



Home Office

# Streamlined asylum processing for children's casework

Version 2.0

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# About this guidance

This guidance provides information on the temporary changes to streamline asylum processing within Children's Asylum Casework which has been trialled from 17 March 2023. This guidance provides information on making asylum decisions under streamlined asylum processing and the changes to how we implement the duty to trace family.

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 and guidance on streamlined asylum processing for adult and family asylums can be found on the Migration and Borders Guidance platform.

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

- Asylum interviews
- Assessing credibility and refugee status in asylum claims lodged before 28 June 2022
- Humanitarian protection
- Family asylum claims
- Family tracing
- Dependants and former dependants
- Refugee and humanitarian protection leave
- Pending prosecutions in asylum claims
- Processing children's asylum claims
- Streamlined asylum processing
- Withdrawing asylum claims
- Implementing and serving the decision

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 and from 13 July this process was extended to apply to non-legacy ('flow') claims made from 28 June 2022 to 6 March 2023.

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. A [written Ministerial statement](#) was laid in Parliament on 8 June which set out that this differentiation policy would be paused via a change to the Immigration Rules in July 2023. This policy change does apply to children who applied for asylum from 28 June 2022 (whether or not they are covered by the streamlined asylum process).

This means we will stop making grouping decisions under the differentiated asylum policy after these Rules changes and those individuals who are successful in their asylum application, including those who are granted humanitarian protection, will receive the same conditions. Our ability to remove failed asylum applicants remains unchanged. Children who have already received a "Group 2" or humanitarian protection decision under post-28 June 2022 policies will be contacted and will have their conditions aligned to those afforded to "Group 1" refugees. This includes length of permission to stay, route to settlement, and eligibility for Family Reunion.

The 2022 Act provisions established the test for determining whether an asylum seekers' fear of persecution is well-founded and this policy is not impacted by the policy change made.

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

Claims made after 28 June 2022, non-legacy cases, are known as 'flow' cases.

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 our intention to get individuals a decision on their application more quickly. This process was extended on 17 July 2023 to flow claims made from 28 June 2022 to 6 March 2022 with the view to progress all claims within this cohort to an initial decision faster, reducing the total backlog of outstanding asylum claims.

This guidance outlines our plan to speed up evidence gathering in children's casework through a trial streamlined process. Children's asylum casework processes are for claims from claimants who raised their claim for asylum as a minor under the age of 18 years. This includes claims from accompanied (AASC) and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC). AASC for these purposes are children in the care of relatives in the UK, however they have claimed asylum in their own right and are not included in a family claim for asylum. We will test the feasibility of a new event, known as a Preliminary Information Meeting (PIM) – the intention of this event is to meet with a child early in the process to seek information that enables us to progress their case as efficiently as possible.

The streamlined asylum processing model for children focuses on legacy claimants (claims lodged before 28 June 2022) and flow claims made from 28 June 2022 to 6 March 2023, from the top 5 high grant countries for children's casework. Given that grant rates fluctuate, the countries included are subject to change so will be regularly reviewed. Currently the top high grant countries in children's casework which will be included are Afghanistan, Eritrea, Sudan, Syria, and Vietnam. We will monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of gathering evidence through a PIM and consider the merits of rolling this out more widely.

Once a PIM has taken place in some cases it may be possible to omit a substantive asylum interview where a positive decision on a claim can be taken based on the evidence available. However, where an interview is necessary to decide the claim, a substantive asylum interview may be undertaken to ensure that decisions are being taken efficiently.

If it is not possible to grant refugee status following a completed PIM, then a substantive asylum interview should be arranged for the child. A Statement of Evidence Form (SEF) is not required to be completed under these circumstances. If a child undergoes a PIM and there is sufficient evidence to grant Humanitarian Protection only, then the child will also receive a substantive asylum interview.

No decision to refuse protection status for a child will be made just on the basis of a PIM alone.

Changes are also being made to how we operate the duty of the Secretary of State to trace the members of an unaccompanied minor's family. This obligation will still be fulfilled however it will now be completed by another team within the Home Office in children's decision-making units rather than Decision-Makers, which is a change from what is set out in the current Family tracing guidance. The changes to the duty to trace families for unaccompanied children apply only to children from the nationalities in scope of the streamlined process identified within this guidance. Children from other nationalities must continue to be processed in line with the Family tracing guidance.

