



Home Office

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Minister of State for Immigration

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Rt Hon Alistair Carmichael MP
House of Commons
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Dear Alistair,

During day two of Committee stage of the Illegal Migration Bill on 28 March, I stated on two occasions, once in response to a statement of yours on detention (Hansard, column 903), that the number of unaccompanied minors arriving in the UK had increased by fourfold since 2019. I wish to clarify here my comment.

The Home Office's statistics on irregular migration to the UK, year ending December 2022 actually show that 7,117 children arrived in the UK via small boats in 2022 compared to 308 in 2019. This represents an increase by over twenty-three-fold. I acknowledge that these figures do not distinguish between those children who are unaccompanied and those who are accompanied, such as those in a family group.

The reference to a fourfold increase is a statistic relating to unaccompanied minors but in respect of an increase in transfers under the National Transfer Scheme which has seen 4,187 children transferred to local authorities with children's services between 1 July 2021 and 31 December 2022. This compares to 775 children transferred in the same timeframe in previous years (440% increase).

I am copying this letter to Alison Thewliss MP. I am also placing a copy of this letter in the House of Commons Library.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP
Minister of State for Immigration