

## **Modern Slavery – preliminary findings V3**

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### **Dataset:**

The findings below are from analysis of the following dataset:

Home Office, Modern Slavery Research & Analysis. (2026). National Referral Mechanism and Duty to Notify Statistics, 2014-2025. [data collection]. 20th Edition. UK Data Service. SN: 8910, DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-8910-20>

This dataset was last updated on 26/02/26, when data for Q4, 2025 were added, and location data from previous years were amended.

### **Nationality:**

- There are more than 200 nationalities represented in referrals, which includes dual nationals as separate categories.
- The category “UK” in the findings below includes those specifying UK as their sole nationality together with those with UK specified as either first or second nationality e.g. “Syrian UK”, “UK Zimbabwean” and “Unknown UK”.
- The category “Non-UK” in the findings below includes all those who do not have UK specified as part of their nationality, so includes those with dual (as long as not UK) or single nationalities.

### **Location:**

Location categorisation is based on the location of the police force sent the NRM for investigation.

The category “London” includes those referrals made to the Metropolitan Police and City of London police.

Criteria applied to identify the relevant police force are:

- the force has acted as first responder, or the referral indicates that the force is already involved in the recording/investigation of the potential modern slavery human trafficking offences
- the potential victim has been exploited within the force area
- the potential victim has been exploited abroad, or at an unknown location and the victim’s address at time of referral is within the force area
- the potential victim has been exploited abroad or at an unknown location and they have presented to another first responder within the force area

### **Other notes:**

All counts are rounded to the nearest 10. The rounding is the reason values for counts in the columns for “Total” sometimes differ slightly from the sums of the counts in the previous columns.

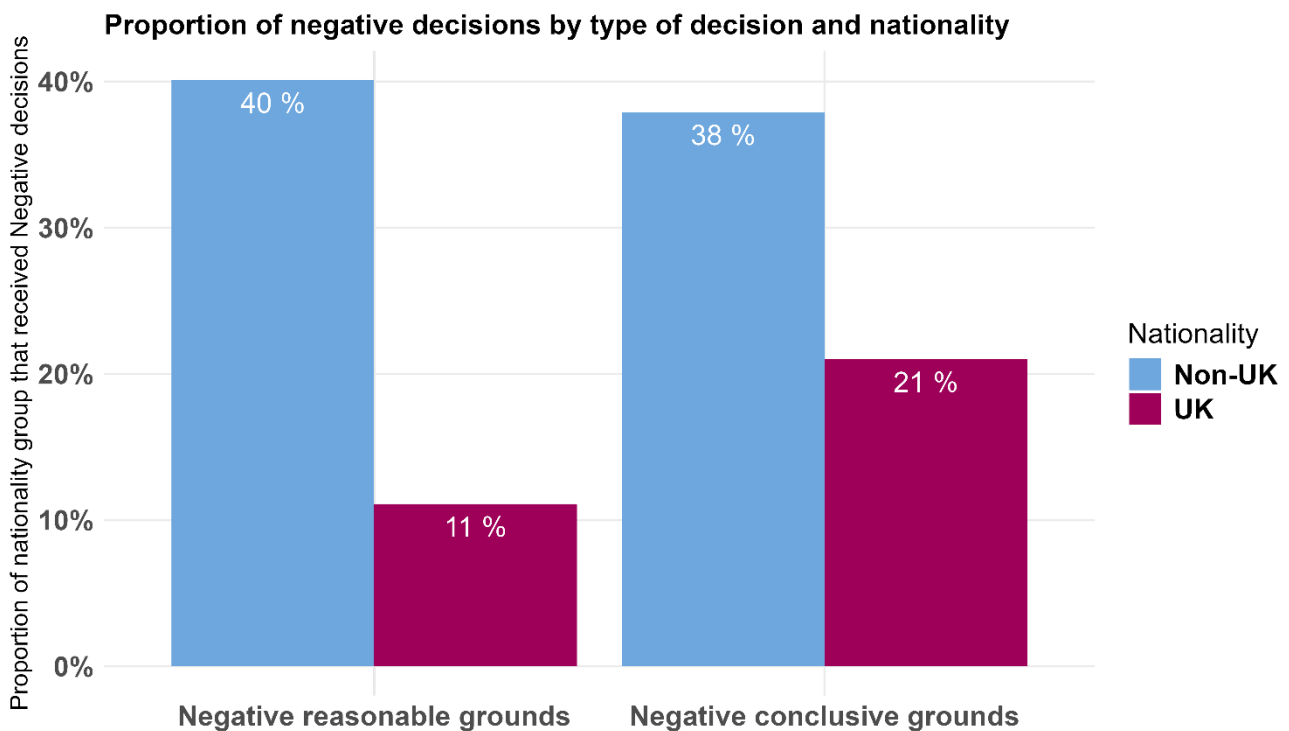
**A: Proportion of negative decisions for Non-UK nationals as compared to UK nationals**

