Glossary – References

● Home Secretaries

See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Home_Secretary

Theresa May – 12 May 2010 – 13 July 2016
Amber Rudd – 13 July 2016 – 29 April 2018
Sajid Javid – 30 April 2018 – 24 July 2019
Priti Patel – 24 July 2019 – 6 September 2022
Suella Braverman – 6 September 2022 – 19 October 2022
Grant Shapps – 19 October 2022 – 25 October 2022
Suella Braverman – 25 October 2022 – 13 November 2023
James Clerverly – 13 November 2023

● Key Policies and References

Take back control
"Go Home" vans
The "tens of thousands" target
The "hostile environment Policy"
The Windrush Generation – The Windrush Scandal
"Stop the Boats"
The Illegal Migration Act 2023
The Rwanda Asylum Plan

A general overview

Text 1 - A new wave of mass migration has begun

What does it mean for rich-world economies?

The Economist, May 28th 2023

Last year 1.2m people moved to Britain—almost certainly the most ever. Net migration (ie, immigrants minus emigrants) to Australia is currently twice the rate before the covid-19 pandemic. Spain's equivalent figure recently hit an all-time high. Nearly 1.4m people on net are expected to move to America this year, one-third more than before the pandemic. In 2022 net migration to Canada was more than double the previous record. In Germany it was even higher than during the "migration crisis" of 2015. The rich world as a whole is in the middle of an unprecedented migration boom. Its foreign-born population is rising faster than at any point in history (see chart 1).

The Economist

What does this mean for the global economy? Not long ago it seemed as if many wealthy countries had turned decisively against mass migration. In 2016 Britons voted for Brexit and then Americans for Donald Trump—both political projects had a strong anti-migrant streak. In the global wave of populism that followed, politicians from Australia to Hungary promised to crack down on migration. Then covid closed borders. Migration came to a standstill, or even went into reverse, as people decided to return home. Between 2019 and 2021 the populations of Kuwait and Singapore, countries that typically receive lots of migrants, fell by 4%. In 2021 the number of emigrants from Australia exceeded the number of immigrants to the country for the first time since the 1940s.

In some places the surge in migration has brought back a sense of normality. Singapore's foreign workforce recently returned to its pre-pandemic level. In other places it feels like a drastic change. Consider Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada's second-smallest province by population. Long home to people of Irish-Catholic descent—with accents to match—net migration to the province is running at more than 20 times the pre-pandemic norm. St John's, the capital, once fairly homogeneous, feels more like Toronto every time you visit. Heart's Delight, a small rural village, now has a Ukrainian bakery, Borsch. The provincial government is setting up an office in Bangalore to help recruit nurses.

The new arrivals in Newfoundland are a microcosm of those elsewhere in the rich world. Many hundreds of Ukrainians have arrived on the island—a tiny share of the millions who have left the country since Russia invaded. Indians and Nigerians also appear to be on the move in large numbers. Many speak English. And many already have familial connections in richer countries, in particular Britain and Canada.

Some of the surge in migration is because people are making up for lost time. Many migrants acquired visas in 2020 or 2021, but only made the trip once covid restrictions loosened. Yet the rich world's foreign-born population—at well over 100m—is now above its pre-crisis trend, suggesting something else is going on.

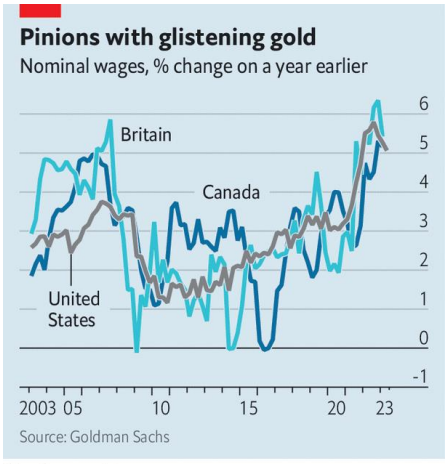
The nature of the post-pandemic economy is a big part of the explanation. Unemployment in the rich world, at 4.8%, has not been so low in decades. Bosses are desperate for staff, with vacancies near an all-time high. People from abroad thus have good reason to travel. Currency movements may be another factor. A British pound buys more than 100 Indian rupees, compared with 90 in 2019. Since the beginning of 2021 the average emerging-market currency has depreciated by about 4% against the dollar. This enables migrants to send more money home than before.

Many governments are also trying to attract more people. Canada has an explicit target to welcome 1.5m new residents in 2023-25. Germany and India recently signed an agreement to allow more Indians to work and study in Germany. Australia is increasing the time period some students can work after graduating from two to four years. Britain has welcomed Hong Kongers looking to flee Chinese oppression—well over 100,000 have arrived. Many countries have made it easy for Ukrainians to enter. Even those countries hitherto hostile to migration, including Japan and South Korea, are looking more favourably on outsiders as they seek to counteract the impact of ageing populations.

Economies that welcome lots of migrants tend to benefit in the long run. Just look at America. Foreign folk bring new ideas with them. In America immigrants are about 80% likelier than native-born folk to found a firm, according to a recent paper by Pierre Azoulay of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and colleagues. Research suggests that migrants also help to build trading and investment links between their home country and the receiving one. A slug of young workers also helps generate more tax revenue.

Your people shall be my people

Some economists also hope that the wave of migration will have more immediate benefits. "High immigration is helpful for the Fed as it tries to cool down the labour market and slow down inflation," says Torsten Slok of Apollo Global Management, an asset manager, expressing a common view. Such arguments may be a little too optimistic. Having more people does increase the supply of labour, which all else equal reduces wage growth. But the effect is pretty small. There is little sign that the countries receiving the most migrants have the loosest labour markets. In Canada, for instance, pay is still rising by about 5% year on year (see chart 2).



The Economist

Migrants also increase demand for goods and services, which can raise inflation. In Britain new arrivals appear to be pushing up rents in London, which already had a constrained supply of housing. A similar effect is noticeable in Australia. Estimates published by Goldman Sachs, a bank, imply that Australia's current annualised net migration rate of 500,000 people is raising rents by around 5%. Higher rents feed into a higher overall consumer-price index. Demand from migrants may also explain why, despite higher mortgage rates, house prices in many rich countries have not fallen by much.

Over the next year or so migration may come down a bit. The post-pandemic "catch-up" will end; rich-world labour markets are slowly loosening. Yet there is reason to believe that historically high levels of new arrivals will remain raised for some time. More welcoming government policy is one factor. More important, migration today begets migration tomorrow, as new arrivals bring over children and partners. Before long the rich world's anti-immigrant turn of the late 2010s will seem like an aberration.

Text 2 - Europe is stuck in a need-hate relationship with migrants

Alas, the EU is facing a fresh migration crisis

Image: peter schrank

Europe | Charlemagne ***The Economist,*** Oct 4th 2023

A surge of small boats is arriving on Europe's southern shores, brimming with migrants willing to work, for example doing low-skilled jobs in construction or caring for the elderly. In entirely separate news, Europe has a mounting shortage of workers, especially in low-skilled sectors like construction or taking care of the elderly. To some, that may suggest a solution about as complex as slotting the last piece into a jigsaw puzzle. Alas, migration is not amenable to such reasoning. Countries have borders for good reasons; economic needs are often subservient to political imperatives. Still, the end result is that Europe is nuttily deploying barbed-wire fences and "workers wanted" banners at the same time. Meanwhile, thousands are drowning as they try to reach a place that may soon realise it needs them.

So migration is, alas, back at the forefront of EU politics. The bloc is on track to receive over 1m asylum applications this year, the most since a rush of arrivals in 2015-16. Back then, in the midst of turmoil in Afghanistan and Syria, the mood was fairly welcoming: Angela Merkel, Germany's chancellor, had pronounced that in the wake of a large inflow of migrants "*Wir schaffen das*"—we can manage this. Now Europe no longer feels it can *schaffen* quite as much. Whether liberal or conservative, northern or southern, the feeling is of a continent at its limits. Millions of Ukrainians fleeing war into the EU have strained resources—and sympathy—that might have gone to those from farther afield. Countries that took lots of migrants in 2015 have not fared well: Sweden is calling in the army to help deal with a surge in gang violence, much of it related to its previously porous border. Migrant-hating populists have fared well there, as they also have in Germany.

If one thing unites politicians in the EU, it is the certainty that a botched policy on migration will cost them their jobs. The continent anyway suffers from old divisions. Southern European countries like Italy and Greece complain they bear the brunt of EU rules which force countries where migrants arrive to bear the expense of processing them, even though most migrants

want to end up in places like Germany and Sweden. Those rich countries think southerners are flouting the rules by failing to intercept migrants as they set foot in the EU. One solution mooted for years is a pan-European grand bargain, whereby countries beyond the front lines of migration agree to take in some of the huddled masses. Such a deal was struck in June, and continues to be haggled over. But under the weight of new arrivals it seems to be wobbling. Another element was an agreement with Tunisia, which many migrants from across the world are using as a stepping stone before crossing the Mediterranean into Europe. The autocratic regime there was in essence to be bribed with EU cash to deter smugglers using its shores as a launchpad. A similar deal with Turkey helped stem the flow in 2016. But that too is not working well.

A meeting of EU leaders on October 6th, as *The Economist* goes to the printed press, was meant to cool mounting tempers. For there have been spats aplenty of late. Italy is fuming at Germany about its government funding for NGOs that succour small boats in the Mediterranean. What in Berlin is deemed a "moral duty" to save imperilled migrants is decried in Rome as a "pull factor" for asylum-seekers; a politician in Giorgia Meloni's hard-right ruling coalition has compared the arrival of migrants to the German invasions of the second world war. Schengen, the passport-free travel area, is shrinking by the day as country after country brings back border controls. On September 27th Germany reimposed some passport checks on Poland, in part as a result of authorities there having been busted selling visas in Asia and Africa.

