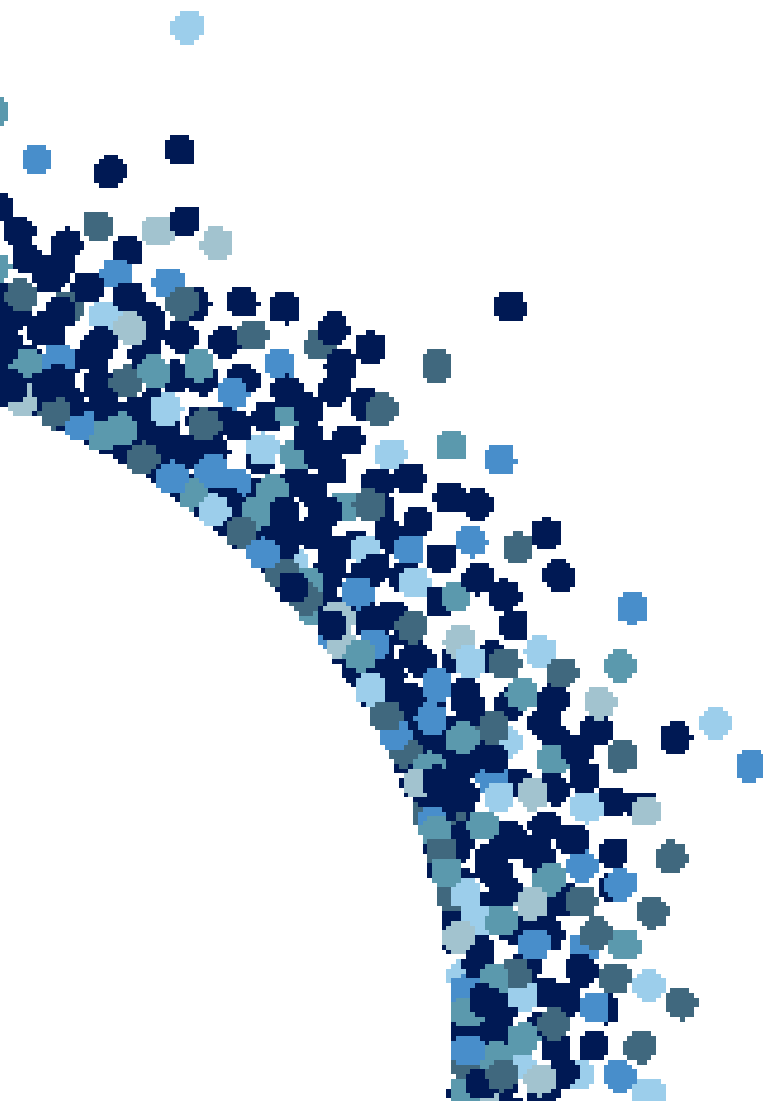




# BRIEFING

## Deprivation and the no recourse to public funds (NRPF) condition



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PUBLISHED: 15/11/2023

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This briefing examines the UK's 'No Recourse to Public Funds' (NRPF) condition, which applies to people on temporary immigration statuses, and prevents access – in most cases – to state-funded welfare. It examines the likely number of migrants that have the NRPF condition attached to their immigration status and their characteristics, including how many are at risk of destitution.

## Key Points

At the end of 2022, about 2.6 million people held visas that typically have NRPF, substantially up from previous years.

At the end of 2022, the top nationalities in visa categories with NRPF were India (665,000), China (316,000), Nigeria (268,000), Pakistan (147,000) and Hong Kong (121,000).

EU citizens who moved to the UK after 31 December 2020 under the new immigration system (84,000 at the end of 2022) have NRPF attached to their status.

All residents with irregular immigration statuses are subject to the NRPF condition. There are no official statistics about the size of this group, which is estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands.

Among recently arrived migrants—the group most likely to have NRPF—just under 100,000 live in economically vulnerable households (where all working-age adults are inactive, unemployed, or in low or low-medium skilled jobs) with dependent children.

Recently arrived migrants from Bangladesh (27%), Pakistan (21%), and Iran (18%) have the highest likelihood of living in a deprived household.

An estimated 10% of non-EU citizens with less than five years of residence receive public benefits (which is allowed e.g. if they are a refugee or are in a family with a UK citizen or person with recourse to public funds), compared to 25% of UK nationals.

There were 2,500 successful applications to lift the NRPF condition per year in 2021 and 2022, which is comparable to pre-Covid years.

## Understanding the policy

### *What is NRPF and who is subject to it?*

The No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition is a legal restriction on individuals 'subject to immigration control', as defined in section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. It restricts people from accessing most mainstream benefits and housing assistance if they hold temporary immigration statuses or lack a valid status. The NRPF condition can also indirectly affect family members and dependents of individuals subject to immigration control; for example, British children whose parents have NRPF and who cannot claim benefits in their own right.

The NRPF condition is intended to limit public expenditure and encourage self-sufficiency among non-citizens by preventing them from relying on state support. In this regard, the government [has said](#) that the NRPF condition “is important in reassuring the public that immigration brings real benefits to the UK and that its finite resources are protected for British citizens and those who have lawfully settled here on a permanent basis”.

People with NRPF cannot access a wide range of benefits, including but not limited to Universal Credit, Housing Benefit, Child Benefit, and the recent Cost of Living Payments. Many visa holders with the NRPF condition attached to their status will be in a reasonably secure financial position and will not require access to public funds at any point in the time on a temporary visa. However, some have financial circumstances that mean they would be eligible for benefits but for the NRPF condition. For example, some work visa holders can be on relatively low wages (e.g. care workers, with a minimum required salary of just under £21,000) that would make those with children eligible for in-work benefits if they had access to public funds. For a comprehensive review of the NRPF legislative framework and local authority policy for vulnerable people with NRPF, see this recent report from the Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity (Leon, 2023): [Understanding Migrant Destitution in the UK](#).

From January 1, 2021, the government introduced [a new immigration system](#) that applies the same rules to non-UK citizens who migrate to the UK after December 31, 2020. This means EU citizens moving to the UK under the new immigration system came into force have the NRPF condition attached to their visa (although there is an exception for EU citizens who have moved on an EUSS Family Permit).

Because EU migration inflows to the UK in the last two years have been very low, most residents with NRPF are non-EU citizens who do not have permanent Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) in the UK. Most EU citizens with status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) – who were living in the UK before 1 January 202 – can access public funds without restrictions, with some limited exceptions for pre-settled status holders. An unknown number of EU citizens who were eligible but did not apply for the EUSS will also now have NRPF.

Most people with visas (limited leave to remain), expired visas, or without visas have NRPF. The following table provides a breakdown of the main categories of people that make up the population with restricted access to public funds unless they have successfully applied to have the NRPF condition lifted. Note that Ukrainians do have access to public funds.

Immigration Status	Who is included?
Limited leave to remain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People on work and study visas and their dependants</li> <li>- People on family visas</li> <li>- People on ten-year routes to settlement (Private and Family life)</li> <li>- Hong Kong BN(O) visa holders</li> </ul>
Irregular status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People with expired statuses (overstayers)</li> <li>- People who entered the UK without authorisation</li> <li>- Asylum seekers whose appeal rights have been exhausted</li> <li>- Children born in the UK without UK citizenship to parents who are undocumented</li> </ul>

*Can the NRPF condition be changed or lifted?*

Some people with limited leave to remain can request the Home Office to lift the NRPF condition from their visa through a process known as “change of conditions.” Only those with specific types of visas are eligible to apply. This includes people on family visas; ten-year routes to settlement (Family and Private life); leave to remain based on other rights of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR); and people with a British National (Overseas) visa.

Eligible individuals must be in one of the following situations to have their NRPf condition lifted:

- They are destitute or at risk of imminent destitution. The Home Office considers a person “destitute” if they lack adequate accommodation or the means to obtain it and/or cannot meet other essential living needs. People are deemed at risk of destitution if they are unlikely to continue having adequate accommodation or means to meet their essential needs in three months’ time.
- A child’s essential needs cannot be met due to insufficient income.
- There are exceptional financial circumstances.

People on five-year family visas who had their NRPf condition lifted used to be automatically moved to the ten-year route to settlement. However, at the time of writing the Government was reviewing this policy and had suspended its application until the review is finalised.

### *Services and entitlements that are not impacted by NRPf*

Some benefits and services are universal, which means that their access is not conditional on people’s statuses:

- **Healthcare:** all residents, regardless of their legal status, can access GP and emergency healthcare services, including treatment for life-threatening conditions or contagious diseases. People with limited leave to remain are eligible to use the same health services as UK citizens, after paying the Immigration Health Surcharge as part of their visa application. People with visitor visas or those with no valid legal status must pay for hospital treatment or secondary healthcare services.
- **Education:** right to access free primary and secondary education. In 2022, these rights were extended to free school meals for eligible vulnerable households.
- **Social care:** Social care includes different forms of assistance for vulnerable children, young people, and adults. These services are not considered public funds for immigration purposes, allowing access regardless of immigration status. Not all destitute NRPf individuals are necessarily entitled to social services’ duty of care, which is reserved for families with dependent children, vulnerable adults, and care leavers.

Asylum seekers waiting for an asylum decision cannot access mainstream benefits, including child benefit and universal credit. They are eligible for support through the asylum system, so they are not included in the estimates of NRPf population in this briefing. Asylum seekers cannot access public funds other than asylum support, which includes access to accommodation and financial assistance for food, clothing and toiletries (£47.39 per week).

## Understanding the evidence

The Home Office does not publish official statistics on the number of people with NRPf at a given point in time. This means that we need to rely on different Home Office visa data to estimate the number of residents with NRPf indirectly. Note, however, that the Home Office [recently announced](#) that the new immigration case working system (*Atlas*) would be able to provide statistics on the number of people with NRPf attached to their immigration status at some point in 2023.

Currently, the most comprehensive source of data to estimate the number of people on visas that typically come with the NRPf condition is the Home Office [Migrant Journey](#) (MJ) reports, formerly known as the ‘Statistics on changes in migrants’ visa and leave status’ report. MJ data tracks people’s legal status over time from the year they first enter the UK immigration system, usually with an out-of-country entry visa. The publicly available MJ data show the number of people granted visas outside the UK, extensions to stay, settlement, and citizenship. MJ also provides breakdowns by year, type of entry visa, current visa, nationality, and type of applicant (main vs dependent) since 2004.

*Change of conditions* (CoC) data provide information on the number of people who applied to have the NRPF condition lifted, and were granted/denied access to public benefits, each quarter since Q3 2017. Breakdowns by age group, nationality and gender are available. CoC data is published by the Government in the [Migration transparency data](#) collection as part of the [Immigration and Protection transparency data](#) tables.

*Who is included in the Migrant Journey data?*

People are automatically included in the MJ data when they are granted an entry visa on one of the three mainstream immigration routes (work, family, study), regardless of whether they move to the UK following their visa grant. A few people enter the MJ data with an in-country visa rather than an out-of-country work, family or study entry visa. These people are excluded from the publicly available MJ data and require an FOI to calculate their number.

The MJ data have some limitations that affect the estimation of residents with NRPF:

- British and settled children with parents subject to NRPF are excluded from Migrant Journey data and thus not included in the visa figures.
- MJ data does not include information on whether visa holders applied for and were successfully granted a change of conditions to allow them to access public funds.
- Not all people included in MJ data are currently living in the UK, and we do not know how many. This is because MJ data are not cross-checked against border entry data. A small share of visa grantees will never move to the UK and, among those who will move, some will leave before their visa expires. However, there is no official data that allows us to identify and exclude them from MJ data. At the same time, some people may overstay their visas and live here without a valid visa, leading to their exclusion from the MJ data, despite still residing in the UK.

People with irregular immigration status – all of which have NRPF – are not included in MJ data nor in any other administrative data. The estimates provided in this report come from researchers or organisations such as Pew. However, these estimates are highly uncertain and come with major caveats, as the Migration Observatory has [explained elsewhere](#).

*Data on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of people with NRPF*

Home Office MJ data provide only three demographic breakdowns of people with limited leave to remain: nationality, age and sex. Other relevant information, including their ethnicity, region of residence, level of education, and income, is, however, neither collected by MJ data nor by the new immigration case working system (*Atlas*). This is why most of the research about the characteristics of people with NRPF [relies](#) on small ad-hoc surveys or interviews.

In this report, we rely on the Census 2021 for England and Wales, the Annual Population Survey (APS) and Labour Force Survey (LFS) data to look at the characteristics of non-EU citizens who have been living in the UK for less than five years and thus are likely to have limited leave to remain with NRPF. Neither the Census nor the APS and LFS ask respondents about their immigration status other than their nationality, so it is not possible to know which respondents have limited or indefinite leave to remain. This analysis will likely exclude most people in ten-year routes to settlement, many of whom have been in the UK for more than five years or are even UK born.

The number of people on visas with NRPF at the end of 2022 based on MJ Home Office data (2.6 million) is much higher than the number of non-EU citizens with less than five years of residence based on Census 2021 England & Wales (982,000) and APS 2022 (1.3 million). There are several reasons why MJ Home Office data yields a larger number than the Census and APS: first, although most people on visas with NRPF have likely been in the UK for less than five years, MJ Home Office includes all people who have been in the UK longer and are still on temporary visas (e.g. people on ten-year-routes). Second, MJ includes EU citizens on visas that come with NRPF (84,000 at the end of 2022). Third, MJ Home Office data reflects the high immigration inflows during 2022. People who arrived in 2022 are not included in the 2021 England & Wales Census and less likely to be sampled in the APS 2022 (recently arrived migrants are often under-sampled in general population surveys). MJ Home Office data is a better estimate of the total number of people with NRPF, although the Census and APS data are needed to understand the characteristics of those likely to have NRPF.

## At the end of 2022, about 2.6 million people held visas that typically have NRPf, substantially up from previous years

At the end of 2022, 2.58 million people held valid visa types that typically come with NRPf (Figure 1). A large majority will still have NRPf since a very small percentage of people successfully apply to have the condition lifted (as explained further below).

