



**Commission on the
Integration of
Refugees**

Integration of Refugees in the UK

**Exploring the Integration
Experiences of Refugees
and People Seeking
Asylum in the UK**



Report produced by Neighbourly Lab
for the Commission on the Integration of Refugees, March 2024



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Foreword

This piece of research was commissioned by the Commission on the Integration of Refugees to explore an interrelated set of research questions. Firstly, to explore the fundamental integration experiences of people who identify as refugees, or people in the asylum system who have also arrived in the UK within the last 10 years. Secondly, to gain a deeper understanding of what facilitates and what hinders integration from this group's perspective. And thirdly, to structure this research according to some of the key areas of integration and asylum policy that relate to the commission's broader workstreams (Social Inclusion, ESOL/Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship, Living conditions, Health and Mental health).

Neighbourly Lab addressed these questions through a mixed-methods approach, combining a survey questionnaire with a series of immersive qualitative interviews. In doing so, we engaged a vast number of people and organisations.

Our initial aim was to garner 400 survey responses and complete 8 interviews. In total, the survey reached 1,189 people of which 755 responses were complete enough to use in our data analysis. We also completed 11 interviews. This created rich and extensive data sources that provided meaningful insight into the lived experience of those people we engaged with. These qualitative and quantitative findings form the bulk of this report and are woven alongside one another.

We hope that this report voices the much-needed perspectives of the people whose experiences have led our research. We also hope that this evidence-base will support the Commission in its mission to inform and influence both policymakers and the general public, and to bring about systemic change.

Key themes at a glance

Trends over time:

- › Three years into being in the UK we see very limited improvements in people's experiences here according to our available indicators, showing the need for a more systemic approach
- › There is limited evidence to suggest that respondents feel more part of British society the longer they have been in the country

Respondents are highly educated:

- › 1 in 3 respondents are educated to undergraduate degree level
- › 1 in 4 respondents are educated to master's level
- › Ukrainian respondents were significantly more likely to have a graduate level of education

But respondents also struggle to use their education and qualifications:

- › 1 in 3 respondents **do not currently** use the skills from their qualifications
- › The language barrier is the most significant barrier to work for respondents

Key themes at a glance

A high number of respondents in employment have had to move down to entry level positions:

- › 39% of respondents have had to drop down to an entry level position compared to their previous role before arriving in the UK

Learning English is vital for integration but waiting lists for classes are a key barrier to this process:

- › Nearly 3 in 10 of all respondents have experienced waiting lists for language classes
- › 1 in 5 respondents cannot afford to travel to class

People's first 6 months in the UK appear to be a crucial window for socially connecting in the UK:

- › People's first month in the UK is difficult to make friends. This number then increases significantly over the first 6 months
- › However, after three years we stop seeing any clear increase in the number of friends made

Key themes at a glance

Mental health is the most severe health challenge experienced by respondents

- › People who did not arrive through a resettlement scheme are 7 times more likely to suffer a mental health condition

Schools appear to have great potential as spaces for mixing and connection between children, but not parents

- › 69% of respondents feel that their children have made friends at school
- › Only 24% of parents feel that they are getting to know other parents well

The most common way that respondents make friends in the UK is through their neighbours

- › 19% of respondents have made friends through their neighbours
- › 16% of respondents have made friends through volunteering

Quantitative Research Methodology

Survey design:

- › We conducted **20 stakeholder interviews** with different experts across the sector to understand what their priority research areas were
- › We carried out a **survey co-design session** with key Commission stakeholders
- › We carried out a **co-design consultation** with community researchers with lived experience
- › We invited community members to **translate the survey** into 10 languages
- › We also conducted extensive background research on the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK

Survey distribution:

- › We've travelled all over the UK and spent time in spaces like **churches, community centres, hotels, council offices, and charities** to meet people and ask them to complete the survey and we also partnered with **community researchers** to support this process
- › This experience has also been ethnographic in itself - we've had **dozens of expansive, off-the record conversations** with people whilst visiting these spaces which have added texture to our qualitative research
- › We've also developed online relationships with stakeholders across the UK, including **all of the devolved nations**, who have helped to distribute the survey themselves

Quantitative Research Methodology

More on our sampling method:

Our sampling frame for this research was anyone who identified as a refugee or person in the asylum system and had arrived in the UK within the last 10 years. As we used a **convenience sample**, rather than a random sample, there is a greater risk of bias within our sample. However, as we shall see later in the report, the **demographic breakdown generally aligns with our overall expectations** for the sample.

It is still important to acknowledge the potential biases at play in this sample. Firstly, because we partnered with lots of Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) groups to help distribute the survey there is a chance that it reached groups who are more actively involved within their local community (e.g. through volunteering) and have also received more support (e.g. language classes or

practical information). Although we also surveyed people in forms of temporary accommodation who were not involved necessarily in VCFSE groups, our method means that we were unlikely to survey the most disconnected and unsupported groups currently in the UK.

It is also worth acknowledging that our survey sample is concentrated by people who have lived in the UK between 1 and 3 years, making it harder to draw conclusions about the experiences of those who have been in the UK for longer. This reflects a common methodological challenge within migration research, as people who have spent more time in the UK tend to be less connected with VCFSE groups and are generally more difficult to connect with.

Quantitative Research Methodology

More on our sampling method:

And so while we do not propose that our results are wholly representative of the target population, **we also do not think that our sample is significantly biased towards any particular subset of the relevant population.** Furthermore, **we have conducted subgroup analyses** where we think

there may be a potential for bias in the sample as a whole, such as separating out responses from people who arrived in the UK via a resettlement scheme versus those who did not arrive through a resettlement scheme. Our sampling approach also added to its reliability:

- › We went to a **wide variety of places** to collect responses, ranging from volunteer groups to temporary asylum accommodation
- › We distributed the survey online through organisations **across the UK** including in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland
- › We made the survey as **accessible as possible**, partnering with Community Researchers who translated the survey into 10 languages and also helped to distribute the survey through their networks
- › We **approached specific communities** such as Syrian and Albanian community groups when we could see an undercount in these communities through our interim monitoring
- › In total, the survey reached 1,189 people out of which **755** of these responses were complete enough to use in our data analysis

We chose not to weight our data for the following reasons

Lack of accurate demographic data to weight to

The most accurate breakdown of the current proportion of refugees and people in the asylum system in the UK from each region was in a recent briefing to the House of Commons. However, these figures:

- › Do not give demographic breakdowns (gender, age)
- › Are based on 2022 only (rather than our 10 year sampling frame)

Lacking a proper set of reliable weights means weighting the data would not have been valuable

Non randomised sample

Weighting is appropriate when respondents are selected at random. Due to our sampling methods, it is unlikely that our respondents are wholly representative of their specific region:

- › We went via community groups and charities who were only a few degrees of separation from all respondents
- › We used our own contacts

Therefore, even if we applied weighting, we should not expect this data to be representative of the whole population of refugees and people in the asylum system in the UK

With this in mind, it is helpful to clarify exactly how we can use and interpret this data

We can interpret this data as:

- ✓ Insight into the lived experience of 755 refugees and people in the asylum system currently living in the UK from a diverse range of backgrounds
- ✓ Evidence to support motivations for certain policy recommendations
- ✓ Directions and inspiration for further research and investigations

We cannot interpret this data as:

- ✗ An evaluation of different immigration schemes
Robust evidence into what causes different integration experiences
- ✗ Representative insights into all refugees and people in the asylum system in the UK

Qualitative Research Methodology

- › We conducted **11 immersive qualitative interviews** with participants. The participants encompassed a diverse range of nationality, age, gender, time spent in the UK, and current immigration status (detailed in the following section)
- › **6 interviews were completed in person and 5 were completed online**
- › Each interview lasted approximately 90 mins and adopted an “everyday” lens where we began by exploring the day-to-day experiences of participants to then build out into broader discursive themes. This afforded us a rich and unvarnished look into the different stories and events that made up the overall integration experiences of our participants
- › As a result we have been able to gather a range of case studies, engaging quotes and common themes that add texture to our quantitative analysis

A sincere thank you to all the people and organisations who supported this research

This research simply could not have been done without the kindness and generosity of so many people and organisations around the UK. Their help in connecting us with interview participants and distributing the survey was crucial and would always be additional work alongside their already jam-packed schedules. We are massively grateful.

In no particular order our thanks goes to: Action Foundation, Opora, Bell Farm Christian Centre, Asylum Link, Brushstrokes, REAP, British Red Cross, Work Rights Centre, the University of Birmingham, Newham Council, Scottish Refugee Council, Refugee Council, Lewisham Council, IMIX, Care 4 Calais, the Northern Ireland Law Centre, Highway Vineyard Church,

Refugee Action, the Syrian Community Council, Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network, the Harbour Project, the Welsh Local Government Association, Shpresa, and all the Community Researchers we partnered with.

It is also worth paying particular thanks to REAP (Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership) who are a small charity supporting a huge number of people in the West Drayton area. They tirelessly supported us to distribute our survey in a range of different places and had an enormous impact on the shape of this research.

Overview of our sample

Qualitative interviews - Participant demographic summary

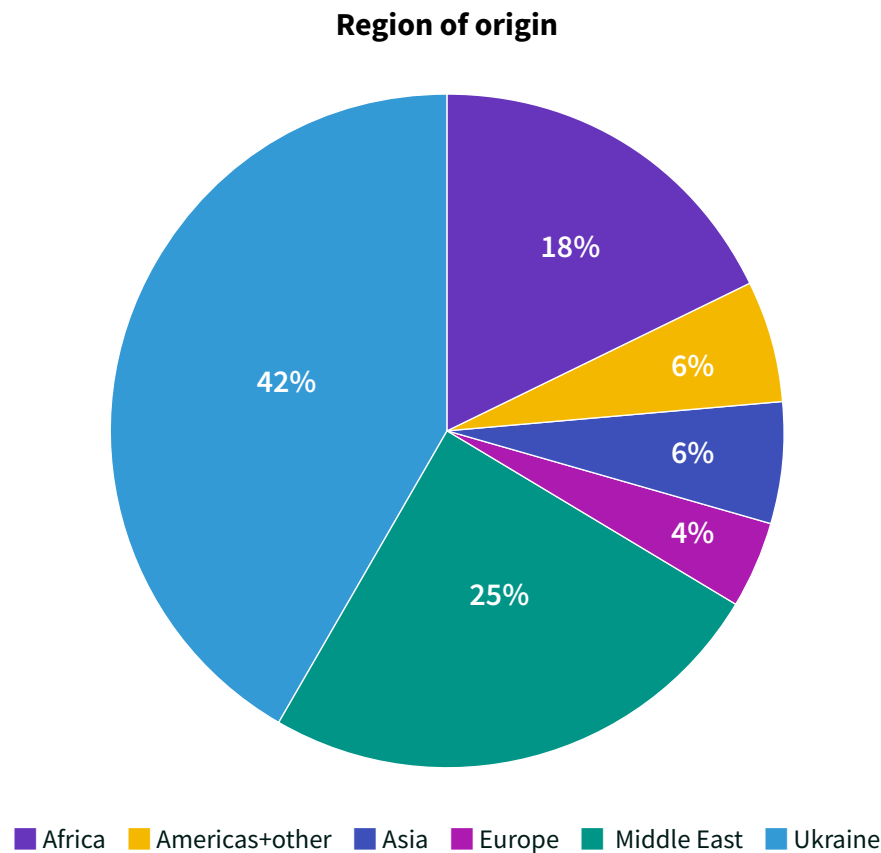
We spoke to a diverse range of interview participants, with a broad spread of perspectives across nationality, age, immigration status, location in the UK, and time spent in the UK (ranging from two years to eight years). This included people from Albania, Afghanistan, India, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Syria, and Ukraine.

We spoke to parents who had arrived in the UK with their families, young adults who had arrived with their parents, and people who had arrived in the UK by themselves and continued to live alone. Our interviewees were also spread across the UK with some based in major UK cities like London, Manchester, Glasgow, Newcastle, and Leeds,

and others based in more rural locations in Wales and the Midlands. Some were still waiting in the asylum system, others had left the asylum system (having received their indefinite leave to remain), others had arrived through a resettlement scheme and, in the case of one participant, had gone on to receive a British passport.

Whilst we do not interpret 11 interviews as exhaustive, the diversity of experiences we listened to enabled us to analyse important comparisons and differences between people's experiences in the UK. These experiences provide rich texture to accompany our quantitative findings.

Survey sample - Overview of ALL respondents



Base = 755 (all respondents)

What is most striking here is that over **40%** of our respondents are Ukrainian, whilst the remaining **60%** are made up of a range of different nationalities broken down into region. While this creates a skew in our data, the high proportion of Ukrainians just reflects the proportion of Ukrainian arrivals to the UK in the past 2 years:

“The number of Ukrainian refugees who arrived in the UK in 2022 was around the same as the number of people granted refuge in the UK from all origins, in total, between 2014 and 2021.”*

This means that for much of our analysis we have looked at the sample as a whole before then **separating out the Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian sample for comparative purposes.**

*House of Commons briefing on Asylum Statistics, Sept 12th 2023.

Survey sample - Overview of ALL respondents

Our sample was weighted towards those who did not arrive in the UK on a refugee resettlement scheme (53%).

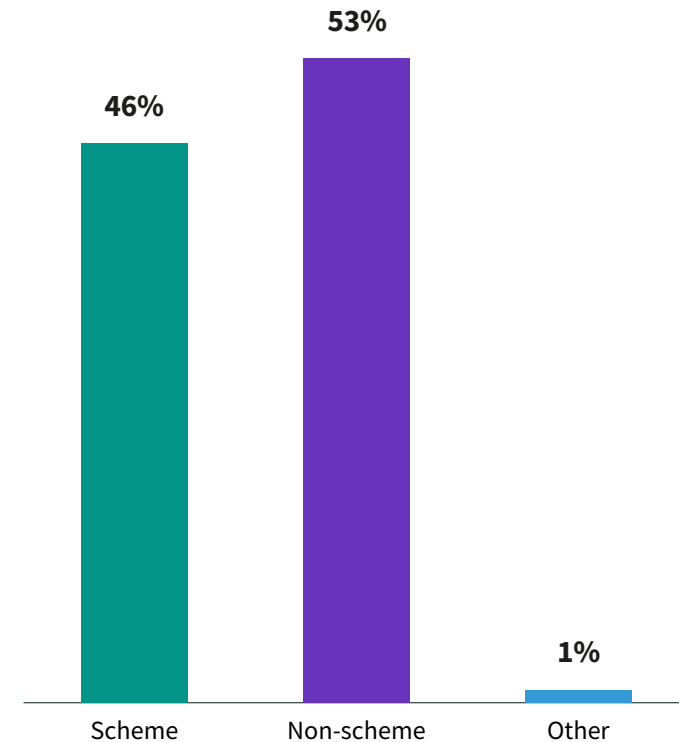
Of those who did not arrive on a scheme, the vast majority arrived in the UK seeking asylum (86% of respondents), with only 14% arriving in the UK for another purpose and then seeking asylum.

The vast majority of those who arrived in the UK on a scheme came through on a Ukrainian Scheme visa* - (91% of overall respondents).

Therefore when we refer to those on a scheme this group is largely made up by Ukrainians.