Nobody quite knows why the migrant numbers are surging. Some are fleeing persecution, though most arriving in Europe are ultimately deemed to want to move for economic reasons and will thus be denied refugee status. Yet economic migrants are just what many countries in the EU are looking for, amid tight labour markets and dire demographic projections. Italy has announced it will issue 425,000 work permits to non-EU nationals by 2025. Germany needs 400,000 foreign workers a year as baby-boomers retire; as it happens, that is roughly the probable number of this year's asylum requests. Both Greece and France are mulling ways to regularise undocumented migrants willing to work in industries struggling to recruit. Even central Europe, long reluctant to accept migrants, is bringing in lots. Hail an Uber in Warsaw these days and it is likely to be driven by an Uzbek or a Turk.

Workers of the world, migrate

It does not naturally follow that a shortage of job applicants in Europe would best be filled by whoever is willing to pay smugglers to get them there. But surely better ways exist to reconcile the hole in European labour markets with the bulge of migrants willing to fill it. "Europe is already in the midst of a global battle for labour that will only get fiercer as time passes," says Michael Spindelegger, head of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development in Vienna. America, one of Europe's rivals for willing hands, has a "green-card lottery" system to allow in over 50,000 people a year to work legally. Millions apply—and may thus be dissuaded from trying their chance illegally, though plenty of others do. Opening such legal channels in Europe would at least provide competition for the smugglers preying on human misery.

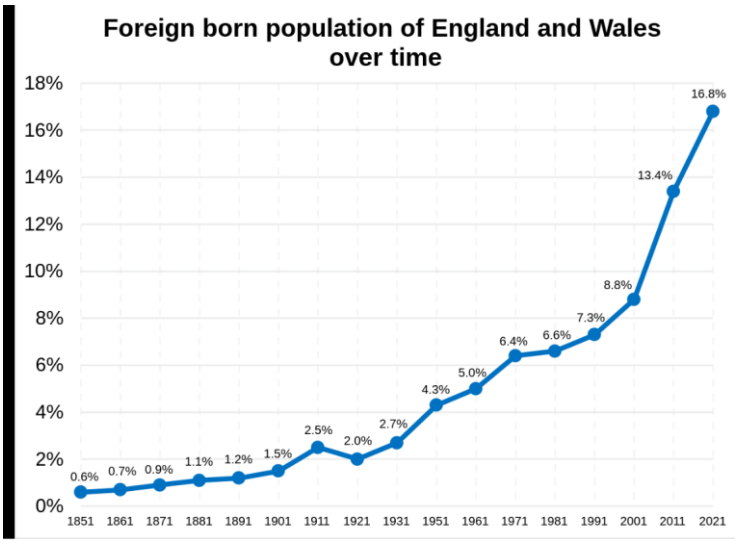
A dose of such self-interested generosity would allow the EU to emerge from its migrant-repelling with its moral credentials (nearly) intact. Meanwhile the situation is the worst of all worlds, with little prospect for improvement. So far this year at least 2,500 people have died or are missing having tried to cross the Mediterranean. That is a stain on a continent that likes to consider itself a force for good in the world. In its battle against illegal migration, Europe should not forget that tomorrow it may be politely inviting in much the same people it is today letting drown.

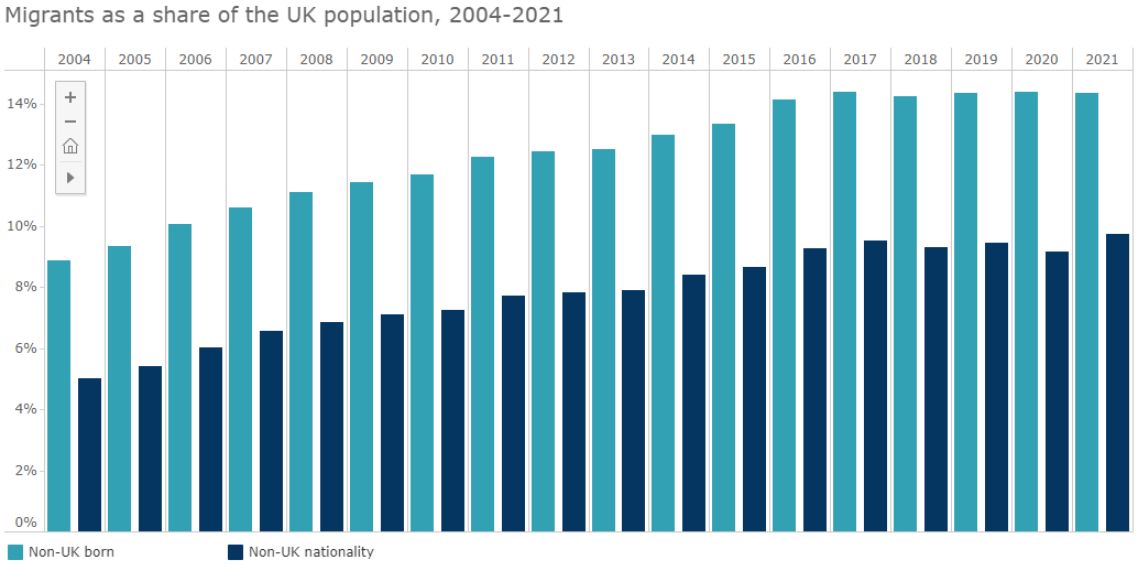
The United-Kingdom

Key Figures and data to be found here:

THE MIGRATION OBSERVATORY
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

- **Migrants in the UK: An Overview- 02 AUG 2022**
https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migrants-in-the-uk-an-overview/
- **E.U. migration to and from the UK – 20 NOV 2023**
https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/eu-migration-to-and-from-the-uk/
- **Migrants in the U.K. labour market: an overview**
https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migrants-in-the-uk-labour-market-an-overview/



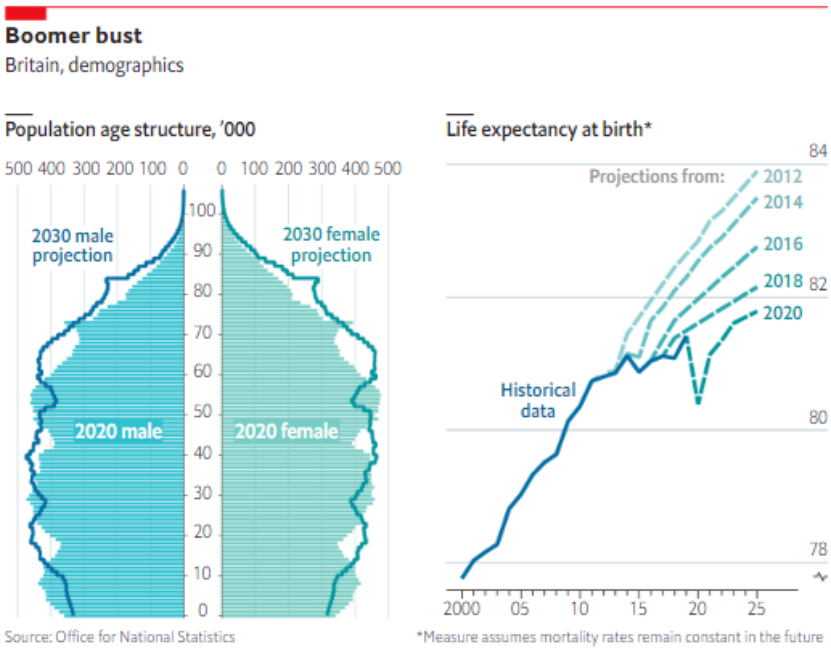


Source: 2004-2020: ONS Population by Country of Birth and Nationality, Table 1.1. and 1.2.; 2021: Migration Observatory analysis of Annual Population Survey, 2021.

Text 3 - Why Britain needs more migrants

It cannot fix its population-growth slowdown without them

Graphic detail | Daily chart***The Economist,*** Jan 14th 2022



Britain's population statistics paint a stark picture. The fertility rate, which can be thought of as the number of children a woman will have during her lifetime, stands at just 1.65. Life-expectancy projections are increasingly pessimistic, too. Interim data published on January 12th by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimate that the population will increase by just 3% in the decade to 2030. In the decade to 2020 it grew by 7%. Meanwhile, the number of people aged 85 and over will rise sharply (see chart). In mid-2020 fewer than 2m were in that age bracket. Projections suggest that by 2045 the figure will be more than 3m.

As in other rich countries, women are having fewer children: after the sharp peak that followed the second world war, fertility rates have declined. And the big baby-boom generation is affecting demographics in Britain and beyond. In Japan, the *dankai no sedai*—those born between 1947 and 1949—have contributed to the country's rapid ageing: almost 30% of the population are aged over 65. The slowdown in life-expectancy increase is also weighing on Britain's population growth. Projections made since 2012 (see chart 2) have steadily revised down period life expectancy at birth (a measure of the average number of years people will live beyond their current age). For someone born in 2025, the latest projected life expectancy is 2.1 years lower than the projection made in 2012.

This slow-growing, ageing population will come at a cost. The number of adults of pensionable age for every 1,000 working-age people is projected to increase from 280 in mid-2020 to 341 by mid-2045. Other rich countries face even worse ratios. The European Union average for the same measure is projected to increase from 340 in 2019 to 590 in 2070.