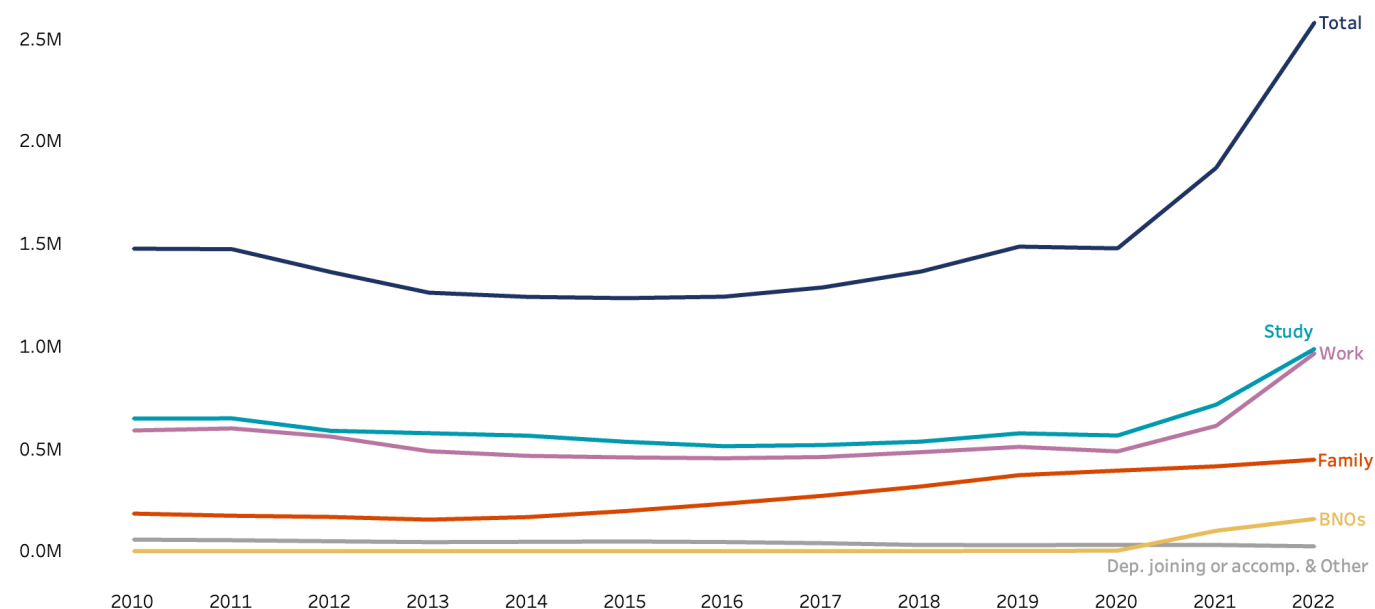
Three quarters of these individuals held either study visas (987,000) or work visas (965,000). Another 446,000 held family visas, and there were 157,000 Hong Kong BN(O)s. People on family visas and BN(O)s can apply to have their NRPf condition lifted, while those on work and study visas cannot.

The number of people holding visas that come with NRPf has increased significantly since the end of 2020, when it stood at 1.48 million (Figure 1). This increase reflects unusually high immigration after the pandemic, especially in the work and study categories, as discussed further in the Migration Observatory commentary, [Why has non-EU migration to the UK risen?](#) For example, about 41% (1 million) and 26% (627,000) of temporary visa holders at the end of 2022 had their entry visas issued in 2022 and 2021, respectively. Only 10% (246,000) of non-EU citizens with visa types that come with NRPf had their entry visa issued before 2018. This reflects the fact that after five years, most temporary visa holders will either have left the UK or received ILR. Individuals who overstay their visas due to reasons such as being unable to afford the fee for visa renewal become irregular migrants and are not included in these data.

**Figure 1**

### Individuals holding valid temporary visas in categories that typically come with NRPf

2010 to 2022, as of 31 December



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of publicly available Home Office Migrant Journey 2022 report, table MJ D01 (end of year leave for people whose earliest identified leave was granted out-of-country), and FOI 76538 (end of year leave for people whose earliest identified leave was granted in-country). Note: most visa holders in the 'Other' category (8,900) have leave outside of the current points-based system and include people who are in the UK as parents of British dependent children. Note that most dependants are not in the 'dependant, joining, and accompanying' category but are recorded as dependants under the main applicants' visa. The 'dependant, joining, and accompanying' category includes dependants of some visas outside the points-based system.



Many of those holding visas with NRPF will be financially secure and have no need to access public funds. Many UK visas have financial requirements that exclude people on the lowest incomes from coming to the UK. However, some temporary visa holders would be eligible for benefits but for the NRPF condition. For example, some work and family visa holders have relatively low wages that would make a person without NRPF eligible for in-work benefits, if they had children. A single parent on a care worker salary of £20,960, with ILR or British citizenship and living in the London Borough of Hounslow, for example, would be entitled to £244 of benefits per week, mostly from Universal Credit. (This is just one illustration: the specific benefits entitlements vary considerably depending on the amount of rent people pay.)

In addition, people may meet financial requirements when they first receive a visa but later see their circumstances change. In these scenarios, they lack access to the welfare safety net and are therefore at a higher risk of destitution. [Research has shown](#) that a variety of disruptive events, such as a divorce or becoming unemployed, can lead to financial hardship.

**At the end of 2022, the top nationalities in visa categories with NRPF were India (665,000), China (316,000), Nigeria (268,000), Pakistan (147,000) and Hong Kong (121,000)**

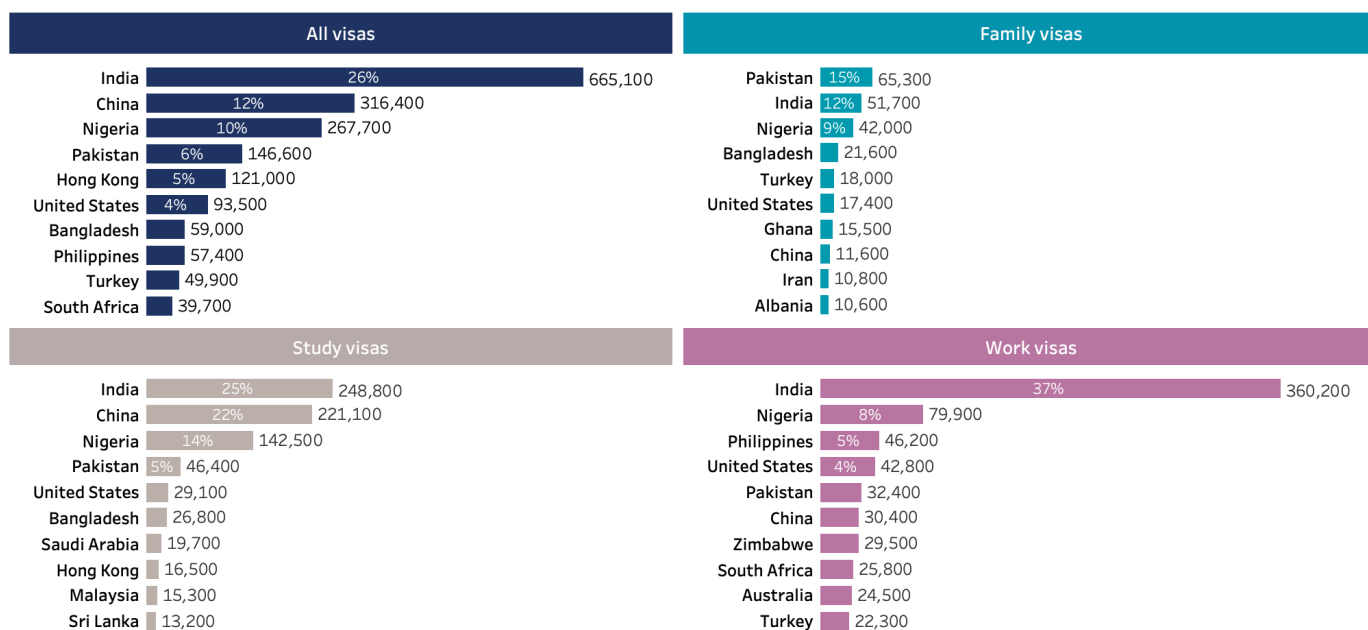
Indian citizens were the largest nationality group in visa categories with NRPF at the end of 2022, followed by nationals of China, Nigeria, Pakistan and Hong Kong (Figure 2). More than three quarters of Hong-Kong citizens with NRPF (79%) were in the BN(O) route.

