

Using longitudinally linked data to measure the integration of refugees in the UK



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BACKGROUND

In collaboration with the Home Office, we are linking data on refugees in the UK for a minimum period of 5 years to develop an understanding of socio-economic and integration outcomes of refugees. The refugee cohort study will link key administrative data sources from 2015 to 2026, as well as the 2021 census, to provide post-entry information such as education, employment, and health outcomes for approximately 100,000 refugees.

Quantitative evidence surrounding refugee outcomes is lacking.

The lack of refugee outcomes is largely attributed to a lack of datasets which permit refugees to be identified. This study will act as a catalyst to filling an evidence gap and support evidence-based policymaking for these vulnerable groups. The aim is to create a research resource that will provide Home Office and other government, academic and charitable organisation users with valuable insights into social and economic integration outcomes for refugees.

These integration outcomes include English language, education, economic, secondary migration, employment, and health outcomes. Ultimately, refugees will benefit from this cohort study. For example, if the analysis reveals certain demographic groups are less likely to secure employment, this can inform targeted activity to support groups most in need/likely to benefit.

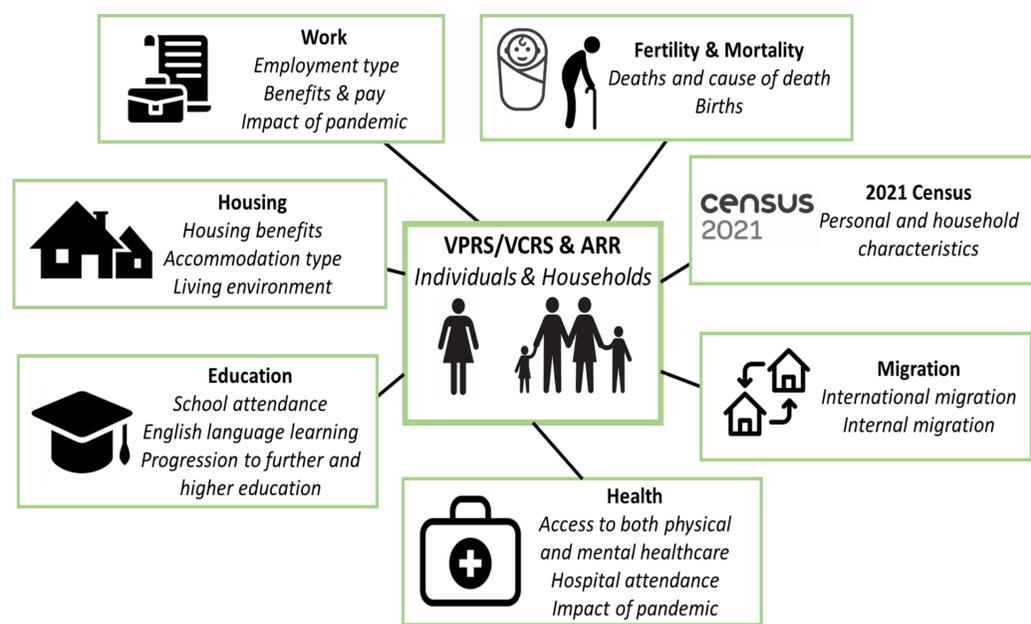
WHO IS INCLUDED IN THE STUDY?

- Full Cohort Study will include approximately **100,000** refugees, including:
- Approximately **22,000** resettled refugees who have been resettled to the UK from the country where they initially sought asylum as part of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme/ Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VPRS/VCRS) between 2015 and 2021.
- Study Design includes refugees who have arrived as asylum seekers – approximately **15,000** asylum route refugees will be incorporated into the study ever year totalling **90,000** for 2015-2020.
- Only Individuals who have already been granted refugee status will be included. The study will not include those still awaiting a decision on their asylum claim, or those who have been denied asylum.

We conducted a pilot study testing the viability of linking Home Office data on refugees who arrived via the VPRS and VCRS resettlement schemes to immigration and health care registration data. In this pilot, we incorporated knowledge of Arabic naming conventions and transliteration into the matching algorithms.

We achieved a record linkage rate in excess of 96%. Previous record linkage using foreign names has produced lower than expected linkage rates due to the complexities of foreign naming conventions which existing linkage algorithms are not designed for; we need to understand this and develop algorithms to optimise linkage.

