



National Audit Office

The UK's independent public spending
watchdog

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FOREIGN CRIMINALS LIVING IN THE UK

Thank you for your request of 29 February 2024 for information about foreign criminals living in the UK. We have considered your request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

We have searched our records and can confirm that we do not hold the up-to-date figures you requested. However, we have provided information from previous National Audit Office reports that were published between 2014 and 2020 and links to publicly available data which may be useful for your research.

Your specific request is set out in **Annex A** together with our answer to each part of the request. **Annex B** sets out the steps you may wish to take if you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your request for information under FOIA.

I hope this response is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

NAO FOI Team



Annex A

Request for information about foreign criminals living in the UK:

(Your request is in bold italics and our response below)

I am doing research on criminal asylum seekers from abroad.

Please let me know the following for my research.

1. How many foreign criminals are living in the UK?

We do not hold information on the number of foreign criminals currently living in the UK.

In October 2014 we published a report [Managing and removing foreign national offenders](#). The report set out that on 31 March 2014 there were 12,250 foreign national offenders in England and Wales either serving in prison or living in the community after prison pending removal action, including 10,600 in prison or on remand (see paragraph 3.3). This figure had remained fairly constant since 2011.

Our June 2020 report [Immigration enforcement](#) provided information on enforced and voluntary returns of individuals with no leave to remain and foreign national offenders (see Figure 11). At that time, we found:

The Department focuses much of its returns work on returning foreign national offenders. This includes EU nationals who pose a potential threat or have committed multiple offences in the UK. In the 12 months to the end of November 2019, the Department removed over 5,000 foreign national offenders (Figure 11). The Department's approach to the return of foreign national offenders is partly supported by international agreements with EU partners and other countries.

Statistics relating to the number of foreign nationals in prison in England and Wales are provided in a February 2024 House of Commons Library report [Deportation of foreign national offenders](#). This is based on data published by HM Prison and Probation Service and the Ministry of Justice which can be accessed at the following link [Offender management statistics quarterly: January to March 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). This data shows that, as of June 2023, there were 10,321 foreign nationals held in custody (3,355 remand, 6,453 sentenced and 513 non-criminal).

The Home Office also publishes immigration enforcement data which includes information on foreign national offenders, which can be accessed at this link [Immigration Enforcement data: Q4 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

2. How many of them are from India?

Our 2014 report (link above) provides data on the nationalities of foreign nationals in the prison estate in England and Wales. Figure 1 of the report showed a breakdown at that time and included the following information:

<i>Numbers of Indian nationals in the prison estate at the end of March 2014</i>				
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
India	412	418	408	423

We hold no other data on the nationalities of foreign national offenders.

The HM Prison and Probation Service publishes statistics on the prison population, including a breakdown of the nationality of foreign national offenders available at the following link [Offender management statistics quarterly: January to March 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). This shows the most common nationalities after British Nationals in prisons are Albanian (14% of the foreign national offender prison population), Polish (8%), Romanian (7%), Irish (6%), Jamaican (4%), and Lithuanian (4%). It does not mention how many are from India.

3. How much has the government spent on them in the last five years?

We provided an estimate of government spend on foreign national offenders in our 2014 report (link above). We estimated that in 2013-14 the government (Home Office, Ministry of Justice and other public bodies) had spent £850 million on managing and removing foreign national offenders, or approximately £70,000 per foreign national offender (see paragraphs 4.11-4.13). The report notes that the departments did not have a good understanding of the costs involved and, as a result, the NAO undertook a detailed costing exercise to estimate this figure. The estimated costs included the costs up to conviction (police costs, courts and Crown Prosecution Service costs and legal aid costs from processing a foreign national crime up to sentence) and the costs incurred after conviction (administration costs incurred by the Department, National Offender Management Service (now HM Prison and Probation Service) and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, as well as prison and detention costs).

In June 2020 we published a report on immigration enforcement (link above). The Immigration Enforcement Directorate is responsible for encouraging and enforcing the departure of immigration offenders and foreign national offenders (FNOs) from the UK. All work related to FNOs sat within this operational area. Figure 4 of the report provides a breakdown of the directorate's resources, but we didn't disaggregate costs beyond this level.

We have no further information on government spending on foreign criminals living in the UK. The Home Office has overall responsibility for removal. The Ministry of Justice and HM Prison and Probation Service manage offenders in custody and negotiate international agreements on prisoner transfers. Both departments publish information that may help answer your questions (see links above). If you require further information on these areas, these departments may be able to provide further detail.

Annex B

Statement of Policy

Our policy is to respond to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as helpfully and promptly as possible, having regard to the principles set out in the Act. I therefore hope you are happy with the way we have handled your request. If you are not, then you should take the following steps.

In the first instance, within 40 working days, write to the National Audit Office Freedom of Information (FOI) Team at FOI@nao.org.uk or by post to:

FOI Team, Green 2, National Audit Office, 157-197 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 9SP

The Head of FOI will arrange a review, which will be conducted by a senior member of staff who was not involved in decisions relating to your original request. Once the review has been completed, we will write informing you of the outcome.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The primary way of escalating your concerns to the Information Commissioner is at: <https://ico.org.uk/foicomplaints>

Alternatively, you can contact the ICO at <https://ico.org.uk/> or Information Commissioner's Office Wycliffe House Water Lane Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF.