes launched in March 2022, and as of 5 November 2024, 265,300 visas had been issued and 216,300 people had arrived through both the Ukraine Family and UKHR Sponsorship Schemes combined (32 arrivals per 10,000 UK population)¹³. The breakdown by scheme is shown in Table 3.

For Ukraine visa grant schemes, data is available by age and sex; most people (67 percent) are aged 18 to 64, and females make up a larger percentage (65 percent) (11).

¹³ [Share of successful asylum claims reach a 30-year high, new Home Office data reveal - Migration Observatory - The Migration Observatory](#) [accesses 01/01/2025]

Table 3: Breakdown of Homes for Ukraine Visas and Applications by Scheme

Scheme	Visas issued	Applications withdrawn	Applications refused	Applications awaiting conclusion
UKR Family Scheme	72,400	12,800	23,000	50
UKR Sponsorship Scheme	192,900	27,900	17,700	2,300
Totals	265,300	40,700	40,800	2,400

2.7 Afghan resettlement schemes

As of June 2024, around 16,530 individuals have arrived in the UK from Afghanistan and been resettled through the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP, 6,835 people) or the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS, 9,695 people)¹⁴.

Up to that point, the UK had granted Indefinite Leave to Remain to 12,874 individuals under the ARAP and ACRS schemes. 3,081 people were in transitional accommodation, with around half being children. 22,638 people had moved into permanent homes, with a small number still in temporary accommodation.

In these schemes there are more people aged 18 plus than under 18, but in some years the difference is marginal.

2.8 Hong Kong BNO scheme

UK government data shows that since the Hong Kong British Nationals Overseas (BNO) scheme's launch on 31 January 2021, 113,742 visas have been granted to BNO status holders and their dependents¹⁵. The scheme allows BNO status holders and their immediate family members to live, work, and study in the UK. This pathway also leads to permanent settlement and British citizenship.

¹⁴ [Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme \[accessed 01/02/2025\]](#)

¹⁵ [Hong Kong British Nationals \(Overseas\) Welcome Programme – information for local authorities - GOV.UK \[accessed 01/01/2025\]](#)

A report by British Future provides an age breakdown for people on the BNO Hong Kong visa grant scheme in 2023, whereby people aged between 35 and 54 made up over 60 percent of the cohort¹⁶.

3. Local and regional data

3.1 All asylum or refugees

There are 659,276 residents in Gloucestershire¹⁷. Of these, 2,395 are refugees or asylum seekers entitled to support across the Homes for Ukraine, Afghan Resettlement and Asylum systems. This equates to less than a half of one percent (0.36, or 36 people per 10,000 settled Gloucestershire residents). This percentage is broadly in line with rates across the South West at 0.34%, and less than the UK at 0.43%. These rates vary across the county by district, with the most in urban centers, ranging from 0.24% in Tewkesbury to 0.47% in Gloucester¹⁸.

The numbers entering the county through asylum, Homes for Ukraine, and other resettlement schemes in the period from January to September 2024 are available, however there is no overall breakdown of asylum seekers and refugees by protected characteristics, socio-economic status or other characteristics usually used to understand health inequalities within a subpopulation of the county. Where such breakdowns are available for individual routes (for example, Homes for Ukraine) they are presented below.

3.2 Asylum seekers in Gloucestershire

The Home Offices publishes a limited set of information about asylum seekers at the Local Authority level. This data shows that as of the end of September 2024, approximately 445 people and their dependents (excl unaccompanied children seeking asylum) were being supported in Gloucestershire under section 95,98 or 4 regulations¹⁹. This figure is a snapshot of asylum seekers being supported in-county at the end of September. The notes for that data clarify what is covered under those regulations: support for asylum seekers who have an asylum claim or appeal outstanding, or who had children in their household when their appeal rights were exhausted (95), temporary provision of accommodation for asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute (98), or support for those whose

¹⁶ [British Future](#) [accessed 01/01/2025]

¹⁷ Mid 2023 Population Estimates, ONS

¹⁸ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675c7e1a98302e574b91539f/regional-and-local-authority-dataset-sep-24.ods> accessed 29.01.2025

¹⁹ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675c7e1a98302e574b91539f/regional-and-local-authority-dataset-sep-24.ods> [accessed 29.01.2025]

application has been determined as refused but they are destitute and there are reasons temporarily preventing them from leaving the UK (4).

Operational data is available on numbers of asylum seekers locally, by broad age and gender, country of origin, and on the status of appeals. This data is used to inform service planning but these operational data are not designed to be shared publicly. Based on 3 months of data from 2024 - the patterns in the data suggest that the demographic representation of asylum seekers in Gloucestershire is similar to national data: the majority are adult males, a significant minority are adult females, and a small minority are children. It also highlights that nationalities of those arriving are diverse. the county supported people from all continents except Antarctica and Oceania including which high proportions from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Eritrea, but ranging as widely as Lithuania in the north, China in the east, Namibia in the south, and Honduras in the west. Finally, and again similar to national data above, a large majority of asylum seekers had their claim for asylum approved with a small proportion rejected.

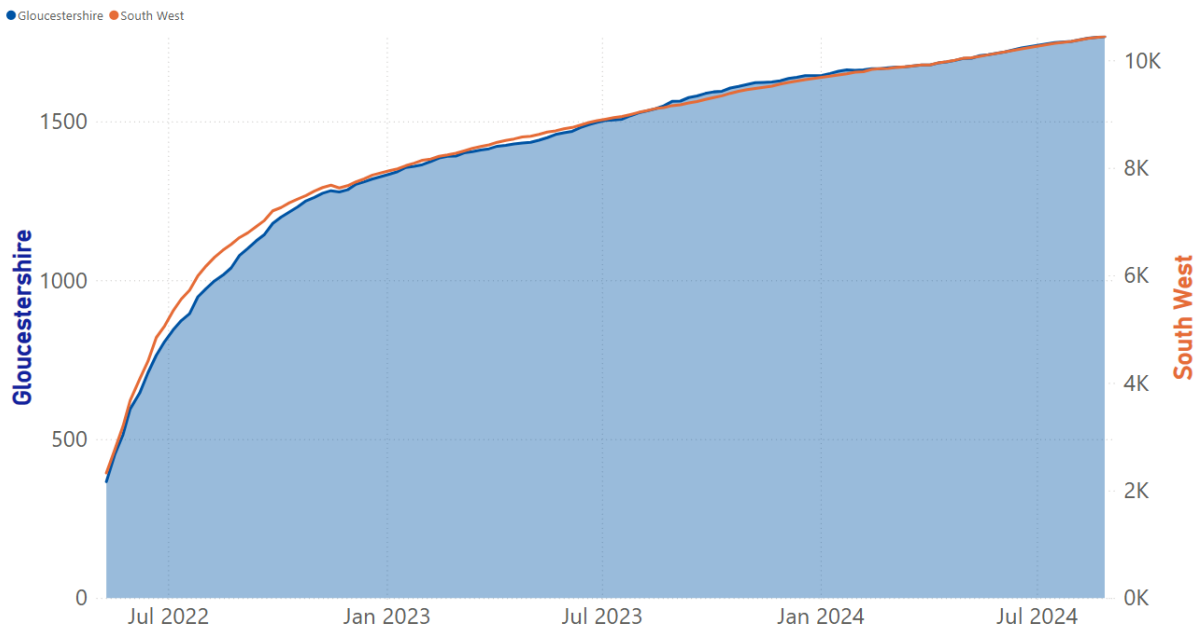
3.3 Gloucestershire Homes for Ukraine Data

Based on Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government data²⁰, by September 2024 Gloucestershire had welcomed approximately 1,776 Homes for Ukraine guests (26.9 arrivals per 10,000 usual Gloucestershire residents). This is similar to the comparable rate of 24 arrivals per 10,000 usual residents in the South West region.

Based on operational information, between 1 January and 30 September 2024, Gloucestershire residents welcomed 134 new arrivals on the Homes for Ukraine scheme, and helped 196 move on to secure private accommodation.

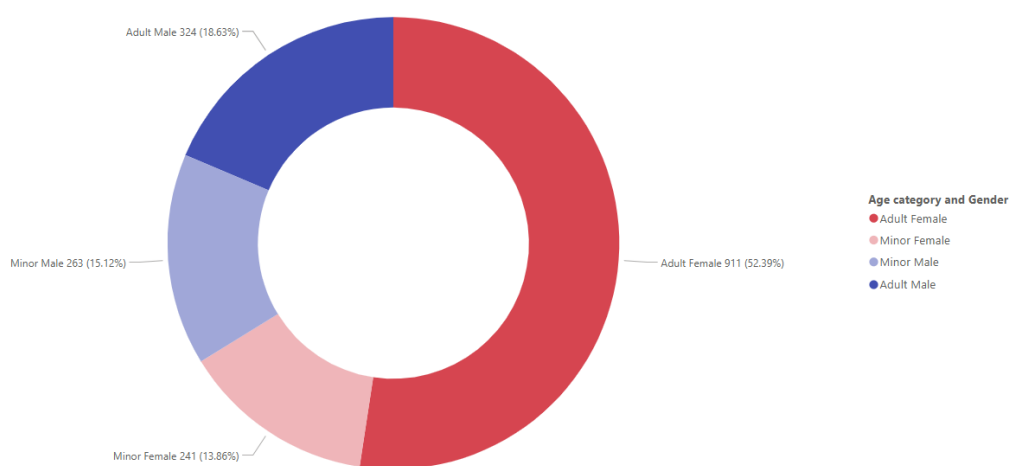
²⁰ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675c7e1a98302e574b91539f/regional-and-local-authority-dataset-sep-24.ods> accessed 29.01.2025

Figure 6: Cumulative arrivals on the Homes for Ukraine scheme for Gloucestershire (left axis, blue) and South-West England (right axis, orange).



Arrivals on the Homes for Ukraine scheme are mostly adult females at 52.39%, with 18.63% being adult male, and children making up the remaining 28.98% as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Age category and gender for all Gloucestershire Homes for Ukraine arrivals since the scheme opened in 2022, until November 2024.



3.4 Resettlement through other resettlement schemes

Since 2015, Gloucestershire has welcomed people under the VPRS and UKRS but there have been no new arrivals under these routes since January 2024. As at September 2024, 174 refugees are recorded in as in-county from one of the Afghan resettlement schemes (ACRS and ARAP)²¹. This is a snapshot figure published by the Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government as in-county at the end of September. As such it is not comparable to the Homes for Ukraine figure above which is the total number welcomed in the course of the scheme.

Arrivals on the resettlement schemes for which we have local operational data, there is a balanced split between adults and children, and between male and female. For both UKRS and the Afghan resettlement schemes roughly a quarter fall into each category (i.e adult males, adult females, male children, and female children).

4. What information is not available

As shown above, there is data on the numbers entering Gloucestershire through asylum and resettlement schemes in the period from January to September 2024 and some breakdowns by gender. Importantly, on arrival it is not likely that organisations would be able to collate accurate information that we would consider as standard for the settled population, and which are routinely used to understand and respond to need and plan services. This information might include their assets and needs for medical and social care (like records around medical history and disability), education, skills and qualifications, previous employment histories, and other wider personal assets and needs (for example, their level of fluency in English).

Importantly, in the UK we routinely collect information on what are called 'protected characteristics', and particularly age, gender, disability and ethnicity. However, there is no systematic, accurate and routinely available data on these characteristics for refugees and asylum seekers when they first arrive. This means it is highly challenging to assess health and other social inequalities which might vary by these and other characteristics including occupational or educational socio-economic status, religion, or country of origin.

5. Conclusion

This section highlights some of the national and local data about people seeking humanitarian support in Gloucestershire and the UK more widely. This data is

²¹ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675c7e1a98302e574b91539f/regional-and-local-authority-dataset-sep-24.ods> accessed 29.01.2025

critical for those working and providing support for refugees and asylum seekers in Gloucestershire to understand the needs and respond to them. This section also shows that data is also powerful for understanding societal attitudes to refugees.

What is counted, counts. There are significant gaps in the data for refugees and asylum seekers. As a result, unlike the settled population of Gloucestershire, we often do not understand the wider demographics of refugees and asylum seekers. These might be characteristics that we take for granted when we are planning care for the settled population, like whether they have any disabilities, special educational needs, or their medical histories. Similarly, as reflected in the 2024 Director of Public Health Annual Report, we would be able to support people better to settle them into life in Gloucestershire if we consistently knew levels of English language and other skills amongst migrants. Therefore, we should continue to improve the data that we collect about refugees and asylum seekers, so that we can support them better to most easily settle into life in the UK.