People on family visas are the largest group who can apply to have their NRPF condition lifted. The top nationalities in the family visa category at the end of 2022 were Pakistani, Indian, and Nigerian nationals.

Figure 2

**Individuals in the largest visa categories with NRPF**

Top 10 nationalities by visa category, as of 31 December 2022



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of publicly available Home Office Migrant Journey 2022 report, table MJ D01 (end of year leave for people whose earliest identified leave was granted out-of-country), and FOI 76538 (end of year leave for people whose earliest identified leave was granted in country)



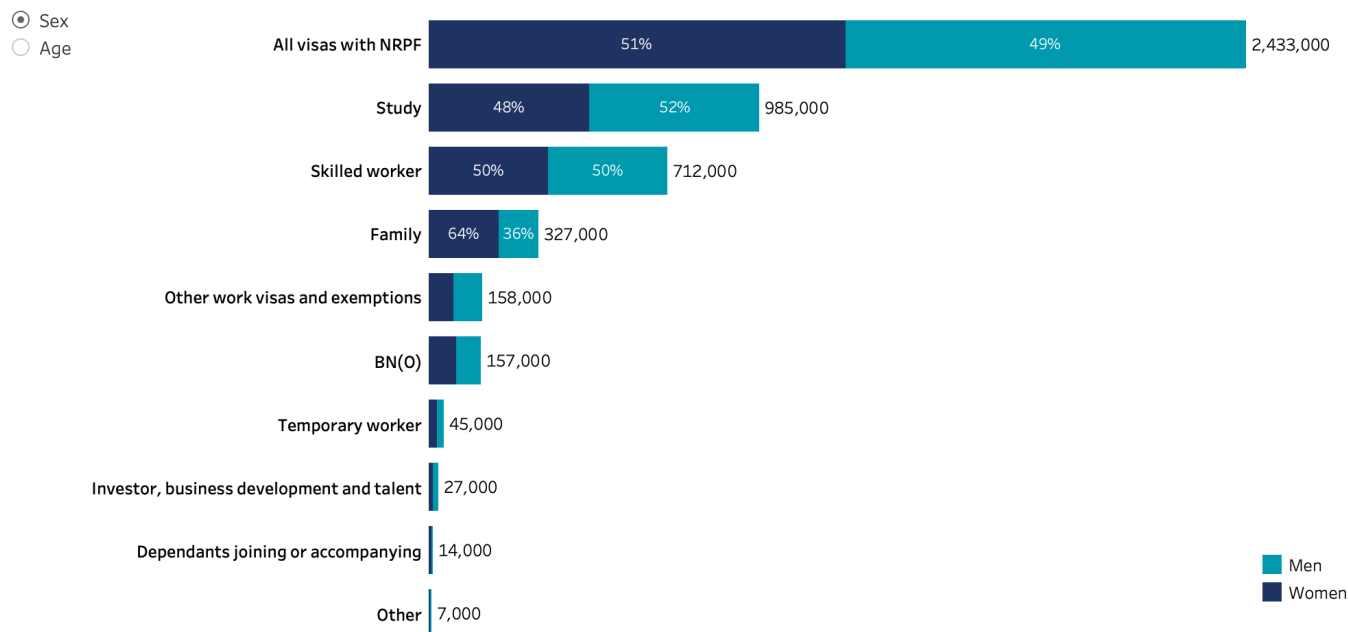


Just over half of the people with visas that typically come with NRPF were women, and 92% were adults, at the end of 2022 (Figure 3). Women made up roughly half of visa holders in most leave categories except for family visas, where they represented almost two thirds.

**Figure 3**

**Age and sex distribution of people on visa categories with NRPF**

Out of country visa grants, as of 31 December 2022



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of publicly available Home Office Migrant Journey 2022 report, summary tables, table MJ 07 ("People with valid limited leave to remain at the end of 2022, for those issued leave from 2004 onwards, by leave type category, age, and sex). People whose sex is not recorded (114) is not shown in the figure.



**EU citizens who moved to the UK after 31 December 2020 have NRPF attached to their status**

EU migrants who moved to the UK after the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020 have restricted access to public funds, except those who arrived on an [EU Settlement Scheme \(EUSS\) Family Permit](#) (family members whose relationship to a resident with status under the EUSS started before 31 December 2020).

Immigration from the EU under the post-Brexit immigration system [has been low](#). As of 31 December 2022, EU citizens represented 3% of all visa holders with NRPF usually attached to their immigration status—or 84,000 people. Most of these EU citizens had work (52%) or study (38%) visas, while another 9% were on family visas (Figure 4). The top five EU nationalities among EU visa holders were France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Poland. It is worth noting that post-2004 accession countries (EU-8 and EU-2) represented just 17% of the overall EU visa holders, marking a significant departure from historical patterns of immigration to the UK.

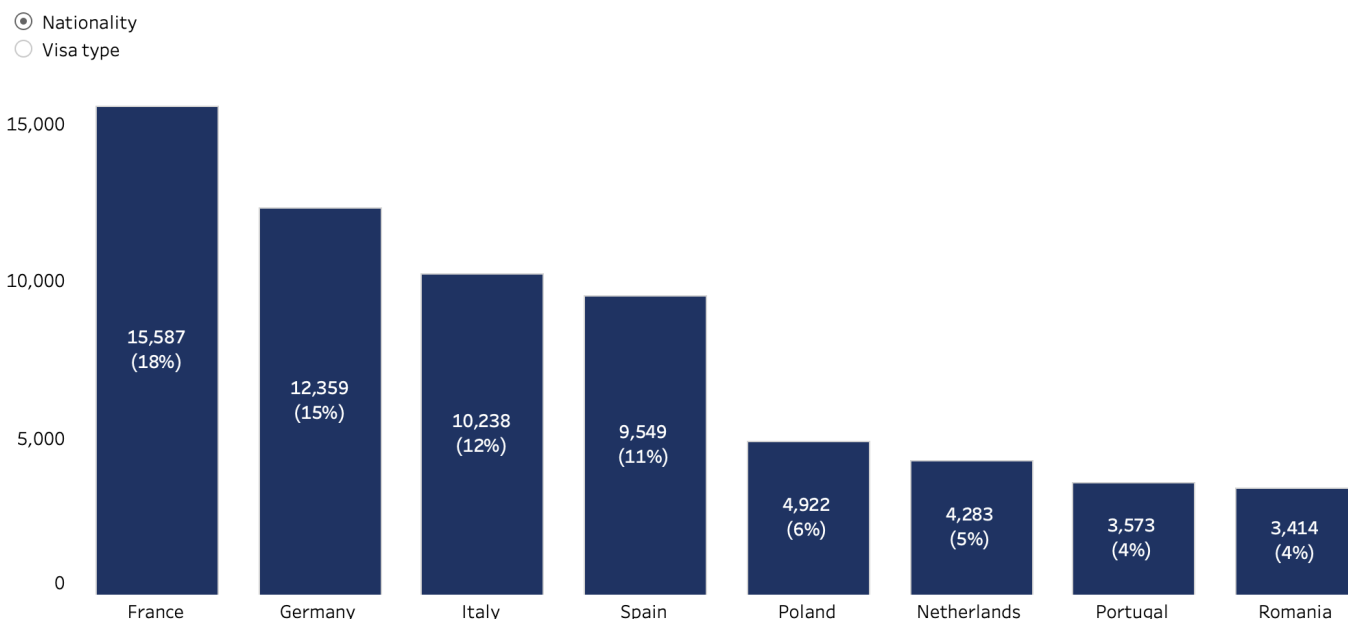
EU nationals with status under the EUSS – who were living in the UK before 1 January 2021 – can generally access public funds without restrictions, with some limited exceptions for pre-settled status holders. Nonetheless, [emerging data](#) shows a rise in the number of destitute EU citizens being referred to local authorities for support.



