

Over £370 million saved in crackdown on asylum claims by tourists

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Almost £400 million has been saved in asylum accommodation and support costs after a crackdown on tourists abusing the UK's immigration system.

Since coming to office, the government has stripped visitors from 4 countries of visa-free entry following a surge in asylum claims.

Thousands of tourists from Jordan, Colombia, Trinidad and Tobago and Botswana claimed asylum in the UK before visit visas were introduced by this government. Nicaragua and Saint Lucia will be added to the list from today.

The measures have had a colossal impact. Asylum claims by nationals from Jordan, Colombia and Trinidad and Tobago have fallen by 93%, while claims on arrival at ports have been all but eliminated.

The tougher controls are estimated to have prevented more than 6,000 people claiming asylum and over £370 million in associated costs since July 2024.

The millions saved can instead be spent on strengthening border security and speeding up returns.

People arriving on legal routes made up 39% of more than 100,000 UK asylum claims last year. Support for asylum seekers is costing taxpayers £4 billion a year.

From today, Nicaraguan and Saint Lucian nationals will have to apply for a visit visa to travel to the UK.

The new requirement follows continued exploitation by Nicaraguan visitors, with almost 90% of asylum claims being made on arrival at a UK port in 2025. This is an unsustainable pressure on the Britain's borders.

Saint Lucians will now need visas due to rising and disproportionately high asylum claims, as well as the threat to border security posed by the country's Citizenship by Investment programme. This grants citizenship in exchange for a one-off payment of \$240,000 to the Saint Lucian government.

Asylum claims from these two countries also have above average costs for the Home Office, due to higher proportions presenting as destitute.

There are currently almost 500 Saint Lucians and Nicaraguans receiving Home Office support, which is why urgent action is needed.

The move comes as Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood prepares to make a speech later today, where she will make the case for a 'good migration system' that provides sanctuary to those in genuine danger while tackling illegal migration with order and control at our borders.

Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood said:

I will not tolerate systematic abuse of Britain's generosity by people granted the

privilege of visa-free entry.

From imposing visa requirements to shutting down visas entirely, I will do whatever it takes to restore order and control to our border.

Last week, Home Office data for 2025 revealed the number of people in asylum hotels are down by 19%, and 4% fewer people are claiming asylum

The new requirement has been introduced in Immigration Rules changes today, alongside a first of its kind 'brake' on visas from 4 nationalities.

Students from Afghanistan, Cameroon, Myanmar and Sudan will be refused visas as they are the most likely to claim asylum, with applications soaring by over 470% between 2021 and 2025.

The announcement comes alongside the government's pledge to open further safe and legal routes for those fleeing persecution, as well as deter from dangerous small boat crossings.

Last November, the Home Secretary threatened to shut down UK visas for Angola, Namibia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo unless their governments agreed to take back illegal migrants.

Four months later, co-operation has been secured from all 3 countries, with flights off the ground to return foreign criminals and illegal immigrants.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/over-370-million-saved-in-crackdown-on-asylum-claims-by-tourists>