The changes to the duty to family trace are being undertaken to increase efficiency in the process. Decision-makers will no longer be routinely taking efforts to trace family going forward and this will ensure their time is spent developing expertise and greater consistency in progressing asylum decisions. The child will still benefit from family tracing, where it is appropriate to do so, as this will be conducted separately by other trained members of staff.

The streamlined asylum process will ensure that Home Office resource is used efficiently; freeing up our workforce's time to make more decisions for children whilst maintaining the priorities of accuracy and high-quality decisions.

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 in respect of children.

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 applicable to initial asylum decisions only. 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.

This guidance is for streamlined asylum processing changes within children's asylum casework only. This is separate to the streamlined asylum process for adult and family asylum claims. Please see the guidance for Streamlined asylum processing for adult and family claims for more information.

This guidance is for the cohorts specified and other outstanding claims within children's casework will continue to be progressed through the current processes in place. This guidance does not aim to reflect processes that may apply to children impacted by the Illegal Migration Act 2023.

## 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 **2.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **25 July 2023**

## Changes from last version of this guidance

Revisions have been made to this guidance to:

- incorporate changes to the streamlined asylum processing, which was expanded from legacy claims only to non-legacy claims (flow cases) made from 28 June 2022 to 6 March 2023 for the 5 high-grant nationalities of child legacy claims
- remove references to the differentiation policy which was paused in the July 2023 Immigration Rules changes as explained in the Written Ministerial Statement of 8 June 2023

- update on when a statement of evidence form is not required

## **Related content**

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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 those awaiting a decision.

The streamlined asylum process will encourage decision-makers to take positive decisions on claims without conducting a substantive interview, where it is appropriate to do so. As of the date of this guidance, the Home Office recognises that claimants from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Sudan, Syria and Vietnam are the most likely individuals to which omitting a substantive interview following a PIM could be appropriate within children's asylum casework.

These countries have been specified for inclusion in the trial of streamlined asylum process for children 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. 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.

There will still be occasions where a substantive interview is required for nationals of Afghanistan, Eritrea, Sudan, Syria and Vietnam. 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.

Family tracing for claims from the streamlined asylum processing cohort within children's casework will still be performed where appropriate, however this will not routinely be undertaken by the Decision-Maker and instead will be conducted by a Home Office employee. An assessment using information provided by the claimant will be made by the Home Office employee to determine in line with the current Family tracing guidance whether it is appropriate to initiate family tracing. The duty to trace family will remain with decision-makers for cases not being considered under the streamlined asylum processes. Detailed guidance on Family tracing is set out in this advice.

The changes above were implemented to streamline asylum processing for children through a trial beginning 17 March 2023. For more information on this trial, including the length and assessment, please see testing the feasibility of changes. This document is to be used whilst the trial is ongoing. Any reforms introduced permanently to children's asylum casework will be updated in relevant guidance.



## 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 following a Preliminary Information Meeting (PIM) without a substantive asylum interview (for positive decisions only based on sufficient evidence being available after meeting the child) or completing a targeted / shorter interview (with the PIM information ensuring this can be more focussed) or completing a fuller interview where appropriate to do so will ensure that claims are considered without unnecessary delay. The introduction of these changes is intended to reduce delays in the asylum system for children through the lack of sufficiently completed Statement of Evidence Forms (SEF) being returned to decision-making teams within the specified 60 days.

Even where an interview is needed following the PIM our objective is that we can progress to hold this event more quickly. 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

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. Please see Processing children's asylum claims guidance for more relevant legislation and legal frameworks in respect of children.

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 and Assessing credibility and refugee status guidance after 28 June 2022.

### Related content

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# Changes to current process

## Cohorts within streamlined asylum processing

The changes to the existing process for considering claims within children's asylum casework are outlined below. Children's asylum casework processes are for claims from claimants who raised their claim for asylum as a minor under the age of eighteen years. This includes claims from accompanied (AASC) and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC). AASC for these purposes are children in the care of relatives in the UK, however they have claimed asylum in their own right and are not included in a family claim for asylum.

As mentioned in the about this guidance section, streamlined asylum processing is currently only applicable to those awaiting an initial decision who claimed asylum prior to the 6 March 2023.

All claims being processed by the designated Decision-Making Units (DMUs) to consider children's casework, who meet the criteria for consideration under a streamlined asylum process, are eligible for inclusion. This includes claimants awaiting an initial decision who claimed asylum prior to the 6 March 2023 who are now over the age of 18 but made their asylum application whilst a minor.

The streamlined asylum processing model is intended to be used for the processing of claims from the current top five high-grant nationalities within children's casework. The Home Office currently assess it is appropriate to initially apply these changes to be tested to nationals of Afghanistan, Eritrea, Sudan, Syria and Vietnam in children's casework in order to test the feasibility of this model.

All nationalities may receive a PIM in future if it is considered that wider roll-out of the changes are to be implemented throughout children's casework.

## Preliminary Information Meeting

The Preliminary Information Meeting (PIM), is a meeting which will be held between the claimant and a Home Office decision-maker in the presence of a Responsible Adult. The purpose of the PIM is to gather information proactively from a meeting with the child specifically for the purpose of progressing their claim.

## Arranging the PIM

The designated team(s) who assist with case progression within the Decision-Making Units (DMUs) considering children's asylum casework will identify appropriate cases to receive an invitation to attend a PIM and send the invitation letter to the child and Responsible Adult acting on behalf of the child. If there is a Legal Representative correctly recorded on the system with a completed Letter of Authority received by the Home Office, then an invitation to attend the PIM should also be sent to them. The Responsible Adult details should already be recorded on

CID/Atlas following completion of the Welfare Form. In most cases this is likely to be an employee from a local authority, or a family member for AASC.

The Responsible Adult will make arrangements for the child to attend the PIM. The location should be private and can include, but is not limited to, appropriate office space within a local authority or NGO office. The use of the existing Remote Asylum Interview Process to hold the PIM remotely via video conferencing can be utilised where a local authority is signed up to the Remote Asylum Interview Process with the DMUs. However, the PIM is not considered to be an asylum interview. Please see the Processing children's asylum claims guidance for more information on the use of video conferencing.

If the child wishes to hold the PIM in-person, the DMUs should be notified by the Responsible Adult so that arrangements can be made to facilitate this within a Home Office building.

An interpreter should be provided by the Home Office where an interpreter is required to conduct the PIM.

If the child indicates to the decision-maker that they would feel more comfortable sharing their details at the PIM with either a male or female interpreter and/or Home Office Decision-Maker conducting the PIM, efforts to attempt to accommodate this request should be made. The Responsible Adult must notify the team progressing the case using the contact details from the invitation to the PIM letter at least three days before the PIM is due to be held with any requested preferences for a male or female interpreter or Decision-Maker to allow teams time to attempt to accommodate the request.

There is not currently a specific timeframe on when the PIM should occur as individual circumstances will vary which we will take into account, but as a guide we advise that a PIM is not conducted until a UASC has been in the care of a local authority for at least 2 weeks. For AASC (as defined above) who are not in the care of a local authority, we advise that a PIM is not conducted until at least 2 weeks has elapsed since the registration of their claim at an Asylum Intake Unit. We will keep this under review as we trial this process

## During the PIM

At all stages of the process, but with particular emphasis when obtaining and then assessing evidence from a child, Home Office staff must take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child as expressed in section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009.

A Responsible Adult must be present at the PIM. The PIM will be conducted by a Decision-Maker who has received training to consider asylum claims from children.

The Decision-Maker should use their skills obtained during training to interview and interact with children within the PIM, however, the PIM is not considered to be an interview.

A legal representative is permitted to attend the PIM, however the presence of a legal representative is not required and a PIM will not be delayed to ensure the attendance of a legal representative where a Responsible Adult is already present.

At the beginning of the PIM Decision-Makers must confirm:

- the identity of the child – you must ask the claimant to show their Application Registration Card (ARC) card – you must perform a visual check with the ARC card to ensure the photograph, name and reference number matches Home Office records and the individual attending the PIM – please see Asylum interview guidance for cases when the child is unable to produce an ARC card as although the PIM is not an interview, this guidance will assist
- that a responsible adult is available – a responsible adult must be present for the PIM to go ahead
- the details of anyone else attending the PIM – anyone else attending the PIM will also need to have their details checked and recorded, (including a check that they are properly authorised to act)
- that the child feels comfortable, and that any specific health and emotional needs are acknowledged and addressed

Decision-makers must check at intervals throughout the PIM that the child feels comfortable and where necessary, consult with the Responsible Adult but the expectation is that the PIM is not a lengthy event so in many cases it may be completed before a break might be needed. The child, and the Responsible Adult on their behalf, can request breaks during the PIM.