Figure 4

**Number of EU citizens on visas with NRPF**

By nationality and visa type, 2021 to March 2023 arrivals



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of Home Office Immigration System Statistics.  
 Note: There were 84,000 EU citizens on visas with NRPF as of 31 December 2022.



**All residents with irregular immigration statuses are subject to the NRPF condition, but there are no official statistics about the size of this group**

People with no visa or whose visas are expired are subject to the NRPF condition. There are no official statistics about the size or characteristics of the population living in the UK without legal status. This population is expected mostly to comprise non-EU citizens, although it would also include EU citizens who did not apply to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) and were already living in the UK before 31 December 2020. While some external organisations have attempted to assess the size of the irregular population in the UK, the data limitations and methodological problems are so significant that estimates are not expected to be particularly reliable. Nonetheless, the [estimates that do exist](#) suggest it is plausible that the figure is in the hundreds of thousands.

**Almost 100,000 recently arrived migrants live in economically vulnerable households with dependent children**

There is no available data on the socio-economic characteristics of individuals with NRPF. However, we can look at non-EU nationals with less than five years of residence in Britain – the group most likely to have NRPF – to examine indicators of deprivation. Since the large majority of EU citizens do not have NRPF, they are excluded from the analysis. In 2023, [one study](#) estimated that in 2022 at least 1,195,800 foreign-born individuals in the UK were destitute (28% of whom were children); this includes migrants with permanent status who do not have NRPF. The estimate suggests that migrants are over-represented among the population experiencing destitution.

A sizeable minority of recently arrived working-age non-EU citizens have characteristics that put them at risk of poverty, including living with dependent children, being economically inactive or unemployed, or in a low-paid job (Figure 5). In 2019–21, around half (348,000 or 49%) lived in a household with dependent children, and about a quarter (184,000 or 26%) lived in households where all working-age adults are inactive, unemployed, or in low

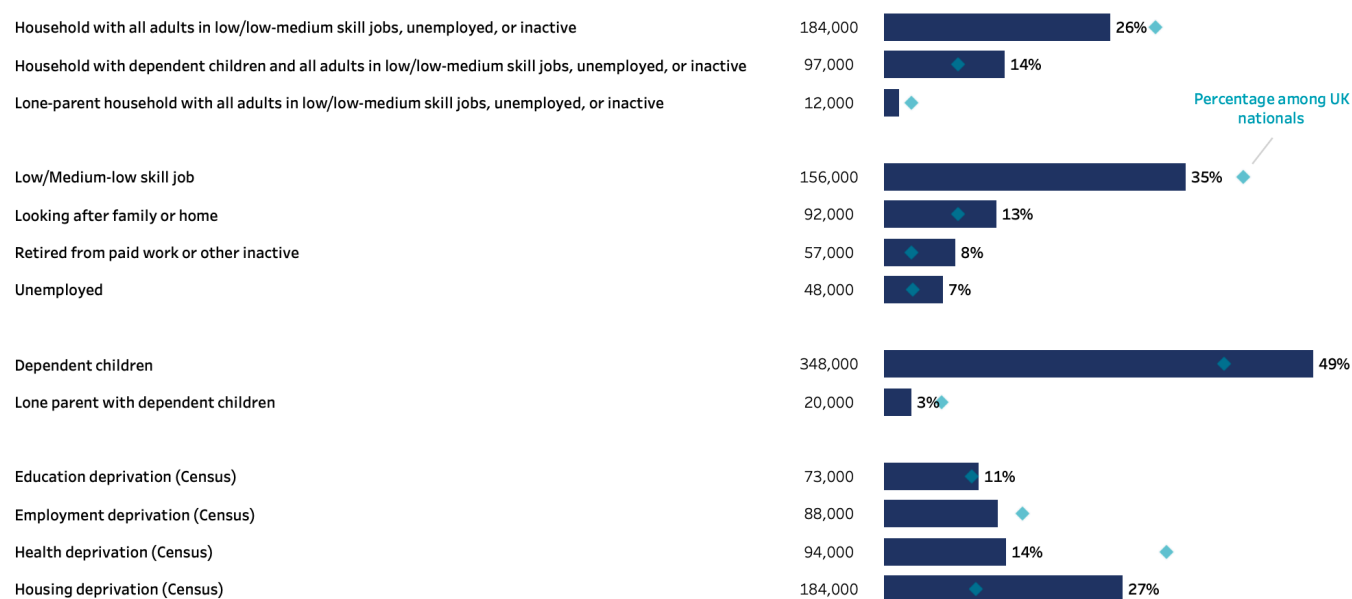
or low-medium skilled jobs where the risk of financial insecurity is higher. About 97,000 individuals (14% of total) were living in households with dependent children and 12,000 (2%) were part of single-parent households where all working-age adults were inactive, unemployed, or in low or low-medium skilled jobs.

Non-EU citizens with less than five years of residence are more exposed to some factors that increase the risk of poverty compared to UK nationals. For example, they are more likely to have dependent children, be unemployed, or experience housing deprivation. However, on average, they also tend to be healthier (as recent migrants tend to be younger) and less likely to be single parents.

Figure 5

**Non-EU citizens with less than 5 years of residence and characteristics linked to a higher risk of poverty**

Number and percentage, individuals aged 16 to 64, 2021



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of 2021 England and Wales Census data and 2019-21 Labour Force Survey data.

Note: The data in the Census and the LFS have been collected at different times and using different methods, meaning they refer to different populations and are not directly comparable. Census data only covers England and Wales.



Research has shown that [single or lone parents, former asylum seekers and people with low levels of education are at a higher risk of poverty](#). Economic activity is another key determinant – those who are unemployed face much higher risks of poverty and social exclusion, along with inactive individuals. The kind of jobs people do also influence their risk of poverty. People working in jobs that do not require long training periods (e.g. cleaners, care workers, retail cashiers) tend to have lower earnings than those in jobs that do (e.g. IT specialists, teachers, doctors). Furthermore, the risk of poverty is notably higher for households with children, particularly single-parent households. In 2016, [more than half of single-parent households](#) were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the UK, a pattern visible across European countries.

