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National Statistics

# **EXPERIMENTAL STATISTICS: Asylum claims on the basis of sexual orientation**

Updated 22 August 2019

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2019/experimental-statistics-asylum-claims-on-the-basis-of-sexual-orientation>

These data are experimental statistics and should be interpreted with caution. Experimental statistics are statistics that are not yet fully developed nor been subject to the full level of quality assurance of National Statistics. Further details can be found in the Office for National Statistics Guide to Experimental Statistics (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/methodologytopicsandstatisticalconcepts/guidetoexperimentalstatistics>). Further details about the limitations of these statistics can be found in the 'about the statistics' section below.

All statistics published in this section relate to the number of asylum claims made where sexual orientation formed part of the basis of the claim. The data cover claims with a lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) element, but do not cover other forms of sexual or gender identity. The data do not show the number of asylum claimants who define themselves as LGB. Having an identifier that an asylum case is based on sexual orientation does not indicate that a claimant has any particular sexual orientation – no assessment is made regarding the validity of any references to a person's sexual orientation prior to applying the identifier.

## 1. Asylum applications

Data in this section refer to asylum applications from main applicants made in the calendar years 2015 – 2018.

There were 1,502 asylum applications where sexual orientation formed part of the basis for the claim (LGB asylum applications) lodged in the UK in 2018, representing 5% of all asylum applications. This was a fall of 22% compared with the previous year. In contrast, total asylum applications increased by 11% over the same period.

In 2018, Pakistani nationals were the most common nationality accounting for over a fifth (22%) of all LGB asylum applications (324 applications). Bangladeshi nationals were the second highest nationality (with 148 applications, or 10% of the total), followed by Malaysian and Ugandan nationals (139 and 95 applications, respectively).

Although Pakistani nationals have accounted for the largest number of LGB asylum applications in each of the last four years (between 20% and 30%), the number of applications has fallen each year between 2016 (621 applications) and 2018 (324 applications) at a faster rate than total applications. LGB applications from Bangladeshi and Nigerian nationals (both down 51%) have also fallen in the latest year at a faster rate than total applications (down 24% and 21%, respectively).

In contrast, LGB asylum applications from Malaysian nationals, have increased since 2015, with a notable increase in the latest year, rising by over 2.5 times, from 53 in 2017 to 139 in 2018, although numbers remain relatively low. Total asylum applications from Malaysian nationals more than doubled over the same period.

**Figure 1: Top 5<sup>1</sup> nationalities lodging asylum applications<sup>2</sup> where sexual orientation<sup>3</sup> formed part of the basis for the claim, as a proportion of total asylum applications in 2018**

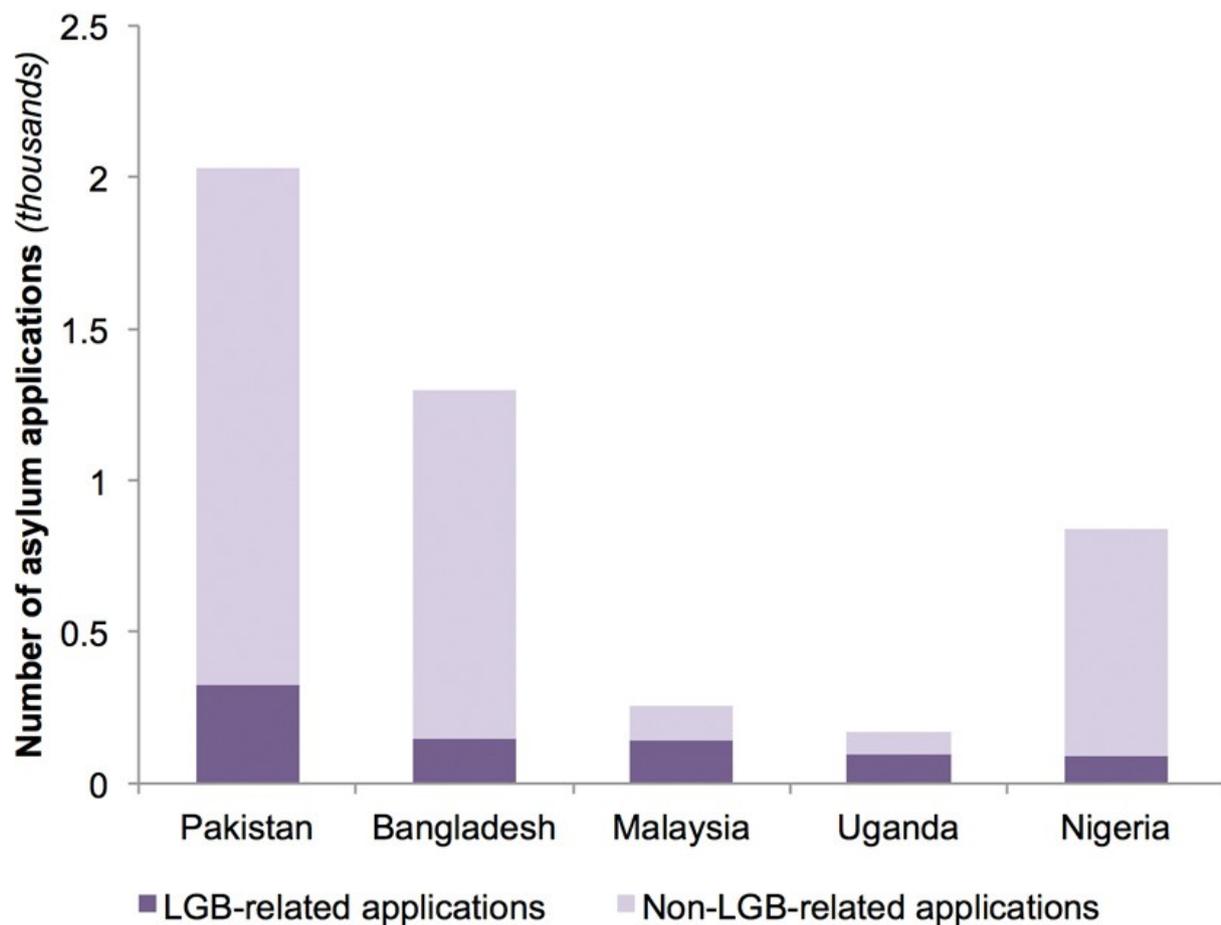
**Source:**

Table SOC\_01 ([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/825368/asylum-sexual-orientation-dec-2018-tables.ods](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/825368/asylum-sexual-orientation-dec-2018-tables.ods)), EXPERIMENTAL STATISTICS: Asylum claims on the basis of sexual orientation and Asylum applications dataset ([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/825386/asylum-applications-datasets-jun-2019.xlsx](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/825386/asylum-applications-datasets-jun-2019.xlsx)).

**Chart notes:**

1. Top 5 nationalities presented are those with the highest numbers of asylum applications where sexual orientation formed part of the basis for the claim.
2. Main applicants only.
3. Sexual orientation claims cover claims with a lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) element, but do not cover other forms of sexual or gender identity.

For most nationalities, LGB asylum applications account for a small proportion of total asylum applications. Although Pakistani and Bangladeshi nationals had the highest number LGB asylum applications, due to the high volumes of total applications from these nationalities, LGB asylum applications accounted for a relatively small proportion of total applications from these nationalities (16% and 11% respectively). In contrast, LGB asylum applications from Malaysian and Ugandan nationals accounted for the majority of applications from these nationalities (54% and 56%, respectively) and nearly a quarter of applications from Cameroonian nationals were LGB-related.

**Table 1: Top 5<sup>1</sup> nationalities with the highest proportion of asylum applications<sup>2</sup> where sexual orientation formed part of the basis for the claim in 2018**

Nationality	Asylum claims based on sexual orientation	Total asylum claims	% of claims based on sexual orientation
Uganda	95	171	56%
Malaysia	139	259	54%
Cameroon	51	211	24%
Pakistan	324	2,033	16%
Bangladesh	148	1,297	11%

**Source:**

Table SOC\_01 ([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/825368/asylum-sexual-orientation-dec-2018-tables.ods](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/825368/asylum-sexual-orientation-dec-2018-tables.ods)), EXPERIMENTAL STATISTICS: Asylum claims on the basis of sexual orientation and Asylum applications dataset ([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/825386/asylum-applications-datasets-jun-2019.xlsx](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/825386/asylum-applications-datasets-jun-2019.xlsx)).

**Table notes:**

1. Nationalities presented are those with the highest percentage of total applications based on sexual orientation, and who had at least 50 LGB asylum applications in 2018.
2. Main applicants only.

**2. Initial Decisions**

Data in this section refer to initial decisions made on asylum applications in the calendar years 2015 – 2018. Decisions may relate to an application made in an earlier year, and therefore are not directly comparable with applications over the same period.

There were 501 grants of asylum or an alternative form of leave to main applicants where sexual orientation formed part of the basis for their asylum claim in 2018 – this was a grant rate of 29%.

Although the grant rate for LGB asylum applications was lower than for all asylum applications (33%), nationalities who commonly claim asylum on the basis of sexual orientation typically see higher grant rates for LGB applications than for total applications.

Overall, the success rate for claims recording a sexual orientation element does not differ greatly from the overall grant rate for asylum applications, with nationality of the applicant typically proving a more influential factor than any sexual orientation element to their application.

**Figure 2: Grant rates at initial decision<sup>1</sup> in 2018, by nationality<sup>2</sup>**

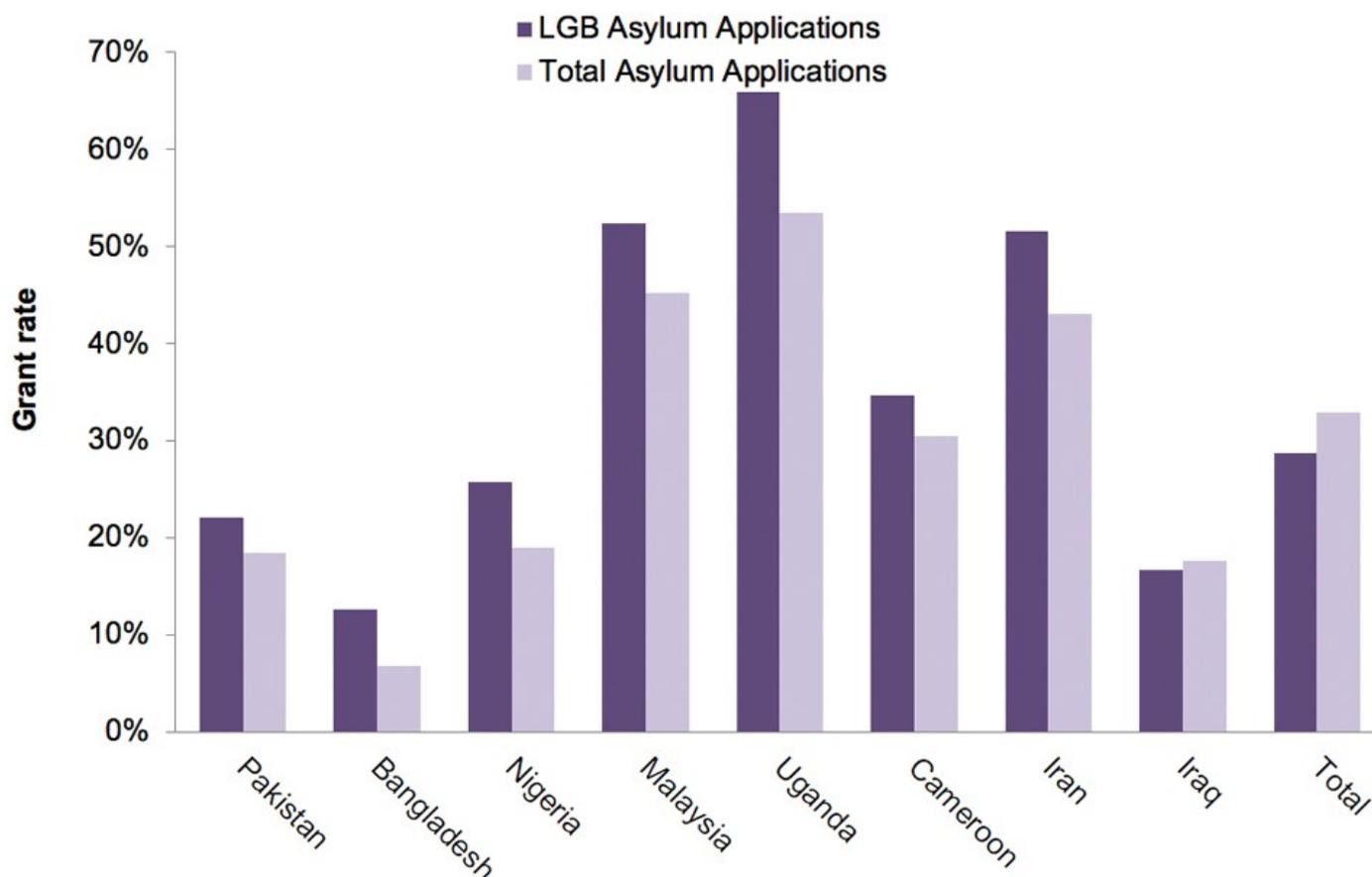
**Source:**

Table SOC\_02 ([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/825368/asylum-sexual-orientation-dec-2018-tables.ods](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/825368/asylum-sexual-orientation-dec-2018-tables.ods)), EXPERIMENTAL STATISTICS: Asylum claims on the basis of sexual orientation and Initial decisions and resettlement dataset ([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/825386/asylum-applications-datasets-jun-2019.xlsx](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/825386/asylum-applications-datasets-jun-2019.xlsx)).