**Table 1: Reasonable grounds decisions, 2021 – 2025: Decision outcomes by nationality group (proportions of nationality group and the corresponding numbers of decisions (in brackets))**

	Negative	Positive	Total
Non-UK	40.1% (25500)	59.9% (38070)	(63570)
UK	11.1% (2650)	88.9% (21180)	(23830)
Total	32.2% (28160)	67.8% (59250)	(87400)

**Table 2: Conclusive grounds decisions, 2021 – 2025: Decision outcomes by nationality group (proportions of nationality group and the corresponding numbers of decisions (in brackets))**

	Negative	Positive	Disqualified	Total
Non-UK	37.9% (15900)	60.3% (25260)	1.8% (760)	(41920)
UK	21.0% (4200)	79.0% (15820)	0.1% (10)	(20030)
Total	32.4% (20100)	66.3% (41080)	1.2% (770)	(61950)



Data source: Home Office, Chart: GLA

The chart and tables above show

- The proportion of negative decisions was much higher for those of Non-UK nationality compared to those of UK dual and UK sole nationalities;
- The difference between the rates of negative decisions for Non-UK and UK sole was much less for conclusive grounds decisions (38% v. 21%) than for reasonable grounds decisions (40% v. 11%).

**B: Proportion of negative decisions for non-UK nationals as compared to UK nationals, comparing adults with children**

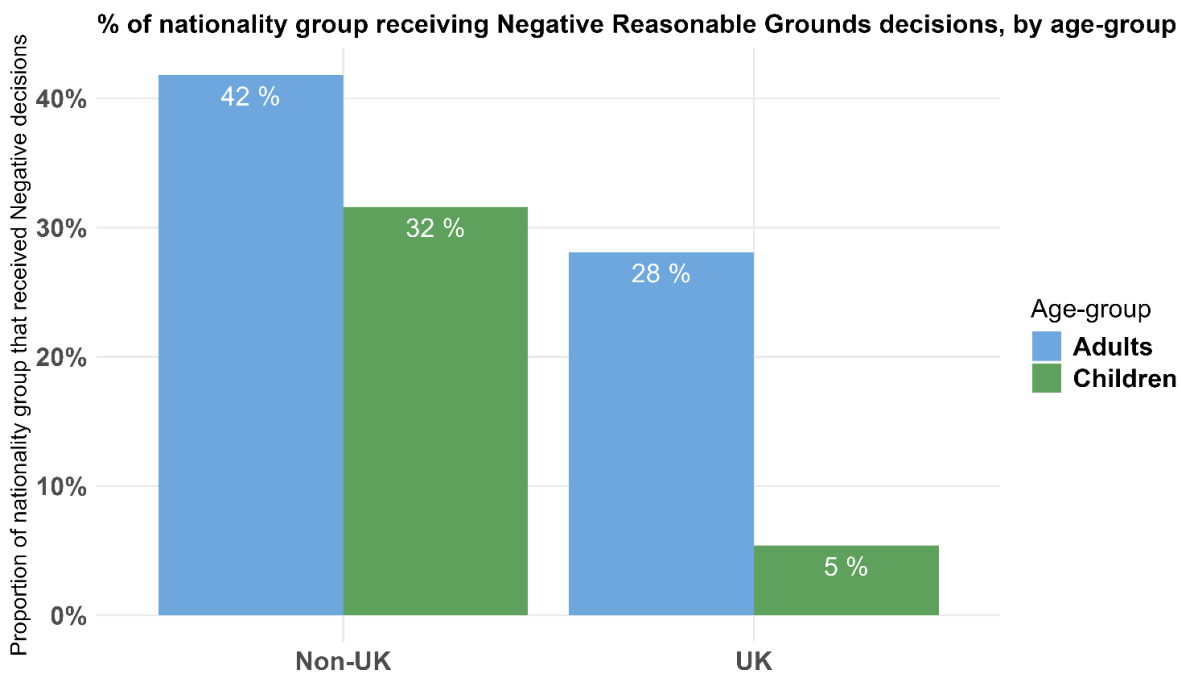
**B1: Reasonable grounds**

**Table 3: Reasonable grounds decisions, 2021 – 2025: Decision outcomes for adults (18+y.o.) by nationality group (proportions of nationality group and the corresponding numbers of decisions (in brackets))**

	Negative	Positive	Total
Non-UK	41.8% (22160)	58.2% (30910)	(53070)
UK	28.1% (1690)	71.9% (4330)	(6020)
Total	40.1% (21900)	59.6% (35240)	(59090)

**Table 4: Reasonable grounds decisions, Q1 2021 – Q3 2025: Decision outcomes for children (<17y.o.) by nationality group (proportions of nationality group and the corresponding numbers of decisions (in brackets))**

	Negative	Positive	Total
Non-UK	31.6% (3290)	68.4% (7140)	(10430)
UK	5.4% (960)	94.6% (16847)	(17810)
Total	15.1% (4010)	84.9% (23980)	(28240)



Data source: Home Office, Chart: GLA

The chart and tables above for NRG show

- For those of Non-UK nationality the rate of negative reasonable grounds decisions was slightly lower for children than for adults (32% v. 42%)
- For those of UK nationality, the rate of negative reasonable grounds decisions was much lower for children compared to adults (5% v. 28%).

