

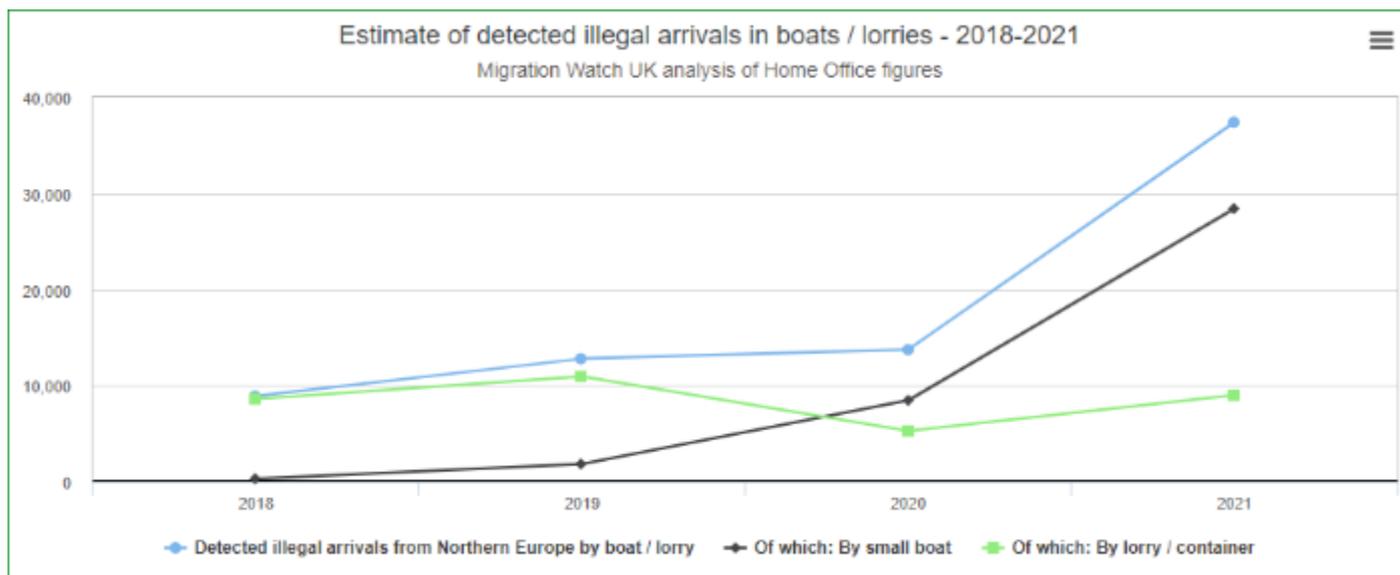


Illegal clandestine arrivals by lorry

Illegal Immigration: MW 502

1. The total number of migrants entering the UK clandestinely each year is not known. However, our analysis suggests that there have been at least 320,000 attempts to come to the UK without prior permission from Northern France since 2014. This number does not include attempted but unsuccessful attempts to come via lorry from 2020 to 2022 so the total may be significantly higher.
2. Meanwhile, there have been around 110,000 detected and reported irregular arrivals from Northern France via dinghy and lorry since 2014, including approximately 70,000 arrivals by those hiding in the back of lorries or in containers.
3. The government do not regularly apprise the tax-paying public of statistics on the scale of detected illegal arrivals by lorry or container. They now also intend to restrict publication of statistics on irregular small boats arrivals.¹ However, Migration Watch UK research - based on official sources - suggests that lorry detections have averaged 8,500 per year since 2014. See Table A in the Annex below.
4. ***When those arriving in boats are included, the estimated number of detected illegal arrivals from Northern Europe has more than quadrupled from just under 9,000 to 37,400 since 2018.*** Of nearly 75,000 coming since then, just over half (40,400) have been reported coming by boat, and the remainder, 33,800, by lorry.