Not everyone who is economically vulnerable or facing economic hardship will be considered destitute. Destitution indicates very deep poverty, so the number of people who can be classified as poor under [different measures](#) will be larger than the number of people who are destitute. Based on Section 95(3) of the Immigration and Asylum 1999 Act, destitution entails the inability to afford the absolute basics required to maintain a healthy life, such as adequate accommodation or other essential living needs, such as food and clothing. For an empirically informed discussion of the impact of the cost of living crisis on the level of destitution in the UK, including among the migrant population, see the [recent report by Fitzpatrick et al. \(2023\)](#).

## Recently arrived migrants from Bangladesh (27%), Pakistan (21%), and Iran (18%) have the highest likelihood of living in a deprived household

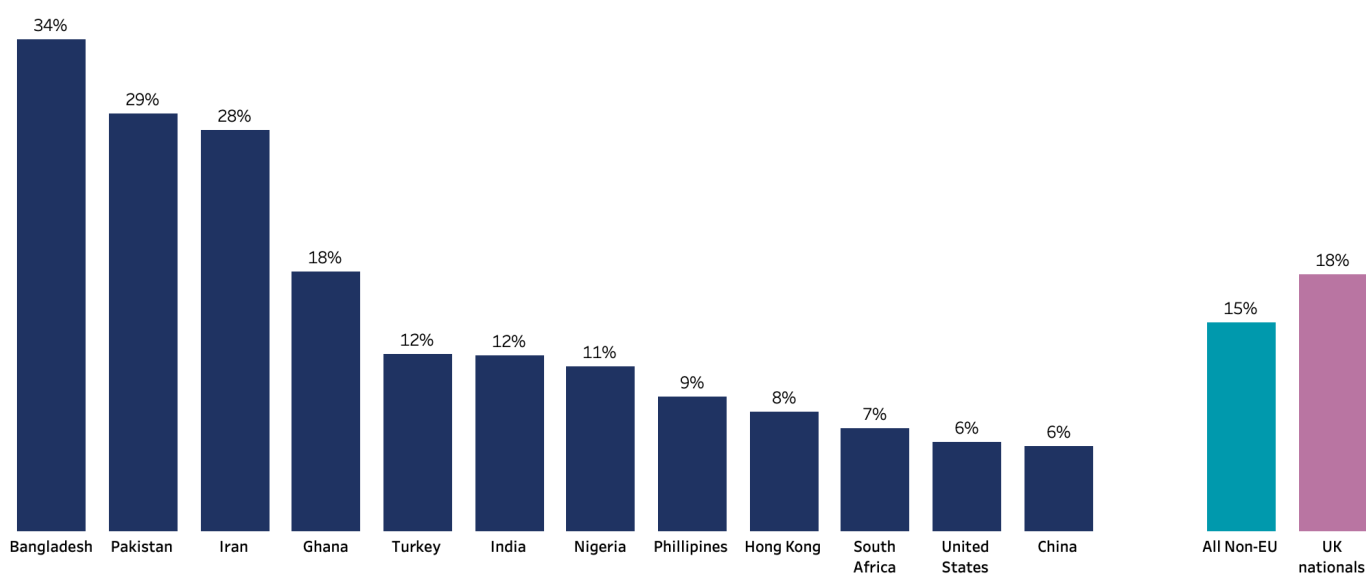
The 2021 Census of England and Wales provides information on several dimensions of household deprivation, which are defined by the Office for National Statistics as education deprivation (when no household member has the equivalent to GCSE grades A\*-C and no one aged 16 to 18 years is a full-time student); housing deprivation (when the household's accommodation is either overcrowded, in a shared dwelling, or has no central heating); and health/disability deprivation (if any person in the household has general health that is bad or very bad or is identified as disabled).

Among non-EU passport holders with less than five years of residence in the UK, 15% lived in households in England and Wales that were deprived in at least two of the dimensions described above (Figure 6). This is slightly lower than the equivalent figure for UK nationals, which was 18%. The highest shares of individuals in deprived households were found among Bangladeshi (27%), Pakistani (21%), and Iranian (18%) nationals.

Figure 6

### Household deprivation levels among non-EU citizens with 0-5 years of residence, by nationality

Deprivation in 2+ dimensions (employment, education, housing, health), England & Wales Census 2021



Note: a household is classified as **deprived in the employment** dimension if any member, not a full-time student, is either unemployed or economically inactive due to long-term sickness or disability. A household is classified as **deprived in the housing** dimension if the household's accommodation is either overcrowded, in a shared dwelling, or has no central heating. A household is **deprived in the education** dimension if if no one has at least a level 2 education and no one aged 16 to 18 years is a full-time student. A household is **deprived in the health/disability** dimension if any person in the household has general health that is bad or very bad or is identified as disabled. Figures only include residents living in households.



## An estimated 10% of working-age non-EU citizens with less than five years of residence receive public benefits, compared to 25% of UK nationals

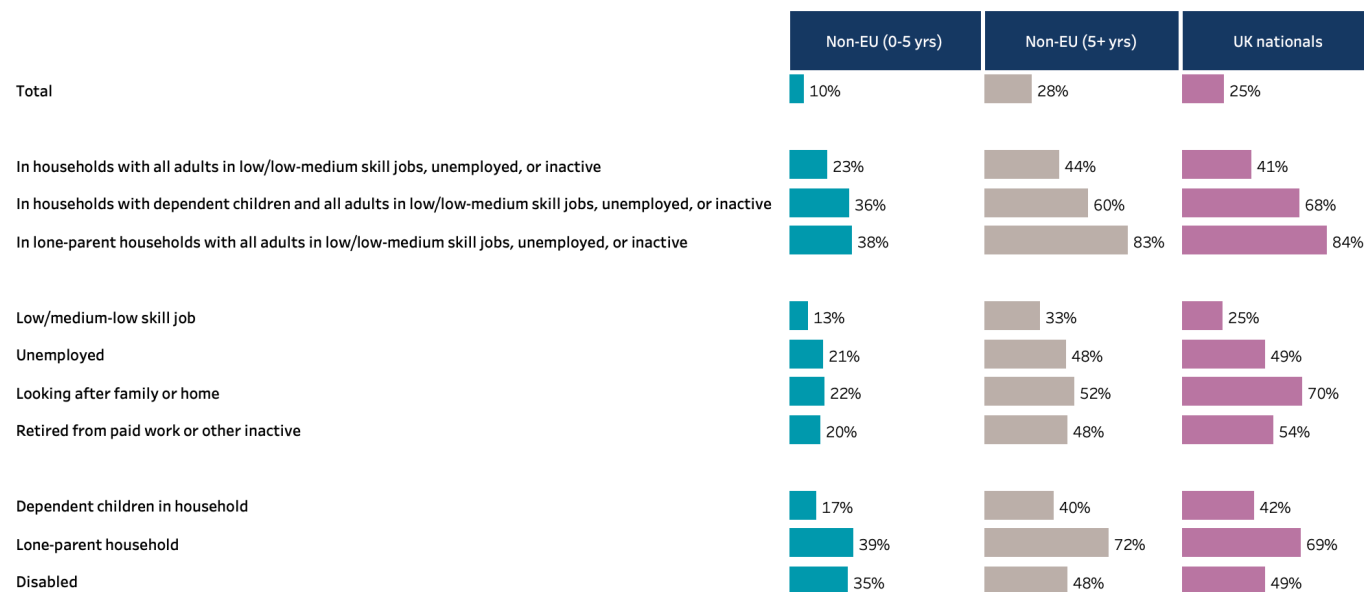
The prevalence of NRPF among non-EU citizens with less than five years of residence in the UK can be seen in survey data showing whether people say they are receiving at least one kind of benefit (including child benefit). Some recently arrived migrants are expected to report receiving benefits, for example, if they are a refugee or are part of a family with a UK citizen or person who does not have NRPF, among other reasons. Overall, only 10% of recently arrived working-age non-EU citizens received public benefits in 2019-21, considerably less than the share among non-EU citizens with longer stays (28%), who are less likely to have NRPF. By comparison, about a quarter of UK working-age nationals received benefits in the same period.

The gap is particularly large when we consider groups of people who are at a higher risk of poverty and would be more likely to receive benefits if they had access to public funds (Figure 7). For example, an estimated 69% of British adults living in a household with dependent children where all adults were in low/low-medium skilled jobs, unemployed, or economically inactive received benefits in 2019–21. Among non-EU citizens with less than five years of residence in the same situation, the percentage was 36%. Similar gaps exist for those looking after their family or home (70% vs. 22%), single parents (72% vs. 39%), or the unemployed (49% vs. 21%).

Figure 7

**Percentage of individuals receiving benefits, by nationality and characteristics linked to a higher risk of poverty**

Individuals aged 16 to 64, Labour Force Survey 2019-21



Source: Migration Observatory Analysis of Labour Force Survey, 2019-21.

Note: The figures include recipients of unemployment benefits, income support, sickness or disability benefits, state pensions, family benefits, child benefits, housing or Council Tax benefits, and other benefits. These are based on self-reports rather than administrative records, which could somewhat inflate the estimates.



**There were around 2,500 successful applications to lift the NRPf condition per year in 2021 and 2022**

Among the largest visa categories, family visa holders (446,000 at the end of 2022) and BN(O)s (147,000) can apply for a change of conditions to have their NRPf condition lifted, while work and study visa holders cannot. The top nationalities of people on family visas at the end of 2022 were Pakistani (65,000 or 15%), Indian (52,000 or 12%), Nigerian (42,000 or 9%) and Bangladeshi (22,000 or 5%). In the BN(O) route, 61% are Hong-Kongers and 33% are Chinese nationals (see Figure 2 above).

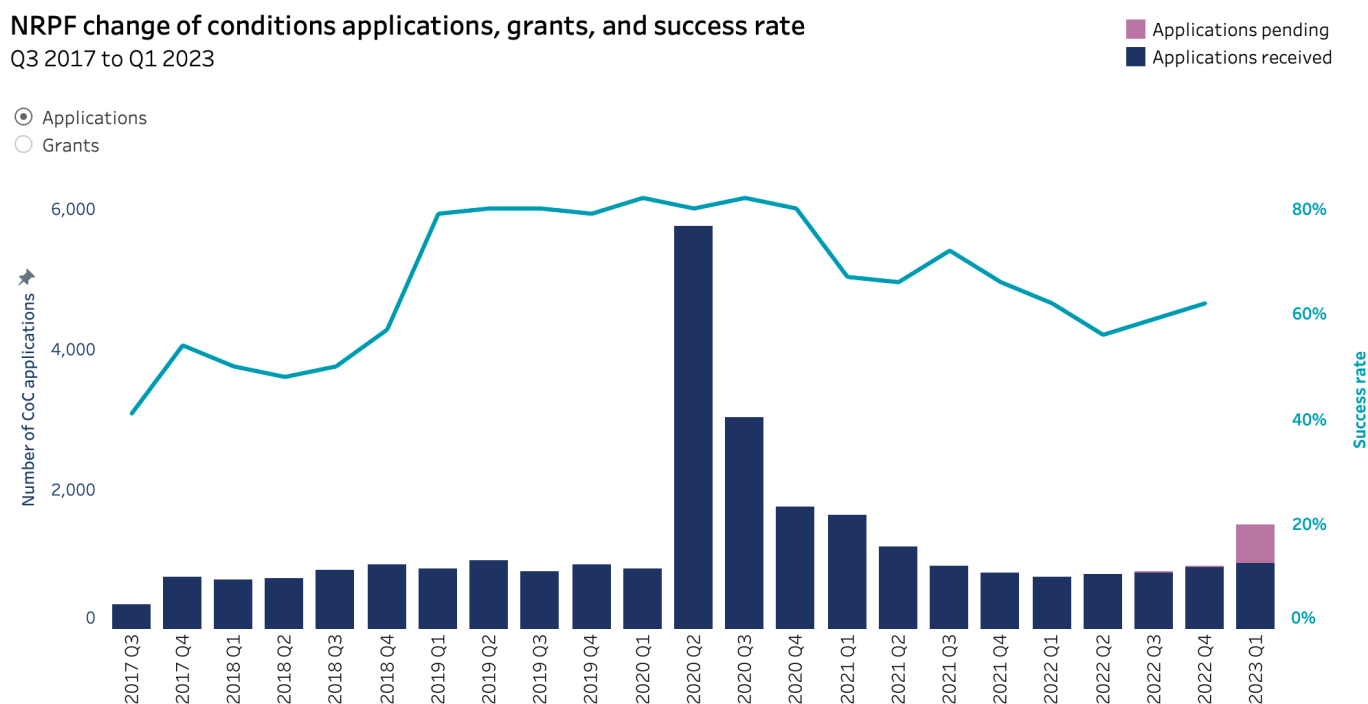
A relatively small share of people with NRPf have the condition lifted by the Home Office, following a successful Change of Conditions (CoC) application. The number of applications increased sharply—and temporarily—during the pandemic in 2020, reaching 5,748 in Q2 2020 (Figure 8). Excluding the 2020 pandemic year, the Home Office received 3,628 CoC applications on average per year, from 2018 to 2022. Home Office figures do not show how many people currently hold a visa from which the NRPf condition has been lifted, as the same person may need to apply more than once if they extend or switch visas. Nonetheless, the numbers indicate that only a small percentage of people holding visas where NRPf can be lifted successfully do so (there were 446,000 family visa holders and 147,000 BNO visa holders at the end of 2022). This is likely due to several factors: first, eligible people who are facing economic hardship may not necessarily be destitute or at risk of destitution, and thus they may decide not to

apply. Second, [visa holders](#) may [be fearful of applying](#) for a CoC in case it [jeopardises future applications](#) for leave to remain or the risk of social services intervening in the care of their children.

Between 2017 and Q1 2023, 64% change of applications were successful, resulting in a little over 20,000 grants of changed status. Processing times for applications have increased over time, particularly after a spike in applications during 2020. Whereas a decision took less than 30 days in 2017-19, this [increased](#) to around 50 days in 2022-23.

Figure 8

NRPF change of conditions applications, grants, and success rate  
Q3 2017 to Q1 2023



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of the change of conditions data, UK Visa & Immigration Transparency Data Q1 2023, table CoC 01.

