

# Out of the starting blocks

Cohort study on recent asylum migration



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## Explanation of symbols

Empty cell	Figure not applicable
.	Figure is unknown, insufficiently reliable or confidential
*	Provisional figure
**	Revised provisional figure
2017–2018	2017 to 2018 inclusive
2017/2018	Average for 2017 to 2018 inclusive
2017/'18	Crop year, financial year, school year, etc., beginning in 2017 and ending in 2018
2015/'16–2017/'18	Crop year, financial year, etc., 2015/'16 to 2017/'18 inclusive

Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond to the sum of the separate figures.

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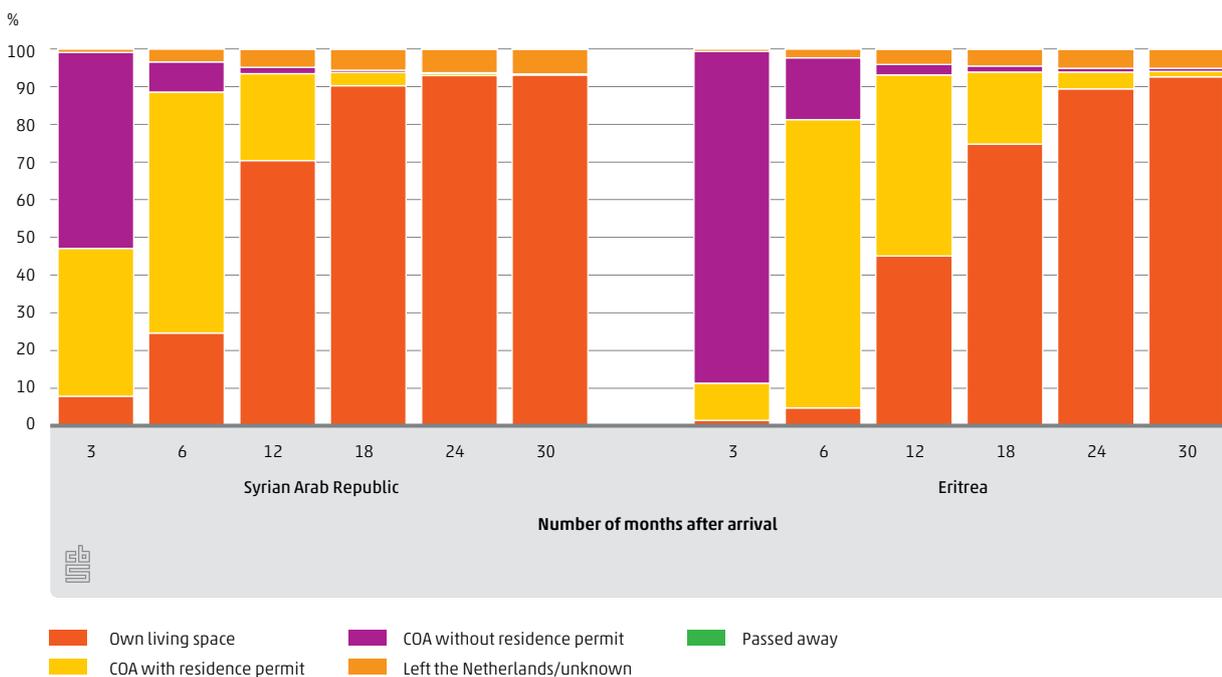
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# Summary

Since 2014, the Netherlands has faced a large inflow of asylum seekers, mainly from Syria and Eritrea. The inflow peaked in the autumn of 2015, but in the second half of 2016 and 2017 the Netherlands was still having to contend with a higher inflow than before 2014. The composition of the new arrivals has changed greatly in the recent period; in 2014 and 2015 they were still predominantly young men, whereas in 2016 and 2017 there was a shift towards women and particularly children travelling to the Netherlands to be reunited with their family. The composition has also changed in terms of nationalities; compared to the previous years, 2016 saw many asylum seekers coming to the Netherlands from 'safe countries' such as Albania and Morocco. In the first half of 2017 the focus of the asylum flow shifted to sponsors for family reunification from Syria and Eritrea. The number of Syrians who came to the Netherlands as 'first asylum seekers' in 2014 more than doubled 18 months later as a result of family joiners, family reunification, family formation or the birth of children in the Netherlands. After 30 months this cohort had grown by as much as 125 percent.

