



Lord Alton of Liverpool
Joint Committee on Human Rights
House of Commons
Palace of Westminster
Westminster
SW1A 0AA

17 July 2026

Dear Lord Alton,

Thank you for your letter of 18 June 2026, following up on my previous reply to you regarding the visa brakes that were implemented for nationals of Afghanistan, Cameroon, Myanmar and Sudan in March. I will address each of your questions in turn.

You asked for the latest data on visa issues and asylum claims, up to the end of quarter 1 2026. The latest data up to March 2026 on the volumes of visas issued and asylum claims linked to visas, both broken down by nationality, can be found in the following published datasets:

- [Entry clearance visa applications and outcomes detailed datasets, year ending March 2026.](#)
- [Asylum claims and initial decisions detailed datasets, year ending March 2026.](#)

You ask whether data that is not cohort-matched can be used to establish the likely behaviour of future cohorts of visa holders. The un-matched conversion rate gives an indication of the proportion of asylum claims from visa holders by comparing the number of claims and visas issued during the same time period, rather than from the same individuals. We did not adopt a matched methodology as asylum claims are often made close to the point of visa expiry, rather than close to the beginning of visa validity. This would make it difficult to construct a useful like-for-like comparison of cohorts, as asylum data is published on a quarterly basis, and could risk presenting a false and distorted downward trend in asylum claims. Using a matched methodology is, therefore, not practicable, as we would need to wait for all visas issued to expire before accurately counting the number that subsequently claim asylum.

You ask whether including data up to year ending September 2025 overlaps with the data from October to December 2024. The data for year ending September 25 includes the months October 24 – September 25. Table 1 of the [Impact Assessment](#) uses various time periods to compare conversion rates over time. Calculating a total of each row would result in double-counting some volumes, however there is no double counting in the overall figures.

You ask about how the data indicating fewer visa linked asylum claims by Afghan nationals between 2023 and 2025 can be used to justify the implementation of a visa brake. The reduction in asylum claims by this cohort since 2023 is principally due to fewer visas being issued. However, there were still 470 asylum claims and a very high conversion rate of 131% in year ending September 2025, which significantly exceeds the threshold for consideration of a visa brake of 100 claims and a 15% conversion rate, which is why Afghanistan was considered for a visa brake.

You ask for a breakdown of asylum claims by the type of study visa for each of these countries. The Home Office only publishes the total asylum claims linked to student visas. The Home Office also does not currently publish claims linked to Graduate visas.

You ask whether analysis exists on the success rates of asylum claims made by student visa holders from the four affected countries, and whether this informed the policy. The Home Office does not publish asylum grant rates by method of entry, other than for small boats. Nor does the department routinely analyse or publish asylum outcomes by previous visa route for the purposes of immigration statistics. The visa brake policy is not designed to assess whether individual asylum claims are well-founded and genuine; rather, it is intended to address the high volume of visa-linked asylum claims as part of wider determinations to protect UK border security and maintain confidence in the immigration system. The merits of individual asylum claims made in the UK continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis through the asylum determination process, in line with our international protection obligations.

You ask what safe and legal routes currently exist for nationals of Afghanistan, Cameroon, Myanmar and Sudan to seek asylum in the UK. A new community sponsorship scheme will allow communities to sponsor refugees to resettle in their area with communities taking responsibility for housing, integration and supporting arrivals into work. The named community sponsorship model will sit outside the UK Resettlement Scheme and operate at a much higher capacity once established, which is something the voluntary sector has long supported. Refugee status will be determined in partnership with the UNHCR to ensure the routes can be launched and managed effectively. Meanwhile, trusted universities will be able to directly sponsor refugees through a study route. Applications will open this autumn for organisations to sponsor refugees, with the first arrivals in autumn 2027. A refugee work route is expected to open next year, allowing employers to sponsor refugees. The numbers will start small at first but build over time as public confidence is restored in Britain's immigration system.

We cannot create a route to cater for every eventuality and those in need of protection should seek sanctuary in the first safe country they reach as this is the fastest route to safety. The new safe and legal routes will enable the UK to support a wide range of refugees in need of protection, however, not everybody that wants to come to the UK will be able to do so. At the same time, we must ensure that visa routes operate as intended and protect the integrity of the immigration system where evidence shows sustained patterns of visa-linked asylum claims.

Thank you once again for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mike Tapp', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mike Tapp MP
Minister for Migration & Citizenship