

Borders Act to overhaul asylum system becomes law

News story

The Nationality and Borders Act passed today (Thursday 28 April 2022) will deliver the biggest overhaul of our asylum system in decades.



The Nationality and Borders Act will deter illegal entry into the UK, breaking the business model of people-smuggling networks, and speed up the removal of those with no right to be in the UK.

This will in turn free up the asylum system so we can better support those in genuine need of asylum through safe and legal routes.

In addition, the act puts into law that those who arrive illegally in the UK – who could have claimed asylum in another safe country – can be considered as ‘inadmissible’ to the UK asylum system.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

This is a huge milestone in our commitment to our promise to the British public – a fair but firm immigration system.

While there is no single solution to the global migration crisis, these new laws are the first step in overhauling our decades-old, broken asylum system.

We will now work tirelessly to deliver these reforms to ensure we have an immigration system that protects those in genuine need while cracking down on abuse of the system and evil people-smuggling gangs.

These key reforms will be operating alongside a raft of other new measures, including:

- tougher penalties for people smugglers with a maximum sentence of life imprisonment
- increasing the maximum penalty for illegally entering the UK or overstaying a visa to 4 years' imprisonment
- new measures to end the merry-go-round of legal challenges which can be used to frustrate removal of those with no right to be in the UK
- cracking down on adults pretending to be children by introducing scientific methods for age assessment
- a new US-style Electronic Travel Authorisation scheme to slam the door on criminals before they even get here

Officers, prosecutors, caseworkers and judges will be able to make full use of these new powers from the summer once new guidance and training is rolled out.

Given the extent of these reforms, measures will be implemented over the coming months and into next year.

Royal Assent of the Nationality and Borders Act comes after Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a package of measures to tackle illegal migration earlier in the month.

This included a world-leading partnership with Rwanda to relocate people entering the UK via dangerous or illegal journeys, such as by small boat or hidden in lorries, to have their asylum claim processed in Rwanda to build a new life.

Published 28 April 2022