

Asylum Numbers Quiz (2018)

- In 2015 the UK pledged to bring 20,000 Syrians to the UK under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. So far they are roughly on target, but how many Syrians are refugees in other Middle Eastern countries?**
a. 100,000 b. 500,000 c. 2.3 million d. 5.6 million
- In Eritrea, which is one of the biggest refugee producing countries, there is compulsory military service. What is the maximum length of time you can be forced to serve?**
a. 2 years b. 6 years c. 12 years d. 22 years
- In 2017 there were around 650,000 asylum applications in the EU. What percentage came to the UK?**
a. 4% b. 7% c. 10% d. 15%
- In 2017, 21.3 million non-EA nationals came to the UK for various reasons. What percentage of them were seeking asylum here?**
a. 0.1% b. 0.5% c. 1% d. 5%
- While awaiting a decision on their asylum claim, asylum seekers are given a room in a shared house with utility bills paid, and £37.75 a week benefits to live on. How much of this does the Home Office consider sufficient to cover weekly travel?**
a. £1 b. £3 c. £5 d. £8
- How long can asylum seekers be kept in immigration detention centres?**
a. 6 months b. One year c. 3 years d. Indefinitely
- What is the cost of keeping an asylum seeker in Colnbrook Detention Centre for a year?**
a. £10,000 b. £30,000 c. £50,000 d. £70,000
- In 2010 the UK government pledged to end the detention of children. From July 2017 to June 2018, how many children were held in immigration detention?**
a. None b. 13 c. 81 d. 299
- In the year to June 2018, what percentage of initial asylum decisions in the UK were refusals?**
a. 17% b. 31% c. 52% d. 71%
- Frontex, the European agencies network to secure Europe's borders, has 50 helicopters patrolling the Mediterranean. How many of them are used for search and rescue missions?**
a. None b. 10 c. 25 d. All of them

How did you do? If you got eight or more, that's pretty good. Less than four... maybe you need to read everything on this website!

Answers on the page below...

Answers to the Asylum Numbers Quiz

1. **d. 5.6 million** Syrians are living in camps, temporary shelters or whatever they can find in Turkey (3.5 million), Lebanon (1 million – 20% of the population), Jordan (670,000), Iraq (249,000) and Egypt (130,000). That's 275 times as many as will come to the UK by 2020. Although 20,000 is better than nothing, Canada, by contrast, managed to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees in less than *four months* between 4 November 2015 and 29 February 2016.
2. **d. 22 years** In addition to the terrible persecution for their faith suffered by Eritrean Christians, young people can be called up to the military at age 18 – and may not be released until they are 40. Military service in Eritrea is extremely harsh, with frequent reports of beatings and rapes.
3. **a. 4%**. The UK is one of the hardest EU countries to reach because we are surrounded by sea and far away from the entry points in Greece, Italy and Spain. The UK has no refugee visa system, so refugees that want to get here often have to use false documents and undertake dangerous journeys stowed away in ships or lorries. The UK government has invested many millions of pounds on additional security such as patrol vessels in the channel and razor wire fences at Calais.

By contrast Germany, which had already taken over a million refugees since 2015, had 168,000 applications for asylum last year – five times as many as the UK.

4. **a. 0.1%** When people talk about curbing immigration numbers, should refugees even enter into the question, given that the numbers are so tiny? Most non-EA immigrants come on visit visas, work visas or study visas. Stopping refugees coming would make virtually no difference to overall migration.
5. **b. £3** When the amount of weekly benefits (then £36.95) that asylum seekers are entitled to was legally challenged as being not enough to live on, the judge ordered the Home Office to review its policy. It did, and concluded that it really *was* enough. The amount allocated for weekly travel was £3. In most UK cities that does not cover even one return journey on a bus. German asylum benefits used to be the same as those in the UK. When *their* courts ordered it to be reconsidered, the rate was immediately increased by 50%.

The UK government increased asylum benefits by 80p in January 2018. That is just the second small rise since 2011, when it was frozen at £36.62 a week. Before that the rate was set at 70% of Job Seekers' Allowance. Now it represents just 51.6% of JSA for over 25s.

6. **d. Indefinitely** The UK is the only country in the EU that does not have a limit on the length of immigration detention. In 2017 about 78% of detainees were held for less than two months, around 3% were held for 6-12 months, and 1% for over a year. About 47% of detainees are refused asylum seekers. Only a tiny percentage of these have committed any sort of criminal offence while in the UK.
7. **d. £70,000** The UK detains more asylum seekers than almost any other European country. 12,800 – around 47% of all detainees held at some point in an Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) in 2017 – were refused asylum seekers. The vast majority were there because the Home Office intended to remove them from the UK. Very few had committed any sort of criminal offence. More than half are eventually released. At an average cost of £86 per night, it makes no economic sense to detain asylum seekers without good cause.
8. **c. 81** Although the detention of children has reduced significantly, families can still be held for up to 72 hours in Tinsley House IRC near Gatwick or Dungavel IRC in Scotland. After that, ministerial

permission must be sought to extend the stay for up to a week. In addition there may well be age-disputed minors in detention, which the Home Office deem to be over 18. These will not appear in the figures.

- 9. d. 71%** There is no longer a target time for making an initial decision, and the average time has increased significantly over the last few years, mainly due to a shortage of trained caseworkers. By the end of June 2018, 10,707 asylum seekers had been waiting for more than six months for an initial decision.

Of the 71% whose claims were refused, 38% of those decisions were subsequently overturned at appeal stage, at huge cost to the taxpayer. It clearly demonstrates that caseworkers are getting a significant number of decisions wrong. It also leaves genuine refugees in limbo for months or years, unable to work and contribute to society.

- 10. a. None** Frontex's work is security and border control, keeping people out of the EU, not rescuing them. Their interventions in the Mediterranean are to return people back to where they came from. In 2017, the budget of Frontex was 281 million Euros.

National governments may take a different approach. The Italian *Mare Nostrum* operation saved thousands of lives in the Mediterranean through its rescue missions, but now the new Italian government is taking a hardline approach. There have also been independent rescue missions, but these have now been prevented from operating. There have been no independent rescue ships operating since 26 August 2018. This now means that those risking the crossing are in greater danger. In 2017 drownings compared to safe arrivals in Italy was 2.3%. In 2018 the figure is 5.2%.