



National Audit Office

The UK's independent public spending
watchdog

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Reference FOI-1674
Date 20 December 2023

Dear

ASYLUM APPLICATIONS PROCESSED BY THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT

Thank you for your request of 22 November 2023 for information about the asylum applications which have been processed by the immigration department over the last 3-5 years. We have considered your request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

We can confirm that we do not hold information in the scope of your request.

The Home Office is the government department responsible for asylum and visa applications, they routinely publish information that may help answer some of your questions. To help you in finding this, we have provided some useful links and information in the attached document to this letter in response to each of your questions.

You may also wish to contact the Home Office directly, who might be able to help you with any other information you seek. Details of how to contact them can be found on their homepage here: [Home Office - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk).

Your original request has been reproduced in **Annex A** for your reference. **Annex B** sets out the steps you may wish to take if you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your request for information under FOIA.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely,

NAO FOI Team

Annex A

Request for information: Immigration processing

(Your request is in italics below)

“Many people are concerned at the inability of the immigration department to process asylum applications, which we believe is exacerbated by their working from home and possible family connections to would be applicants or bias towards not wanting to disallow any application.

Can you please provide details on: -

- 1. Number of civil servants working in the immigrant department*
- 2. Average length of time it takes to process an immigration application (by type - asylum, work, join family etc)*
- 3. Number of immigration applications processed per annum over the last 3-5 years (split between regular, illegal, asylum, skills shortage, joining family etc)*
- 4. Number of outstanding applications at the start and end of each year for the past 3-5 years (IE opening number, plus new ones, less processed, closing balance)*
- 5. Number of amnesties granted over past 3-5 years and reason (eg inability to process, time barred to gocen leave to work etc)*
- 6. Number of civil servants by ethnic origin working in the immigration department*
- 7. Immigration applications granted by type (eg family, skills shortage).”*

Annex B

Statement of Policy

Our policy is to respond to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as helpfully and promptly as possible, having regard to the principles set out in the Act. I therefore hope you are happy with the way we have handled your request. If you are not, then you should take the following steps.

In the first instance, within 40 working days, write to the National Audit Office Freedom of Information (FOI) Team at FOI@nao.org.uk or by post to:

FOI Team, Green 2, National Audit Office, 157-197 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 9SP

The Head of FOI will arrange a review, which will be conducted by a senior member of staff who was not involved in decisions relating to your original request. Once the review has been completed, we will write informing you of the outcome.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The primary way of escalating your concerns to the Information Commissioner is at: <https://ico.org.uk/foicomplaints>

Alternatively, you can contact the ICO at <https://ico.org.uk/> or Information Commissioner's Office Wycliffe House Water Lane Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF.