



Home Office

Streamlined asylum processing

Version 1.0

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About this guidance

This guidance provides information on making decisions under streamlined asylum processing – this includes deciding asylum claims without a substantive asylum interview where appropriate.

On 13 December 2022, the Prime Minister outlined a range of immigration-related plans: [PM statement on illegal migration: 13 December 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-statement-on-illegal-migration-13-december-2022). This included an ambition to triple the decision-making productivity and clear the backlog of legacy asylum claims by the end of 2023. Streamlined asylum processing is one way in which we hope to achieve these ambitions.

You must read this guidance and be aware of other key guidance products, in particular the Asylum Policy guidance on:

- Withdrawing asylum claims
- Asylum interviews
- Assessing credibility and refugee status in asylum claims lodged before 28 June 2022
- Humanitarian protection
- Family asylum claims
- Dependants and former dependants
- Refugee and humanitarian protection leave
- Pending prosecutions in asylum claims

You must also refer to the relevant country policy and information notes.

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Streamlined asylum processing applies to legacy (pre-28 June 2022) claims only. On 28 June 2022, provisions within the Nationality and Borders Act ('the 2022 Act') came into force establishing a new framework for asylum decision making. This included the differentiated asylum system, which allows the UK to treat two groups of refugees differently on the basis of whether they 'came directly' to the UK, made an asylum claim, 'without delay' and, where applicable, showed 'good cause' for their illegal entry or presence. The 2022 Act provisions also established in statute the test for determining whether an asylum seekers' fear of persecution is well-founded.

Individuals who made their asylum claim before these provisions came into force on 28 June 2022 are known as ‘legacy’ claims.

It is in everyone’s interest to reach a swift decision on protection claims, giving individuals the certainty, they need regarding their future in the UK. We recognise that many individuals have been waiting a long time for an initial decision. Therefore, the Prime Ministerial commitment to clear the legacy initial decision backlog by the end of 2023 and triple the productivity of decision-makers represents both our intention to get individuals a decision on their application more quickly and then to embed, in the most efficient way, the new asylum system introduced by the 2022 Act.

The streamlined asylum processing model is intended to be used for the processing of manifestly well-founded cases in the legacy caseload. Streamlined asylum processing will give decision-makers increased flexibility over the process of making asylum decisions in the interest of making the accurate and high-quality decisions as quickly as possible, for example without a personal interview where a positive decision can be taken based on the evidence available.

The streamlined asylum processing model concentrates on legacy claimants from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Syria, and Yemen. Where an interview is necessary to decide the claim, targeted and shorter interviews may be undertaken to ensure that decisions are being taken efficiently.

The streamlined asylum process will ensure that Home Office resource is used efficiently; freeing up our workforce’s time to make more decisions whilst maintaining the priorities of accuracy and high quality. Further work is being undertaken to more efficiently process all outstanding asylum claims – including those made after 28 June 2022.

A substantive decision should not be made in an asylum case where the person would be subject to inadmissibility action as an EU national, or where the third country inadmissibility policy applies. See [Inadmissibility: safe third country cases and EU and EEA Asylum Claims](#) for further information. Consequently, streamlined asylum processing does not apply to inadmissible claims. A claim should only be considered for streamlined asylum processing if it has been confirmed that the asylum claim will be considered substantively in the UK.

This guidance is not applicable where the claimant has provided further protection or human rights representations following the refusal or withdrawal of an earlier protection or human rights claim. Decision makers must continue to refer to and apply the guidance on Further submissions in those cases.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors then email [Asylum Policy](#).

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email the Guidance Rules and Forms team.

Publication

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was published:

- version **1.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **23 February 2023**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This is new guidance.

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Applications in respect of children

Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 requires the Home Office to carry out its existing functions in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK.

This guidance will not apply to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASCs) or accompanied children who have claims not linked to a family group. Separate work is ongoing to make the processing of asylum claims from these children more efficient. For information on how to consider claims from those under the age of 18, please see the processing children's claims guidance.

The Family asylum claims guidance must be used where the main claimant and their dependant children have common grounds of alleged persecution, which can be considered as part of a single asylum decision. Streamlined asylum processing will work in conjunction with the family asylum claims process. Family asylum claims can be processed through the streamlined asylum process where appropriate.

In most cases the principal claimant will normally be able to set out any protection needs on behalf of their children. Information regarding dependant children will be gathered during the screening and registration process.

Where there are child welfare or protection concerns that may involve safeguarding issues within the family unit the case must be referred immediately to the Asylum Safeguarding Hub. See the 'safeguarding' section of the Assessing credibility and refugee status in asylum claims lodged before 28 June 2022 guidance for more information.

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Background

The Home Office is committed to ensuring asylum claims, where admissible, are correctly decided in accordance with our international obligations under the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), in a timely and sensitive way and on an individual, objective and impartial basis.

The department is pursuing a wide range of programmes that will transform the current asylum system, aiming to significantly speed up asylum decision-making for the benefit of all involved in the asylum system. The Department recognises that there is an opportunity to accelerate the processing of cohorts of claims which are generally manifestly well-founded.

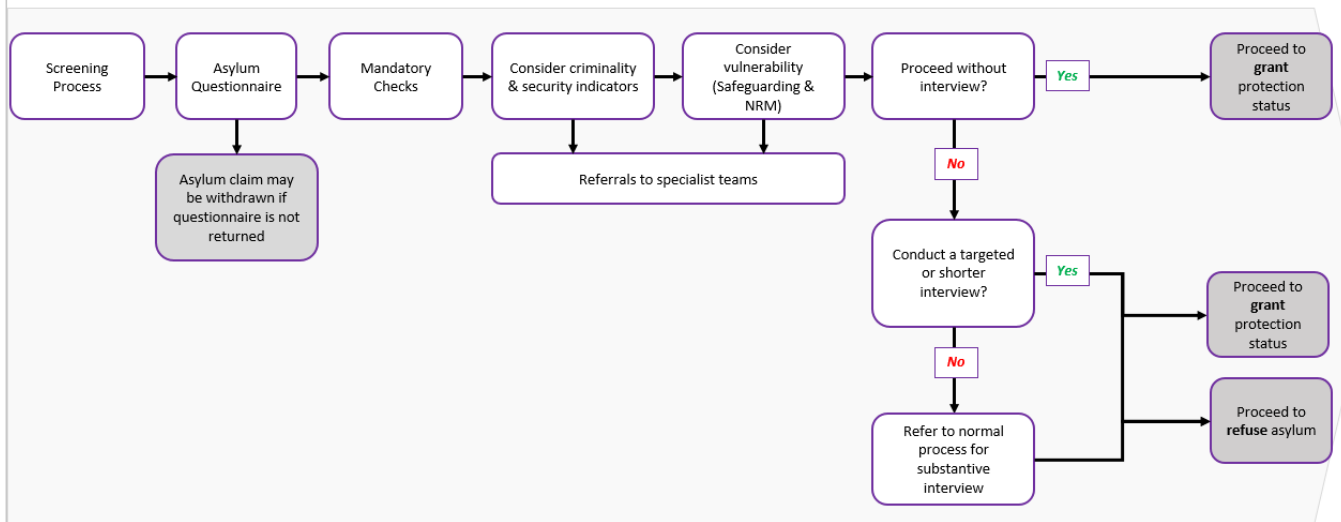
The streamlined asylum process will encourage decision-makers to take positive decisions on claims without conducting a personal interview where it is appropriate to do so. The Home Office recognises that claimants from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Syria and Yemen are the most likely individuals to which omitting a personal interview will be appropriate.

These countries have been specified for inclusion in the streamlined asylum process on the basis of their high-grant rate of protection status (refugee status or humanitarian protection). All these nationalities have a grant rate of over 95% and over 100 grants of protection status in the year-ending September 2022. Please refer to [Migration statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/migration-statistics) for further information.

There will still be occasions where a personal interview is required for nationals of Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Syria and Yemen. Where this is the case, this policy encourages the use of targeted and shorter interviews to make the decision-making process as efficient as possible.

The diagram below provides an overview of the streamlined asylum process.

STREAMLINED ASYLUM PROCESS



Policy intention

The policy objective is to deliver a firm, but fair, and efficient asylum system that ensures those who need protection are granted as soon as possible to start to integrate and rebuild their lives in the UK whilst identifying those who should not benefit from a grant of protection status. Making an asylum decision without a substantive asylum interview or completing a targeted / shorter interview will ensure that claims are considered without unnecessary delay. This policy will form part of our approach to the remaining outstanding legacy claims, that is cases made before 28 June 2022, with a view to concluding them all by the end of 2023.

Relevant legislation

Current UK asylum law is derived from a range of sources; international and European Law, primary and secondary legislation, the Immigration Rules (which are in turn supported by policy and guidance), and a substantial body of caselaw. For more information, please see the 'Relevant Legislation' section of the Assessing credibility and refugee status in asylum claims lodged before 28 June 2022 guidance.