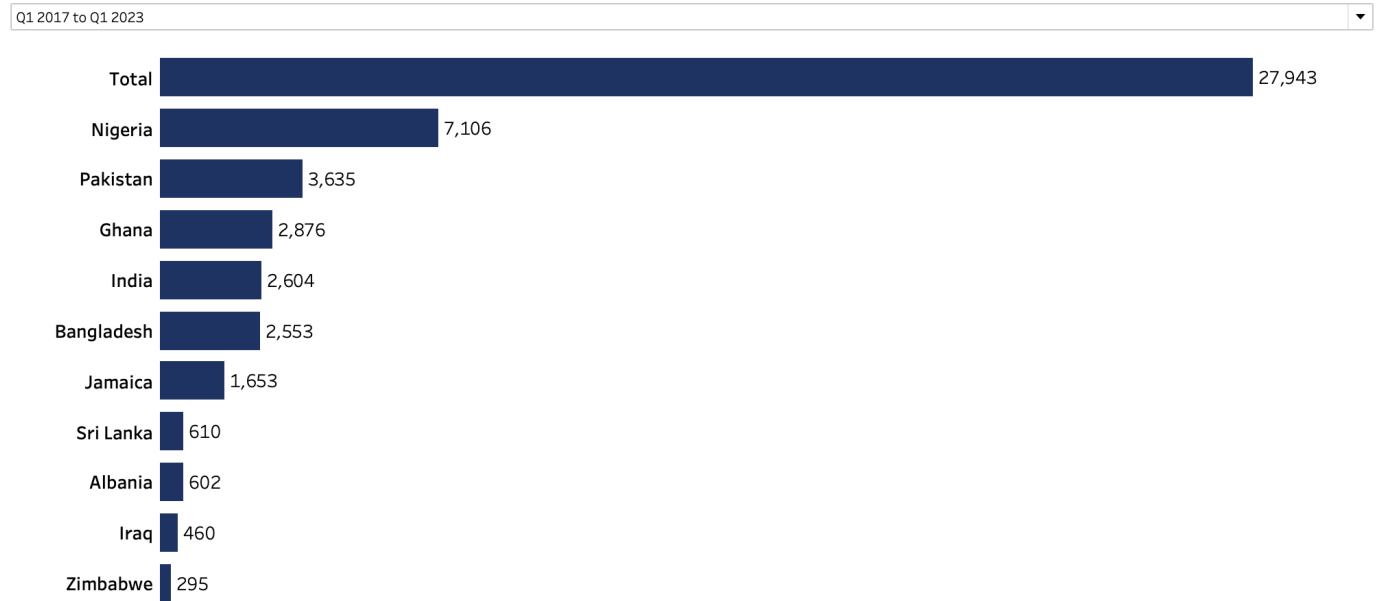


A total of 28,000 change of conditions applications were submitted in the six years to March 2023 (Figure 9). A quarter of applications were from Nigerian citizens, followed by nationals of Pakistan, Ghana, India, and Bangladesh. These were also the top nationalities of family visa holders (Figure 2). However, Turkish (95 CoC applications) and US nationals (159 CoC applications) are not in the top ten nationalities submitting CoC applications despite being among the top ten nationalities on family visas.

While Hong Kong BNO status holders are eligible to apply for a Change of Conditions, very few have done so: 46 since 2021, when the BNO route opened.

Figure 9

Top nationalities submitting applications for an NRPf change of conditions  
Q1 2017 to Q1 2023



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of the change of conditions data, UK Visa & Immigration Transparency Data Q1 2023, table CoC 06.



The application success rate is relatively consistent across different nationalities, averaging 70% from 2017 to Q1 2023 (Figure 10). However, there is more variation in the gender balance of applications. In particular, applications from citizens of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka were more likely to be men. Overall, 64% of applications were submitted by women during this period.

Figure 10

## Success rate and share of women among NRPf change of conditions applications

Q1 2017 to Q1 2023, top nationalities

Nationality	🇪🇺	Applications	Success rate (%)	Applications from women (%)	🇪🇺
Albania		602	68%	78%	
Jamaica		1,653	73%	78%	
Ghana		2,876	72%	73%	
Zimbabwe		295	60%	69%	
Nigeria		7,106	71%	67%	
Iraq		460	55%	66%	
All nationalities		27,943	70%	64%	
India		2,604	66%	54%	
Pakistan		3,635	77%	53%	
Sri Lanka		610	78%	53%	
Bangladesh		2,553	78%	51%	

Source: Migration Observatory analysis of the change of conditions data, UK Visa &amp; Immigration Transparency Data Q1 2023, table CoC 06.



## Evidence gaps and limitations

Until very recently, there was almost no statistical evidence at all on people with NRPf. This briefing has attempted to bring together available data to shed light on the issue, but many data and evidence gaps remain related to the short- and long-term impacts of the NRPf condition.

There is no statutory duty on local authorities to systematically collect anonymised data on the numbers of vulnerable and destitute migrants with NRPf approaching them for support. The NRPf Network [published an annual analysis of the collective data](#) provided by 72 councils in England and Scotland. In 2023, COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) published [data](#) on the number of vulnerable destitute migrants with NRPf approaching Scottish local authorities. However, there is no published data for the numbers of destitute migrants with NRPf approaching social services in Wales and Northern Ireland. Whilst the data published by the NRPf Network and COSLA provides an insight into the potential numbers of people impacted by the NRPf condition, the challenges in collating and reporting data indicate the current figures represent an underreporting of the need and support provided by social services across the UK to vulnerable migrants with NRPf.



The main data sources for understanding migrants' characteristics and outcomes—such as the Annual Population Survey and the Census—do not directly measure immigration status or whether a person has NRPF. The number of years a person has lived in the UK gives only a rough indication of whether they are likely to have NRPF. As a result, it is difficult to quantify the effects of having the NRPF condition, the impacts of having the condition lifted (through either a successful change of conditions or ILR application), or the long-term effects of having had NRPF in the past. For example, evidence suggests that experiences of poverty can have long-term impacts, particularly but not exclusively on children. According to one social cost benefit analysis estimate, such removing the NRPF condition from some migrants could bring net benefits. However, relatively little is known about the fiscal impacts of the NRPF condition, which is relevant since reducing costs to the state is one of the stated goals of the policy. Finally, a limitation of Home Office administrative data (Migrant Journey), on which we rely on to estimate the number of people with NRPF, is that they do not allow us to identify families and family composition.

## Acknowledgements

*Research for this project was produced with the support of abdrn Financial Fairness Trust.*

*Thanks to **Roshan Melwani** for his assistance. Thanks to **Jacqui Broadhead, Mubin Haq, Caz Hattam, Lucy Leon, Rupinder Parhar, Ilona Pinter, and Madeleine Sumption** for comments on an earlier version of this briefing.*

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Based at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford, the Migration Observatory provides independent, authoritative, evidence-based analysis of data on migration and migrants in the UK, to inform media, public and policy debates, and to generate high quality research on international migration and public policy issues. The Observatory's analysis involves experts from a wide range of disciplines and departments at the University of Oxford.



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## Recommended citation

Cuiibus, M. & Fernández-Reino, M. (2023) *Deprivation and the no recourse to public funds (NRPF) condition*. Migration Observatory briefing, COMPAS, University of Oxford

