# Government faces £56 million annual bill as Afghan asylum appeal backlog grows



British taxpayers are facing a substantial financial burden, with an estimated monthly cost of £5 million associated with housing Afghan nationals whose asylum claims have been rejected. This situation arises amid increased rejection rates and a lack of viable options for deportation, as the UK Government does not recognise the Taliban-led administration in Afghanistan.

Under the leadership of Home Secretary Yvette Cooper, the Home Office has revised its internal guidance concerning Afghan asylum seekers. According to the updated policy issued last August, there is deemed to be "limited" evidence that all Afghans remain at risk under the current Taliban regime. Consequently, it has been made clear that vague fears related to personal safety will no longer suffice as grounds for asylum. This policy change has significantly impacted asylum applications; the number of Afghan nationals whose claims have been rejected but who are allowed to appeal has risen dramatically, from merely 70 cases in 2022 to over 2,600 in the previous year.

The increase in rejected claims has triggered a financial and logistical dilemma for ministers, as the government grapples with a system that cannot deport these individuals to a regime it does not officially recognise. An analysis conducted by The Telegraph indicates that if three-quarters of these rejected appeals were to follow the historical trend and remain pending for a year, the projected annual cost to taxpayers could escalate to at least £56 million. This estimation employs figures from the National Audit Office that outline the costs associated with providing accommodation and support to each asylum seeker.

Furthermore, the UK faces significant delays within its immigration tribunal system, which is heavily backlogged, meaning appeals can take years to process. During this period, the responsibility for housing and financial support remains with the state. Even individuals who exhaust the appeals process are unlikely to be deported in the near future, as there is no existing return agreement with the Taliban.

Marley Morris from the Institute for Public Policy Research highlighted the urgency of addressing the issue, stating, “If the Government wants to meet its target on exiting asylum hotels, then it needs to look at the refusals of Afghans. It is a group who are likely to appeal, may well win and even if they don’t, they can’t be returned anyway.”

This complex situation illustrates the challenges facing the UK Government as it navigates asylum processes and international diplomatic relations. The implications for public finances and the broader immigration system are significant, prompting ongoing debates regarding policy effectiveness and humanitarian considerations.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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