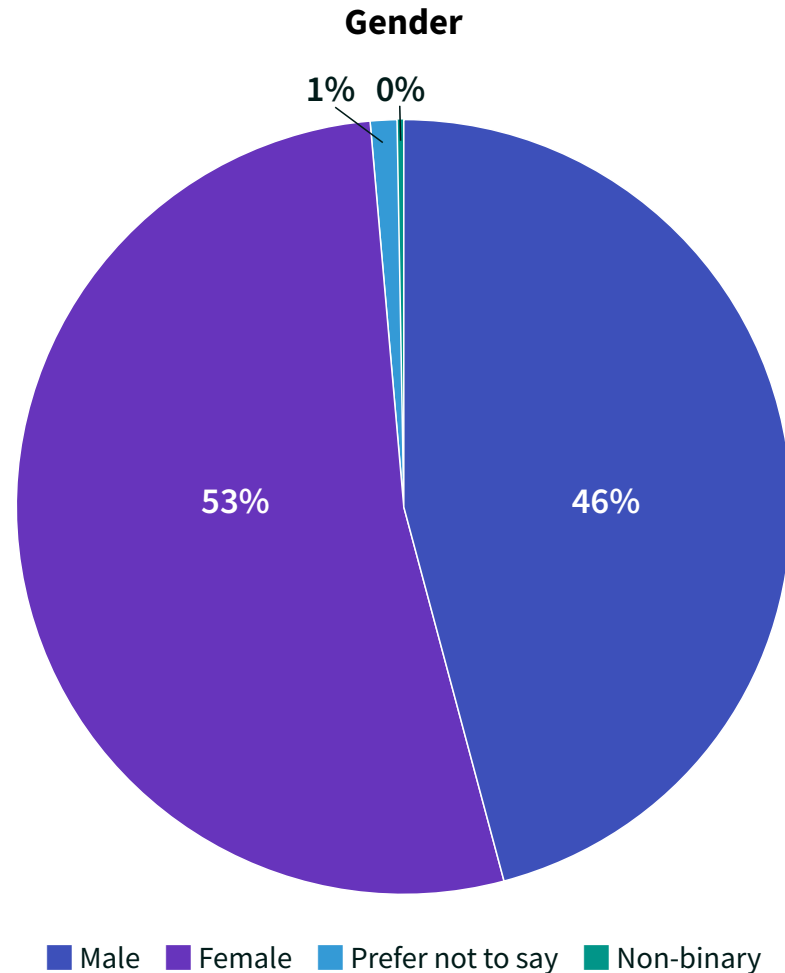
*This includes Ukraine schemes visa, Ukraine sponsorship scheme and Ukraine family scheme.

How respondents arrived in the UK



Base = 755 (all respondents), Scheme (346), Non-scheme (400), Other (9)

Survey sample - Overview of ALL respondents



Base = 755 (all respondents)

Overall, our sample is fairly balanced in terms of gender. However, there was a wide range in the gender profiles of respondents from different regions. This is to be expected, given that different proportions of men and women from different regions seek asylum in the UK.

The regional gender profiles in our sample were aligned with what we expected.

For example:

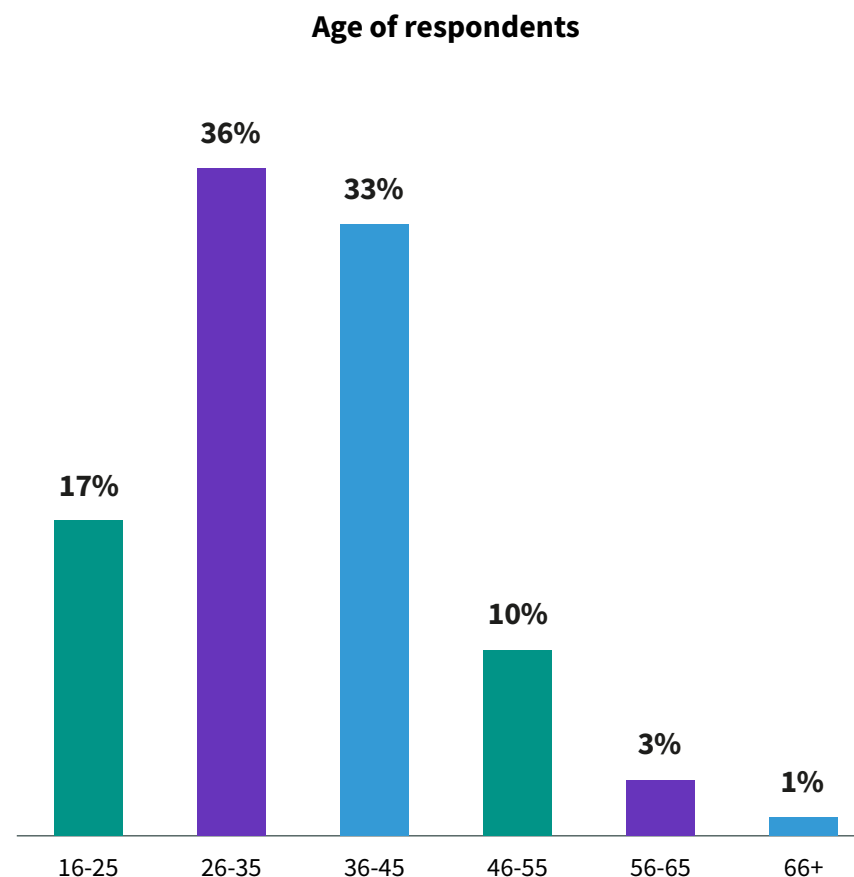
83% of Ukrainian respondents were women

65% of Asian respondents were men

Survey sample - Overview of ALL respondents

Our sample is skewed towards people aged 45 and under.

Again, this aligns with the typical age profiles of people who come to the UK as refugees or to seek asylum.



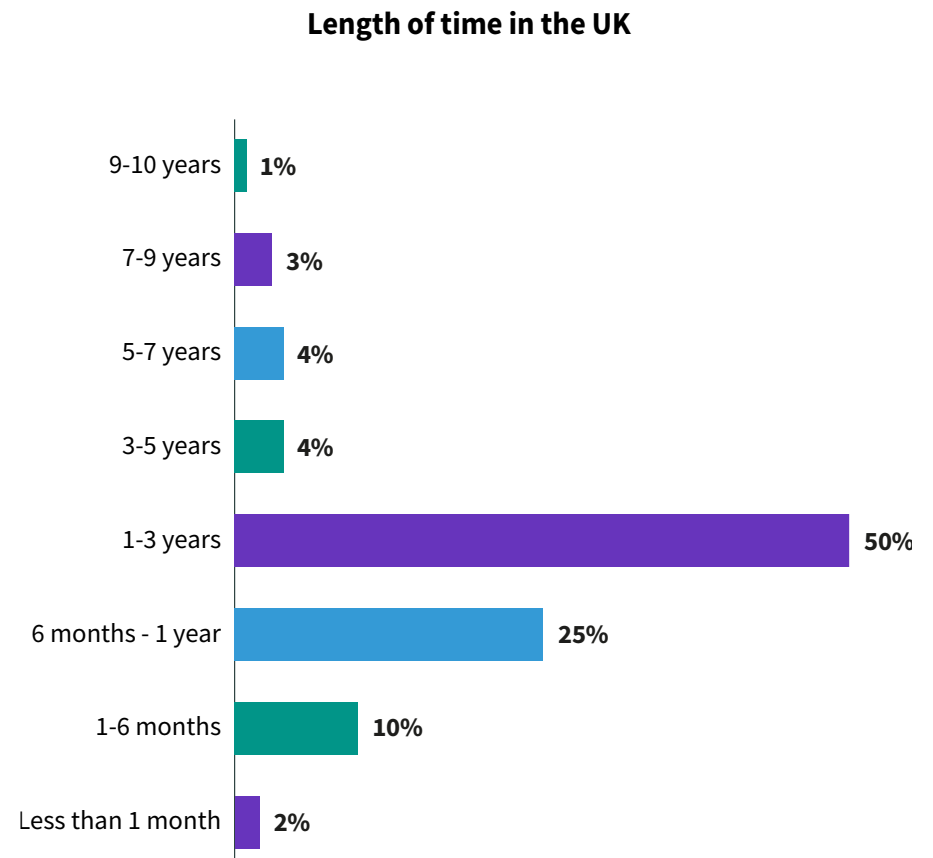
Base = 755 (all respondents)

Survey sample - Overview of ALL respondents

87% of our sample arrived in the UK up to 3 years ago.

This means that our results are skewed towards the experience of these newcomers. However, where appropriate, we look at the different experiences of those who have been here for different lengths of time.

Where possible throughout the report we have included analysis by the length of time respondents have been in the UK, however this has on occasions required the need to combine the categories in the chart because of the low base size in some bands.



Base = 755 (all respondents)

Digging into further quantitative and qualitative insights

Accommodation and Living Conditions
Education and English Language Provision
Employment and Entrepreneurship
Social Inclusion
Health and Mental Health

Accommodation and Living Conditions

A summary

The conditions that people live in are a crucial component of their integration experiences. Good quality accommodation that can meet basic needs like cleanliness, security, access to cooking facilities, and access to transport all lead to improved physical and mental health. They enable people to feel settled, secure, and able to devote their time and energy to other parts of life like working, meeting new people, or childcare.

Just 30% of all the respondents we surveyed felt like they are having their basic living conditions fully met across all four of the above indicators. This was reinforced through our qualitative research, where we heard countless examples of people being forced to live in squalor with no, or little to no support from the people with influence (housing managers, hotel staff, council staff). Perhaps more strikingly, we also saw how respondents who have lived in the UK for longer are significantly less likely to have all their basic safety and security needs met. In general, there are not any significant improvements in how respondents perceive

their living conditions over time (although it is difficult to draw firm conclusions because of the smaller sample size of respondents in the country for more than three years). This adds some weight to our qualitative findings that people's broader integration experiences do not clearly improve over time within the current system.

We also discovered that more Ukrainian respondents have at least some of their basic accommodation needs met compared to non-Ukrainian responses across all indicators. This reflects positively on the efficacy of the Ukrainian resettlement schemes. It also provides evidence that it is possible to provide much improved forms of accommodation to new arrivals when policies are designed thoughtfully. These more positive experiences serve as a wider example of how mechanisms can be put in place to improve the UK's integration system.

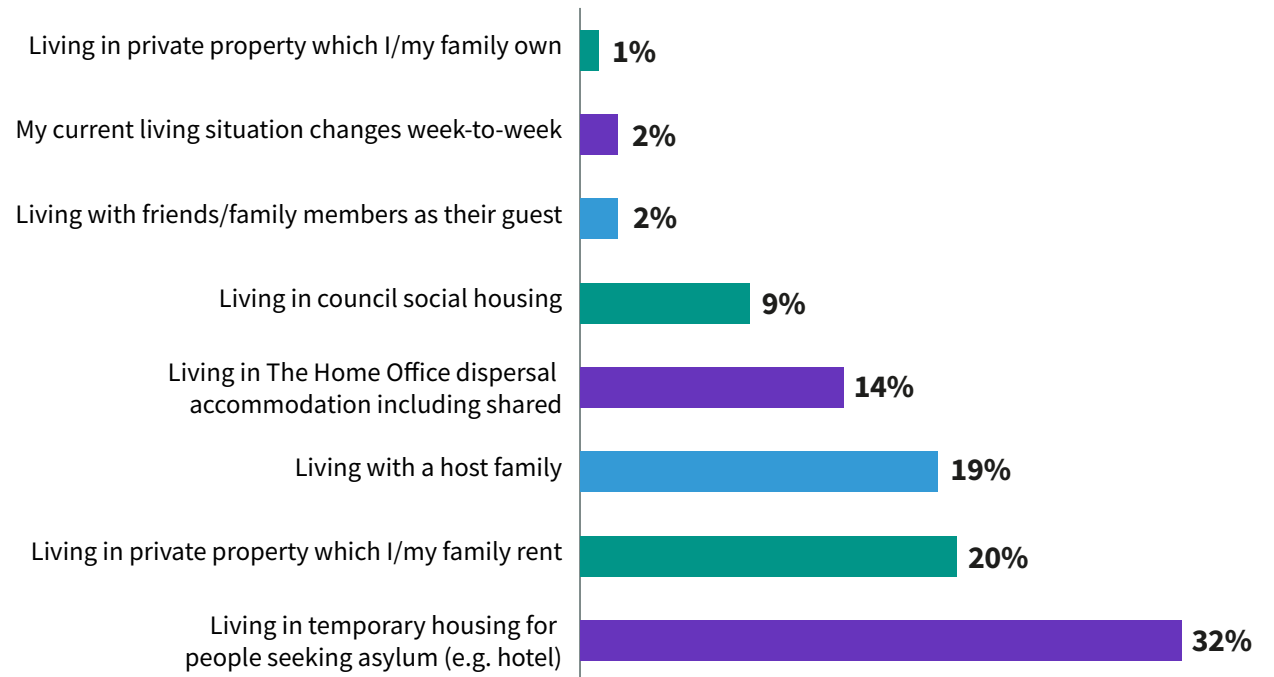
Accommodation and Living Conditions: Current housing situation

Findings:

Around 1 in 3 respondents were living in temporary housing and 1 in 5 were renting a private property or living with a host family.

Breaking this down:

Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?



Base= 667

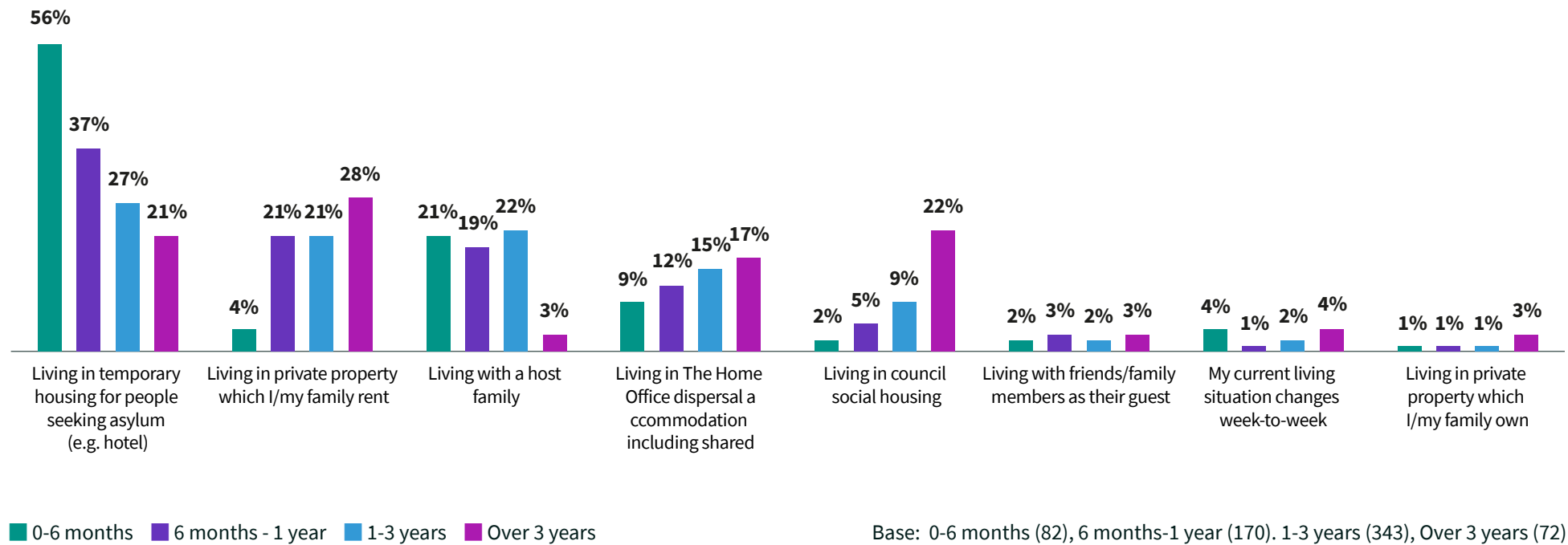
Accommodation and Living Conditions: Current housing situation

Findings:

Temporary accommodation was the main residence for most respondents for the first three years.

Breaking this down:

Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?



Accommodation and Living Conditions: Basic needs

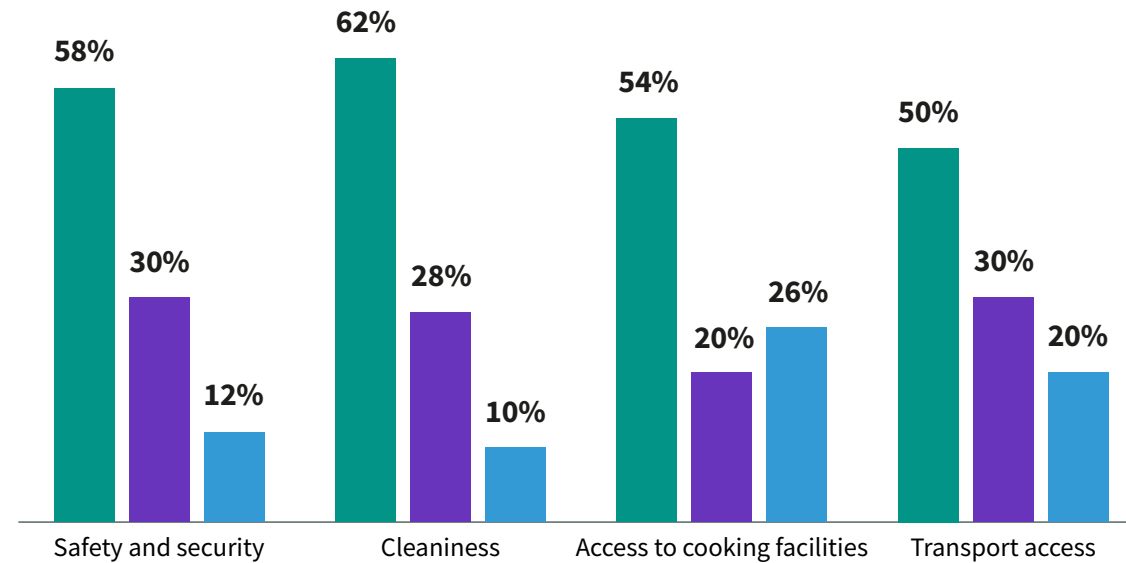
Findings:

Just over half of respondents have their basic needs fully met in their current accommodation.