All information will be recorded on a Preliminary Information Meeting template form. This template will include space for the Decision-Maker to record their own questions relevant to the child's case and also include pre-populated questions to establish the basis of the claim for asylum, the claimant's nationality and identity (if appropriate) as well as relevant welfare and safeguarding questions. The decision-maker should also seek to identify if there are any national security concerns. The decision-maker should also ask questions to establish whether it is appropriate to initiate the checks to trace family as outlined in the Family tracing guidance.

During the PIM, if evidence emerges meaning that it would not be in the best interests to proceed (for example, vulnerability or complexity of the case), the decision maker should suspend the PIM. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis and appropriate referrals should be made. The child will be notified in due course of the next steps to progress their case.

The PIM should not be audio recorded. The decision-maker should share a written copy of the completed Preliminary Information Meeting template with the claimant. The child, or the Responsible Adult on their behalf, should be provided with a copy of the written transcript shortly after the PIM, and this will usually be by email or post.

## After the PIM

If, having established and considered the relevant material aspects of the claim at the PIM, the decision-maker considers it is possible to grant protection status to the child, the asylum decision should be served in the usual way. Please see the Processing children's asylum claims guidance for more information.

The PIM is an opportunity for the decision-maker to consider granting asylum on the basis of the evidence gathered. Should significant discrepancies or inconsistencies emerge, the decision-maker should not challenge these at the PIM but assess whether they need to refer the case on to a substantive interview. This is not, however, intended to prevent a decision-maker from making any necessary referrals (for example, safeguarding or welfare) on the basis of evidence gathered at the PIM.

In assessing a child's credibility from the PIM, the decision-maker should attach weight to evidence in line with the child's circumstances and the context in which it was provided along with any mitigating factors. If it is considered that the evidence provided at the PIM significantly undermines the claim for asylum – and, therefore, a positive decision cannot be made – the child should be given the opportunity to address any gaps in their evidence and clarify any issues at the substantive asylum interview.

The decision-maker should not refuse a child protection status following a PIM just on the basis of the evidence gathered. If there is not enough evidence to grant protection status, then the child will continue within the current process for considering asylum claims which they will be notified about in due course following the PIM and will receive a substantive asylum interview on another date.

The child will also receive an asylum interview if there is only evidence available following the PIM to grant Humanitarian Protection. The interview required could be a substantive, targeted or shorter interview depending on the level of information and evidence already received in the PIM or via other means.

Please see Processing children's asylum claims guidance for more information on Responsible Adults and video conferencing for remote interview settings. Where this guidance refers to an 'interviewing officer', it should be read in conjunction with the above guidance as a 'decision-maker'.

## Family tracing

The Secretary of State has a duty to trace the family of unaccompanied children under [regulation 6 of the Asylum Seekers \(Reception Conditions\) Regulations 2005](#) (the 2005 regulations). This duty is currently performed by decision-makers.

The changes to streamline the asylum process will see changes made to how we operate the duty to family trace for the cohorts identified within this guidance only. Family tracing will be removed from the decision-maker (aside from their role in asking relevant questions about this topic at the PIM) and will instead be conducted

within scope of this trial by other Home Office colleagues in a specified team who assist within the DMUs with duties to progress cases (currently known as the Children and Secondary Case Progression Unit).

Only the people conducting the efforts to trace family is changing. The way in which family tracing checks are performed will remain in line with the current Family tracing guidance.

Home Office staff conducting the efforts to trace family members of unaccompanied children will receive training to perform this task.

Family tracing will only be conducted where it is appropriate to do so as outlined in the existing Family tracing guidance. Consideration will be given to whether it is appropriate to trace family of the unaccompanied child based on available evidence, and this will include the information provided at the PIM.