**Chart notes:**

1. Main applicants only.
2. Nationalities presented are those with at least 50 initial decisions made on asylum claims with a sexual orientation basis in 2018.

**3. Appeals**

Data in this section on appeals received refer to appeals from main applicants that were lodged in the calendar years 2015 – 2018. Data on determinations of appeals refer to appeal decisions which were made in the calendar years 2015 – 2018 and may relate to an appeal lodged in a prior year. Therefore, data on appeals determined are not directly comparable with appeals received over the same period.

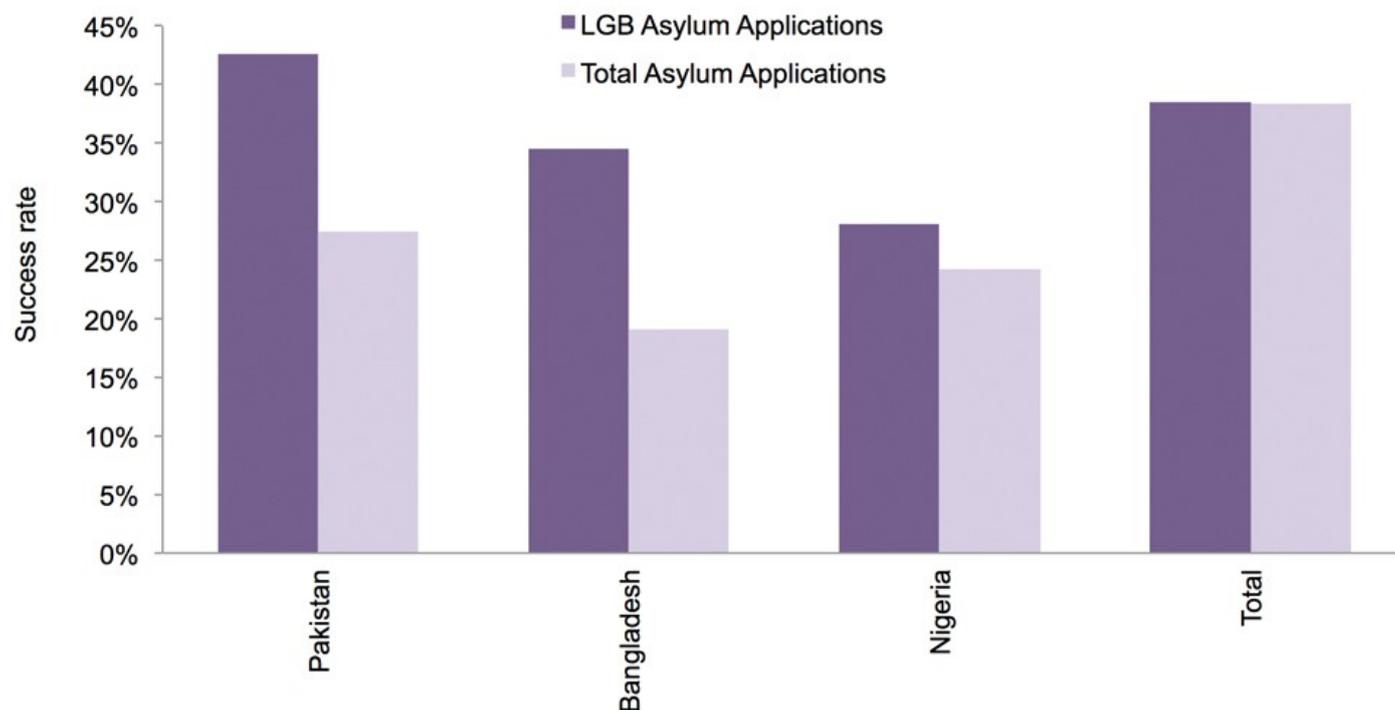
There were 1,170 appeals relating to asylum applications where sexual orientation formed part of the basis for the claim lodged in the UK, representing 9% of all appeals lodged in this period.

The number of appeals lodged relating to LGB asylum applications fell by 10% over the last year, from 1,306 in 2017, to 1,170 in 2018. Prior to this, the number of appeals increased, but this is likely to reflect improvements from caseworkers in the use of the sexual orientation identifier from 2015. As some cases

can take a long time to reach the appeals stage, some of the appeals in 2015 may relate to claims made in earlier years when the flag was not widely used.