Accommodation is least likely to be meeting respondents basic needs in relation to transport access and access to cooking facilities.

Breaking this down:

To what extent is your accommodation meeting your basic requirements?



- My accommodation is fully meeting my basic needs in this way
- My accommodation is meeting some of my basic needs in this way
- My accommodation is not meeting my basic needs in this way

Base = 662

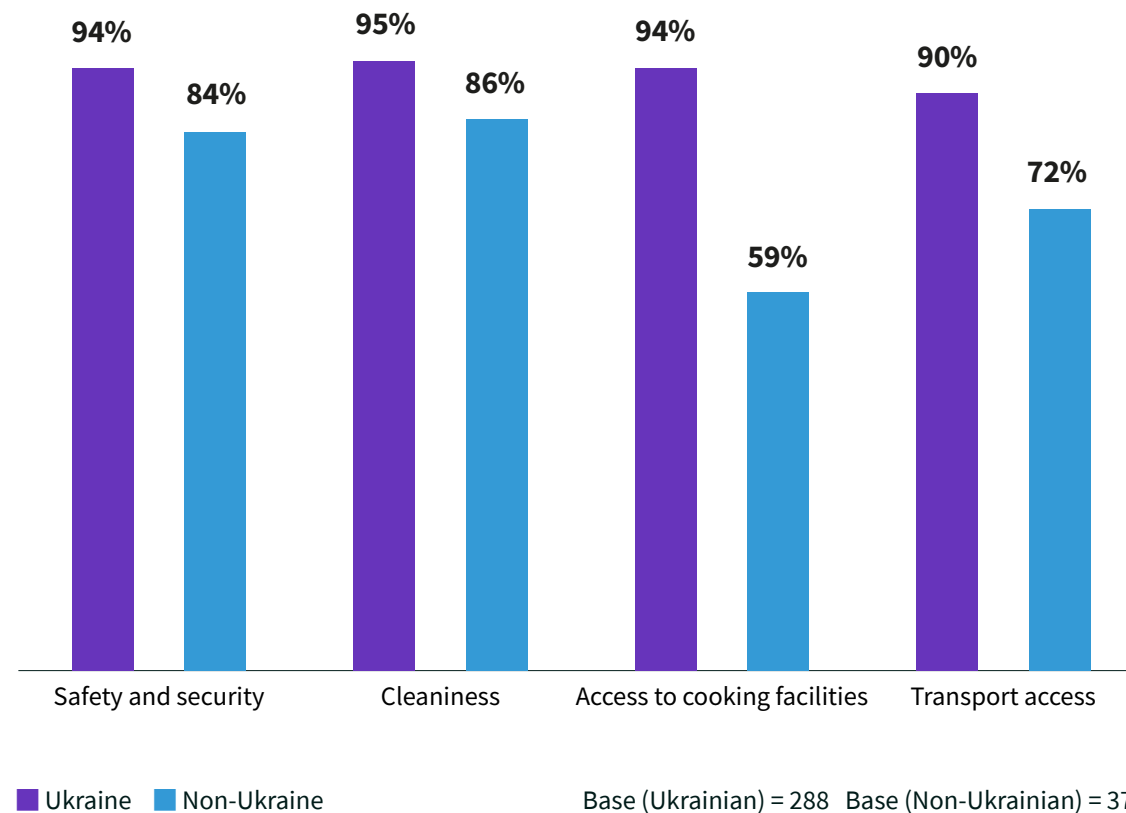
Accommodation and Living Conditions: Basic needs

Findings:

When separating Ukrainian responses out we see that a higher proportion of Ukrainians have at least some of their basic needs met across each of our 4 indicators.

Breaking this down:

Proportion of respondents who have at least some of their basic needs met



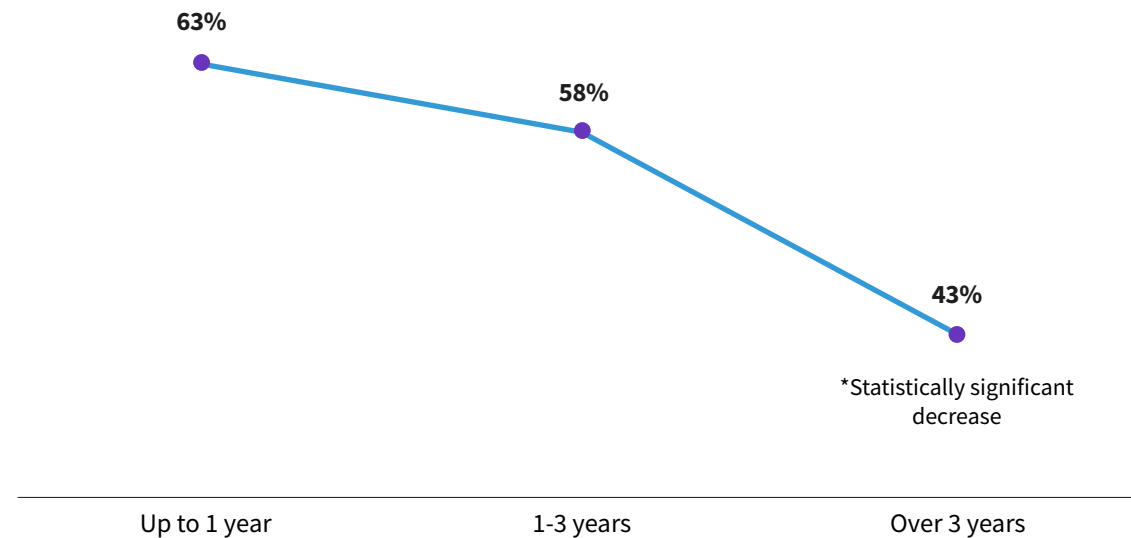
Accommodation and Living Conditions: Basic needs

Findings:

Respondents who have lived in the UK for longer are **significantly less likely to have all their basic safety and security needs met** in their accommodation.

Breaking this down:

“My accommodation is fully meeting my safety and security needs.”



Base: Up to 1 year (248), 1-3 years (342), Over 3 years (72), due to the low base size for the over 3 years category care should be taken into the interpretation of this data

*The decrease between 'up to 1 year' and 'over 3 years' and between '1-3 years' and 'over 3 years' is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

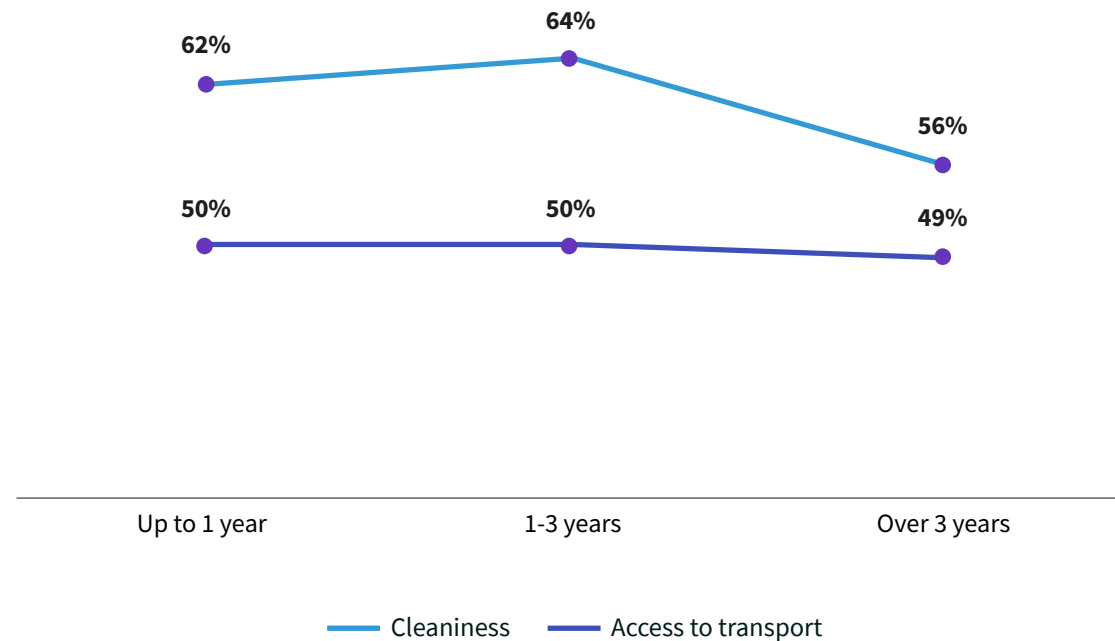
Accommodation and Living Conditions: Basic needs

Findings:

The length of time respondents have been in the UK has limited effect on their perception of their accommodation meeting their basic cleanliness or access to transport needs.

Breaking this down:

“My accommodation is fully meeting my basic cleanliness/access to transport needs.”



Base: Up to 1 year (248), 1-3 years (342), Over 3 years (72), due to the low base size for the over 3 years category care should be taken into the interpretation of this data

Qualitative spotlight on social connection: Community and solidarity in temporary accommodation

Unpacking this quote

This sense of community and social bonding formed by people living together in temporary accommodation, particularly hotels, was something that came through powerfully in both our interviews and also during our trips to hotels and nearby community centres to distribute our survey. It was striking how much support hotel residents provided for one another in often highly challenging contexts, as well as the level of mixing across lines of difference taking place. This links to the peak of the dome shape we see on the previous two pages, which possibly reflects how people's experiences in the UK can deteriorate after receiving their leave to remain (see following page).

At the same time -as this quote captures- we also saw how these deep bonds were unsettled by the constant and seemingly random relocation of people to new accommodation. People described how it was hard to feel a sense of belonging to place whilst in the asylum system not just because of how much they moved around, but also how the people around them were changing so quickly.

“The hotel was one room for all four of us. The people there were kind and we had a good relationship and we still speak to each other sometimes now. We are all far away from each other now though, but we would like to meet them again. There were people who could also speak Kurdish and we can also speak a little Arabic which helped, but there were also other people from all over the world.”

A father describes the first hotel he lived in with his young family

Qualitative spotlight on living conditions: Leave to remain and finding accommodation

Unpacking this quote

We have heard repeatedly during our qualitative research about the severe risk of homelessness faced by people once they receive their leave to remain and are evicted from their temporary accommodation. The 28 day notice period (due to shorten further) leaves little time for people to prepare themselves and often this forces people to live chaotic lifestyles. In this instance, a man on his own had no support to find accommodation and was forced to sleep rough for a month.

“Once I received my leave to remain I had to leave my hotel but could not find any accommodation. The council told me because I did not have children and I wasn’t pregnant I was not a priority. So I became homeless and that really affected my mental health. As a person who is normally at home by 9 or 10 pm every evening I had to adjust to being homeless. And the council can’t really do anything. My mental health in the UK has been affected even worse than what I was running away from originally out of fear.”

A solo man describes the difficulty of finding accommodation after receiving his leave to remain

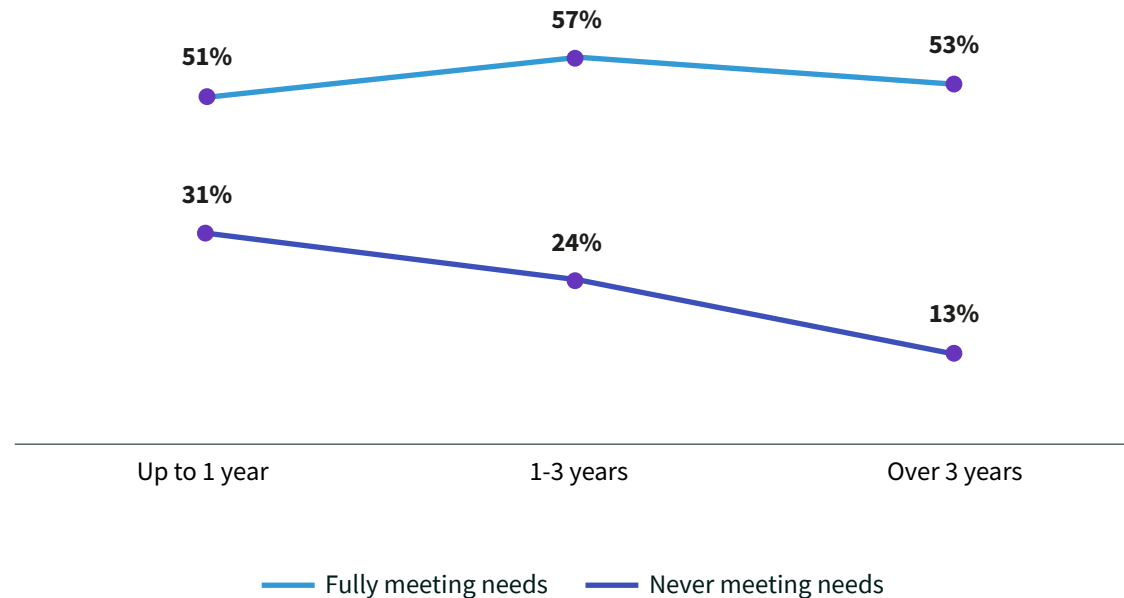
Accommodation and Living Conditions: Basic needs

Findings:

Satisfaction with access to cooking facilities is lowest in respondents' first year, however for many this still remains an issue after they have been in the UK for over 3 years.

Breaking this down:

“My accommodation is fully/never meeting my basic access to cooking facilities needs.”



Base: Up to 1 year (248), 1-3 years (342), Over 3 years (72), due to the low base size for the over 3 years category care should be taken into the interpretation of this data

Qualitative spotlight on living conditions: Lack of empathy from accommodation staff

Unpacking this quote

Although we often saw a sense of community in forms of temporary accommodation, the inadequacy of people's accommodation and the cruelty of some staff was another core qualitative finding. In this quote the participant describes how the accommodation staff implemented a system that reduced the house to squalor, and also deliberately locked the residents out of the kitchen so that they could not cook. The reaction of the manager in this quote was reflected in other interviews and demonstrates a lack of sensitivity and also training amongst some staff.

“The second house I lived in there was around nine of us but we couldn't do our laundry in our house, we had to carry it for 20 minutes to a laundrette. We didn't have a common kitchen or kettle and you're not meant to have any food in the house. People in the house were older and one had a really sick child who was handicapped. Just as I was moving we discovered there was a room with a kitchen and a laundry machine that they'd locked the door to. This accommodation was operated by Clearsprings and it was their decision. Other people were allowed to use kitchens in theirs but we couldn't. They also don't give you provision to clean bathrooms because they say you can use them to kill yourself - if I'd wanted to die I would have died. So it was impossible to keep it clean. It was intentional for people to be in these bad houses and for them to stay that way... Once I complained to the manager and he said 'do you think we're running the Ritz here?'”

A woman describes a temporary shared house in which she was located whilst in the asylum system

Education and English Language Provision

A summary

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes and other forms of education are a crucial component of a person's integration process in the UK. During our qualitative research we heard repeatedly how being able to speak English was the crucial first step for people to settle and have their basic needs met in the UK. We also heard the struggles from those who were initially unable to learn English. Being unable to communicate health issues to a doctor, apply for jobs, or speak to people to make friends and receive information were just a few examples cited. This section unpacks our survey and qualitative findings regarding both ESOL classes and people's experiences of education and schools in the UK.

There is clearly a strong desire to learn English. Out of the respondents surveyed, 99% could either speak English, were learning English, or wanted to to learn English. And we found that ESOL classes are generally effective at increasing

people's confidence to make both friends and to apply for jobs. Qualitatively, we heard how ESOL teachers are generally supportive and the classes are nice spaces for people to attend.