In the initial period after arrival, asylum seekers are received in asylum reception centres operated by the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA). They often move between reception centres during the reception period. Asylum seekers apply to the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) for an asylum residence permit. A large proportion of such applications are approved, but they may also be rejected. Eligible asylum seekers from Syria and Eritrea are granted an asylum residence permit fairly quickly; after a year almost all Syrians and Eritreans (who are still in the Netherlands) have received an asylum residence permit. The process takes longer for the other large groups of asylum seekers, from Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran. In these cases the initial asylum applications are often unsuccessful and residence permits are, in those cases, only granted later after repeated applications or appeals.

**Syrian and Eritrean asylum seekers arriving in 2014, by residence situation at number of months after arrival**



When asylum seekers have been granted an asylum residence permit and have left the COA reception centre, the integration process starts. For this research, holders of asylum residence permits were followed over time to assess their housing, family composition, integration, education, employment, benefit dependency, income, use of health care and criminality. Holders of residence permits are currently followed for a maximum of 2.5 years. In the years ahead this research period will be progressively extended by one year.

Asylum seekers who have left COA reception centres in recent years live in municipalities spread fairly widely across the Netherlands and just as often in urban as non-urban municipalities. As a result of family reunification the family status of asylum seekers holding residence permits changes in many cases from single to families with children.

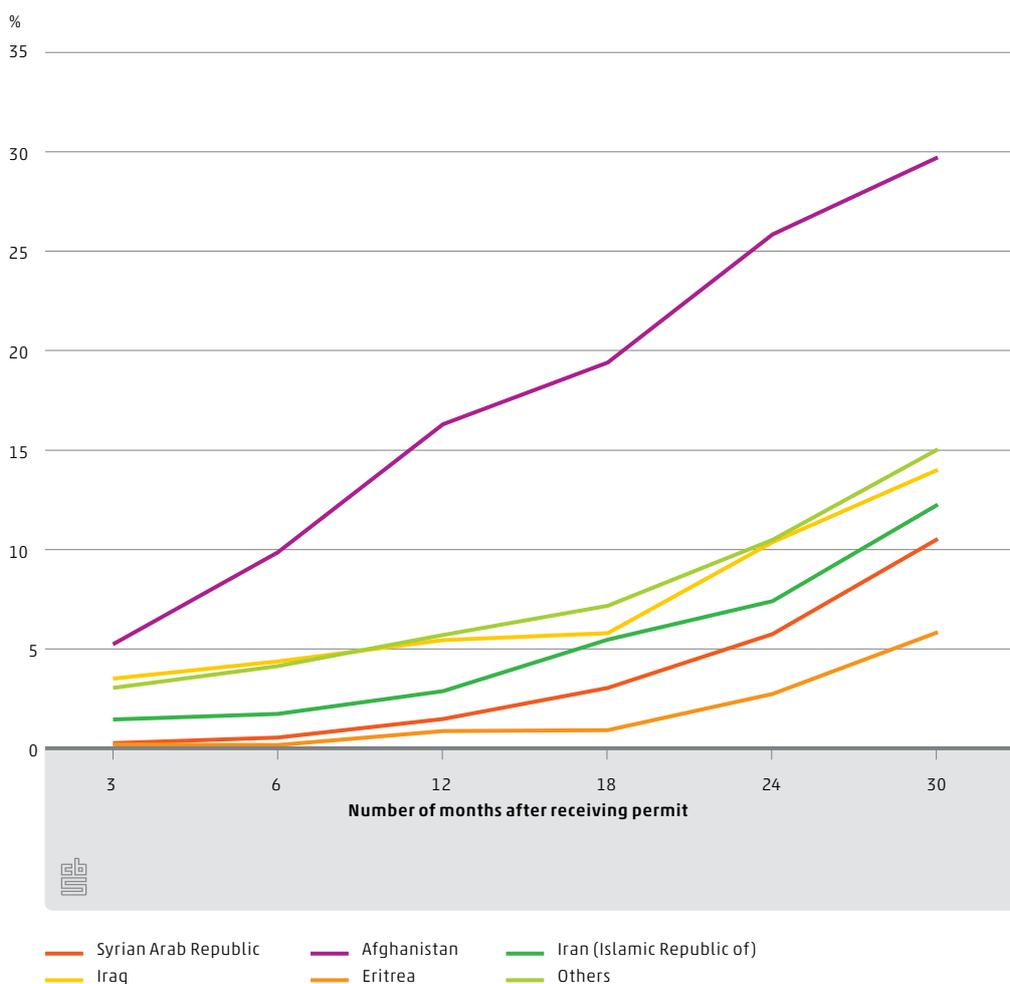
Almost all the children of compulsory school age who were granted a permit in 2014 are registered in education. Since child asylum seekers have barely any command of Dutch when they arrive in the Netherlands, they are usually taught in language classes (primary education) or international transition classes (secondary education) in the first year. This continues for a maximum of two years. Information on progress to regular classes is still limited, but it is noticeable that the proportion of those receiving education among the 18 to 22 age group is increasing, raising the likelihood that these young people will obtain a starter qualification for the Dutch job market later on. As status holders remain longer in the Netherlands, they often move from secondary education to intermediate vocational education (MBO) and practical education. In MBO almost half reach level 1. For courses at MBO level 2 and above stricter requirements apply with regard to prior education, such as obtaining an intermediate preparatory vocational education (VMBO) diploma or higher.