In 2018, 38% (or 473) of appeals relating to LGB asylum applications were allowed. This was equivalent to the appeal success rate for all asylum application. However, as with the trend observed for grant rates at initial decision, the nationalities who commonly claim asylum on the basis of sexual orientation typically had a higher appeal success rate for LGB-related claims compared to the success rate for all claims.

**Figure 3: Appeal success rates<sup>1</sup> in 2018, by nationality<sup>2</sup>**



**Source:**

Table SOC\_04 ([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/825368/asylum-sexual-orientation-dec-2018-tables.ods](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/825368/asylum-sexual-orientation-dec-2018-tables.ods)), EXPERIMENTAL STATISTICS: Asylum claims on the basis of sexual orientation and asylum appeals determined dataset ([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/825386/asylum-applications-datasets-jun-2019.xlsx](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/825386/asylum-applications-datasets-jun-2019.xlsx)).

**Chart notes:**

1. Main applicants only.
2. Nationalities presented are those with at least 50 appeals determined on asylum claims with a sexual orientation basis in 2018.

**4. About the statistics**

Applicants are not required to disclose their sexual orientation when applying for asylum. Some individuals may have less reason to mention sexual orientation when making a claim because it may not be a significant factor in their seeking asylum. Such nationalities would be undercounted in these statistics. These statistics reflect the claims made by asylum applicants and do not reflect a confirmed sexual orientation of the applicant.

The data give information on asylum claims, initial decisions, and appeals where sexual orientation was raised as part of the basis for the claim at some stage prior to reaching a final outcome. The sexual orientation element could be raised at any stage of the process (for example, as part of the asylum case, appeal, or as part of other casework), and may form either the sole basis, or one of multiple grounds for the claim. It may or may not have been accepted as a valid part of the claim, so the data do not necessarily reflect the reason for an initial decision or appeal outcome.

Like other data derived from administrative data, these numbers are correct as at the time of data extraction and may be updated in subsequent statistics releases.

Data on sexual orientation were not routinely recorded in a reportable format prior to 2015. This means that sexual orientation claims that were raised before 2015 that had an initial decision in 2015 or later may not be counted in the initial decisions data (unless the flag was raised in 2015 or later). Similarly, an appeal relating to an application raised prior to 2015 may not be included in the data if the sexual orientation element was raised before 2015. Therefore, the number of initial decisions and appeals will be an undercount. This will affect earlier years to a greater extent than more recent years, so trends over time should be interpreted with caution.

Caseworkers use of the sexual orientation flag is likely to have improved in recent years. Users should exercise caution when making comparisons over time, as the data could be impacted by recording practices as well as genuine trends.

The statistics show:

- The number of asylum claims where sexual orientation was raised as a basis, or part of the basis, of the claim
- The initial decision of claims where sexual orientation was raised as part of the claim
- The number of appeals received for asylum cases where sexual orientation was raised as part of the claim
- The outcome of appeals for asylum cases where sexual orientation was raised as part of the claim

The statistics do not show:

- Whether sexual orientation was the sole basis for the asylum claim
- Whether sexual orientation was raised as the basis of the asylum claim at the time the claim was made, or whether it was raised at a later stage (such as at appeal)
- Whether the sexual orientation element of the claim has any bearing on the outcome. For example, a claim may be based on multiple factors. The outcome of the claim may or may not be due to the sexual orientation element
- The number of asylum claimants who define themselves as LGB. Having an identifier that an asylum case is based on sexual orientation does not indicate that a claimant has any particular sexual orientation. It also does not signify whether that aspect of the claim has been accepted. Sexual orientation as a basis of claim could be due to imputed assertions or association rather than a defining characteristic of the claimant

- Whether the sexual orientation element of the claim had any bearing on the appeal being lodged, or the outcome of the appeal
- Any individuals at risk of persecution due, in part or in full, to a sexual orientation component who have been granted protection through other routes, such as resettlement routes

## 5. Data tables

Data referred to here can be found in the following tables:

- Asylum tables (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets>)
- Asylum claims on the basis of sexual orientation tables ([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/825368/asylum-sexual-orientation-dec-2018-tables.ods](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/825368/asylum-sexual-orientation-dec-2018-tables.ods))

### **We welcome your feedback**

If you have any comments or suggestions for the development of this report, please provide feedback by emailing [MigrationStatsEnquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:MigrationStatsEnquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk). Please include the words 'PUBLICATION FEEDBACK' in the subject of your email.

See section 7 of the 'About this release (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2019/about-this-release>)' section for more details.