However reluctant they may be to do so, countries with ageing populations will have to look beyond their borders. Migration has been a key source of population growth in Britain for decades but Ridhi Kashyap, a demographer at the University of Oxford, believes it will play an even more important role in the future. "Given the grim mortality scenario and the revised downward estimates for fertility, migration is just becoming more salient," she says. All of this means anti-immigration governments are storing up trouble for the future.

Text 4 - Migration to Britain hits a record high – Why?

The country is remarkably comfortable with it. So far

The Economist, May 25th 2023

Nearly seven years have passed since the Brexit referendum in 2016. The desire to "take back control" of Britain's borders and end free movement of labour from the European Union was what motivated many to vote Leave. In the three years before 2016, long-term net migration—immigration minus emigration—had averaged 285,000. Few would have expected that after Brexit still more people would come. Yet in 2022 net migration, according to eagerly awaited official statistics published on May 25th, rose to 606,000, a record for a calendar year. Perhaps surprisingly, Britons appear pretty comfortable with higher numbers, even if their politicians don't.

Since Britain formally left the E.U. in January 2020, non-EU nationals have accounted for nearly all net migration. Four-fifths of the 1.2m people who arrived in Britain in 2022 were citizens of non-EU countries, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The contribution of EU citizens, which was nearly half of net migration between 2010 and 2019, has fallen steadily since the Brexit vote. It turned net-negative in 2020, and last year departures exceeded arrivals by 51,000. The comings and goings of Britons are a rounding error (on balance, 4,000 left last year).

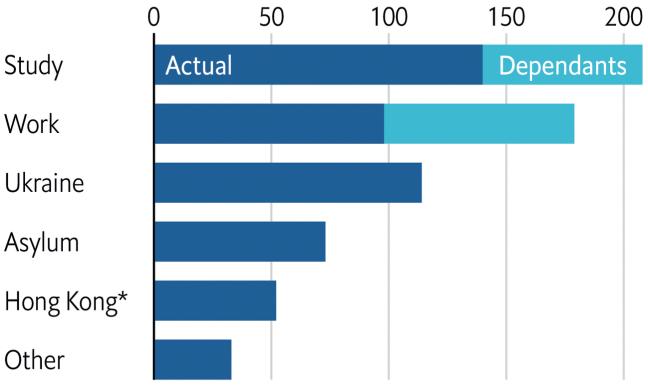
There are three reasons for the steep increase in non-EU migrants. **First**, after studying remotely during the pandemic, **students have returned in droves.** They account for one-third of last year's non-EU figure. But they tend not to stay. Although they can apply for a two-year visa on graduation, the ONS reckons that about three-fifths then leave. Universities UK, a representative body, estimates that international students contribute about £40bn ($49bn) a year to the economy (counting indirect effects as well as merely their fees); they also cross-subsidise British students.

The government is now concerned that some are taking advantage of its desire to attract students. Last year 85,000 people arrived as dependants of students, double the number in 2021. On May 23rd Suella Braverman, the home secretary, announced that students, unless on post-graduate research courses, may no longer sponsor dependants from January 2024 and promised to "clamp down on unscrupulous education agents".

For toil and from trouble

Britain, net long-term migration of non-EU nationals, 2022, '000

By reason



Source: ONS *British nationals overseas visa route

The Economist

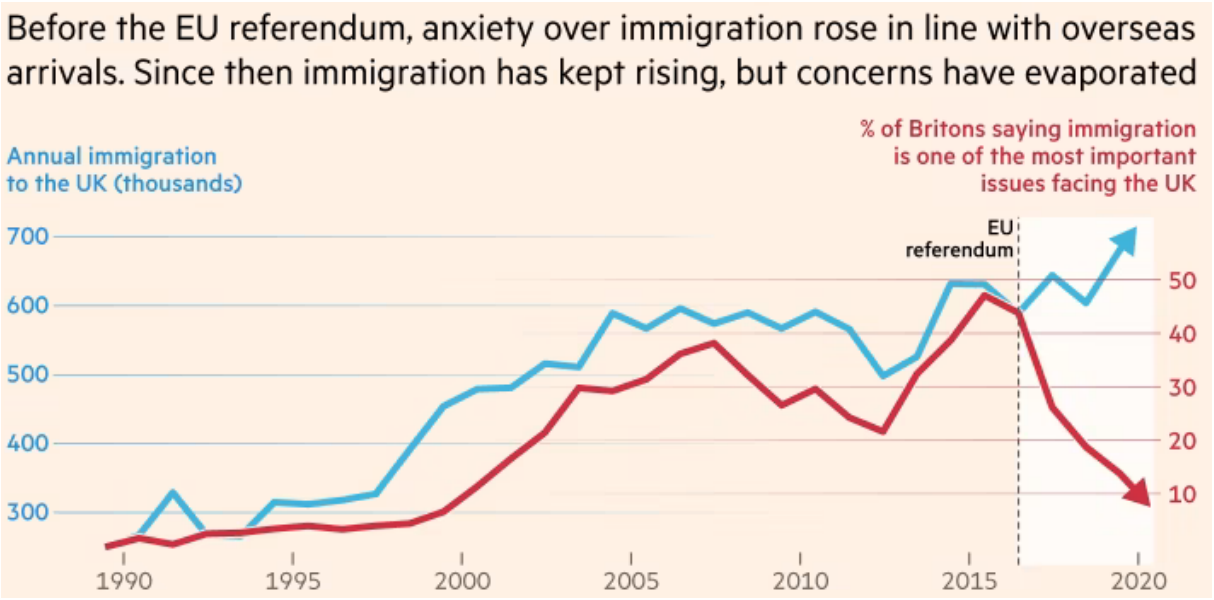
Second, **immigration has been boosted by threats to life and liberty abroad.** A total of 114,000 Ukrainians arrived in Britain last year on special visas after Russia's invasion in February 2022. Around 90,000 **Hong Kongers** have settled over the past two years. And **73,000 asylum-seekers**—often arriving by clandestine means, such as in small boats crossing the English Channel—have been included for the first time. The ONS assumes that all these groups will stay for 12 months or more, though some may leave sooner.

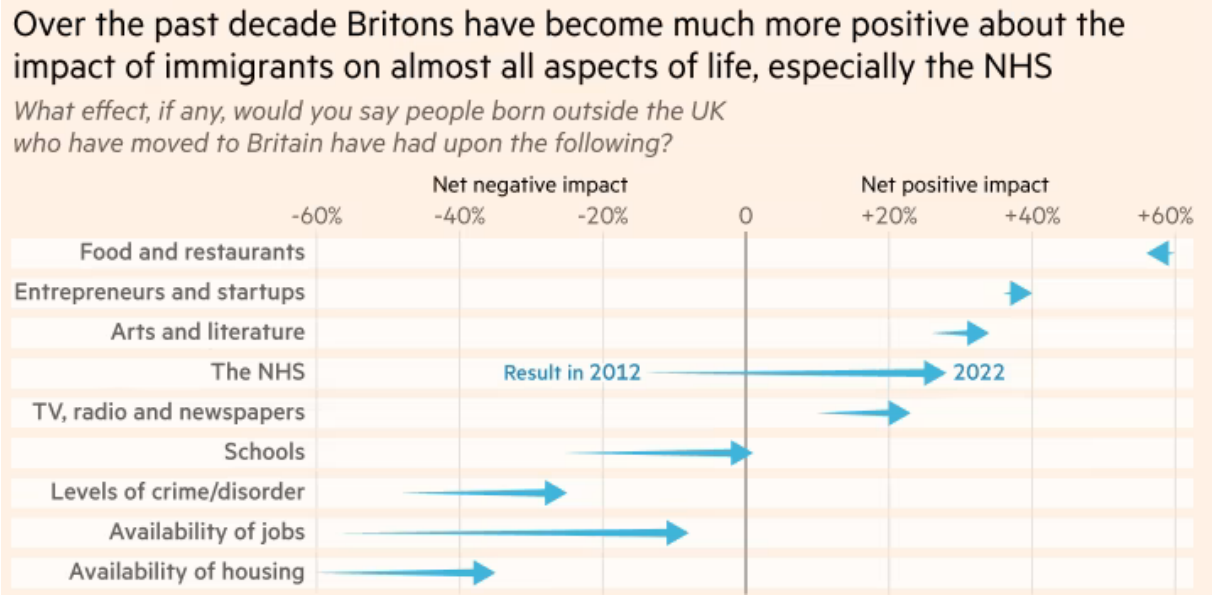
Third, **Britain's new "points-based" workplace visa has buoyed the numbers. A net 98,000 people arrived to work last year, plus 81,000 dependants. Many have jobs in health and social care, where staff are in short supply.** The National Health Service has 40,000 vacancies for nurses, or one post in ten. (…)

Meanwhile the figure of 606,000 will be fodder for the tabloids and a headache for ministers. The Conservative Party's general-election manifesto in 2019 promised that "overall numbers [of migrants] will come down". Rishi Sunak, the prime minister since October, has hitherto focused on stopping people crossing the Channel in small boats. More recently he has said that overall migration numbers need to fall, but not by how much.

Voters seem less bothered than politicians. Britons have become considerably more welcoming in recent years. Just 21% of respondents to the British Social Attitudes survey in 2013 thought immigrants were good for the economy. In 2021 50% did. Nearly half said they "enriched" Britain's cultural life, up from 27% in 2013. That shift has put Britain among the most pro-migrant countries in the long-running and widely used World Values Survey, according to Bobby Duffy of King's College London.

For most, inflation, the precarious state of the economy and health care are bigger problems. With an ageing population and a tight labour market, it makes sense to admit more foreigners. Britons may come to accept that.