Figure 1: Estimate of detected illegal arrivals in boats / lorries, 2018-2021 (Migration Watch UK analysis of Home Office figures, statistics released by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration and media reports)².



5. The authorities have suggested that the boat route was only used sporadically until 2018 when arrivals increased. For example, only 15 people were reported as being detected during 2014³.

6. However, Home Office information shows that 150,000 migrants were encountered at Calais, Coquelles and Dunkirk attempting to pass clandestinely through the juxtaposed border controls between 2016 and 2019, with just over half of these (or 81,000) attempting to access the UK via Calais⁴. This will include many people attempting to come here via lorry.

Table 1: Reproduced from Independent Chief Inspector of Borders report, Nov. 2020. Totals of migrants encountered trying to breach juxtaposed controls.⁵

	Calais	Coquelles	Dunkirk	Total
2016	33,807	13,905	8,414	56,126
2017	14,457	9,086	6,572	31,115
2018	16,538	10,965	8,305	35,808
2019	15,529	9,851	7,041	32,421
Total	81,331	43,807	30,332	155,470

7. Those who come without permission by lorry enter concealed in or on a heavy goods vehicle and are then either detected at a UK port or are subsequently discovered later on in-country, having left the vehicle at its first stopping-point. In 2016/17, three in four clandestines who were detected at a southern port were found at Dover⁶.

8. The vast majority of those discovered by the authorities after entering in the back of lorries or containers are encountered in-country subsequent to their clandestine entry, with only about 10% to 13% detected in Border Force-controlled areas of UK ports.

9. During the period 2016-2019 most of the migrants encountered attempting to by-pass border controls clandestinely were males under the age of 30⁷.

10. And over three quarters (77%, or 120,000 out of 155,200 in total) of those encountered trying to pass clandestinely through the juxtaposed controls claimed to be either Eritrean, Iraqi or Afghan nationals⁸.

11. The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders, the main immigration watchdog, has said that more than 90% of detected clandestine entrants in 2014 and 2015 claimed asylum after being detected⁹. This is similar to boat migrants. Home Office figures released for migrants arriving by dinghy during the first half or so of 2020 suggested that 98% claim asylum¹⁰.

16 February 2022

Annex A

Methods for deriving our estimate that about 70,000 people have been detected entering in lorries / containers since 2014

The estimate of lorry arrivals includes both individuals identified in a UK port (e.g. from lorries or containers) and individuals detected (e.g. in lorry drops) within 72 hours after arrival. However, as the former Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration indicated in 2020, the figures from 2016 to 2019 for individuals identified in a UK port **do not appear to include those picked up in the port of Dover** where, as the paper suggests, a large majority of such identifications occur. Therefore, the combined figures and estimates below are likely to understate the actual total since 2014. As noted above, the government has not heretofore released regular figures on this aspect of illegal immigration. Therefore, please see the notes below the table for an explanation of the source of each figure, or, where applicable, how the estimates were derived.

The below figures also do not include lorry entries for the months December 2021 and January 2022 which are unknown. Adding these in would increase the total further.

Table A: Estimated detected arrivals since 2014 by lorry / boat (Source: Home Office; Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration reports; media reports).

Year	Reported detected illegal arrivals from safe places by boat / lorry	Of which: Migrants arriving while hidden in a lorry / container	Of which: Migrants detected arriving by boat
2014	4837	4822	15
2015	12856	12856	Unknown
2016	8813	8813	Unknown
2017	7265	7265	Unknown
2018	8905	8606	299
2019	12792	10948	1844
2020	13741	5280	8461
2021	37401	9000	28401
2022 (by mid Feb)	1358	Unknown	1358
Total	107968	67590	40378

Notes on sources / methods for deriving estimates where Home Office figures were lacking:

