

Refugee protection to be reviewed every 30 months

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The refugee model will shift from permanent to temporary for those who arrive through illegal routes.

Refugee status will become temporary and subject to review every 30 months for all adults claiming asylum from today, the Home Secretary has announced.

Protection will be renewed for all those refugees who still face danger in their home country. Those whose country has now become safe, and therefore no longer require protection, will be expected to return home. The change follows Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood's visit to Denmark last week, which introduced a similar approach in recent years. The Danes have reduced asylum claims by more than 90% in a decade.

Last November, as part of the most sweeping reforms to tackle illegal migration since the Second World War, the government announced that refugee protection would become temporary. At the same time, refugees who want to stay in Britain and have skills will be able to apply for new work and study visas, helping them integrate with and contribute to society.

Britain will also open new, safe and legal routes, with community sponsorship becoming the new norm. The entire approach is designed to shift the asylum system in Britain away from dangerous, illegal crossings, and high levels of applications from those without legitimate asylum claims.

Under these changes, adults and accompanied children claiming asylum from today will receive a 30-month period of protection, if granted. At a 30-month review, refugees with a continuing need of sanctuary will have their protection renewed, while those whose countries are now deemed safe will be expected to return home.

Under the previous system, refugees were granted 5 years of protection and allowed to bring their families – followed by near-automatic, fee-free permanent settlement with continued access to benefits and housing. This was amongst the most generous offers to refugees in any country in Western Europe. The Home Secretary has argued this has become a pull-factor that has seen asylum claims in Britain rise steeply, including tens of thousands of illegitimate claims each year, as they fall across the rest of the continent.

Refugees under the reformed system will need to renew their permission to stay or apply for a legal visa route. Family reunion remains paused while new rules are designed that bring financial and integration requirements in line with those expected of British citizens.

The reset in Britain's asylum offer, inspired by Denmark's success, will encourage those wishing to build a life in the UK to do so via legal routes and reduce the pull factors driving illegal migration. The first step towards a new, 'core protection' system will be introduced through a change to the Immigration Rules later this week.

Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood said:

This country will always provide sanctuary to those fleeing war and persecution. But we

must also ensure our asylum system is not creating pull factors that draw people on dangerous journeys across the world, fuelling and funding the human traffickers.

Genuine refugees will find safety in Britain, but we must also reduce the incentives that draw people here at such scale, including those without a legitimate need for protection. So, once a refugee's home is safe and they are able to return, they will be expected to do so.

This is a firm but fair approach, restoring order and control of Britain's borders, while protecting those fleeing war and repression."

While Denmark was cutting asylum claims to a 40-year low, the UK saw a 13% increase in the year to September 2025. Across the EU, applications fell by 22% over the same period.

Since 2015, Denmark has made refugee status temporary (subject to review every 2 years), introduced restrictions on family reunion and increased the wait for permanent settlement to 8 years, subject to strict integration and employment requirements.

Under reforms announced last autumn, refugees in the UK will have to wait 20 years for settlement, unless they switch to a legal visa route, as part of the 'core protection' model.

New routes will be created as an alternative to 'core protection' for those who can contribute through work or study, encouraging use of the legal migration system and contributing to better social cohesion. Further details of these will be set out in future Immigration Rules changes.

Unaccompanied children will continue to receive 5 years' leave, while the government considers the appropriate long-term policy for this group. Further details will be set out in due course.

Robust age assessment measures are already in place to root out false claims by migrants claiming to be under 18. AI technology currently being tested will strengthen this further.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/refugee-protection-to-be-reviewed-every-30-months>