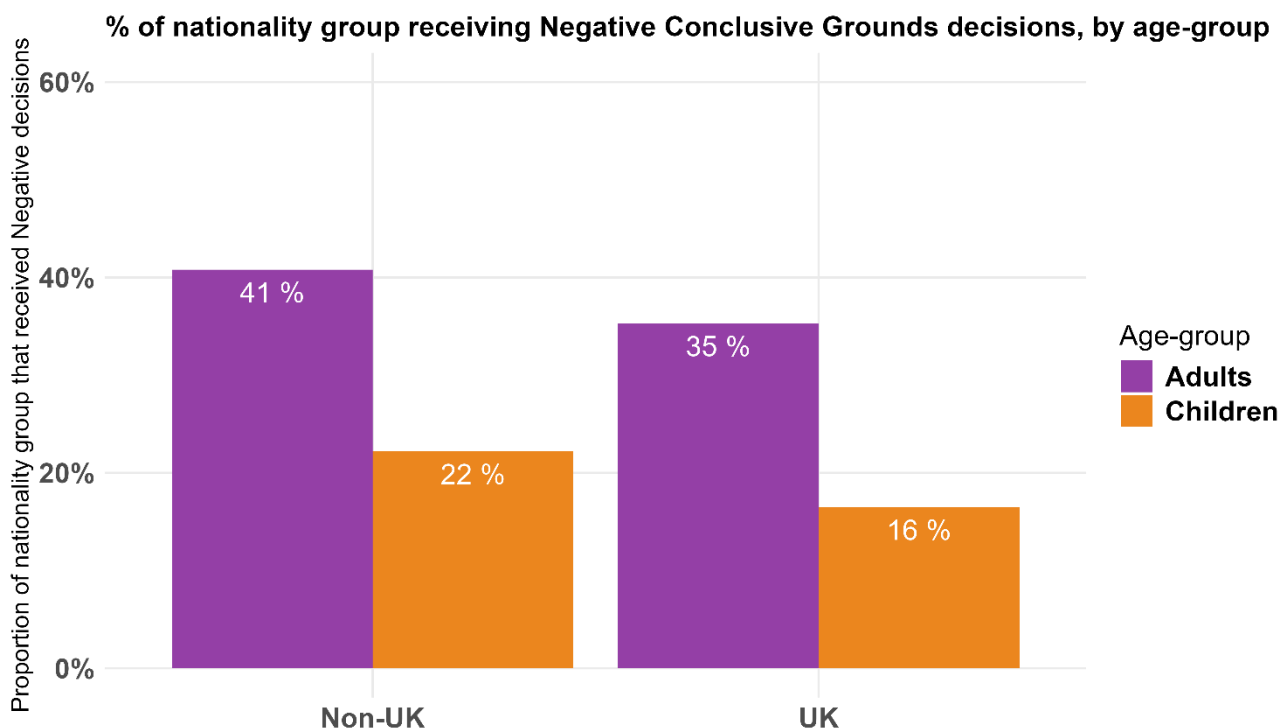
## B2: Conclusive grounds

**Table 5: Conclusive grounds decisions, 2021 – 2025: Decision outcomes for adults (18+y.o.) by nationality group (proportions of nationality group and the corresponding numbers of decisions (in brackets))**

	Negative	Positive	Disqualified	Total
Non-UK	40.8% (14430)	57.1% (20170)	2.2% (750)	(35340)
UK	35.3% (1680)	64.5% (3070)	0.2% (10)	(4750)
Total	40.2% (16110)	57.9% (23230)	1.8% (750)	(40100)

**Table 6: Conclusive grounds decisions, 2021 – 2025: Decision outcomes for children (<17y.o.) by nationality group (proportions of nationality group and the corresponding numbers of decisions (in brackets))**

	Negative	Positive	Disqualified	Total
Non-UK	22.2% (1460)	77.6% (5080)	0.2% (10)	(6550)
UK	16.5% (2520)	83.5% (12750)	0.0% (10)	(15280)
Total	18.2% (3980)	81.7% (17830)	0.1% (20)	(21830)



Data source: Home Office, Chart: GLA

The chart and tables for NCG above show

- For those of both nationality groups, the rate of negative conclusive grounds decisions for children was around half those for adults.
- This is a different pattern to negative reasonable grounds decisions where the difference in rates between adults and children was significantly different for UK v. Non-UK.

### **C: Proportion of London-based NRM referrals that are Non-UK nationals**

**Table 7: Referrals 2021 – 2025: Nationality group by location of referral (proportions of referrals at that location and the corresponding numbers of referrals (in brackets))**

	<b>Non-UK</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Total referrals</b>
<b>London Police Force</b>	<b>78.0%</b> (18790)	22.0% (5300)	(24090)
Other Police Force	70.6% (45920)	29.4% (19080)	(65000)
Total	72.6% (64710)	27.4% (24380)	(89080)

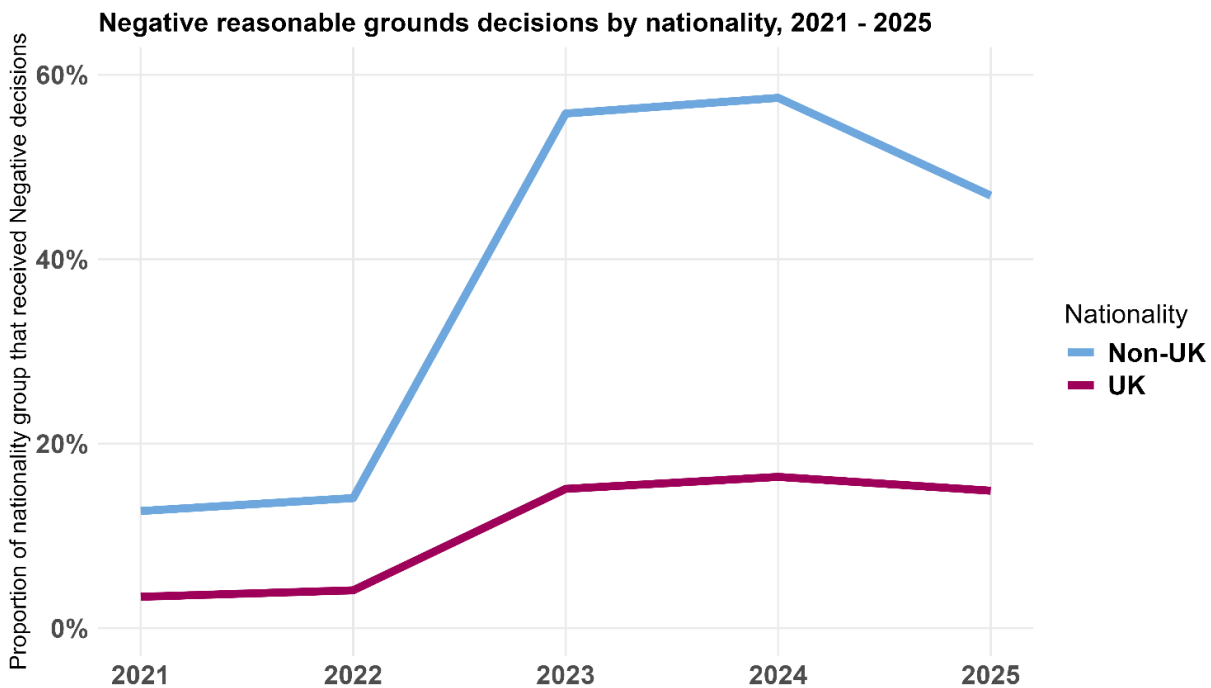
The table above shows that 78% of referrals made to a London police force were for those of Non-UK nationality. This is higher than the proportion of referrals made in the rest of the UK (71%).