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Screening process

When an adult (those over the age of 18 years old) claims asylum in the UK, their asylum claim is registered. Following system and security database checks, including biometric checks, the Home Office undertake a screening interview to gather their basic details to confirm their identity and a brief overview of why they have come to the UK and claimed asylum. The screening interview also covers:

- whether they have any dependants on their asylum claim
- if they have family in the UK
- their travel history, including if they sought or could have sought asylum in a safe third country
- trafficking indicators
- any physical and mental health conditions which also helps to identify any vulnerabilities and decide whether someone is suitable for detention
- questions relating to criminality and security issues

Mandatory systems and security database checks must be completed during the screening process, normally this would be prior to the screening interview so as to establish if the person is already known in any capacity before the interview commences. If you identify that any of these checks have not been completed, you must arrange for any missing checks to be completed and update the results on caseworking systems before an asylum decision is made. For more information see section System and Security Checks in the Asylum screening and routing guidance.

If the person wanting to claim asylum is already a failed asylum seeker or has previously had their claim for asylum withdrawn, it will not be appropriate to register it as a second claim for asylum instead the further submission process should be followed. See the further submissions guidance.

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Asylum questionnaire

Where a claimant in the legacy caseload, who lodged their claim before the 28 June 2022, has not had a personal interview and it is deemed possible to decide the claim without a personal interview should sufficient evidence be provided in response to the questionnaire, you should normally dispatch an asylum questionnaire to claimants in order to seek further details about their asylum claim and to take account of any changes in circumstances.

It would not usually be appropriate to serve an asylum questionnaire to claimants who have already taken part in a personal interview but there may be occasions where you deem this to be worthwhile, for example you need to check whether there has been a change in circumstances between the personal interview and the decision. Alternatively, if specific further information is required from these individuals, you may write out to seek clarification.

The asylum questionnaire may cover matters such as:

- whether the claimant wishes to withdraw their claim
- personal details, for example residential address
- identity and nationality
- previous employment
- previous addresses
- family
- reasons for claiming asylum
- fear of what would happen if returned to country of origin
- physical and mental health issues
- exploitation (trafficking and modern slavery if applicable)
- other reasons for needing to stay in the UK
- whether there are grounds for suspecting the individual may have been involved in activities of concern that would cause them to be excluded from the Refugee Convention
- the family members dependant on the claim including any UK born children
- any further evidence the claimant wishes to provide in support of their claim

Any further evidence provided will be helpful in establishing whether a personal interview is required and may result in a quicker decision being taken on the asylum claim.

You must provide claimants with a minimum of 20 working days from the date of service of the questionnaire to return the asylum questionnaire. Should the claimant not respond within this time period, you must send a reminder and provide the claimant with a further 10 working days to return the asylum questionnaire unless a decision can be made at that point, for example because a substantive interview has taken place during this period or further evidence has been provided by the claimant separately.

Where a claimant requests an extension of the deadline in order to respond to the questionnaire, you must consider the request for an extension on a case-by-case basis. It will normally be appropriate to accept such requests as long as the requested extension is proportionate for the task of completing the asylum questionnaire. If the request is reasonable and proportionate to the reasons for the request, you must confirm that an extension has been granted. If the request is not reasonable and proportionate, you must confirm that the claim may be withdrawn if it is not returned within the timescale provided. Extension requests for durations of greater than 20 working days are unlikely to be reasonable and proportionate unless exceptional circumstances are presented.

If the asylum questionnaire is returned, you must use the responses to inform your decision-making. The claimant may provide detail in their questionnaire that suggests a referral to Special Cases Unit (SCU) could be necessary. If so, a substantive interview will be required to more clearly establish whether the applicant has been involved in conduct that could lead to exclusion under Articles 1F and 33(2) of the Refugee Convention and from Humanitarian Protection, and so a referral to SCU.

Should the claimant not return the Asylum Questionnaire in the time period provided, the asylum claim may be treated as withdrawn under Paragraph 333C of the Immigration Rules. You should refer such claims to the relevant team to consider whether withdrawal of the asylum claim is appropriate. For further information, please see the Asylum Policy Instruction on Withdrawing asylum claims.

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Trafficking / Modern Slavery indicators

There are questions asked during the screening interview that help to identify whether someone has potentially been or potentially is a victim of human trafficking or modern slavery. If there are any indicators, the screening officer, (and subsequent officers if this has not been done previously), is under a statutory duty as a First Responder to refer the person to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). If they are an adult, then consent needs to be obtained in order to be referred. If an adult does not consent to being referred into the NRM process, then a Duty to Notify online form is completed instead.

The relevant NRM and Duty to Notify referral forms are available here: [Report modern slavery – GOV.UK](#).

