

Channel Crossings Exceed 25,000 by July in Record Year for Arrivals

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The number of people crossing the English Channel in small boats surpassed 25,000 by the end of July, making it the fastest year on record for arrivals since monitoring began in 2018. The surge represents a 51 percent increase compared to the same period last year and a 73 percent rise on 2023 figures.

A single-day total of 898 people arrived in 13 small boats, pushing the cumulative number for 2025 to 25,436. Official data shows nearly 20,000 crossings had already been recorded by mid-year, with the pace continuing to accelerate through the summer months.

The rise in crossings follows a sharp increase in 2024, when around 37,000 individuals made the journey, second only to the 2022 peak of approximately 46,000. By May this year, over 14,800 had already arrived, indicating the pressure on UK border enforcement and asylum systems remains high.

As the numbers grow, asylum applications continue to climb. More than 85,000 claims were lodged in the year to March 2025, marking a 15 percent increase. Despite government commitments to clamp down on irregular arrivals, fewer than 500 migrants have been charged with illegal entry across more than 43,000 incidents between July 2024 and June 2025.

In response, the Government has launched a pilot “one-in, one-out” migrant exchange scheme with France. It has also advanced plans to fast-track removals for individuals arriving from countries classified as safe, part of a broader effort to reduce the backlog and limit misuse of the asylum process.

Authorities in France have taken steps to reduce access to dinghies and tighten security along the northern coast in a coordinated attempt to slow crossings. However, boats continue to depart, often carrying higher numbers of people per vessel.

Tensions are mounting in communities across England, including Epping, Norwich and Leeds, where protests have broken out over the use of hotels to house asylum seekers. As of March, more than 32,000 individuals remained in temporary accommodation, prompting a government pledge to phase out hotel use entirely by 2029 and replace it with lower-cost housing.

The sharp rise in crossings is likely to fuel ongoing political debate. Reform UK and other parties have called for tougher measures, while the current Labour government faces scrutiny over its ability to deliver credible, enforceable migration controls.