- **2021 figure (9,000):** A Home Office source quoted in The Times in November 2021 suggested there had been 9,000 arrivals by lorry in the year to date¹¹
- **2020 figure (5,280):** Home Office indicated in March 2021 that 32% of illegal entries in 2020 came via lorry. We took 32% of the total of 16,500 detected illegal entries to come to this figure.¹²
- **2018 and 2019 figures (8,606 and 10,948 respectively):** These figures are reported in the ICIBI's 2020 report on small boats and lorry drops. The 2018 figure includes 7,554 migrants encountered in response to a lorry drop event and at least 1,052 clandestine detections within the Border Force-controlled areas of UK ports (excluding Dover), while the 2019 figure includes 10,034 migrants encountered in response to a lorry drop and estimated just under 1,000 encountered in response to a lorry drop.¹³
- **2016 and 2017 figures (8813 and 7265 respectively):** These estimates are based upon the number detections of individuals identified in a UK port in 2016 and 2017. We took the share that such detections ran at in 2018 and 2019 and applied them to the figures for 2016 and 2017 in order to come to an overall annual minimum estimate (minus those detected at Dover, as noted above).¹⁴
- **2014 and 2015 figures (4,822 and 12,856 respectively):** These are 12-month estimates are based upon figures provided in in the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's (ICIBI) 2016 report on lorry drops for five month periods (April to September) in both 2014 and 2015. After analysing trends in detections for the years 2018 and 2019, and in order to ensure any estimate was conservative and cautious, we took the 12-month total to roughly be the given total for the specified periods multiplied by two.¹⁵

Notes

1. Thousands of people have already signed a petition calling on the government to continue issuing daily updates on the number of migrants crossing in boats. Please sign and share the petition before it closes at the end of July 2022 using the following link, URL: <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/607119>
2. For instance, in 2014 the Border Force cutter fleet only dealt with two illegal immigration incidents involving 15 migrants. Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, 'Inspection of General Aviation and General Maritime', 2015, URL: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/547695/ICIBI-report-on-GAGM-January_2016.pdf
3. Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI), 'Inspection of the Home Office's response to in-country clandestine arrivals ('lorry drops') and to irregular migrants arriving via 'small boats', published November 2020, URL: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/933953/An_inspection_of_the_Home_Office_s_response_to_in-country_clandestine_arrivals__lorry_drops__and_to_irregular_migrants_arriving_via__small_boats_.pdf
4. Ibid.
5. ICIBI, 'Inspection of Border Force operations at south coast seaports', 2018, p. 35, URL: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/755272/ICIBI_An_inspection_of_South_Coast_Ports.pdf
6. ICIBI report, November 2020.
7. Ibid.
8. ICIBI report on lorry drops, 2016.
9. Evidence provided by Home Office to House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, September 2020.
10. Evidence provided by Home Office to House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, September 2020.
11. The Times, November 2021. URL: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/people-smuggling-arrests-after...-banians-found-in-car-boot-vcz7dfx2l>
12. Home Office, 'New Plan for Immigration', p. 7, URL https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/933953/overseas_Borders_Web_Accessible.pdf
13. Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI), 'Inspection of the Home Office's response to in-country clandestine arrivals ('lorry drops') and to irregular migrants arriving via 'small boats', published November 2020, URL: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/933953/An_inspection_of_the_Home_Office_s_response_to_in-country_clandestine_arrivals__lorry_drops__and_to_irregular_migrants_arriving_via__small_boats_.pdf
14. Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI), 'Inspection of the Home Office's response to in-country clandestine arrivals ('lorry drops') and to irregular migrants arriving via 'small boats', published November 2020, URL: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/933953/An_inspection_of_the_Home_Office_s_response_to_in-country_clandestine_arrivals__lorry_drops__and_to_irregular_migrants_arriving_via__small_boats_.pdf
15. ICIBI report on lorry drops, 2016, URL: See table 1 on p.8 of 2016 report, URL: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/933953/An_inspection_of_the_Home_Office_s_response_to_in-country_clandestine_arrivals__lorry_drops__and_to_irregular_migrants_arriving_via__small_boats_.pdf