From: Sebastian Payne, "Brexit voters may not be happy with what immigration 'control' looks like", *The Financial Times*, 26 April 2022.

Text 5 - Five Tory PMs and immigration: how numbers – and rhetoric – changed

As ONS data reveals overall net immigration to UK continues to rise, how has Tory leaders' language changed since 2010?

Carmen Aguilar García, Seán Clarke *and* Ben Quinn
The Guardian, Thu 25 May 2023

New figures showing net migration to the UK last year increased to a record level of more than 600,000 have been seized on as the latest example of broken Tory pledges in an area where PMs come under relentless rightwing pressure.

David Cameron, May 2010

Heading into the 2010 general election, the opposition leader promised "to limit net immigration to 'tens of thousands' per year" rather than the hundreds of thousands. He told the BBC:

I don't think that's unrealistic; that's the sort of figure there was in the 1990s and I think we should see that again.

This was a tall order given that Cameron was also committed to staying in the EU and as the referendum approached he was obliged to seek an "emergency brake" on free movement from Brussels.

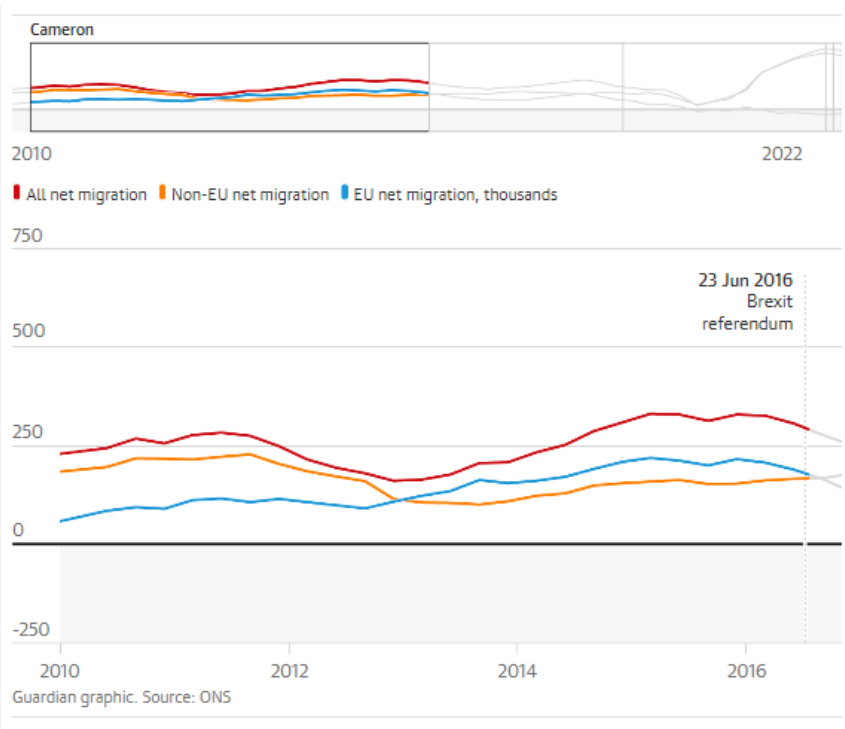
David Cameron, April 2011 and April 2015

A year after winning office, Cameron emphasised the "tens of thousands" pledge, promising to achieve it by the next election. In a 2011 speech, he said:

… with us, our borders will be under control and immigration will be at levels our country can manage. No ifs. No buts. That's a promise we made to the British people. And it's a promise we are keeping.

Nevertheless, the number was up to 379,000 by the time voters went to the polls. In April 2015, the next Tory manifesto repeated the previous pledge:

Our action has not been enough to cut annual net migration to the tens of thousands. That ambition remains the right one.



Campaigning for 'Brexit' before the June 2016 referendum

Promises by pro-Leave Tory MPs and ministers that the UK would be able to "take back control" of a range of powers including immigration played a crucial role in the 2016 referendum.

On the campaign trail, Boris Johnson said:

At the moment we are stuck in the EU so it [the immigration policy] is not possible, but post-23 June that option will be on the table. What we want to do is take back control over immigration and have more fairness over the way it is done.

Theresa May, July 2016–July 2019

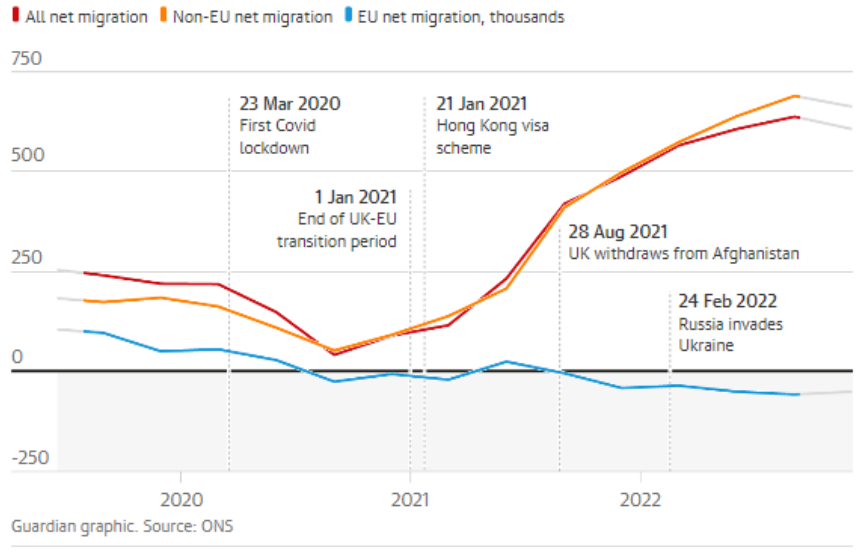
After becoming prime minister, the new Tory leader's main task was to negotiate Britain's withdrawal from the EU. May quickly

made it clear she did not want Britain to remain in the single market, which meant freedom of movement, going on to pledge in her general election manifesto:
We do want to bring net migration down to sustainable levels. We believe that is the tens of thousands.

Boris Johnson, July 2019 – September 2022
Having ousted May with a promise to "get Brexit done", Johnson was no more keen than May to restore free movement.
While dispensing with promises to bring net migration into the tens of thousands, he pivoted to a new pledge for overall numbers to fall from a level of about 245,000. The 2019 manifesto promised:

There will be fewer lower-skilled migrants and overall numbers will come down. And we will ensure that the British people are always in control.

It was also with Johnson, however, that the rhetorical focus began to shift from overall migration to "cracking down" on irregular migration.



Liz Truss, September 2022 – October 2022
Although her time in office was short, Truss still found time to fall foul of Tory immigration infighting. She favoured relaxing immigration rules to help specific sectors.
We will make it easier for farmers and growers to access the workers they need, with a short-term expansion to the seasonal workers scheme, while working with industry to address longer-term skills shortages.

When the then-and-future home secretary, Suella Braverman, was forced to resign, some in Braverman's camp said the real reason was a dispute on work visas. By their telling, Braverman challenged Truss to honour a manifesto commitment to bring down overall migration.

Rishi Sunak, October 2022
Sunak – himself the child of immigrants – has changed the focus since becoming prime minister drawing a distinction between regular and irregular migration and emphasising the contribution of migrants to public services.
But this message has largely been drowned out by an insistent rhetorical drumbeat on irregular migration, Sunak has stated:

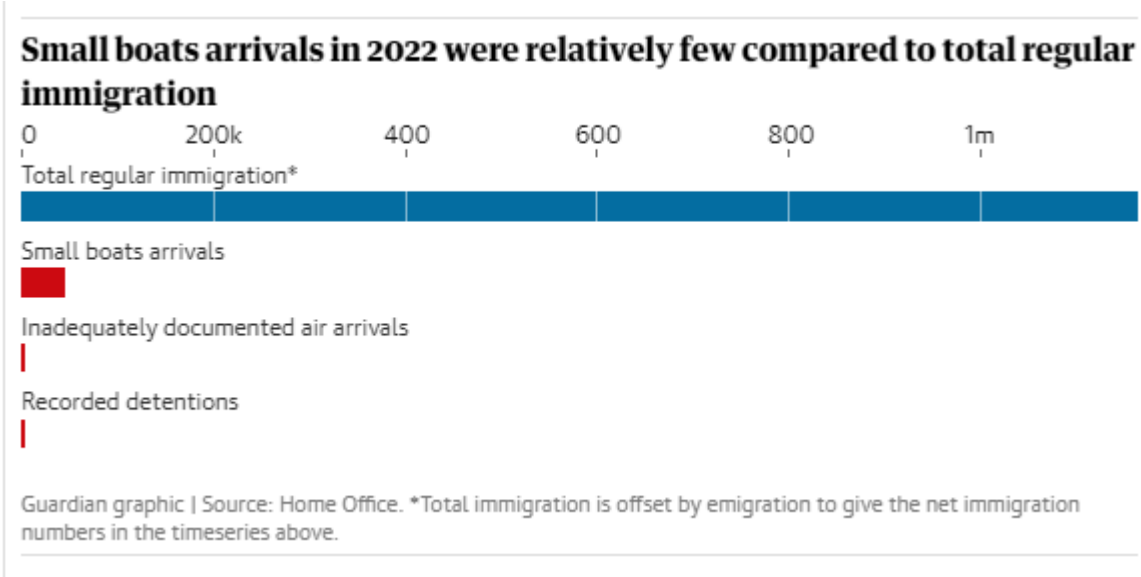
I'm relentlessly focused on stopping the boats, that's one of my five priorities, and we're doing absolutely everything we can to do that.

Those comments were made in an interview this month during a trip to in effect set a goal of bringing migration below the level he "inherited", which was about 500,000 net arrivals a year.

Days earlier, he had already started to back away from the 2019 manifesto promise to reduce it below the level then of about 220,000.

A question of focus
Immigration is, of course, complex, and the Conservative prime ministers have usually acknowledged that it can be good for the UK, as people come to study or to work in sectors where skilled labour is in short supply. But over the 13 years, the focus has shifted gradually from Cameron's pledge to bring down overall immigration to Sunak's terse commitment to "stop the boats".

This is striking because although small boat arrivals have increased rapidly over the past couple of years, the numbers are still small in comparison to regular immigration, and by no means the only source of irregular migration.



One final question is whether the Tories are leading or following opinion with this change in emphasis. Analysis this week by the UK in a Changing Europe thinktank suggested that more people in the UK now think of immigration as a positive force than a negative one, but that Conservative voters particularly think the government should take small boat crossings seriously.

Methodology and sources

Net migration data comes from the Office for National Statistics. Comparisons throughout the whole period 2009 to 2022 should be taken with care as there were changes in their methodology in June 2010 and in June 2020. Data from 2018 onwards has been revised using the last methodology.

Data on small boats, recorded detentions and inadequately documented air arrivals comes from the Home Office. These numbers are not equal to the size of irregular migration for several reasons: some migrants may become regular after arriving without authorisation (eg when they apply for asylum), people who arrived undetected are not counted, and some of those who enter regularly may have become “irregular” later, for instance, overstaying a visa.

People who become regular after arriving via unauthorised routes will be included in the ONS immigration figures.

Small boats figures do not include any person who arrived on larger vessels (eg ferries) or those intercepted by French authorities and returned to France. Recorded detentions are not the same as people, as the same person can be detected multiple times.

Text 6 - What does Rishi Sunak's promise to stop the boats mean?

BBC, 4 January 2023

IMAGE SOURCE,PA MEDIA

By Daniel Sandford

BBC News home affairs correspondent

In his first major speech of 2023, prime minister Rishi Sunak twice pledged to "stop the boats".

Listing five key promises at the beginning and the end of the speech, he said both times: "We will halve inflation, grow the economy, reduce debt, cut waiting lists and stop the boats."
That was "stop the boats", without qualification.
Given that many people in government have recently highlighted what an intractable problem the issue of people crossing the English Channel in small boats is, that seems a rash promise.
Elsewhere in the speech, the prime minister did qualify his fifth promise, saying: "We will pass new laws to stop small boats, making sure that if you come to this country illegally, you are detained and swiftly removed."
But that is a very different pledge. It is easy to pass new laws if you have a majority in Parliament, but much harder to pass laws that will work. It is even harder to enact legislation that will actually stop people smugglers putting desperate people in small boats when it is such a profitable trade. Just look at drugs legislation and how unsuccessful that has been in preventing smuggling.

Bogged down

When she was home secretary, Priti Patel passed a law that would enact her policy **of sending some asylum seekers to Rwanda for processing.** However, that policy is still bogged down in the courts, and so far no-one has been sent to Rwanda under the scheme.
Also in Ms Patel's Nationality and Borders Act 2022 was a **new offence of arriving in the UK illegally,** but it has barely been used.
Last year, a record 45,756 people entered the UK after crossing the Channel in small boats.
The issue came to a head in November when the **Manston migrant processing centre near Dover became overwhelmed** because of the huge numbers who crossed in October, and a lack of hotel rooms for them. Some migrants spent weeks sleeping on the floor and diseases like scabies and diphtheria started to spread.
Other European countries, particularly Germany and France, cope with larger numbers of asylum seekers, but these are much less visible than the shivering migrants being brought ashore in Dover.
So what exactly is the prime minister promising - to "stop the boats" or to "pass new laws to stop small boats"?
He was asked about this afterwards and admitted: "This is not an easy problem to fix and it's not one we can fix overnight, and requires lots of different things to be changed.
"The most important thing we need to do is pass new legislation, and we want to make sure that new legislation means that if you come here illegally to our country you will not be able to stay. You will be detained and swiftly removed back to a safe country or your own home if that is appropriate," he said.
"I just want to make sure that we fix this problem and, having had this job for a few weeks and spent time thinking about it, my belief is that we do need new laws if we want actually to deal with this challenge."
Mr Sunak claimed other initiatives were already making progress: "The new deal with France means that there's 40% more patrols happening in France, which is making a difference to us.
"The new deal with Albania will enable us to return more migrants who have come here from that country back to where they're from. They account for a third of all small boat crossings in the latter part of last year and that can make a really big difference."

Reading the small print

On 13 December, in the House of Commons, **Mr Sunak previously promised to reduce the backlog of unprocessed asylum claims** and to stop the use of hotels for housing asylum seekers as part of another five-point plan, that time specifically targeted at the small boats crisis.
The government expects to spend £2.3bn on hotels for asylum seekers this financial year (2022-23).
So this is a case of reading the small print. What Mr Sunak actually promised on Wednesday is to pass new laws to detain and remove people entering the UK illegally.
That is not the same as "stopping the boats". What is more, this new legislation may well get bogged down in the courts as a potential breach of the UK's refugee obligations, and if it is going to work it will have to be better than the laws passed only last year.

Illegal Migration Act 2023

These documents relate to the Illegal Migration Act which received Royal Assent on 20 July 2023.
Home Office, 8 March 2023 https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/illegal-migration-bill

The Illegal Migration Act changes the law so that those who arrive in the UK illegally will not be able to stay here and will instead be detained and then promptly removed, either to their home country or a safe third country.

The act aims to:

- put a stop to illegal migration into the UK by removing the incentive to make dangerous small boat crossings
- speed up the removal of those with no right to be here - in turn this will free up capacity so that the UK can better support those in genuine need of asylum through safe and legal routes
- prevent people who come to the UK through illegal and dangerous journeys from misusing modern slavery safeguards to block their removal
- ensure that the UK continues to support those in genuine need by committing to resettle a specific number of the most vulnerable refugees in the UK every year

Explainer

Text 7 - What does the UK government's bill on illegal immigration propose?

Ministers say the bill will stop people crossing the Channel in small boats but critics say the plans are unworkable

The Guardian, Tue 7 Mar 2023

In 2022, 45,755 men, women and children crossed the Channel in small boats to reach the UK, most of whom then claimed asylum. Nearly 3,000 people have already made the crossing this year, with official estimates expecting more than 80,000 this year.

Rishi Sunak has promised to end the small boats once and for all, by introducing the illegal immigration bill. Critics including former Tory ministers have claimed it is doomed to be halted by challenges in the European court of human rights and will be used as an issue to attack Labour in a general election campaign.

How does the bill fit in with existing human rights legislation and will it be challenged?

Suella Braverman on Tuesday was unable to confirm if the bill is compatible with the European convention on human rights. But the government inserted what is called a section 19(1)(b) statement into the bill, which indicates that the government intends to proceed.

Alexander Horne, a former parliamentary lawyer, described such a statement as a "big red flashing light". He said: "Let's say that this bill gets on the statute book and is found to be problematic. What you're eventually doing is saying, well, the domestic courts will issue a declaration of incompatibility saying that this isn't compatible with our convention rights but because it's primary legislation they can't overrule it, they just have to go along with it.

"So it will then go to Strasbourg because you've exhausted your domestic remedies and you're effectively giving quite strong signalling to Strasbourg saying read the convention in this way or if you don't, tonight, you're setting up a conflict with the UK."

Horne said the right to family life (article 8) was the most likely convention right to be the subject of a challenge but others were also possible such as the prohibition of degrading, inhuman treatment (article 3).

Charlie Whelton, policy and campaigns officer at Liberty, said the fact that in the past the government had not resorted to 19(1)(b) in the past "flags up that this will absolutely without any doubt whatsoever be challenged".

But there remains the suspicion among lawyers that the government is setting up a confrontation with "lefty lawyers" and Strasbourg, who they can then blame for failure to implement the measures. Horne said it was highly unlikely to be on the statute books before the next election. "If you ask me, and this isn't a legal opinion, it's entirely a sort of political view, he [Rishi Sunak] is doing this to generate headlines," he said. "I think the government thinks that banging on about Strasbourg is a new version of banging on about Europe."

What routes are open to those seeking asylum in the UK?

Braverman's aides have said that the bill leaves the way open to a new "global route" administered by the UNHCR.

Details remain scarce, but Braverman told MPs that an annual cap, to be determined by parliament, on the number of refugees the UK will resettle via safe and legal routes will be determined "once we've stopped the boats". "This will ensure an orderly system, considering local authority capacity for housing, public services, and support," she said.

To apply for asylum in the UK, applicants must be physically in the country under the current system.

In 2022, 1,185 refugees were resettled to the UK – 75% fewer than in 2019. Only 22 refugees came to the UK on the Afghan

citizens resettlement scheme. There were also 4,473 refugee family reunion visas issued, down 40% on pre-Covid levels.

In comparison, in the last year more than 210,000 visas have been issued to people from Ukraine to travel to the UK. There are no Ukrainians recorded as having crossed the channel in a small boat.

Where would those who come by boat be detained?

The new law says that everyone who arrives in the UK via an irregular route – ie via small boats across the Channel or in the back of a lorry – will be detained for 28 days. Ministers are planning to convert a former RAF base in Essex and, according to the Times, another one in Lincolnshire.

But two new bases will not cope with the numbers of people who would be detained in the UK if this bill is enacted. Currently, people can be detained within the immigration system for the purposes of identification or when it's going to be possible to remove them in a reasonable timeframe.