**D: Time trends**

**D1: Proportion of negative reasonable grounds decisions for non-UK nationals as compared to UK nationals**

**Table 8: Negative Reasonable grounds decisions, 2021 – 2025, proportions of nationality group who received negative decisions, and the corresponding numbers of decisions (in brackets), by year (2021 – 2025)**

	Non-UK	UK	All nationalities	Total decisions (-ve & +ve)
<b>2021</b>	<b>12.7%</b> (1040)	<b>3.4%</b> (140)	9.5% (1180)	12480
<b>2022</b>	<b>14.1%</b> (1720)	<b>4.1%</b> (190)	11.4% (1900)	16680
<b>2023</b>	<b>55.8%</b> (5980)	<b>15.1%</b> (630)	44.4% (6610)	14910
<b>2024</b>	<b>57.5%</b> (8310)	<b>16.4%</b> (870)	46.6% (9170)	19750
<b>2025</b>	<b>46.9%</b> (8460)	<b>14.9%</b> (830)	39.4% (9290)	23590
<b>Total</b>	<b>40.1%</b> (25500)	<b>11.1%</b> (2650)	32.2% (28160)	87400



Data source: Home Office, Chart: GLA

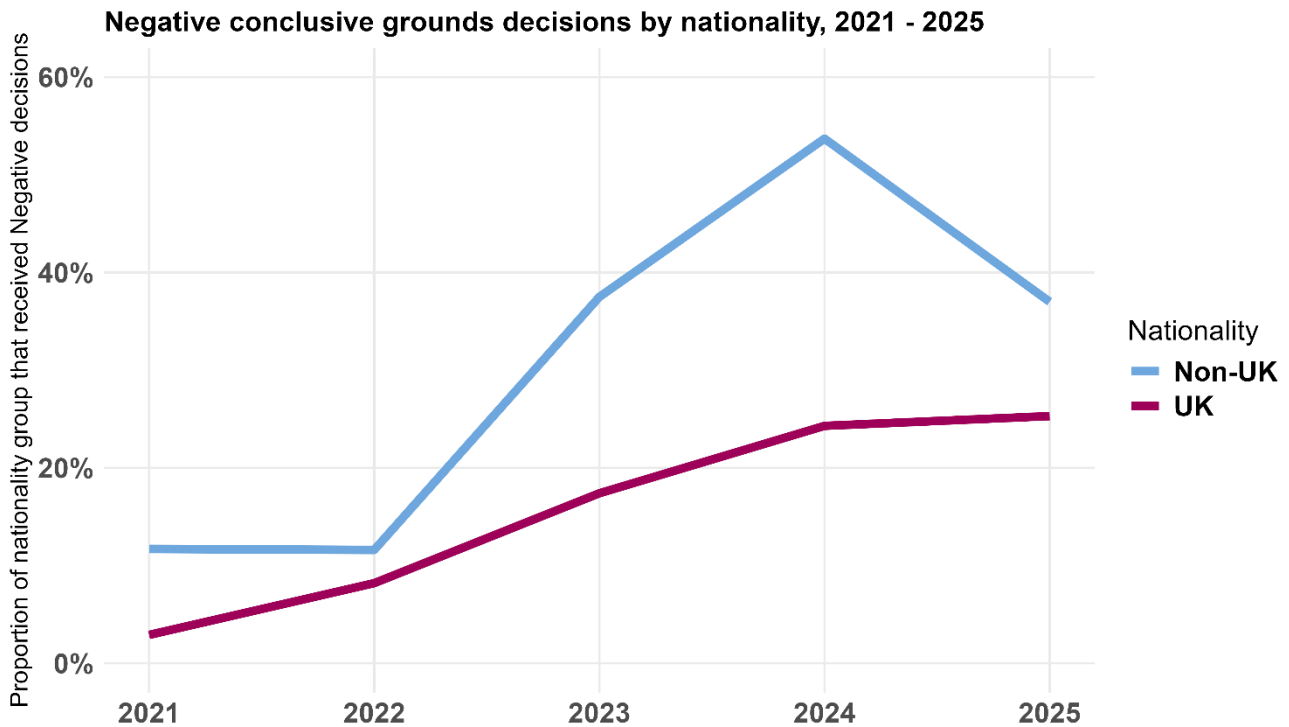
According to the most recent report ([Modern Slavery: NRM and DtN statistics, October to December 2025 - GOV.UK](#)), before 2023, the proportion of positive decisions had remained relatively stable, with around 9 out of every 10 referrals receiving a positive decision. In January 2023, with the implementation of the Nationality and Borders Act, the evidential threshold for determining reasonable grounds decisions was changed, resulting in an increase in the proportion of negative decisions issued. This threshold was amended in July 2023 following a legal challenge, and negative decisions lowered slightly, but remained stable at a much higher rate than pre-2023 levels. A judicial review result in March 2026 showed that internal guidance still reflected the unlawful January 2023 threshold, meaning the guidance will be amended.