INTEGRATION OUTCOMES



We plan to understand integration outcomes for a 5- year follow-up period. Depending on year of entry, there could be 11 years of follow-up for the earliest cohort while 5 - years for the latest cohort.

CHALLENGES

1 Lack of direct follow-up with refugees

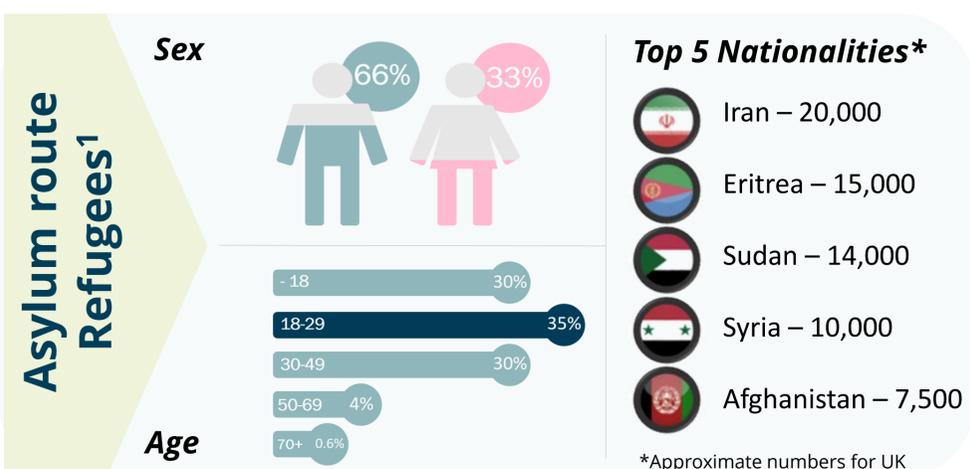
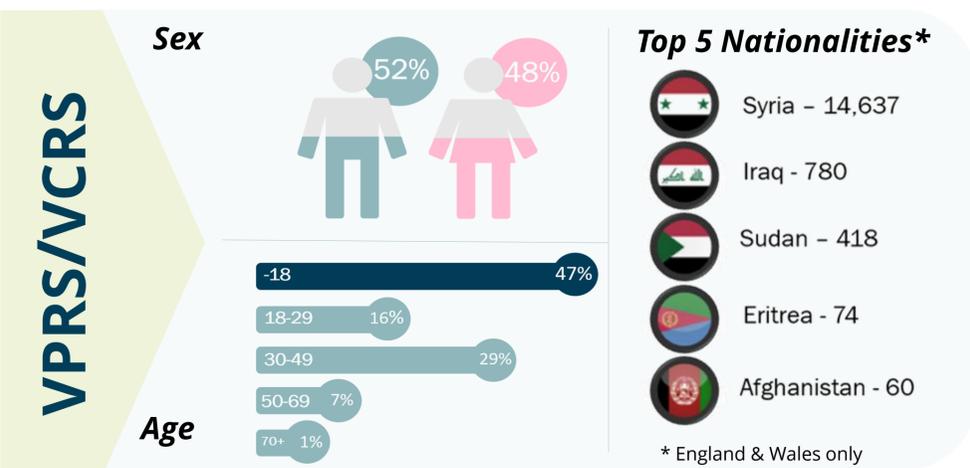
The Home Office collects monitoring data directly for resettled VPRS and VCRS refugees during their first year in the UK. However, as integration is a long-term process, this is not a long enough period to adequately time to begin to understand their integration process. In addition, no comparable information is collected for those refugees who apply for and are granted asylum.

2 Difficulty interacting with government systems

Refugees may find it challenging to interact with and navigate government systems due to language barriers and a lack of adequate support. It is also more likely for these populations to be more transient and therefore more difficult follow up on integration outcomes.

3 Linkage of non-Western names

Algorithms around record linkage are designed primarily with English/Western names in mind. Certain naming conventions in different languages make it harder for algorithms to recognise these as such. For example, refugees may be addressed by informal titles that would not commonly be formalised. Furthermore, many Arabic names can be transliterated into English in various ways e.g. the various spellings of the name Mohammed.



For further information, please contact us at demographic.methods@ons.gov.uk

REFERENCES
¹ GOV.UK. 2021. Asylum and resettlement datasets. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets> [Accessed 6 September 2021].