In 2022, a total of 20,446 people were detained at some point. Official statistics show that 47% were detained for seven days or less. The current detention capacity in the UK is about 2,286, according to estimates by the Refugee Council, so detaining everyone crossing in a small boat for 28 days would require extra capacity.

It would also be very expensive – it costs about £120 to detain someone for one day so detaining 65,000 people for 28 days would cost £219m a year, and that's before the additional costs of building more detention centres.

Where would they be sent by the government under the new laws?

The bill, if enacted, will mean that anyone who arrives on a small boat will have their asylum claim deemed "inadmissible" – the Home Office won't even consider someone's claim, even if they're from a war-torn country such as Afghanistan or Syria or if they face persecution such as women from Iran.

Instead, those people will be removed either to their own country or a "safe third country" if that's not possible. What hasn't been answered yet is where the tens of thousands of people who cross the Channel will be sent.

Half of the people who crossed the channel last year came from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iran, Sudan or Syria. At least 80% of asylum claims from those countries are currently granted. For Afghanistan, Eritrea and Syria the figure is 98%.

Government aides say that at present, they plan to send a majority of those arriving by small boat to Rwanda, even though that scheme is being challenged in the courts. But even if it does start, it is only expected that about 200 people will be able to be transferred. There are no returns deals with France or the EU since the UK left the European Union.

What would happen to those people who can't be removed?

The current process, which was introduced two years ago, states that a person's asylum claim can only be deemed inadmissible if they could have or did claim asylum in another place, and the Home Office has been able to secure their removal to another country.

Of the 12,286 times the Home Office has tried to deem a claim inadmissible through that process, they've only been able to establish inadmissibility 83 times. That's a "success" rate of just 0.7%.

If 65,000 people were to cross the channel once this new legislation was in place and all their claims were deemed inadmissible, that could mean 455 people would be removed on their current track record, according to figures from the Refugee Council.

That would leave 64,545 people stuck in limbo – unable to be removed, their asylum claims not being processed in the UK, unable to work or access support. The government has not yet said what would happen to them.

Government aides argue that there will not be thousands of people stuck in limbo because they predict an immediate drop in the numbers crossing the Channel if people are swiftly removed.

Text 8 - UK visas: How does the points-based immigration system work?

BBC News, November 24, 2022

Downing Street insists that Prime Minister Rishi Sunak wants to bring overall immigration levels down.

How many migrants come to the UK?

In the year ending June 2022, an estimated 1.1m came to the UK and 560,000 departed.

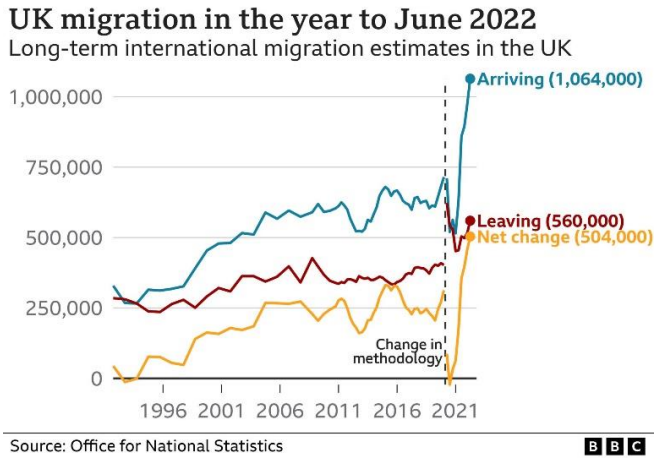
That means net migration (the difference between people arriving and leaving) stood at an estimated **504,000**.

This represents a record high and an increase of 331,000 on the previous year (ending June 2021).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS), which compiles the figures, said the rise was driven by non-EU migrants, specifically students, and the resumption of post-pandemic travel.

It also said the war in Ukraine, the resettlement of Afghans and the new visa route for Hong Kong British nationals had all contributed.

Home Secretary Suella Braverman says she wants to reduce net migration to the "tens of thousands".



Official immigration data gathering was disrupted during the Covid-19 pandemic. Estimates from June 2020 are based on different data sets and are not comparable with earlier years.

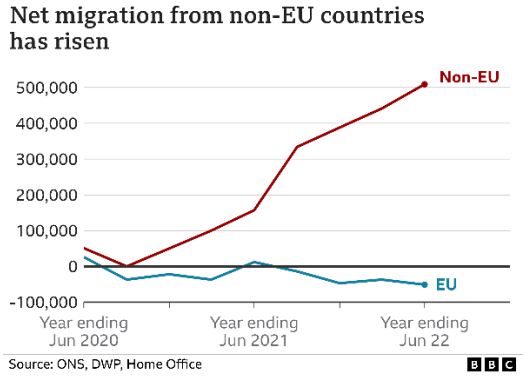
What impact has Brexit had on immigration?

Before Brexit, European Union and UK citizens had the freedom to live and work in any other EU country without needing a work visa.

However, freedom of movement between the two came to an end on 1 January 2021.

In the year ending June 2022, net EU migration was -51,000. This means more EU nationals left the UK than arrived.

Net migration of non-EU nationals, on the other hand, was +509,000.



There was a net increase of +45,000 British nationals. The ONS said this figure included some British nationals arriving from Hong Kong as well as those returning during the pandemic.

Many Brexit supporters - including Ms Braverman - say leaving the EU has given the UK more control over migration policy.

Sir Keir Starmer has ruled out restoring freedom of movement and says the UK must wean itself off "immigration dependency".

However, the CBI - the UK's biggest business group - says immigration is needed to solve worker shortages and boost economic growth.

What are the current visa rules for economic migrants?

Most people wanting to work in the UK have to apply for a visa through a points-based system (PBS).

A points system was first adopted by the Labour government in 2008 and applied to migrants from non-EU countries. It was then overhauled by the Conservatives after the Brexit vote.

The current PBS - which covers EU and non-EU migrants - was launched at the end of 2020.

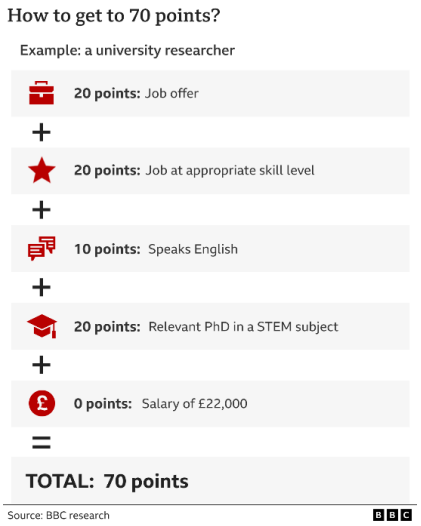
How does the point-based system work?

Applicants need enough points to qualify for a skilled worker visa.

A total of 70 points is required. Attributes like: English skills; qualifications; and being under 26 all count towards the total.

Having an offer of a skilled job from an approved employer and being able to speak English would give 50 points for example.

A further 20 points would also be awarded if the applicant's job pays at least £25,600 a year.



There are some exceptions. Certain jobs in health or education, for example, will still award 20 points even if the salary is less than £25,600.

The standard fee for a skilled visa is usually between £625 and £1,423.

If granted, the visa will last for up to five years before it needs renewing.

What is the 'shortage occupation list'?

A "shortage occupation list" exists to help employers fill certain roles. These jobs have a lower salary threshold, making it easier for applicants to gain the required number of points.

Jobs currently on the list include:

- care workers
- graphic designers
- nurses
- vets

The government updates the list based on advice from an independent group of experts - called the Migration Advisory Committee.

What about seasonal workers?

Temporary work, like fruit picking, is covered by a seasonal worker visa.

Up to 40,000 of these visas are issues each year. However, the National Farmers' Union argues this number is too small and needs to increase to 70,000.

Workers who are granted a visa must be paid at least £10.10 an hour.

Can students and graduates come to the UK?

There is no limit on international students coming to the UK under the student visa application system. However, Ms Braverman has suggested she wants to reduce the number of partners and children who come to the UK with students.

Students who have already completed their degree can stay in the UK for two years under a graduate visa.

Text 9 - International students are the 'ideal migrant'. Even that can't save them from the UK's cruelty

Nesrine Malik

Our universities desperately need their money, yet it almost seems the government is trying to put them off coming

The Observer, Sun 28 May 2023

Given how much the subject of immigration dominates British political life, it is remarkable how little people know about what it actually takes to come to this country. Immigrants are spoken of as if they simply purchase a ticket and stroll in, against the wishes and efforts of the government. Perhaps there should be some mandatory course that everyone has to pass – a sort of Life in the UK test in reverse – in which citizens learn what it's really like. For now, let me reassure you: the UK is very much in control of its borders.

As a veteran of visa applications, I can tell you that the average UK visa process is as probing, extensive and invasive as it gets. But this doesn't stop the Home Office from regularly introducing a new requirement and presenting it to the public as the supposed closing of a loophole, bringing us closer to whatever it is that counts as an acceptable level of net migration. Last week, it was time for international students to feel the heat.

From next year, with a few exceptions, students coming from overseas will be barred from bringing their dependants with them when they come to study in the UK. Last year, almost 500,000 visas were issued to international students – a category that now includes both EU and non-EU, though the vast majority are the latter – to study in the UK. Along with them came just over 135,000 immediate family members – a figure that the government sees as a nice, meaty number to hack at. What they don't see are women with small children, families without child-supporting networks back home, and students who – reasonably – would not like to be separated from their partners for a long time. It is a mark of the government's inability to be honest about the country's need for immigrants that it is scrambling around for some numbers to cut, and in so doing, targeting a cohort of people that brings in huge amounts of revenue, pay into the NHS, and prove in advance that they will not be a "burden" on the state.