However, long waiting lists have become a huge barrier to accessing these classes, and as such are arguably one of the most significant barriers to people's overall integration. Over 1 in 5 of all respondents had experienced this barrier, and those who come through the asylum system tend to experience more waiting lists. It is also interesting to note that out of those in the asylum system 19% are unable to afford to travel to ESOL classes. This is less of an issue for those arriving through resettlement schemes, and indicates the unique challenges faced by people in the asylum system when attempting to learn English and integrate.

Education and English Language Provision: A summary

Alongside ESOL classes, our research indicates that schools have enormous potential to be important and supportive places for people's integration. For example, three out of four parents who responded felt like their school is supportive of their situation as refugees or people in the asylum system. On top of this nearly 70% of respondents felt that their children have made friends through school. We also heard about the impact of schools on the integration of children frequently during interviews with parents, and they are evidently crucial spaces to consider when developing integration policies. Interviewees also praised the pace with which their children were moved into schools once they arrived in the UK, and the support they received from temporary accommodation staff or housing managers.

More attention is still needed for parents though, as our research also revealed how parents struggle to make friends with other parents at their child's school. This challenge might be partly explained by the housing relocation that causes parents to have to move children between schools. Nearly half of all parents surveyed have had to move their children into a new school because their family has been reallocated to a new home, and around 1 in 4 parents have had to move their children into a new school two times or more for the same reason. Until families can experience a semblance of stability and consistency in their lives, it will continue to prove difficult for parents and children to develop meaningful, long-lasting relationships and social capital with other parents and children at their schools.

Education and English Language Provision: Learning English

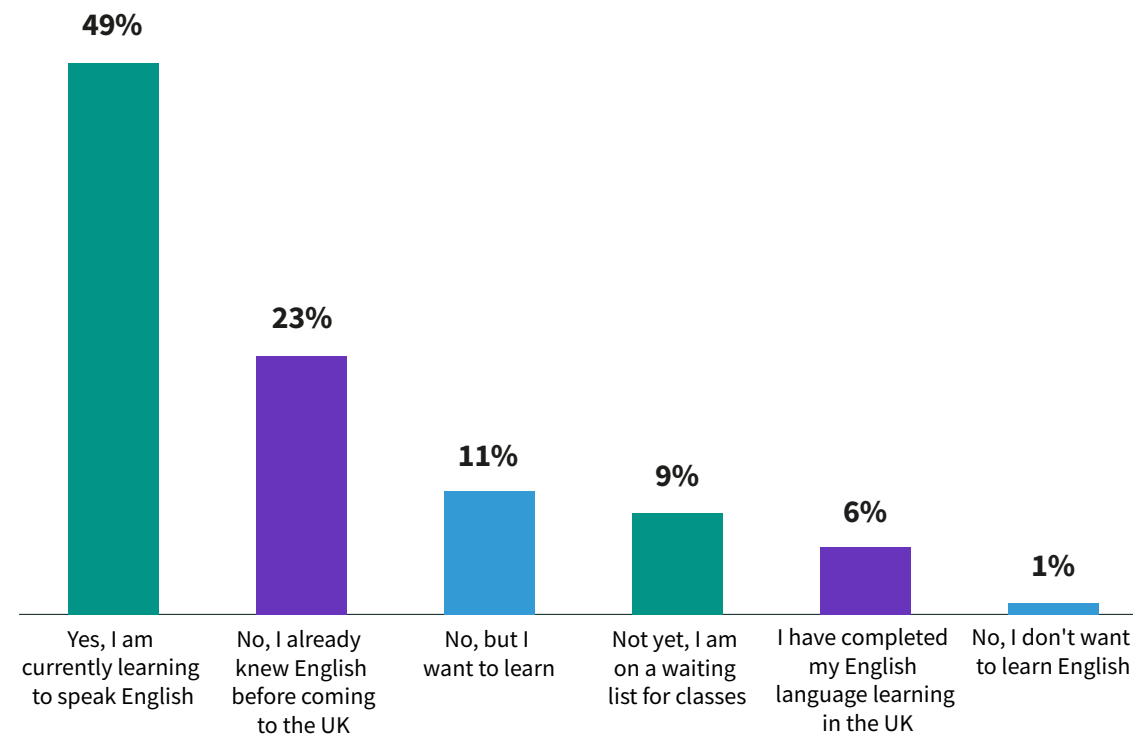
Findings:

Over half of respondents are currently learning English or have already completed their learning.

Nearly a quarter of respondents already knew English before arriving.

Breaking this down:

Are you currently learning English?



Base=720 (35 respondents did not answer this question)

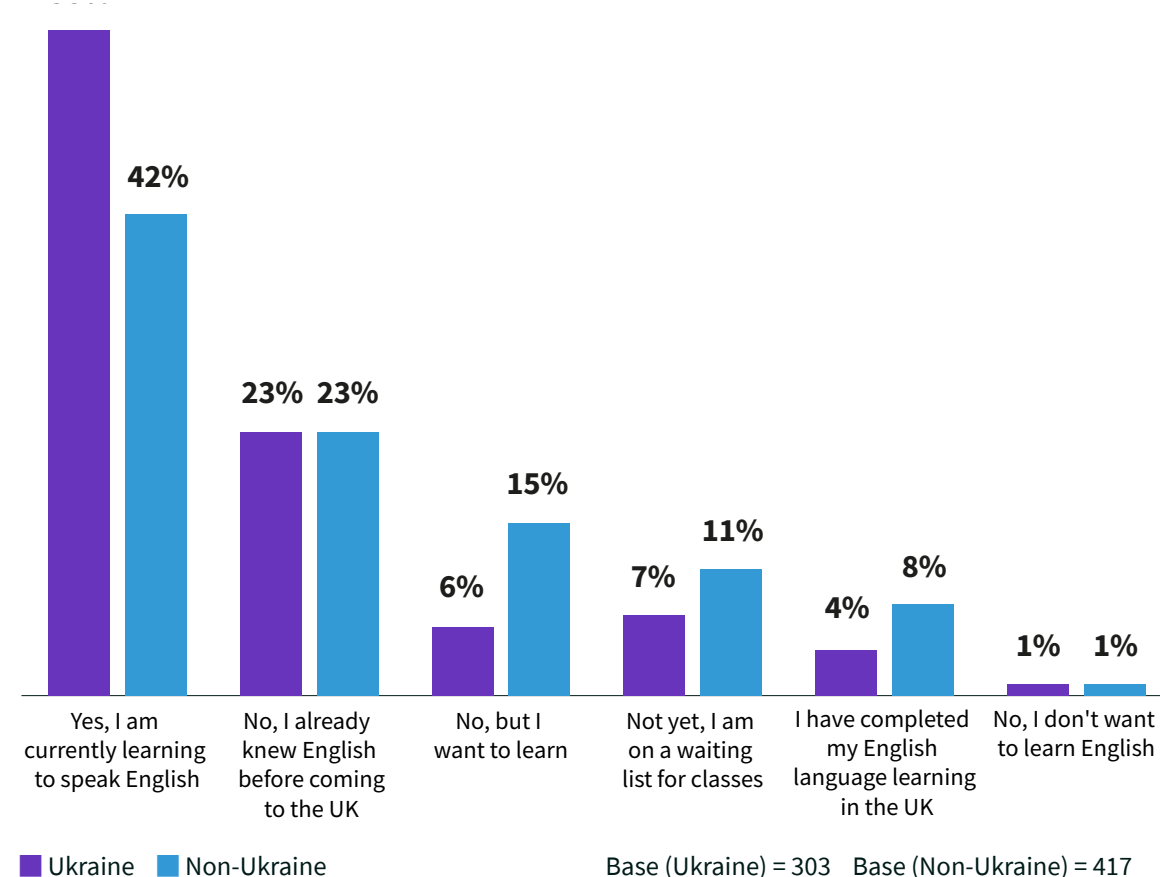
Education and English Language Provision: Learning English

Findings:

When we separate out the Ukrainian sample we see that there is a general similarity across both groups in terms of people's language learning situations, which could indicate how learning English is a shared (and crucial) challenge for most new arrivals.

Breaking this down:

Are you currently learning English?



Education and English Language Provision: Language classes

Findings:

Language classes at University/
College/School are the most common
way for people to learn English.

Breaking this down:

The three most common ways to learn English were:

- › Through Language classes at university/
college/school (**43%**)
- › Through free classes organised in a public
community space (**30%**)
- › Through paid private lessons (**7%**)

Base (Respondents currently learning to speak English or have completed English
language learning in the UK) = 393

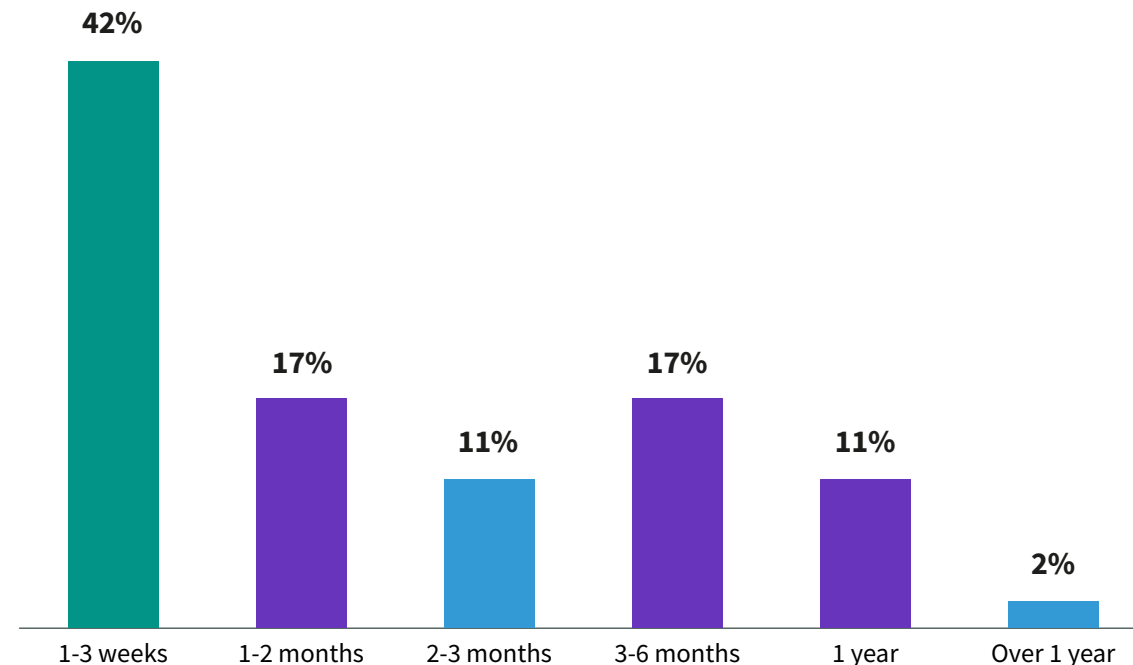
Education and English Language Provision: Learning English

Findings:

Although 2 in 5 respondents had to wait up to 3 weeks for an English class, there were over **1 in 10** respondents that waited for a year or more to be able to access a class.

Breaking this down:

How long was your wait time to get a spot in class?



Base (Respondents currently learning to speak English or have completed English language learning in the UK) = 325

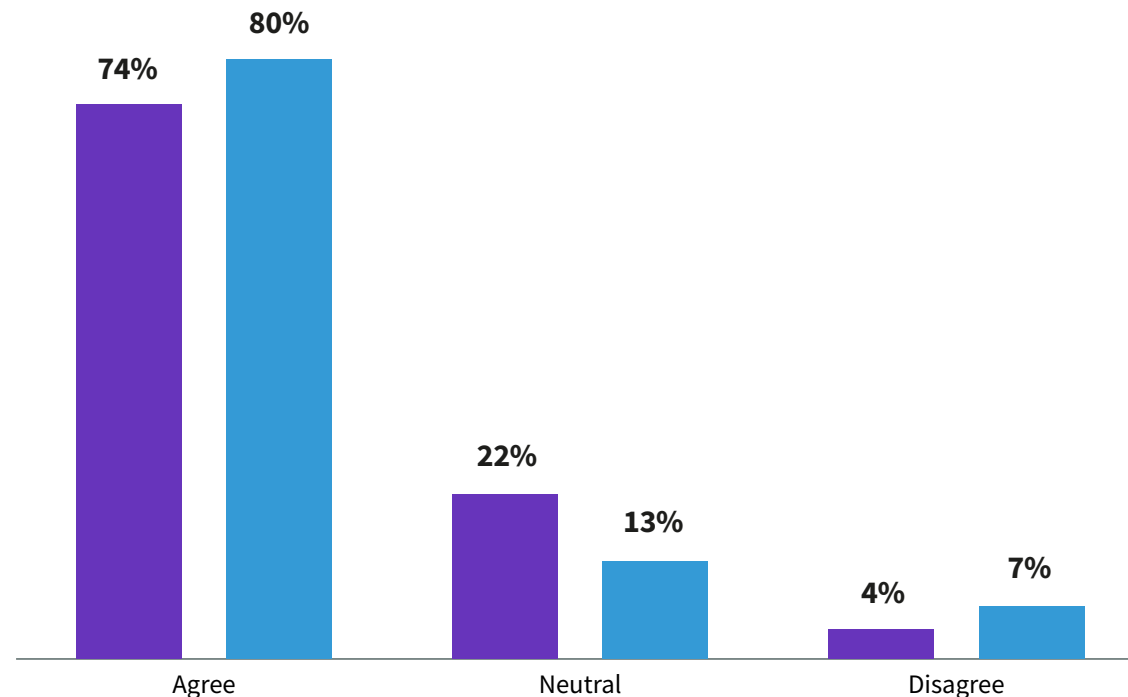
Education and English Language Provision: Language classes

Findings:

Overall, English language classes are effective across several measures including increasing people's confidence to make new friends.

Breaking this down:

“My English lessons have made me more confident to make English speaking friends”



■ Free language class organised in a public community space (e.g. in a library or community centre) ■ Language classes at my university/college/school

Base: 118 Free class organised in public space; 169 Language class at school/ college. Due to the low base size (n=26) paid private lessons have not been included in this chart.

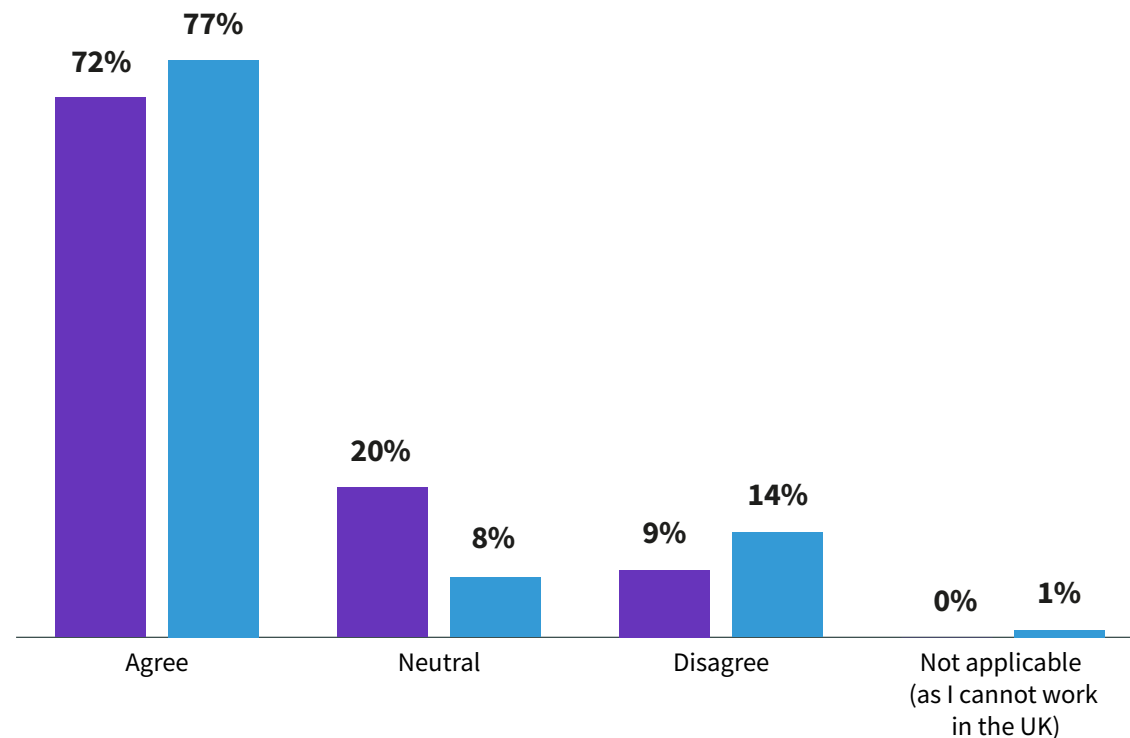
Education and English Language Provision: Language classes

Findings:

English classes in schools, community centres, and colleges have also helped over **70%** of refugees to apply for jobs.