Status holders above the compulsory education age are often unemployed. Of all the status holders aged 18 to 65 who were granted their asylum residence permit in 2014, only 11 percent were working as employees or self-employed entrepreneurs 30 months later. This also means that after 30 months a large proportion of this group depend on social welfare benefits for their income; 86 percent of all status holders aged 18 to 65 are in receipt of a social welfare benefit after 30 months. A positive point, however, is that a year and a half after receiving their permit the benefit dependency among status holders who were granted asylum residence permits in 2014 is slowly beginning to decrease. Afghans who were granted an asylum residence permit in 2014 fare noticeably better in this regard than the other groups; 30 months after obtaining a residence permit 30 percent of these status holders between the ages of 18 and 64 are in employment and 'only' 65 percent are receiving a social welfare benefit.

The fact that so few status holders have found work may be because they are still integrating; in the case of status holders who were granted an asylum residence permit in 2014, only 6 percent had passed the integration examination by 1 October 2016. The formal integration period is three years.

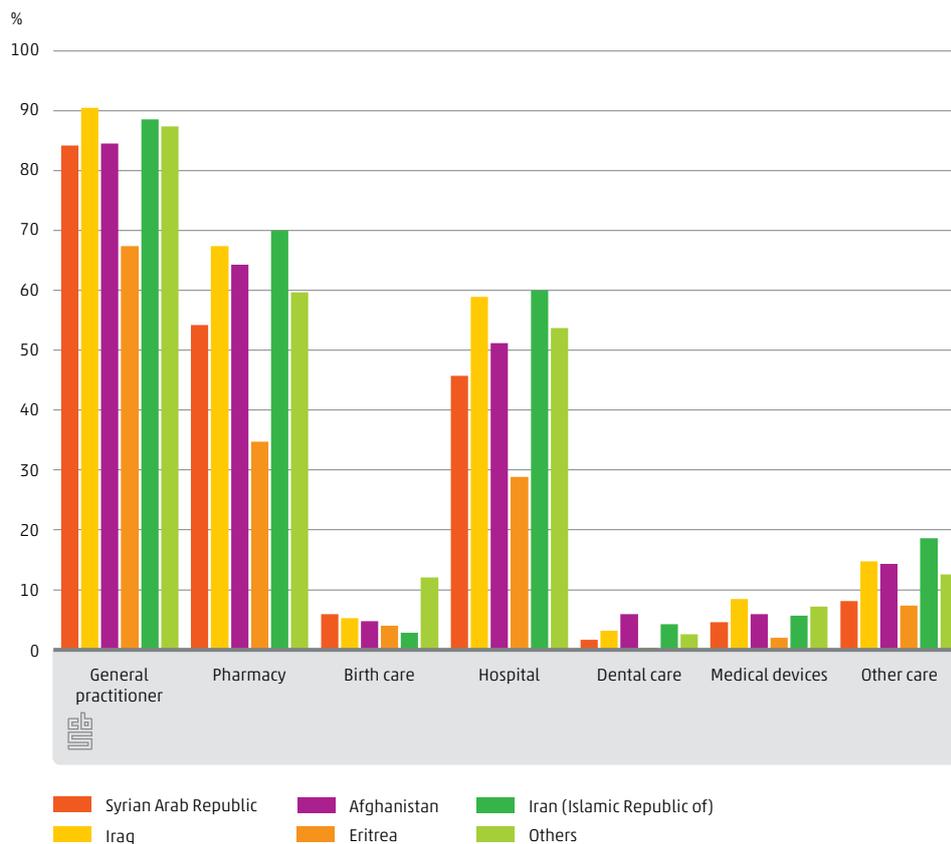
This year, for the first time, research on status holders included their household income and use of health care. Income differences between the various groups of status holders are not (yet) very wide. This is due particularly to the fact that a large proportion of the households still depend on social welfare benefits. The small number of status holders who have found work are also still dependent on supplementary benefits for their income.

**Proportion of people in work among 18 to 64-year-olds who were granted an asylum residence permit in 2014, by number of months after receiving the permit**



As soon as status holders have been granted a residence permit and are no longer staying in a COA reception centre, they can use the regular health care systems. They are also required to take out basic insurance. Of all the status holders who received a permit in 2014, were aged 18 or over and were no longer in a COA reception centre at the end of 2015, 95 percent had taken