The chart and table above clearly show the effect of this change in threshold for both those of both UK and Non-UK nationalities, although the effect was much greater for those of Non-UK nationality.

**D2: Proportion of negative conclusive grounds decisions for non-UK nationals as compared to UK nationals**

**Table 9: Negative Conclusive grounds decisions, 2021 – 2025, proportions of nationality group who received negative decisions, and the corresponding numbers of decisions (in brackets), by year (2021 – 2025)**

	Non-UK	UK	All nationalities	Total decisions (-ve & +ve)
<b>2021</b>	<b>11.7%</b> (210)	<b>2.9%</b> (30)	8.5% (240)	2830
<b>2022</b>	<b>11.6%</b> (470)	<b>8.2%</b> (170)	10.5% (640)	6120
<b>2023</b>	<b>37.5%</b> (2720)	<b>17.4%</b> (470)	32.0% (3200)	9980
<b>2024</b>	<b>53.7%</b> (5900)	<b>24.3%</b> (1560)	42.8% (7460)	17410
<b>2025</b>	<b>37.0%</b> (6600)	<b>25.3%</b> (1970)	33.5% (8570)	25620
<b>Total</b>	<b>37.9%</b> (15900)	<b>21.0%</b> (4200)	32.4% (20100)	61950



Data source: Home Office, Chart: GLA

The most recent Home Office Bulletin ([Modern Slavery: NRM and DtN statistics, July to September 2025 - GOV.UK](#)) does not refer to any change in threshold for positive conclusive grounds decisions, in contrast to the reasonable grounds decisions. The report simply mentions an increasing trend in numbers of decisions since the early months of 2021 due to recruitment of additional decision-makers and increased productivity efforts .

The chart and table above show increasing proportions of negative conclusive decisions since 2021 for both UK and Non-UK nationalities, although for Non-UK the trend reversed in 2025.