Breaking this down:

“My English lessons increased my ability to apply for a job”



■ Free language class organised in a public community space (e.g. in a library or community centre) ■ Language classes at my university/college/school

Base: 46, Free language class: 78, Language class and university or school

Education and English Language Provision: Barriers to language classes

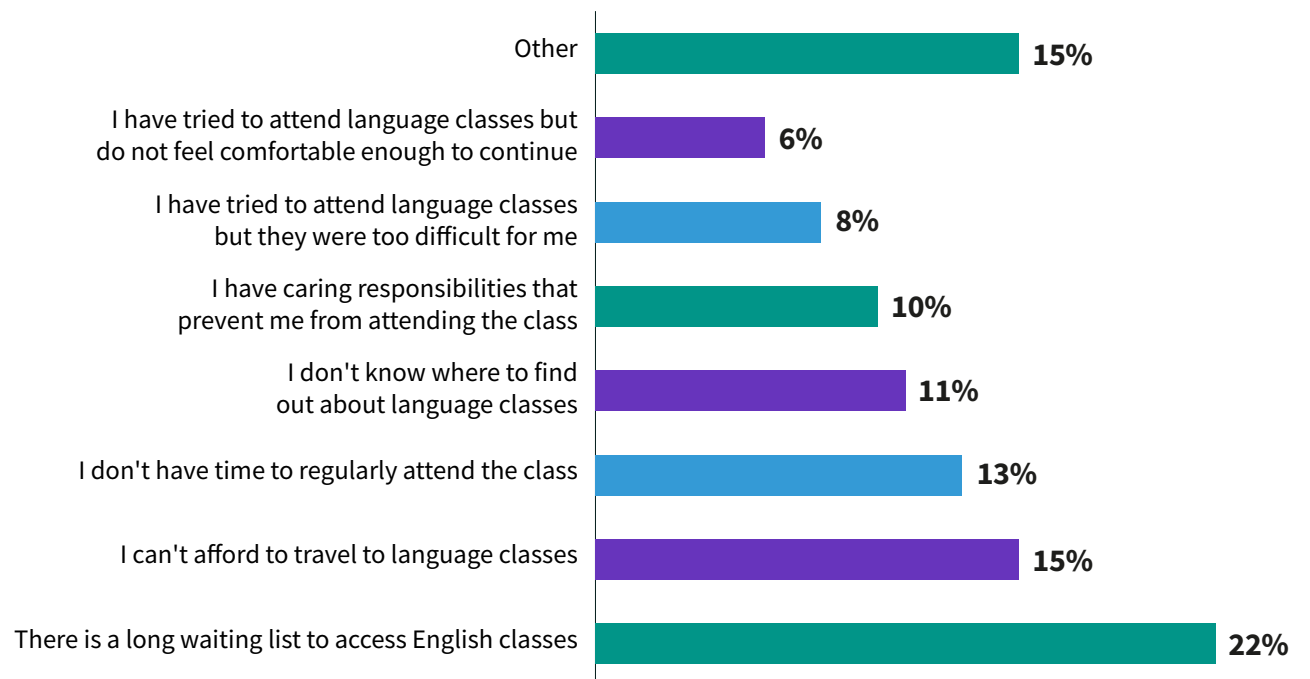
Findings:

Overall, waiting lists are the key barrier to attending language classes. Over **1 in 5** of all respondents have experienced this barrier.

Affordability of travel and time are also barriers to access.

Breaking this down:

What is the biggest barrier for you to attend language classes?



Base: 535

Education and English Language Provision: Barriers to language classes

Findings:

However, when comparing those who have entered through a scheme and those who have not, there are interesting differences in the other barriers faced.

Breaking this down (different barriers):

Those who arrived through a scheme (n=247)	
Not having time to regularly attend the class	23%
Long waiting lists	17%
Caring responsibilities	13%

Those who arrived NOT through a scheme (n=281)	
Long waiting lists	27%
Can't afford to travel to class	19%
Don't know where to find out about classes	14%

Qualitative spotlight on Education and English Language Provision: College classes and waiting lists

How college classes can facilitate integration:

- › During our interviews, each participant who had learnt English in the UK pointed to college classes as vital for their learning
- › We also heard how teachers at college classes are compassionate and attentive. This adds to the capacity of college classes to become **socially connecting spaces** where people meet and mix. **They have huge integrating potential**
- › One participant who has been in the asylum system for 6 years (and relocated to 4 different homes) described how whenever he had to move he would **make new friends by attending his local college class**

How college classes can hinder integration:

- › However, time and again we heard how waiting lists for colleges slow down people's language learning and in turn their integration. This is particularly the case during **people's first two years** in the country
- › People also described how classes often run half-yearly with **little flexibility**. This means if you arrive in a place just after a new class has started, you have to wait 6 months for the next one
- › Lastly, we heard the content of ESOL classes is **not practical** enough to help people integrate. In the words of one participant: *"It was useless information, I didn't know how to go and talk to the GP, how to fill in an application form, or how to talk on the phone"*

Qualitative spotlight on Education and English Language Provision: College classes and waiting lists

Unpacking this quote

We know that it is very difficult to ‘learn by doing’ when arriving in a new country with no knowledge of the language. In this instance, the young person we interviewed highlighted how the waiting lists at their college were preventing her father from learning English. She was worried that if they receive asylum he won’t be able to use his skills as an HGV driver because his language skills will not have improved quickly enough whilst they wait for a decision.

“Dad has applied for ESOL but they said it’s full. Lots of people want to go to the ESOL class. My dad also volunteers and is trying to improve English but he knows so little it is harder without the classes.”

A young person who lives in temporary accommodation with her father in a northern city. They are both currently seeking asylum.

Education and English Language Provision: Schooling and integration

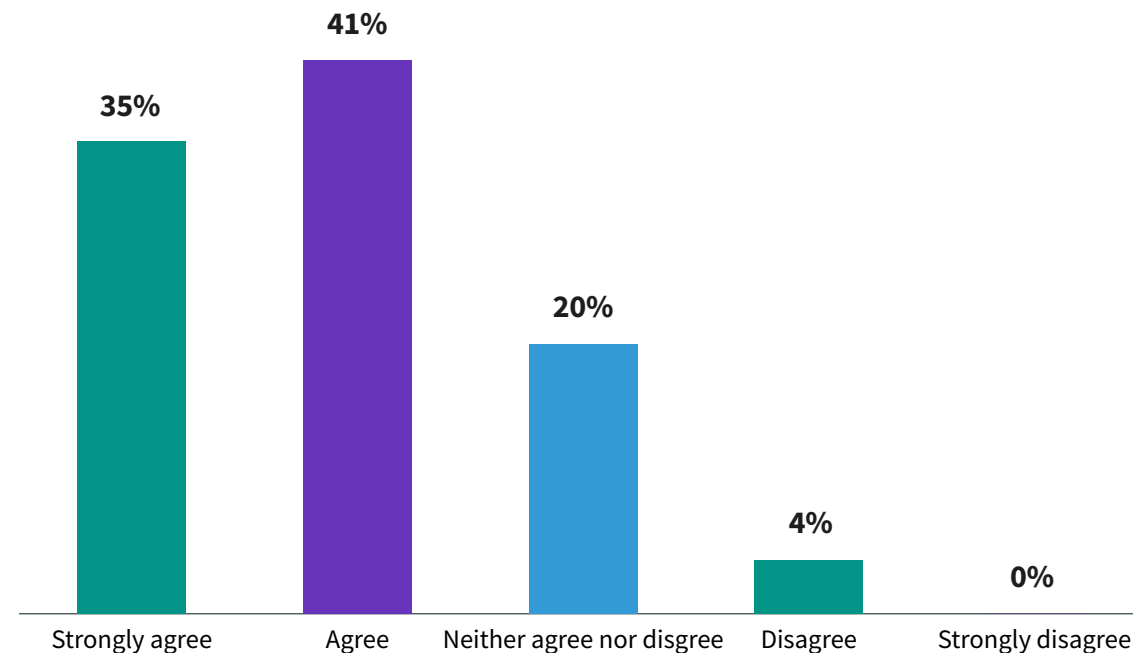
Findings:

Overall, schools in the UK are supportive of the situation faced by refugees and people seeking asylum.

3 out of 4 parents feel like their school is supportive of their situation as refugees/people in the asylum system.

Breaking this down:

“I feel that my children’s school is supportive of our situation as Asylum Seekers/Refugees.”



*95% of respondents' children who are in school are aged between 4 and 18.

Base: 237

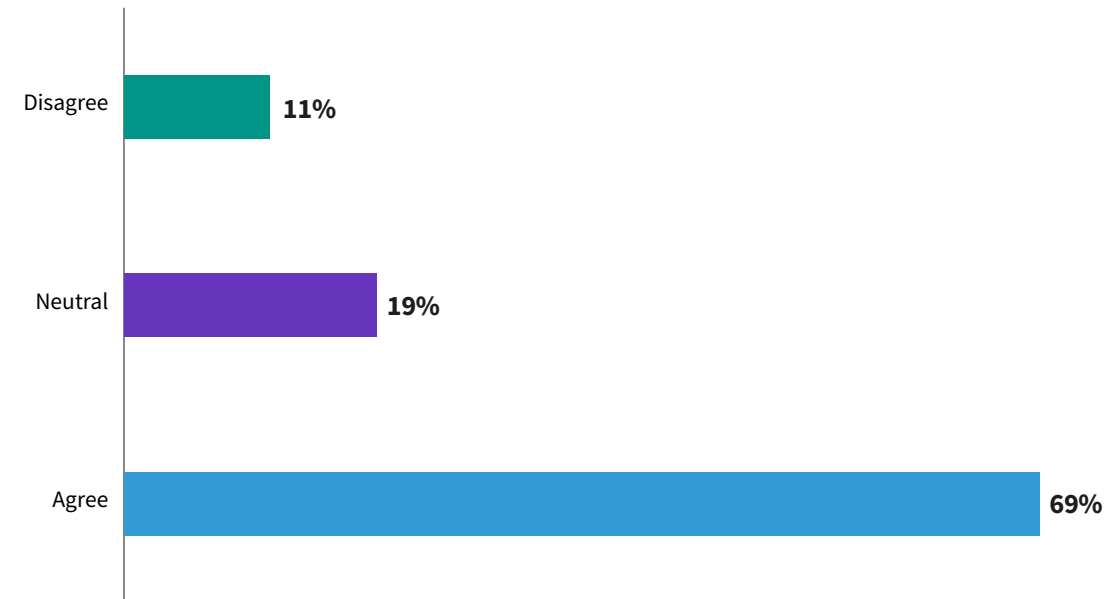
Education and English Language Provision: Schooling and integration

Findings:

Moreover, **69%** of respondents feel that their children have made friends at school which further hints towards the positive potential of schools as spaces for mixing and social connection.

Breaking this down:

“I feel that my children have made friends at school.”



*95% of respondents' children who are in school are aged between 4 and 18.

Base: 237

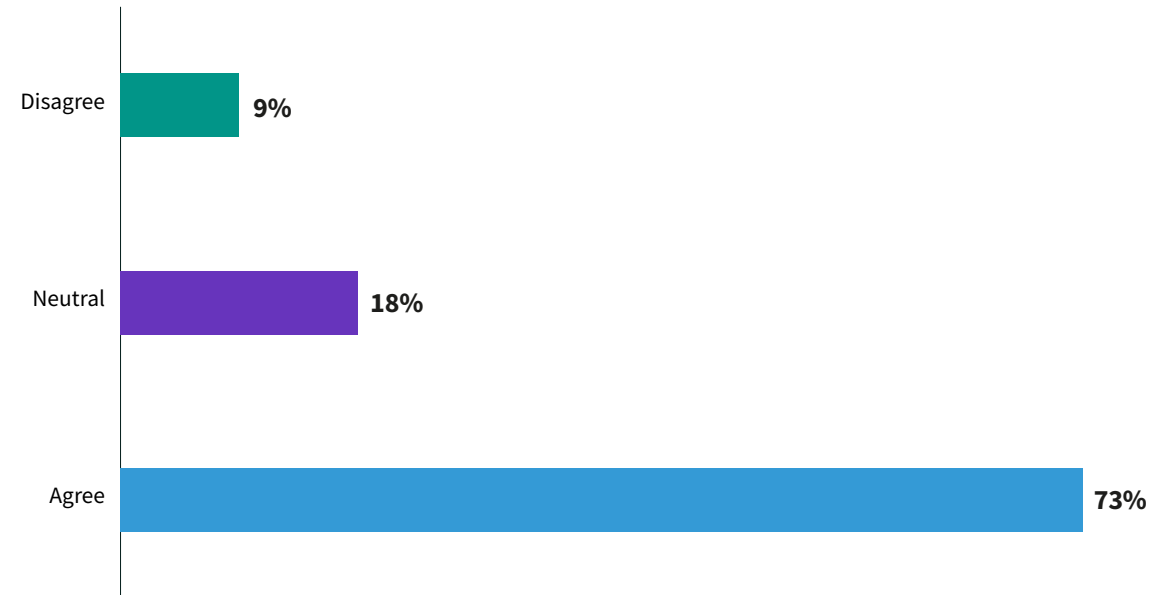
Education and English Language Provision: Schooling and integration

Findings:

And **73%** of parents say that their child feels like they fit in at school, further reinforcing the positive integrating potential of schools for young people.

Breaking this down:

“My child feels like they fit in at school.”



*95% of respondents' children who are in school are aged between 4 and 18.

Base: 237

Education and English Language Provision: Schooling and integration

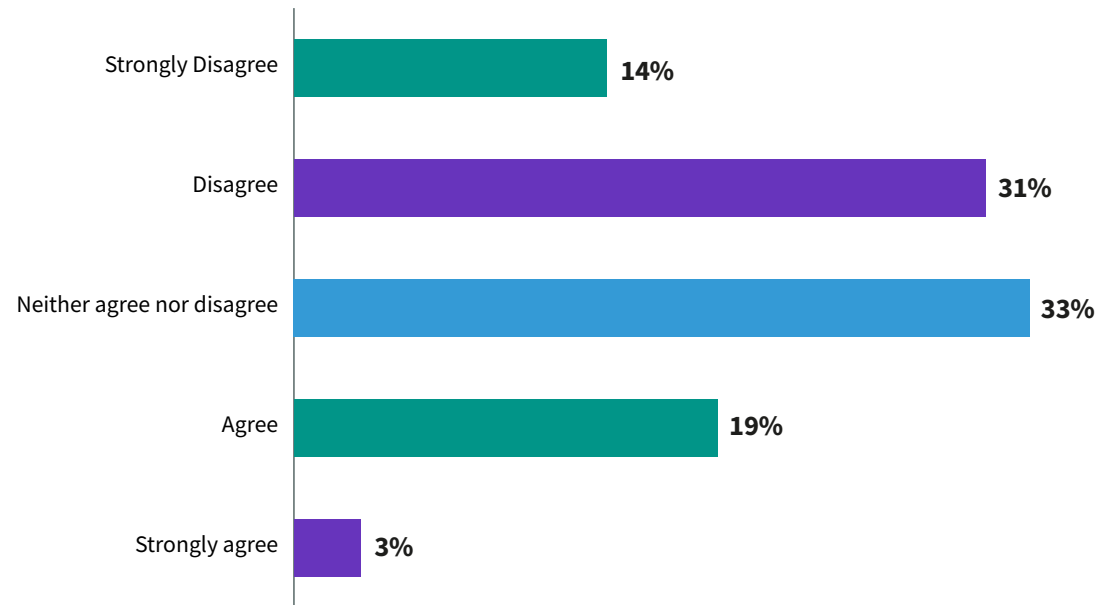
Findings:

However, schools are not necessarily mixing sites between parents.

Only **24%** of parents feel that they are getting to know other parents well.

Breaking this down:

“I feel like I am getting to know the other parents well.”



*95% of respondents' children who are in school are aged between 4 and 18.

Base: 237

Education and English Language Provision: Relocation

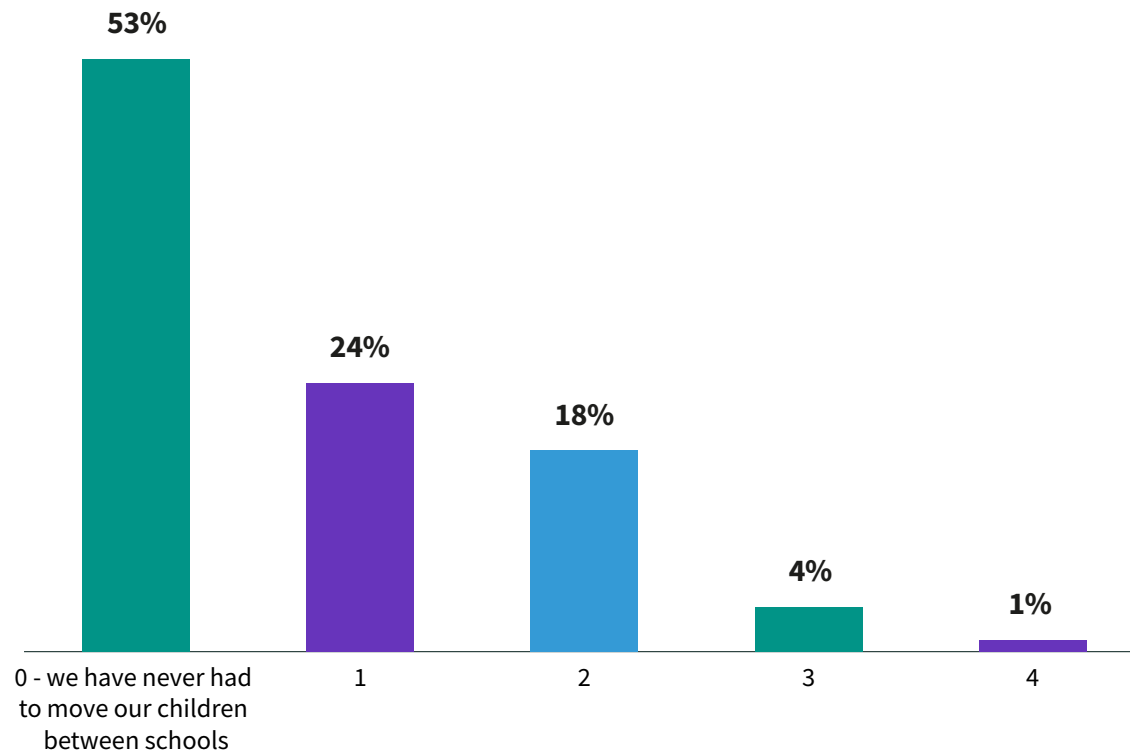
Findings:

Nearly half of parents have had to move their children into a new school because their family has been reallocated to a new home.

Around **1 in 4** parents have had to move their children into a new school two times or more.

Breaking this down:

How many times have you had to move your children between schools due to relocating?



*95% of respondents' children who are in school are aged between 4 and 18.

Base: 237

Qualitative spotlight on Education and English Language Provision: School integration

How schools can facilitate integration

- › Schools provide an excellent environment for children to make friends across lines of difference and experience a sense of belonging
- › Interviewees also praised the pace with which their children were moved into schools once they arrived in the UK (both through the asylum system or through a resettlement scheme). This support is generally provided by temporary accommodation staff or housing managers
- › We generally heard positive experiences about the support provided by teachers to make schools a place of welcome for children: “They [my children] are happy and have a good time with their friends”

What barriers are in place for integration in schools

- › However, parents we spoke to also described the difficulty of making friends with other parents at their children’s school. Language was a key barrier cited, but also the distance of their children’s school from their homes
- › This issue of distance also creates financial stress. One parent described how her daughter’s hour trip to school in the winter meant she had to spend most of her money on warm and waterproof clothes for her daughter
- › We also heard instances of discrimination within schools where interviewee’s children were directed towards certain subjects because of perceived weaknesses in their spoken English

Qualitative spotlight on social inclusion: School allocation

Unpacking this quote

Through several interviews we heard about the randomness with which children are allocated to schools in the UK. In this quote we see the financial burden it places on families who already have very little, as their time is taken up supporting their children in their new schools. We have also heard participants describe the safety issues associated with their children going to schools that are far away - one mother said her daughter's journey to school took an hour and went through several unsafe neighbourhoods.

“When families have more than one child they are often sent to different schools because of the waiting lists and high demand. There is no option to choose. This makes it even harder for a parent to get work because they have to make two school runs in the morning.”

A community organiser describing the challenges faced by parents he supports

Employment and Entrepreneurship

A summary

Whether people can access work, and what type of work they can access, are massive determinants of a person's integration experience in the UK. Work provides people with an income to meet their needs and it also creates structure in people's lives, helping to support their physical and mental health. Under current law, people within the UK's asylum system have no right to work which we know takes an enormous toll on their wellbeing. And even for those who have a right to work, they face particular challenges within the world of work that carry great costs.

Within our survey we found a vast amount of skills and experience currently going underutilised. One in three respondents was educated to undergraduate level, and one in four to Master's level (it's worth noting that Ukrainians make up a significant proportion of this educated sample). However, very few of these respondents can actually use these skills. This is either because they do not have the right to work, or because the complexity of the UK employment system, the lack of available support, and most

significantly the language barrier makes it very difficult to find employment opportunities to match their skills. For most people surveyed, we found that not being able to use their skills in this way impacted their mental health and their sense of contribution to the UK.

As a means to partially address the different deficits created by this environment, it is striking how many respondents have involved themselves in volunteering. 24% of respondents volunteer regularly (higher than the UK average of 16%) and it is the most common way that respondents spend their time in the UK. For those who are able to work and for those who volunteer, it is also clear that employment has an intersecting effect on social connection as workplaces become spaces for people to meet and mix. All this highlights the pressing need for further reforms and interventions that allow people to immerse themselves further in the world of work, and for both the individual and wider society to reap the associated benefits.

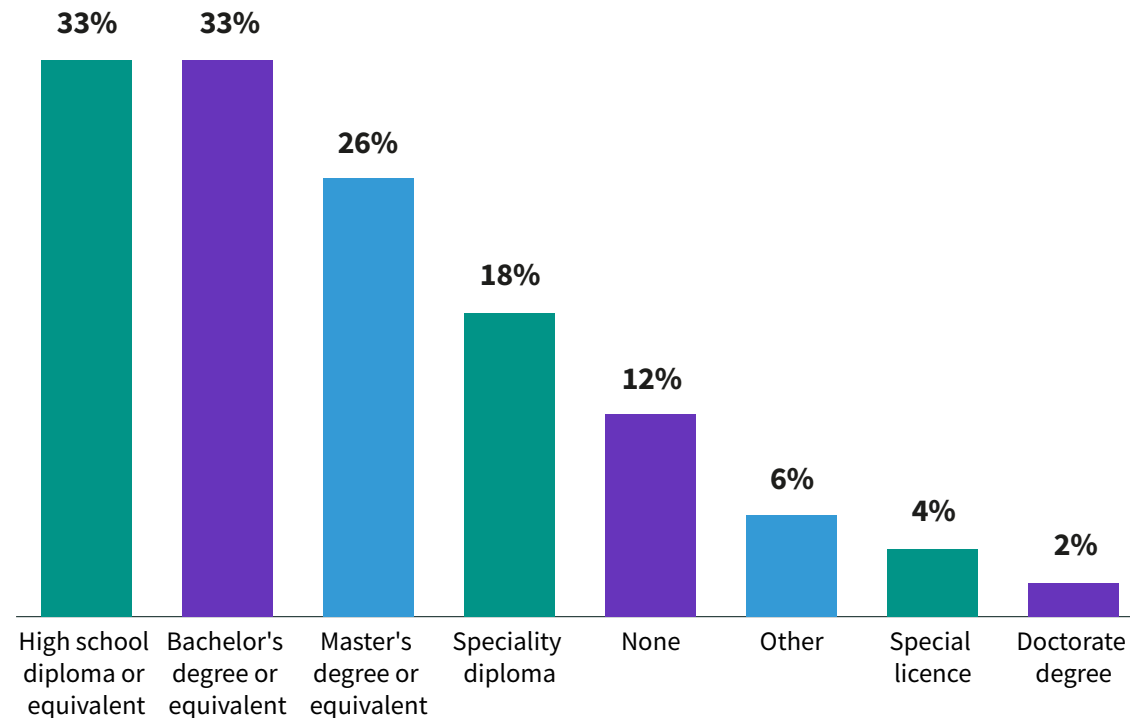
Employment and Entrepreneurship: Education and Qualifications

Findings:

Respondents to our survey were highly educated and qualified with **1 in 3 educated to undergraduate level and 1 in 4 to Master's level.**

Breaking this down:

Which of the following qualifications do you have?



Base: 756

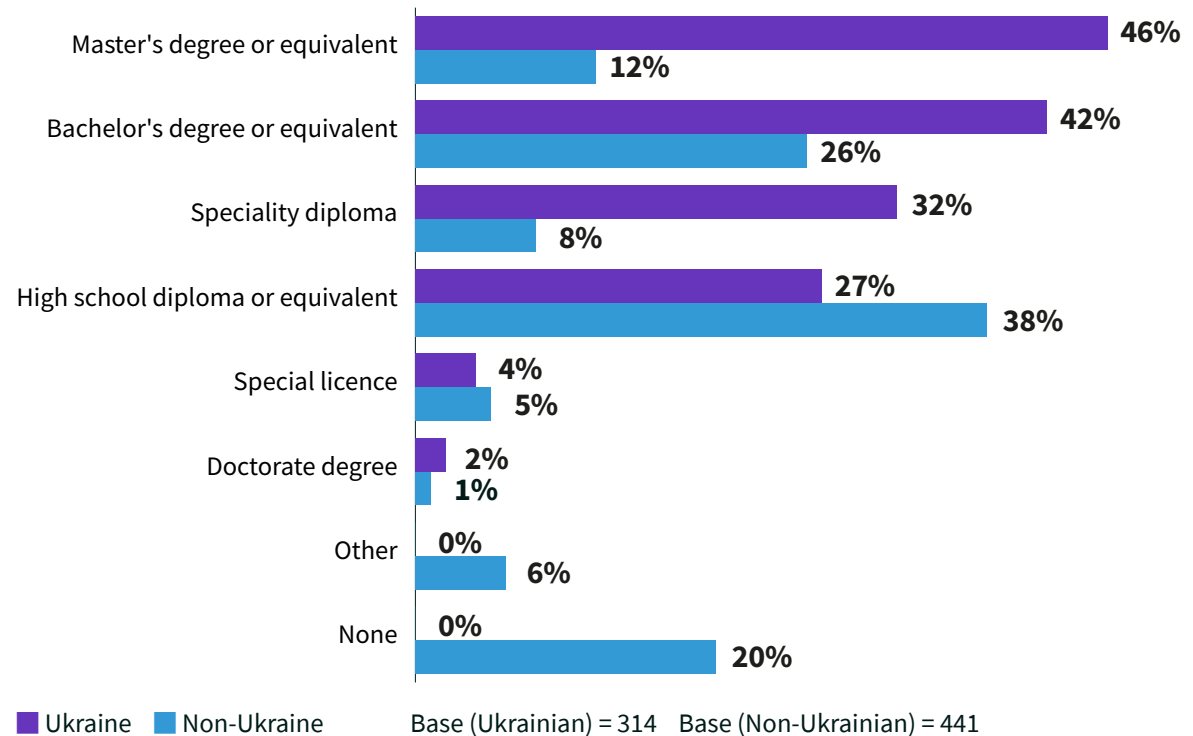
Employment and Entrepreneurship: Education and Qualifications

Findings:

When we separate out our Ukrainian respondents we see that Ukrainians are, overall, more likely to hold Master’s, Bachelors, and speciality diploma qualifications, suggesting that they are, on average, more educated than others in our sample.

Breaking this down:

Which qualifications do you have?



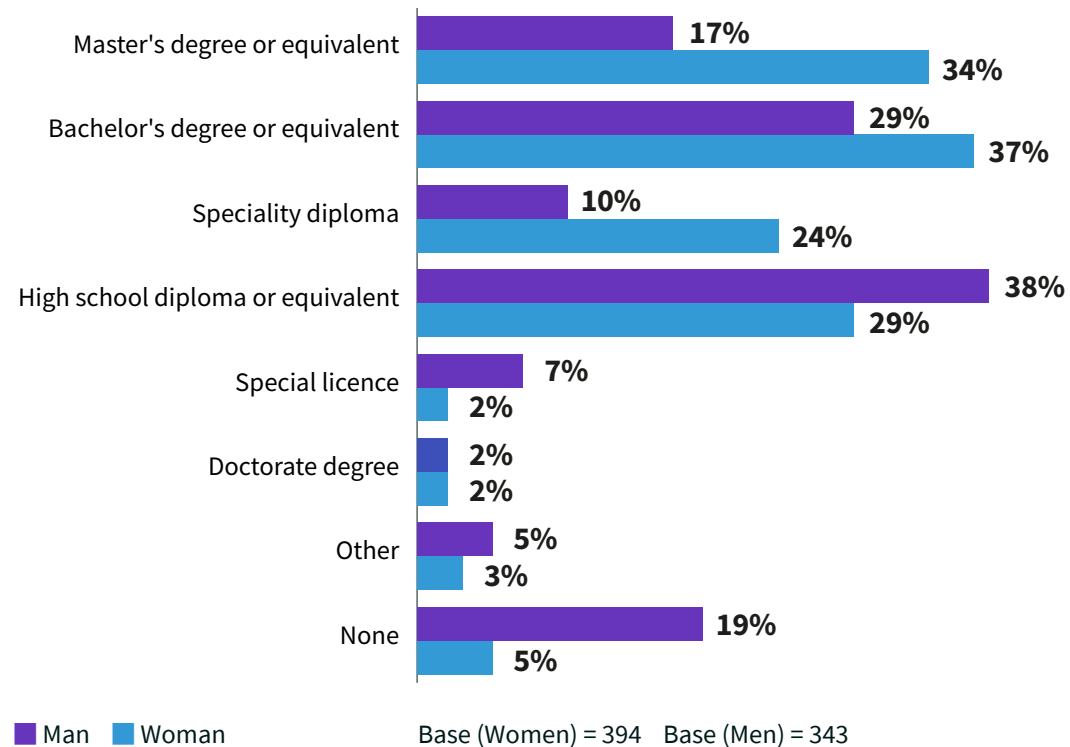
Employment and Entrepreneurship: Education and Qualifications

Findings:

When we separate out according to gender we see that women tend to be better educated than men. This is likely because there were more Ukrainian women than men who responded.

Breaking this down:

Which qualifications do you have?



Employment and Entrepreneurship: Day to day time

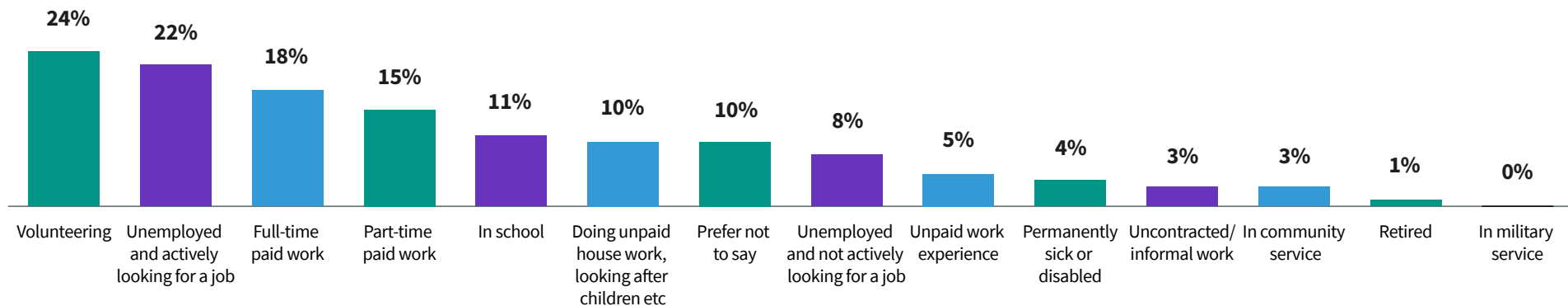
Findings:

Nearly 1 in 4 people are currently volunteering regularly (higher than the UK average of **16%***). This is the most common way that respondents spend their time in the UK.