out basic insurance at the end of 2015. Eighty-two percent also incurred actual costs for a type of care reimbursed under the basic insurance in 2015. It is worth noting that Eritreans make by far the least use of health care. The reasons cited in previous research are cultural differences, taboos, language barriers and unfamiliarity with prevention and treatment options. However, it is also the case that Eritreans stay in COA facilities longer than people of other nationalities after obtaining their permit and so have had less time to incur costs under the basic insurance. The Eritrean permit holders are also younger on average than the other permit holders, which may also explain their lower use of health care.

## Use of health care in 2015 among status holders who were granted an asylum residence permit in 2014 and are no longer staying in a COA facility



Finally, this research assessed the extent to which status holders are suspected of crime more or less frequently than other groups. It can be concluded that in relative terms men with an asylum background are suspected of crime more often than men as a whole in the Netherlands. However, in comparison with all men with a non-Western migration background, men with an asylum background come out much more favourably.

This cohort study describes current patterns in the inflow, reception and integration of asylum seekers. The combination of different registers provides a powerful information source containing information on asylum seekers, including family formers, sponsors and status holders in the Netherlands. Survey-based research is also being conducted among asylum migrants from Syria by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP), the Research and Documentation Centre (WODC) and the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM). This research covers themes such as the background to the departure from Syria, the choice of the Netherlands, the position with regard to the Dutch language, social contacts and education. This will be reported on in June 2018. Furthermore, the register and survey data will be combined later in the year in an in-depth report. In the years ahead, an increasingly rich data set will be developed which can provide deeper and broader insights into the position of asylum migrants in the Netherlands.