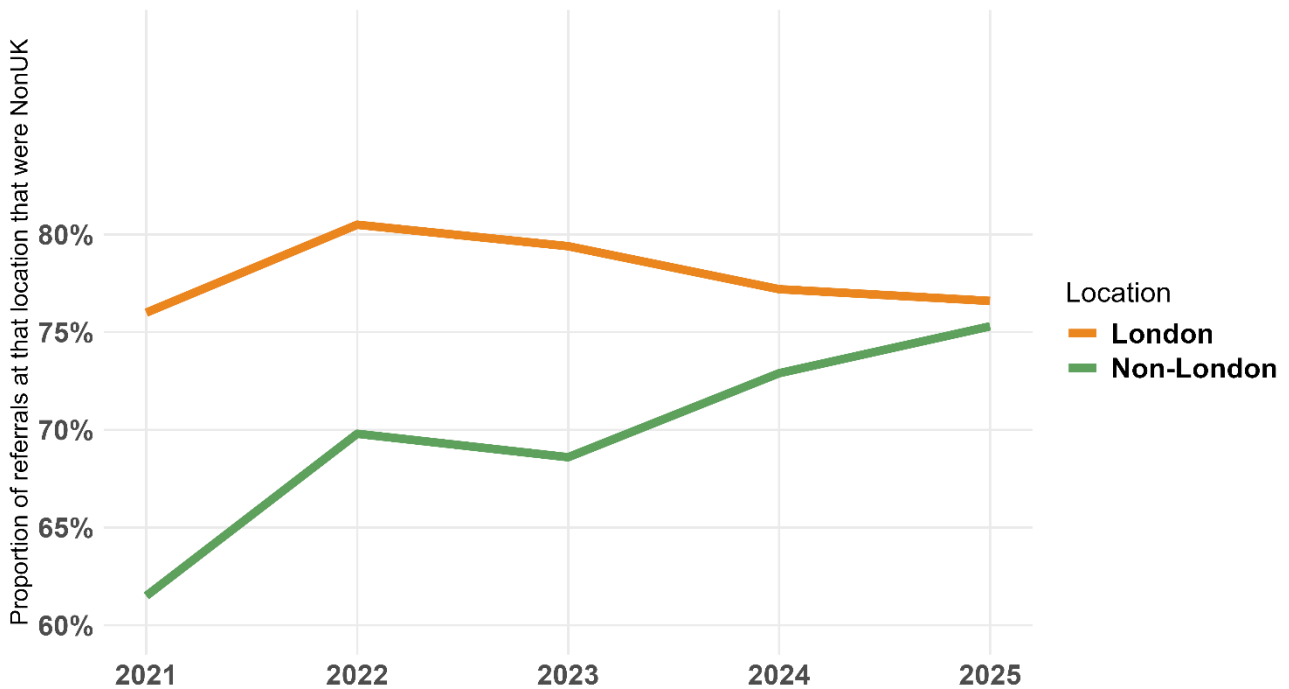
**D3: Proportion of London-based NRM referrals that are non-UK nationals**

**Table 10: Non-UK referrals, 2021 – 2025: Proportions of referrals that were Non-UK, by location, and the corresponding numbers of referrals (in brackets)), by year (2021 – 2025)**

For location of referral, “London” includes those referrals made to the Metropolitan Police and City of London police.

	<b>London Police Force</b>	Non-London Police Force	All police forces	Total referrals (UK + NonUK)
<b>2021</b>	<b>76.0%</b> (2870)	61.5% (5480)	65.8% (8350)	12690
<b>2022</b>	<b>80.5%</b> (3990)	69.8% (8330)	73.0% (12330)	16900
<b>2023</b>	<b>79.4%</b> (4060)	68.6% (8130)	71.8% (12200)	16980
<b>2024</b>	<b>77.2%</b> (3800)	72.9% (10360)	74.0% (14150)	19120
<b>2025</b>	<b>76.6%</b> (4070)	75.3% (13620)	75.6% (17680)	23400
<b>Total</b>	<b>78.0%</b> (18790)	70.6% (45920)	72.6% (64710)	89081

**Non-UK referrals by location, 2021 - 2025**



Data source: Home Office, Chart: GLA

The table and chart above show that for referrals in London, the proportion of those of Non-UK nationality has been consistently above 75% since 2021. For referrals in the rest of the UK, the proportion of Non-UK nationality started at a much lower level, at around 62% and has since increased so that in 2025 there was only a small difference between London and rest of the UK (77% for London and 75% for the rest of the UK).

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