But we don't hear about that, do we? Or about how high the hurdles for entry and settlement already are. Before even being allowed into the UK, international students must demonstrate that they have a place at an accredited British academic institution and have enough funds to cover their course, plus an additional sum to cover living expenses. Dependants have to be able to prove that they have the funds to sustain themselves – £845 a month for up to nine months for courses in London or £680 a month for courses outside London.

All applicants, students and their dependants pay an NHS surcharge; a master's student with one partner and one child needs to pay £1,410 in advance of setting foot in the UK. They will also continue paying this surcharge every year if they find work, and so will effectively be taxed twice to use the health service. Dependants are defined as partners and any children under 18. Not, as one talking head from Conservative Home said on the BBC last week, "their grandmas".

Home secretary Suella Braverman leaving 10 Downing Street last week. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty

That sort of poorly informed discourse has helped turn what is a very good news story for the country – that the UK is becoming a thriving global hub of revenue-generating international students – into a bad one about unacceptably high migration numbers. The reality is that international students, particularly non-EU ones, are playing a massive role in financing the country's higher education system while being a net contributor to the economy. Research from 2021 shows that just 10 non-EU students studying in the UK will generate £1m of economic impact during their studies in terms of fees, consumer spending and job creation – and that's *after* their use of public services has been accounted for.

Non-EU student fees made up 17% of UK universities' income in 2020-21 – in effect, cross-subsidising the education of domestic students. The fees they pay are astonishingly high, averaging some £22,000 a year. So high, in fact, and scandalously divorced from the actual cost of delivery are these fees, that the director of Soas University of London recently said that such students are being exploited in a "morally problematic" higher education system that has become reliant on overseas students. That system, he said, would "collapse" if just China and India were to "close the taps".

Well, Suella Braverman is here to help: introducing a policy that will punish and turn away what is, by government standards, the ideal migrant – someone who only puts into the system, meets strict standards of entry and residence, and has the good sense to clear off afterwards. It's tempting to ascribe this poor judgment to Braverman herself, but let's not forget that the home secretary is simply doing what British politicians have done for years, particularly since David Cameron called for net migration to be reduced to "tens of thousands" and the introduction of the hostile environment: making the lives of foreigners as miserable, expensive and lonely as possible. All to "get the numbers down". Labour, for their part, have said they won't oppose the measure.

The tragedy is that so much of what we were told Brexit was about – pivoting away from Europe towards the Commonwealth and the rest of the world; investing in our "world-beating" homegrown industries – is personified in the international student. They have a cultural affinity with the UK, recognise the prestige of degrees from British universities and the value of being here to their careers and global relevance. But all the government can see in them is a useful number to cull – economic units to be stripped of relationships, choice and humanity.

Text 10 - The Nationality and Borders Bill - Channel Refugee Crisis

Nationality and Borders Act becomes law: five key changes explained

The Conversation, April 29, 2022

At almost the last minute before the parliamentary session ended, after months of pushback from the House of Lords and despite vehement protests from those supporting refugees and migrants, the UK government has succeed in introducing the Nationality and Borders Act.

These are the five significant changes that will dramatically alter asylum and citizenship rules under the new UK law:

1. Asylum seekers can be sent to Rwanda

The plan to process asylum claims in Rwanda is undoubtedly the biggest headline change brought in by the Nationality and Borders Act. It has been widely condemned by human rights experts.

This route will be used to deal with what the government considers "inadmissible" asylum claims – including people who can no longer be returned to European transit countries following the UK's exit from the European Union. This is an intensification of the longstanding trend of countries like the UK preferring ever more restrictive, "remote-control" approaches to reduce access to their territory, thereby avoiding asylum claims. Judging by the results of Australia's similar scheme, this will lead to tragic and harmful consequences for asylum seekers and will also be extremely costly for the UK.

2. Home secretary can strip your citizenship without warning

There are many new or enhanced powers for the home secretary included in the new legislation. Perhaps the most notable is the ability to deprive British people of their citizenship without notice. This has not garnered as much attention as the offshoring plans, but could potentially affect millions of people.

The law does not allow the government to leave anyone stateless so the people most at risk from being stripped of their citizenship without notice are those born in other countries or who, for whatever reason, hold dual citizenship.

There is scant protection for these people. Simply being eligible for citizenship of another country may be considered sufficient to safeguard against statelessness – even if, in practice, the state in question is unlikely to cooperate and grant such citizenship.

3. Asylum seekers can be criminalised

The new law creates two classes of asylum seeker based on how they arrived in the UK. "Group 1" consists of those who meet new entry requirements; "group 2" is made up of those who do not.

Most people attempting to claim asylum in the UK if they are not able to get a visa (nearly impossible from most countries where asylum seekers come from) will now be designated as "group 2".

If they arrive in the UK without valid entry clearance they will be committing an offence and will be liable to prosecution. The idea that a person's right to claim asylum is based on how they reach the UK is significant – and as with nearly all the new law, targets those crossing the English Channel on small boats.

As with much of the political rhetoric around immigration and asylum, the increased use of criminal justice measures is couched in the language of anti-trafficking. By criminalising those who facilitate irregular migration, or the irregular migrants themselves, it is argued that the "evil business of people smuggling" will be disrupted. But evidence suggests that increased enforcement and security tends to backfire. Experts repeatedly point to the more obvious solution of providing safe routes. The Nationality and Borders Act serves to make journeys more dangerous rather than doing anything effective to stop them.

4. People who arrive over the Channel can be treated more harshly

Under the new law, people designated "group 2" will be treated more harshly. The home secretary can now even provide different types of accommodation to the different groups, depending on how they arrived in the UK or whether they previously broke immigration rules.

The effects of this innovation may end up being more significant than the plan to send people to Rwanda because it is likely to apply to many more people – not only those who can be deported.

The decision-making system in the Home Office is already complicated. Adding another two-tier element to the asylum process will make things even worse. This looks a lot like a deliberate move to further degrade the already low level of support provided. It's likely to increase the harmful consequences of Home Office decision-making for those caught up in the system.

5. Protections against modern slavery are being undermined

The parts of the law which criminalise individuals involved in irregular migration connect with another important element – the assumed nexus between asylum and modern slavery. This matter takes up a significant amount of real estate in the new law.

One might assume provisions here would be aimed at better protecting people who are being exploited, but that would miss the mark. There is a remarkable consistency across the new law in terms of its main goal to stop people crossing the Channel in small boats and to make it easier to remove them if they make it over.

Accordingly, the main thrust of the modern slavery provisions in this new law is to reduce the possibility for people whose asylum claims are considered "inadmissible" to avoid

removal by falsely claiming they have been exploited. This, it is claimed, will solve the problem of people using ("abusing") the system designed to address modern slavery to frustrate attempts at removal.

Again, the impacts of these changes are difficult to gauge, but the shift towards making it harder for people to seek protection from exploitation as a means to reduce asylum claims can hardly be seen as a move to tackle traffickers and protect their victims, however the home secretary wishes to spin it.

Text 11 - Unpacking the Supreme Court's Rwanda Decision

By Dr Joelle Grogan, Senior Researcher, UK in a Changing Europe, 16 Nov 2023

On 15 November 2023, the UK Supreme Court (UKSC) unanimously upheld the Court of Appeal's judgment and found that the government's 'Rwanda Policy' is unlawful.

The central question before the Court was whether Rwanda is a safe country for asylum-seekers to be sent to have their claim processed and, if their claim were successful, to stay. Both sides agreed on the legal rule that refugees must not be returned to a country if their life or freedom would be threatened in that country (e.g. non-refoulement), nor can they be sent to a third country where there is a 'substantial risk' of their being returned to a country where they would face such a threat.

The Court underlined that **non-refoulement** is part of several international covenants and treaties to which the UK is bound, including the **UN Refugee Convention**, the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966** and the **European Convention on Human Rights**. The Court also listed the Acts of Parliament that embed the principle in the UK's own national law.

The Court concluded that non-refoulement is '*core principle of international law, to which the United Kingdom government has repeatedly committed itself on the international stage, consistently with this country's reputation for developing and upholding the rule of law.'*

In deciding that Rwanda was *not* safe, and asylum-seekers would be at risk of refoulement, the Supreme Court relied heavily on the UN's evidence on the ground in Rwanda. The evidence pointed to Rwanda's poor human rights record, and highlighted the fact that UK police had to warn Rwandan nationals living in the UK of threats to their life from the Rwandan government.

The systemic issues in the Rwandan legal system were particularly concerning to the Court. Judges may not be independent of political influence, lawyers may not be provided, and despite a right of appeal – there were none on record.

The Court also underlined concerns that some asylum-seekers would not be fairly processed: citizens of certain warzone countries had a 100% rejection rate in Rwanda, while the same nationalities were nearly always recognised as refugees in the UK (for example, Afghanistan has 98%, and Syria 99% approval rate for asylum claims).

The UKSC was also not convinced by the Rwandan government's assurances, even if they were 'in good faith'. The UN documented 100 cases of refoulement, including after the agreement with the UK had been reached. The Court cast doubt on Rwanda's commitment to its own international obligations, pointing to a similar agreement it had reached with Israel between 2013-2018.

On the weight of evidence that the country was not safe, the Court held that it would be unlawful for the UK to send people to Rwanda.

It should be underlined that the judgment does not make the policy of removing asylum-seekers to a third country where their claims are processed unlawful, only that *Rwanda* is not currently a safe country to do so.

While the court emphasised that they considered only the legal question – is Rwanda a safe third country – they implicitly tackled the ongoing political debate about whether the UK should leave the ECHR spearheaded by former Home Secretary, Suella Braverman.

By emphasising that the ECHR is not the *only* source of protection against removal to an unsafe country, the Court implicitly indicated that leaving the ECHR won't end the obligations from other international treaties (and the UK's own domestic law) to guarantee asylum-seekers wouldn't be sent back to a country where it is unsafe for them.

What, then, is next? The new Home Secretary, James Cleverly announced that the current agreement with Rwanda would be upgraded to a new treaty addressing concerns. This treaty would 'make clear that those sent there cannot be sent to another country than the UK' leading to some suggestion that that asylum-seekers rejected by Rwanda would return to the UK. Under current UK law, however, it is not possible for those sent to a third country to return to the UK.

The Prime Minister also responded to the judgment stating he would introduce emergency legislation declaring Rwanda is a safe country, and that the policy would not be stopped by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). The Supreme Court (or any court, including the ECtHR) cannot strike down an Act of Parliament.

The challenge for the government is whether such an act would become law before the next general election. Even if the government's current Commons majority passed the bill

quickly, the government does not control the Lords' timetable who are likely to closely scrutinise or even delay the passing of such an act.

An act declaring that Rwanda is safe would also not end the UK's obligations under international law. The UK and Strasbourg courts could still find that such a law violated human rights. However, this would not change the legal effect of the law. The real consequence would be damage to the UK's strong human rights record, and reputation for upholding its international obligations.

The only short-term alternative would be for the UK to reach agreement with a country that is safe (as likely it is already trying to do). The **Illegal Migration Act** lists 56 other countries (8 for men only) that are considered safe – however, as of yet, the UK has only managed to reach an agreement with one: Rwanda. Most countries on the list are facing their own migration challenges, and are not likely to accept claims and refugees from the UK. For the moment – no Rwanda, no removals.

Text 12 - From 'go home' vans to Windrush scandal: a timeline of UK's hostile environment

The Guardian, Wed 25 May 2022

On 25 May 2012 Theresa May, the then home secretary, gave an interview to the ***Daily Telegraph*** in which she said: "The aim is to create here in Britain a really hostile environment for illegal migration." The phrase became shorthand for a series of strict policies aimed at cracking down on migrants who had overstayed, making it harder for them to work in the UK legally and access housing and bank accounts.

A decade on and the hostile environment is still around, but politicians and others from across the political spectrum question whether it has achieved its stated objectives.

25 May 2012: Theresa May announces the aims of the hostile environment in a Telegraph article. For the first time private landlords, employers and NHS staff are to be co-opted into plans to carry out checks on migrants to ensure they are in the UK legally and to report them to immigration enforcement if not. May, who became home secretary two years before she announced her crackdown, warned: "We're going to give illegal migrants a really hostile reception." The policy heralded a culture change across a range of UK institutions unused to policing immigration.

22 July to 22 August 2013: a pilot scheme takes place in six London boroughs featuring vans carrying billboards with the message: "In the UK illegally? Go home or face arrest." Government hoped that the populist move would take some of the wind out of the sails of the Ukip party, whose anti-immigration, anti-EU narrative was gaining traction at the time. The operation was considered a failure with only a few dozen people leaving the UK as a result. The scheme was ridiculed, with some calling the helpline number saying things like: "Hello – I'd like to go home – to Willesden. Can you give me a lift?"

February 2014: BBC Panorama exposed cheating among overseas students taking English tests. This led to a draconian response from the Home Office with many innocent students later found to have been wrongly accused. About 2,500 students were forcibly removed from the UK after being accused of cheating and a further 7,200 left the country after being warned that they faced detention and removal if they stayed.

October 2017: the Guardian reporter Amelia Gentleman begins the painstaking work of exposing the Windrush scandal. Her exposé led to international condemnation of Home Office hostile environment policies. Gentleman has said it was not initially apparent how wide-ranging the scandal was. She said: "Some MPs, such as Kate Osamor, were beginning to see lots of cases; others hadn't heard of the problem. Mostly people assumed these were weird anomalies where something very specific had gone wrong. I realised how rapidly the problem was growing when the charity Praxis said it was seeing more and more cases every year."

October 2021: the Home Office announces a controversial policy to push back small boats in the Channel. It later emerges that officials never planned to use the policy against asylum seekers, the overwhelming majority of those crossing the Channel in small boats. The widely criticised policy now appears to have been dropped.

14 April 2022: the Home Office launches its most controversial plan to date: offshoring asylum seekers to Rwanda. Rumours and leaks about the policy had been circulating for months before the government announced it formally. At least 100 asylum seekers who recently arrived in the UK in small boats are understood to have been issued with notices of intent that they will be flown 4,500 miles to Rwanda. The government has indicated nobody will be flown out to the central African country before 6 June. The PCS union, which represents many Home Office staff, and several refugee NGOs have launched legal challenges against the policy.

Text 13 - Turning the boat around
The "national shame" of Britain's treatment of Windrush migrants

The incompetent handling of Caribbean Britons' citizenship claims worries other migrants, too

The Economist, Apr 21st 2018

THE past few years have been a "nightmare", says Anthony Bryan. After his passport application was turned down, the Home Office claimed he was an illegal immigrant because he lacked the documents to prove otherwise. He lost his job and did two stints in prison-like migration detention centres. At one point the Home Office booked him on a flight back to Jamaica, the country he left as a child in 1965. Only an intervention by his lawyer averted his deportation.

Mr Bryan is a child of the "Windrush generation" of Caribbean migrants who came to Britain in 1948-71. Named after the *HMT Empire Windrush*, the boat that carried some of the first arrivals, their right to British citizenship was enshrined in law in 1971. That applied even to those without migration papers, like children who travelled on a parent's passport. Many were therefore legally resident, without the paperwork to prove it.

For a long time, that didn't matter. But in 2014 Theresa May, then the home secretary, introduced a number of policies to create a "hostile environment" for illegal migrants. Employers and landlords faced new duties to perform migration checks—and steep fines or jail time if they failed. The effect was to bring migration controls inland from the border.

But the policy also snared people like Mr Bryan, who were in Britain legally. No one, least of all the Home Office, seems to know the number of people affected, but experts reckon it may be tens of thousands. Many have lost their jobs, been detained in migration centres or denied medical treatment. Some may have been deported—the Home Office is not sure.

Proving their right to be in Britain is fiendishly hard for some. Applicants must show that they have not left for more than two consecutive years since their arrival, a tall order for those who came half a century ago as tots. In 2010 the Home Office destroyed an archive of old landing slips, the only evidence some had of their arrival. The problem has been compounded by cuts to legal aid, says Nick Nason, an immigration lawyer.

The government initially hid from its foul-up. Mrs May refused a request by the leaders of Caribbean countries to discuss the problem at this week's Commonwealth summit. But public outrage prompted a U-turn: she apologised for the migrants' treatment, as did her successor as home secretary, Amber Rudd, who faced calls from Labour to resign.

The episode is a cause of "national shame", as David Lammy, a Labour MP and son of Windrush arrivals, told Parliament. And it has hardly reassured EU migrants living in Britain that they can believe the Home Office's assurances regarding their status after Brexit. Satbir Singh of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants sums up the concern: "In 40 years we could see Italian grandmothers being removed because they did not fill in the right application form."

What is the Windrush deportation scandal?

Who are the Windrush generation?

They are people who arrived in the UK after the second world war from Caribbean countries at the invitation of the British government. The first group arrived on the ship MV Empire Windrush in June 1948.

What happened to them?

An estimated 50,000 people faced the risk of deportation if they had never formalised their residency status and did not have the required documentation to prove it.

Why now?

It stems from a policy, set out by Theresa May when she was home secretary, to make the UK 'a really hostile environment for illegal immigrants'. It requires employers, NHS staff, private landlords and other bodies to demand evidence of people's citizenship or immigration status.

Why do they not have the correct paperwork and status?

Some children, often travelling on their parents' passports, were never formally naturalised and many moved to the UK before the countries in which they were born became independent, so they assumed they were British. In some cases, they did not apply for passports. The Home Office did not keep a record of people entering the country and granted leave to remain, which was conferred on anyone living continuously in the country since before 1 January 1973.

What did the government try and do to resolve the problem?

A Home Office team was set up to ensure Commonwealth-born long-term UK residents would no longer find themselves classified as being in the UK illegally. But a month after one minister promised the cases would be resolved within two weeks, many remained destitute. In November 2018 home secretary Sajid Javid revealed that at least 11 Britons who had been wrongly deported had died. In April 2019 the government agreed to pay up to £200m in compensation.

By the end of 2020, victims were describing the long waits and 'abysmal' payouts with the scheme, and the most senior black Home Office employee in the team responsible for the Windrush compensation scheme resigned, describing it as systemically racist and unfit for purpose.

More Links and Resources

- **On the Windrush Scandal**

https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/apr/16/windrush-era-citizens-row-timeline-of-key-events

https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/mar/31/windrush-home-office-has-failed-to-transform-its-culture-report-says

https://www.migrationwatchuk.org/briefing-paper/48

Robert Booth, "UK now among most accepting countries for foreign workers, survey finds", *The Guardian*, 23 February 2023. www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/feb/23/uk-now-among-most-accepting-countries-for-foreign-workers-survey-finds

Jonathan Portes, "The post-Brexit immigration system: where next?", *UK in a changing Europe*, 9 March 2023. https://ukandeu.ac.uk/the-post-brexit-immigration-system-where-next/