*Community Life Survey 2021/22: Volunteering and charitable giving

Breaking this down:

Which of the following best describes what you have been doing for the last 4-12 weeks?



Base 755 (all respondents)

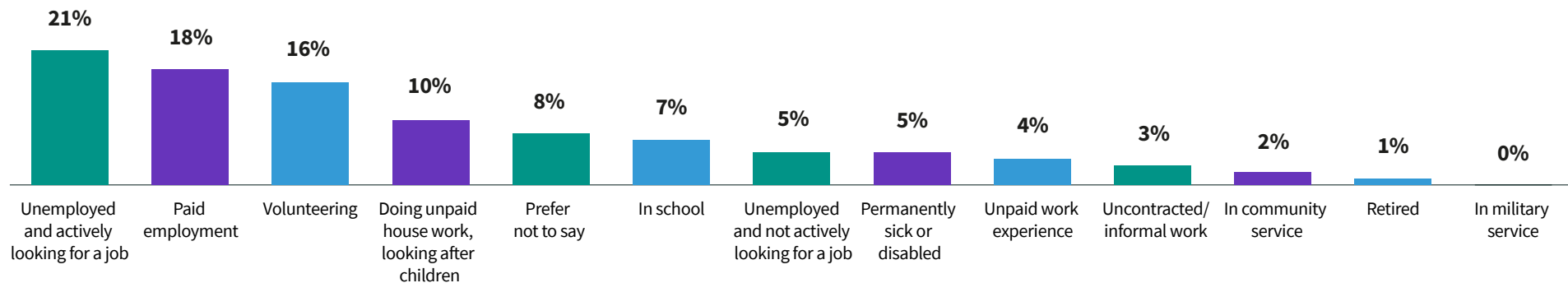
Employment and Entrepreneurship: Day to day time

Findings:

When we filter for just refugees, we see the most common response for respondents is ‘unemployed and actively looking for a job’. 1 in 5 refugees is actively seeking work.

Filtering for only refugees:

Which of the following best describes what you have been doing for the last 4-12 weeks?



Base 348

Employment and Entrepreneurship: The impact of not using skills

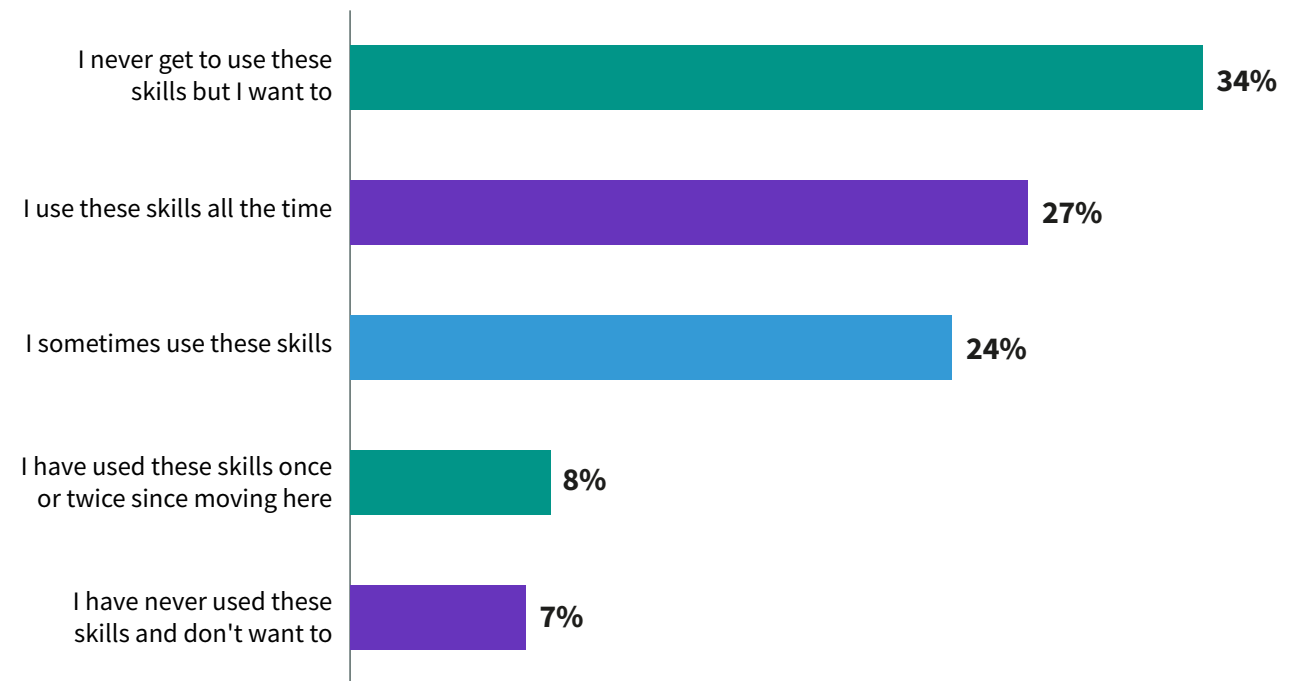
Findings:

1 in 3 do not currently use the skills from their qualifications in their lives in the UK.

Over 1 in 4 (27%) say that they are able to use these skills all the time.

Breaking this down:

To what extent do you get to use the skills you learned through these qualifications?



Base = 618

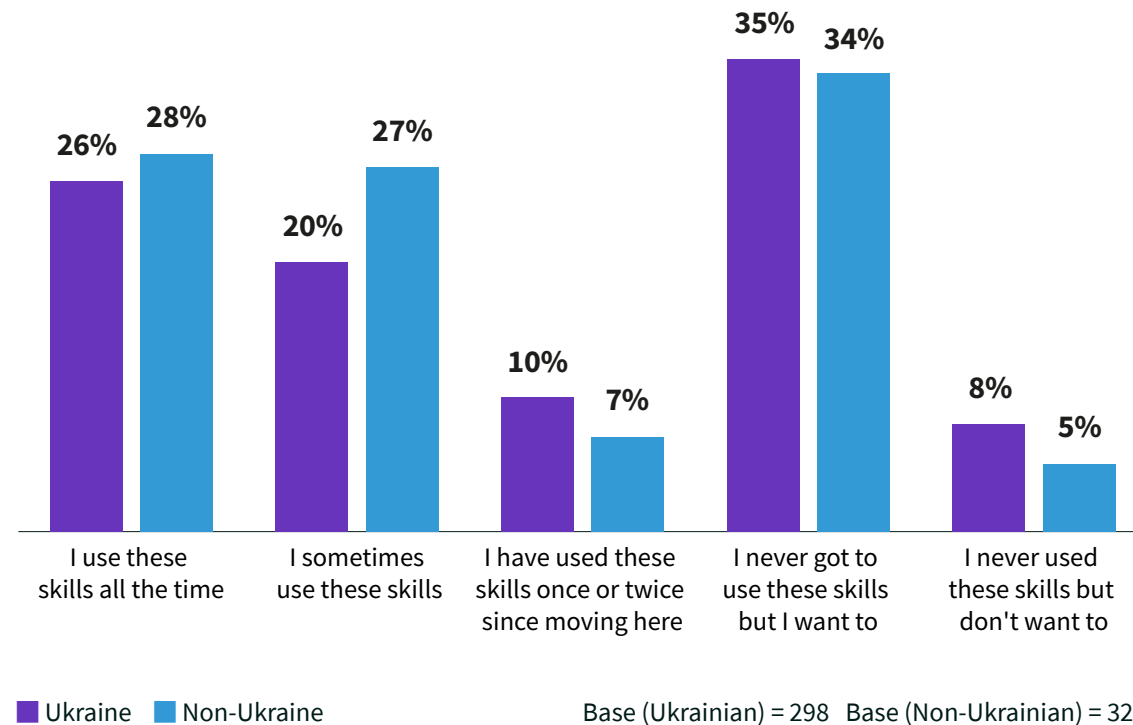
Employment and Entrepreneurship: The impact of not using skills

Findings:

When we separate out the Ukrainian sample we see that both groups get to use/not use their skills to relatively similar degrees. This aligns with our qualitative findings that finding relevant work is a universal challenge for all refugees and people in the asylum system in the UK.

Breaking this down:

To what extent respondents get to use their skills



Employment and Entrepreneurship: The impact of not using skills

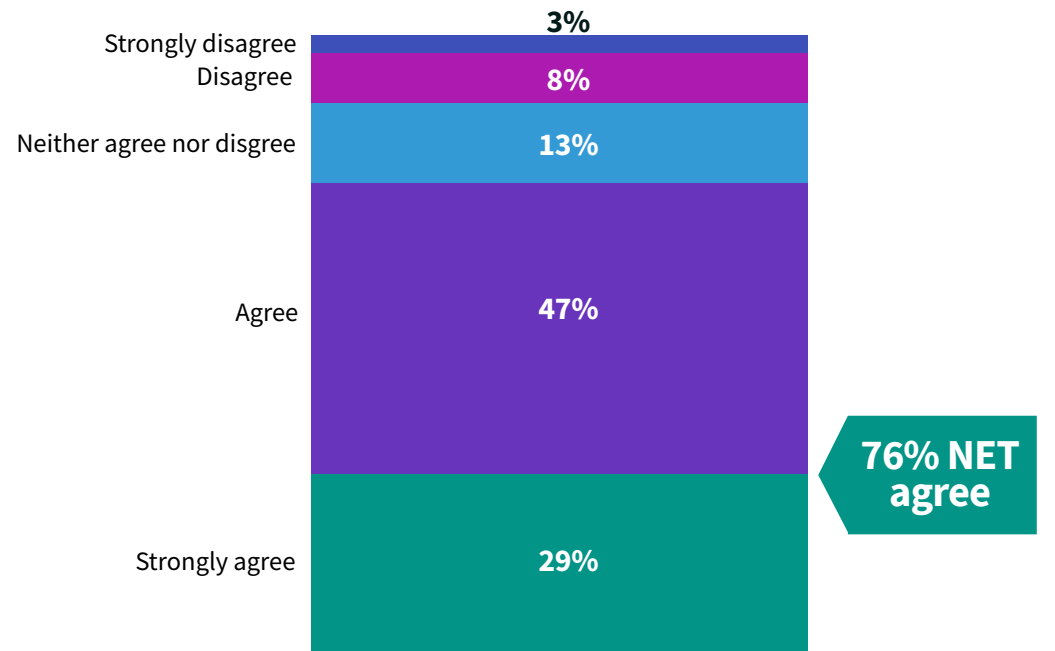
Findings:

3 in 4 respondents do not feel that they are contributing to society as much as they would like.

Half of respondents also agreed that not using their skills/qualifications meant that their skills were not as strong as they used to be.

Breaking this down:

“Not using my skills/qualifications has meant that I am not contributing to society as much as I would like to.”



Base=446 (respondents not using qualifications all the time)

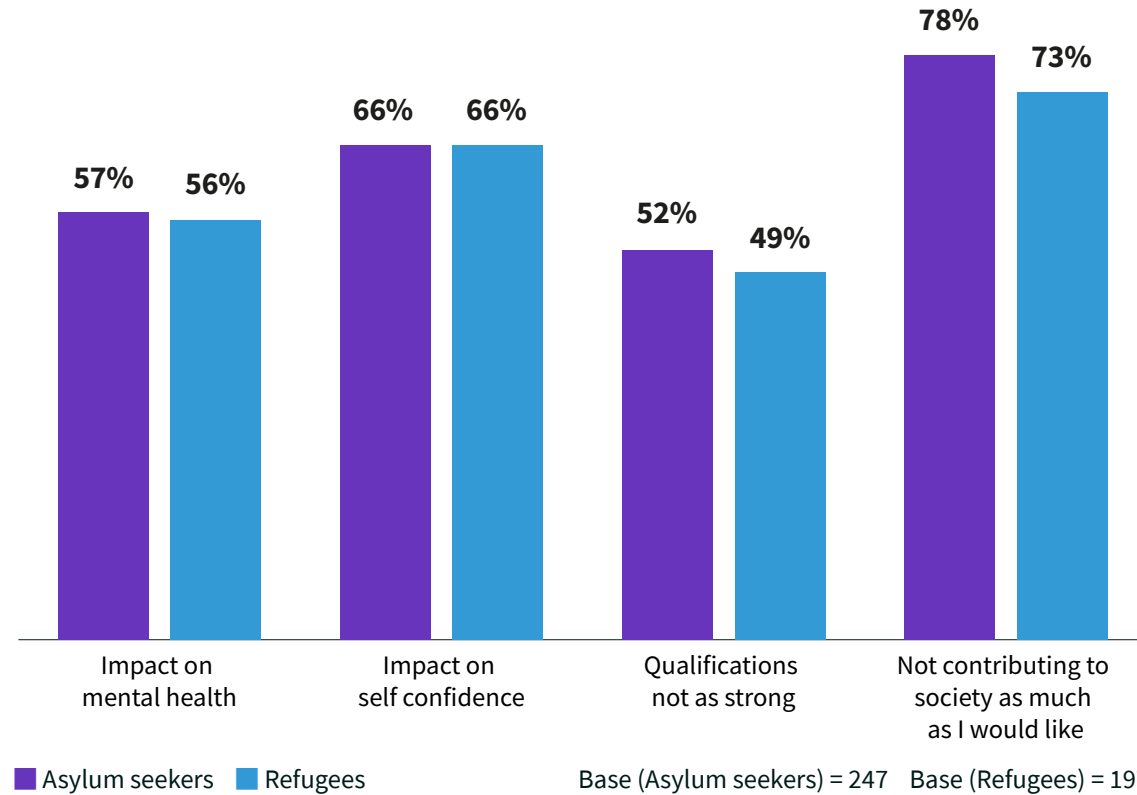
Employment and Entrepreneurship: The impact of not using skills

Findings:

The single biggest impact of not being able to use skills/ qualifications in day to day life is respondents (both refugees and people in the asylum system) feeling like they can't contribute to society as much as they would like.

Breaking this down:

To what extent has not being able to use your skills/qualifications impacted how you feel about your day-to-day life?



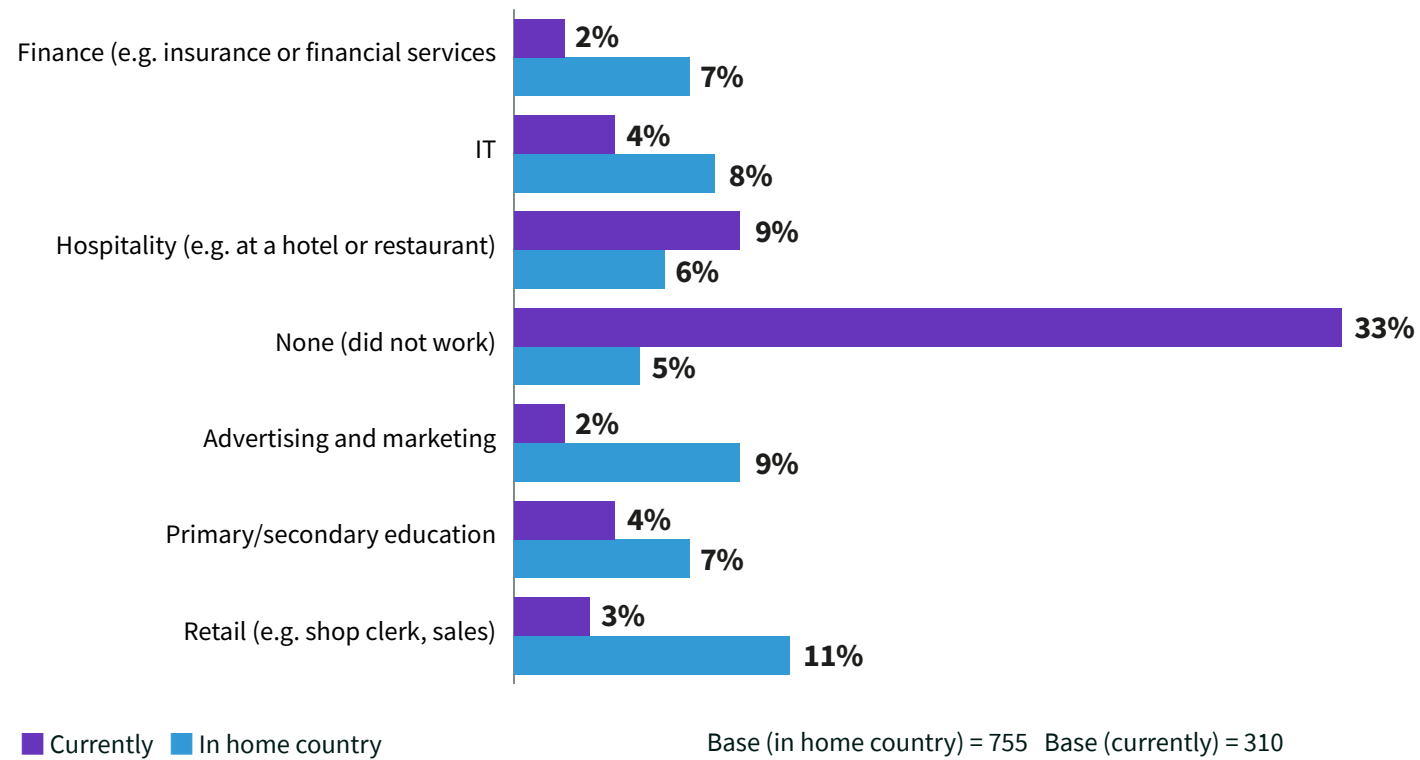
Employment and Entrepreneurship: The impact of not using skills

Findings:

People’s employment in their home country varied across a diverse range of industries (although advertising and retail were the most common forms of employment).