An NRM referral does not prevent an assessment of someone's asylum claim which results in a positive protection decision (a grant of permission to stay). If someone is eligible for refugee status or humanitarian protection, then you can grant protection status or refuse the asylum claim with a right of appeal, even if there is an outstanding NRM reasonable or conclusive grounds decision as to whether they are a victim of human trafficking or modern slavery.

For further information, please see the statutory guidance in relation to [Modern Slavery](#).

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Safeguarding

Protecting vulnerable adults and children is a key cross-cutting departmental priority and safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If you believe that anyone may be in danger at any stage of the asylum process, you need to take immediate action to ensure their safety. In all circumstances a referral should be made to the Safeguarding Hub and advice sought on case progression, in line with the asylum casework process. Please see the 'Safeguarding' section in the Assessing credibility and refugee status in asylum claims lodged before 28 June 2022 guidance for further information.

You do not have to stop making the asylum decision whilst a safeguarding issue is investigated. However, if there is information to suggest that a claim should not be considered as part of the streamlined asylum process, refer the case to the Safeguarding Hub and seek advice from a Senior Caseworker.

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Consideration of the asylum claim

All decisions on asylum claims must be taken in accordance with Part 11 of the Immigration Rules and the published asylum policies, for example assessing credibility and refugee status, humanitarian protection and refugee and humanitarian protection leave.

Exclusion

There are some exceptions to the obligation to provide protection based on the conduct of the claimant.

If you identify that someone may fall for exclusion under Article 1F of the Refugee Convention or that Article 33(2) of the Refugee Convention may be applicable, then it will not be appropriate for the claim to be processed through the streamlined asylum process by Asylum and Human Rights Operations. Instead, the case should be referred to SCU or FNORC to examine the issues relating to exclusion.

For more information about the application of Article 1F and 33(2), please see the Asylum Policy Instruction on Exclusion.

If you are unsure about whether the criteria are met to refer the claim outside of the streamlined asylum process, please speak to your line manager.

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Omitting the personal interview where protection status can be granted

Under Paragraph 339NA(i), a decision to grant refugee status or humanitarian protection can be taken without conducting a personal interview where sufficient evidence is available. Where the claimant does not qualify for refugee status or humanitarian protection, a decision must not be made without a personal interview even if the claimant qualifies for, discretionary leave or other kind of leave to remain (unless one of the other criteria in paragraph 339NA is met). This is to ensure that the claimant has an opportunity to advance their claim and explain all their reasons they wish to remain in the UK.

Evidence can be provided during the screening interview that confirm someone's identity, nationality, and the core materials facts of their claim. Claimants may have also submitted documents in support of their claim for example family, or civil identification documents, arrest warrants, court documents, political membership cards, letters of support from religious leaders / community groups, newspaper articles, social media printouts, photographs, medical evidence. You must also consider the contents of any asylum questionnaire which has been returned when considering whether the substantive asylum interview can be omitted.

Whilst the burden is on the claimant to provide evidence, decision makers must assess the available evidence and, if appropriate, refer to the relevant team to invite claimants to submit further information to help substantiate certain aspects of their account. As part of this, decision makers should refer to the relevant country information. Further information from the claimant may be requested in writing where you decide that to do so is likely to be more efficient than interviewing the claimant.

In order to decide whether the claimant qualifies for protection status based on the evidence available, you must consider the Assessing credibility and refugee status and humanitarian protection guidance.

High-grant countries

The streamlined asylum processing model is intended to be used for the processing of manifestly well-founded cases.

The Home Office currently assesses it appropriate to omit personal interviews from nationals of Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Syria and Yemen where sufficient evidence is available to confirm nationality and there are no other factors that would mean a personal interview was required, for example considerations related to exclusion.

This is on the basis of their current high-grant rate of protection status (refugee status or humanitarian protection) due to the current security and humanitarian situation in those countries. All these nationalities have a grant rate of over 95% and over 100 grants of protection status in the year-ending September 2022. Please see [Migration statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/migration-statistics) for more information. Whilst this is the threshold for inclusion in the model currently, this, along with the countries included, is subject to change and will be regularly reviewed.

Omitting the personal interview will only be appropriate where you have decided that the claimant is a national of these countries to a reasonable degree of likelihood and having considered the relevant Country Policy Information Note, you have decided that the claimant qualifies for protection status. Where the claimant's nationality is unconfirmed based on the evidence available, then you must refer the case to the relevant team to seek further evidence or interview the claimant.

Other types of claims

A personal interview may also be omitted when you are able to take a positive decision (a grant of refugee status or humanitarian protection) on the basis of evidence available on a case-by-case basis, for example where the evidence provided in a returned questionnaire is sufficient to ascertain that the claimant qualifies for protection status. Omitting personal interviews is not limited to the nationalities noted in the [high-grant countries](#) section and can be done in-line with [paragraph 339NA of the immigration Rules](#) on a case-by-case basis.