If it is considered that it is not appropriate to undertake checks to trace family as outlined in the existing guidance, then the child will receive a letter notifying them of the decision not to initiate family tracing checks.

A child will receive a letter separate to their asylum decision which will inform them of the outcome of the efforts to family trace, or to confirm where it has not been considered appropriate to initiate family tracing.

The outcome of family tracing will also be decoupled from the asylum decision. This should allow for claimants to receive grants of protection status, where it is appropriate to make this decision, sooner than they may do in the current process given there can be delays whilst decision-makers fulfil the obligation to trace family members.

Family tracing within children's casework for cohorts not identified within this guidance will currently remain the responsibility of decision-makers but we will keep this under review and may widen to other cohorts in the future.

Please see the Family tracing guidance for more information of how family tracing is conducted. When reading the Family tracing guidance, in respect of cases outlined within this guidance please read 'decision-maker' to read as 'Home Office employee'.

## Testing the feasibility of changes

The changes to streamline the asylum process for children are being trialled as part of the Prime Minister's commitment to reduce the asylum backlog. An evaluation of the changes introduced will be conducted to consider the feasibility of using the same process of a PIM and decoupling the duty to family trace throughout children's casework more widely. Before any permanent changes are introduced, it may be considered whether to extend the trial period to encompass additional children's claims. The details of the evaluation are still to be confirmed however it will ensure

that enough information has been collected to enable us to assess the impact of these changes.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with relevant existing guidance where sign-posted, such as the Processing children's asylum claims guidance and the Family tracing guidance. Any permanent changes to be introduced within children's asylum casework will be updated in the corresponding guidance and this document will also be updated.

### **Related content**

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Processing children's asylum claims guidance

Family tracing guidance

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# Trafficking / Modern Slavery indicators

If there is reason to suspect that a child seeking asylum may be a potential victim of modern slavery, Home Office staff must refer to [Modern slavery: Statutory guidance for England and Wales and Non-Statutory guidance for Scotland and Northern Ireland](#). This modern slavery guidance includes details on how to refer potential child victims of modern slavery to the national referral mechanism.

The relevant National Referral Mechanism (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, Assessing credibility and refugee status guidance for asylum claims lodged on or after 28 June and the Processing children's asylum claims 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 Technical Specialist or 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 Processing children's asylum claims, 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 relevant teams such as FNORC to examine the issues relating to exclusion.

For more information about the application of Article 1F and 33(2) in respect of children please see the Processing children's asylum claims guidance.

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 substantive interview where protection status can be granted**

Under Paragraphs 339NA(i) of the Immigration Rules, a decision to grant refugee status or humanitarian protection can be taken without conducting a substantive 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 substantive interview even if the claimant qualifies for discretionary leave or another 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 PIM that confirms someone's identity, nationality, and the core material 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 Statement of Evidence Form, if one has been submitted, 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 initially be used for the processing of cases from claimants from the top 5 high-grant nationalities in children's casework.

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.

The Home Office currently assesses it could be appropriate to omit substantive interviews from nationals of Afghanistan, Eritrea, Sudan, Syria and Vietnam in children's casework following a PIM where sufficient evidence is available to confirm nationality and there are no other factors that would mean a substantive interview was required, for example considerations related to exclusion.

Omitting the substantive interview following a PIM will only be appropriate where you have decided that the claimant is a national of these countries and they have met the correct standard of proof to substantiate the claim 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

Omitting substantive 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.

## 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 substantive interview, where there are medical issues that prevents the claimant from attending or participating fully in a substantive 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 before an interview (from the Preliminary Information Meeting, and the Statement of Evidence Form where one has been submitted) 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 Paragraph 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, following the PIM a targeted interview may be completed. A targeted interview is a substantive 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 be shorter in length than a usual substantive interview 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 still required to ascertain a small number of the claimant's material facts following the PIM, 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 PIM, or by writing out for further information.

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 a PIM, or during a targeted or shorter interview. As no legal representative is required to be present during the PIM, a child will not be asked about any adverse credibility concerns at the PIM. If there is any information that requires further probing and investigation, then a full substantive interview will 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. Information obtained during the PIM may therefore be tested at 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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### Official – sensitive: start of section

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#### Related content

[Contents](#)

# 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 and Implementing and Serving the Decision.

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

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