Separately, the Home Office will continue to consider whether other cohorts can be identified to progress without a personal interview on a broader scale outside of the nationalities identified in the [high-grant countries](#) section.

Other reasons for omitting the substantive asylum interview

There may be other common circumstances where it is appropriate to omit the substantive asylum interview.

Medical cases

As stated in [Paragraph 339NA\(vii\) of the Immigration Rules](#), it may be appropriate to omit the personal interview, where there are medical issues that prevents the claimant from attending or participating fully in a personal interview.

However, interviews must not be suspended or cancelled solely on the basis that a claimant has informed the Home Office that they intend to seek medical evidence in support of their asylum claim. You must consider any relevant medical issues in conjunction with asylum claims and follow the Medical evidence in asylum claims guidance, in particular see 'Requests to delay substantive interviews' section. See 'non-attendance due to illness' section of the Conducting asylum interviews guidance for further information.

Cases where an interview is necessary

Where you are unable to grant protection status on the basis of the information available pre-personal interview (screening interview and questionnaire) and the required information cannot be sourced via another method, such as writing to the claimant, and there are no other reasons why the interview should be omitted in accordance with Immigration Rules 339NA, you must refer the case to the relevant team who will proceed to interview the claimant.

Any interview must be conducted in accordance with the guidance on asylum interviews.

Targeted interviews

Where further information is required to ascertain a claimant's nationality, a targeted interview may be completed. A targeted interview is a personal interview for the purposes of paragraph 339NA and therefore you must refer to the Asylum interview guidance.

Targeted interviews will predominantly be used to ascertain a claimant's nationality, for example where insufficient evidence has been provided to confirm that the claimant is the nationality they claim to be. These interviews will typically last 30 to 60 minutes in length as they focus on the specific area of nationality in order to obtain the information required to make an asylum decision.

A targeted interview is not indicative of the final determination of the asylum claim and may lead to a grant of protection status, other form of leave to remain, or refusal.

Shorter interviews

Where limited further information is required to ascertain a small number of the claimant's material facts, you should conduct a shorter interview. This may be on issues relating to fundamental aspects of the individual's asylum claim, for example a Convention reason (such as religion) or a claimant's journey to the UK.

Shorter interviews will involve asking questions which will help you to assess the credibility of certain elements of the asylum claim. You should probe for further information that cannot be obtained through documentation, a questionnaire, or by writing out for further information.

A shorter interview may also be used when a claimant has not completed a full screening interview. These interviews will typically last up to 2 hours as they focus on specific core material facts in order to make an asylum decision. If the interviewing officer considers that they have sufficient credible evidence to make a positive protection decision to the required standard of proof, then the interview should be concluded.

A shorter asylum interview is a personal interview for the purposes of [paragraph 339NA of the Immigration Rules](#) and is not indicative of the final determination of the asylum claim and may lead to a grant of protection status, other form of leave to remain, or refusal.

When targeted and shorter interviews are not appropriate

A substantive interview must be conducted where you determine that more substantial information is required regarding the claim than can be determined in a targeted or shorter interview. The need for a substantive interview may be identified based on the evidence available pre-interview, such as evidence provided in response to an asylum questionnaire, or during a targeted or shorter interview. If there is any information that affects credibility adversely, such as conflicting statements or evidence that requires further probing and investigation, then a full substantive interview will usually be conducted that examines all the necessary and relevant aspects of the asylum claim. This may include where vulnerability factors such as safeguarding, trafficking, modern slavery indicators, criminality or security concerns become apparent. These may need to be covered during a longer, substantive interview, in line with the Asylum interview guidance. This enables the Home Office to undertake its key duties and functions and affords the claimant a reasonable opportunity to explain any inconsistencies or discrepancies with known information.

A substantive asylum interview is a personal interview for the purposes of [paragraph 339NA of the Immigration Rules](#) and is not indicative of the final determination of the asylum claim and may lead to a grant of protection status, other form of leave to remain, or refusal.

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Granting protection status and permission to stay

For further information on granting protection status and permission to stay please refer to the guidance on Refugee and Humanitarian Protection Leave.

For further information on implementing and serving asylum decisions, please refer to the guidance on drafting, implementing and serving asylum decisions.

For further information on the status and permission to stay for dependants, please refer to the guidance on Dependants.

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Granting humanitarian protection

When humanitarian protection is granted, you must first provide reasons for the refusal of refugee status in the decision letter before explaining the grant of humanitarian protection.

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