Breaking this down:

Most common industries comparison



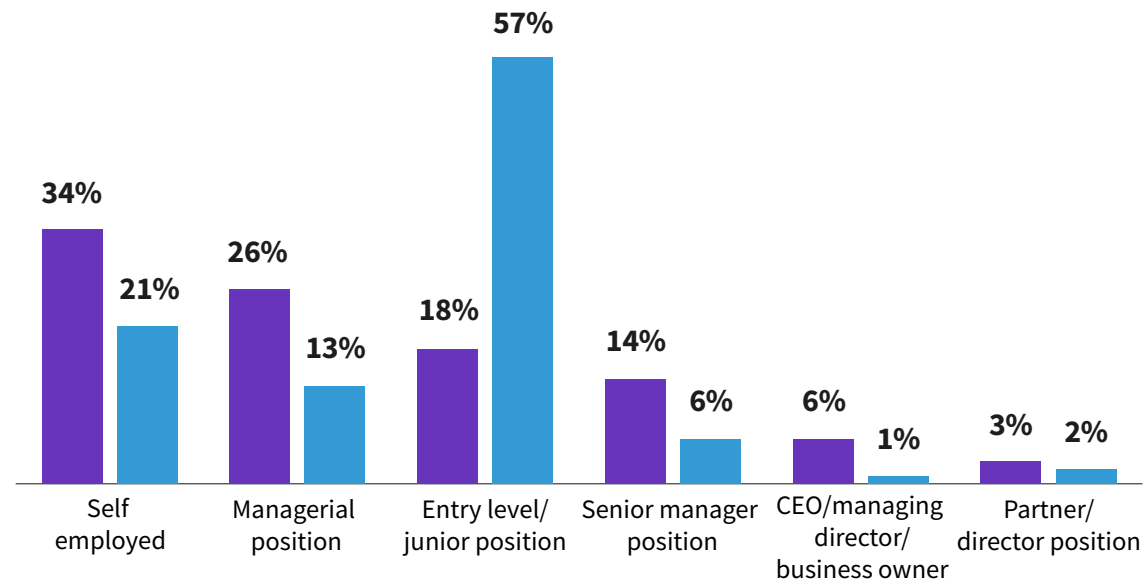
Employment and Entrepreneurship: The impact of not using skills

Findings:

There is a significant increase in those who have moved to an entry level/junior position compared to their previous role.

Breaking this down:

Which of the following best describes your previous and current position?



■ Previous position ■ Current position Base (previous position in home country) = 602 Base (current position) = 177

Qualitative spotlight on Employment and Entrepreneurship:

Barriers to employment:

The devaluing of people's qualifications

Once people have received their leave to remain, they describe the challenge of persuading employers that the qualifications they have from their home country are reputable. Often they are unable to, and are faced with having to save large amounts of money to pay to get new UK qualifications.

A lack of social capital and access to information

A consistent barrier surfacing across our interviews is the struggle to know how to seek employment support to apply for work. People describe having mixed experiences at Job centres and end up spending most of their time looking for information online.

Deterioration of people's skills in asylum system

Those who had spent multiple years in the asylum system would stress that during this time the skills they had from previous work would deteriorate as they were not able to practice them. This was further exacerbated by the mental health impacts associated with being stuck in the system for a long time.

Qualitative spotlight on Employment and Entrepreneurship: Not using skills

Unpacking this quote

This example encapsulates a broader trend of highly skilled people arriving in the UK to seek asylum but not being supported to use these skills effectively. Throughout this interview and many others it was striking how deeply people cared about making a contribution to society, and using their skills, but often there are currently too many barriers in place to allow for this.

“Trust me I know I have a really good portfolio. But when I was applying for jobs I found myself not accepted as a refugee in society and I felt shame as a refugee and I wanted to hide it because I worried they will discriminate [against] me. I am currently jobless - I did some basic work in a coffee shop and as a delivery rider but due to my health condition I couldn’t continue any physical jobs. I haven’t been able to get any employment advice from anyone.”

A woman with refugee status and extensive experience in design and advertising describes trying to find work

Qualitative spotlight on Employment and Entrepreneurship: Workplace discrimination

Unpacking this quote

This instance was one of many examples provided by this interviewee of employers changing their perspectives towards him after they discovered he was a refugee. It was striking how little support he had received for most of the time he had been in the UK to try and find work, and reflected his low levels of social capital after arriving in the UK alone with no friends here.

“I love animals and I was working in a veterinary clinic and after a while the team asked me where I came from and when I disclosed I was a refugee everything changed. They were friendly at the start and I remember the doctor then suddenly asked me these questions and I couldn’t lie and everything got weird after that. Then after three months they told me not to come back. I haven’t been able to get any employment advice from anyone else since this.”

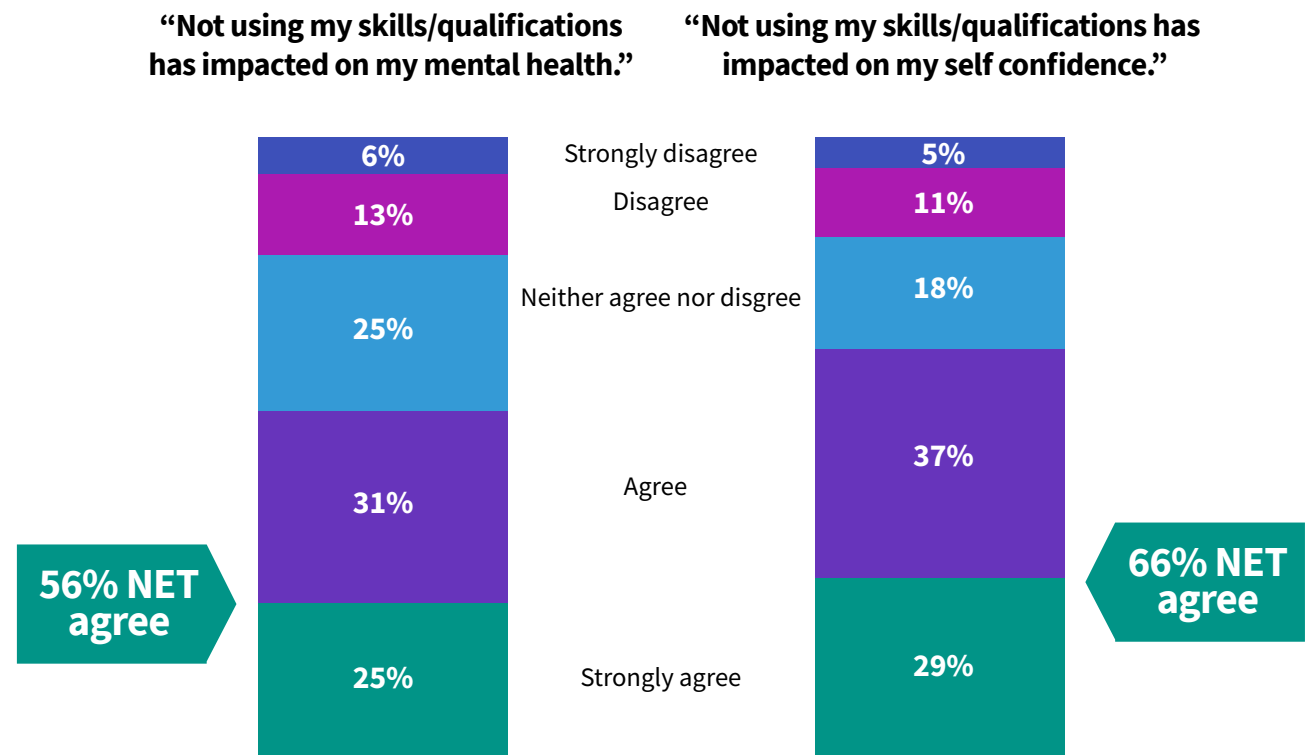
A man in London describes how he was ultimately let go by his employers after disclosing his refugee status

Employment and Entrepreneurship: Mental health and self confidence

Findings:

Not being able to use skills and qualifications has had a significant impact on people’s mental health and self confidence. Over half the respondents have experienced this adverse effect.

Breaking this down:



Base=446 (respondents not using qualifications all the time)

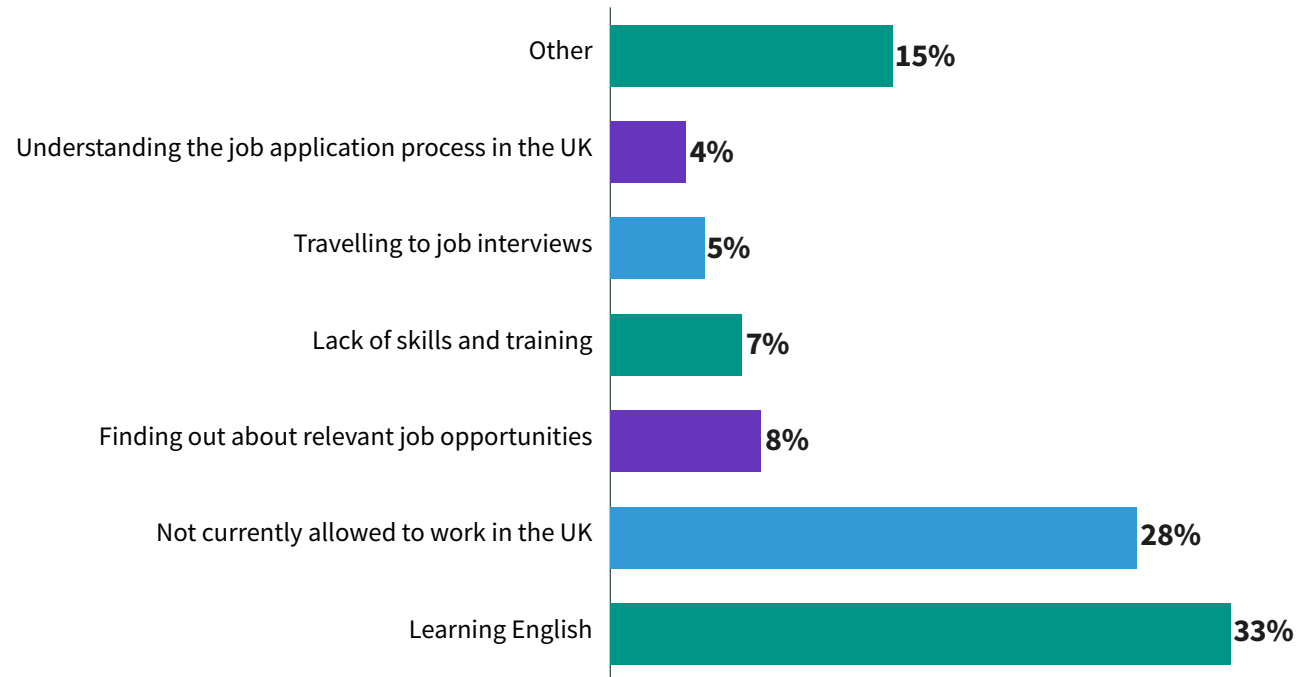
Employment and Entrepreneurship: Barriers

Findings:

As we have already explored, the language barrier is the most significant barrier to work for respondents.

Breaking this down:

If you are not currently in work and would like to work, what had been the biggest barrier for you to get a job in the UK?



Base = 701

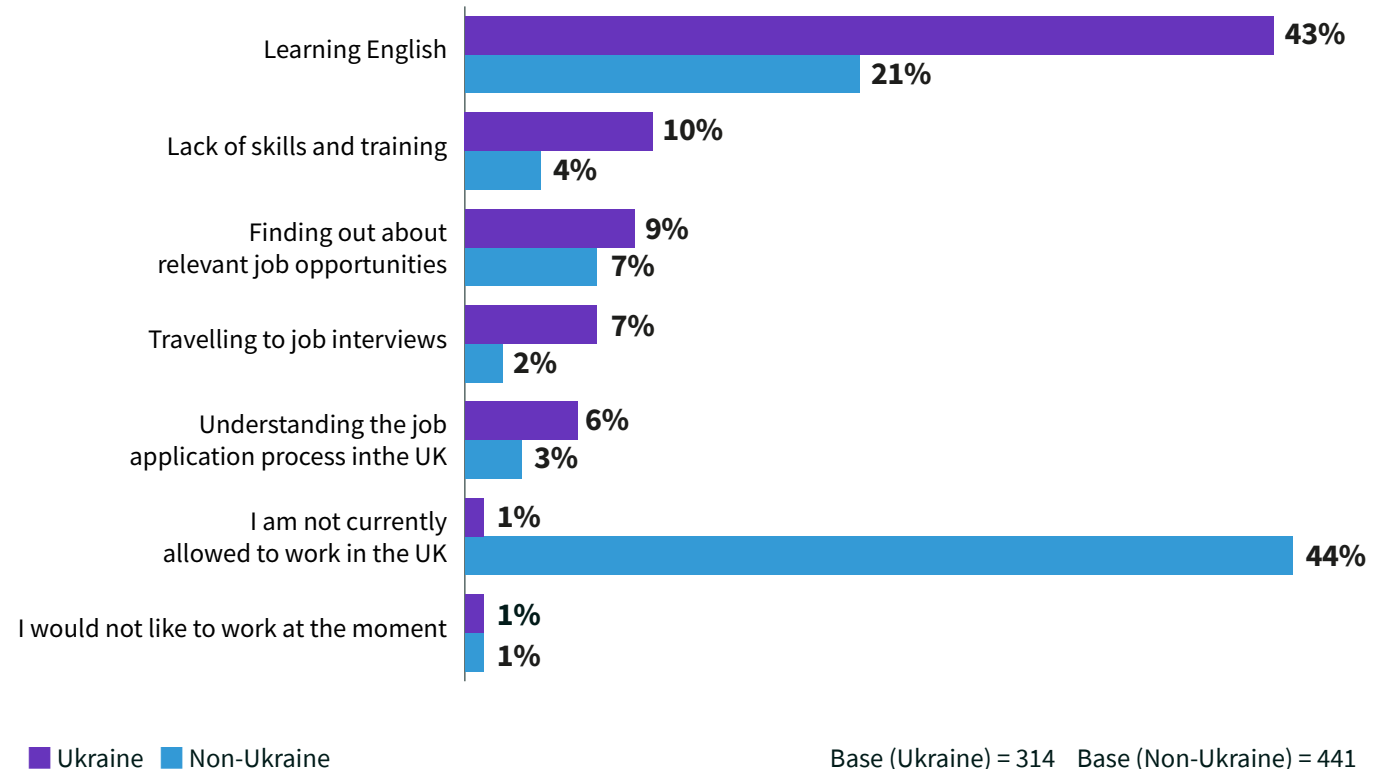
Employment and Entrepreneurship: Barriers

Findings:

When we separate out the Ukrainian sample we see this language barrier is experienced twice as strongly by Ukrainian respondents. Unsurprisingly the largest barrier for non-Ukrainians is not having the right to work as we know that people in the asylum system made up most of this group.

Breaking this down:

What to you is the biggest barrier to employment?



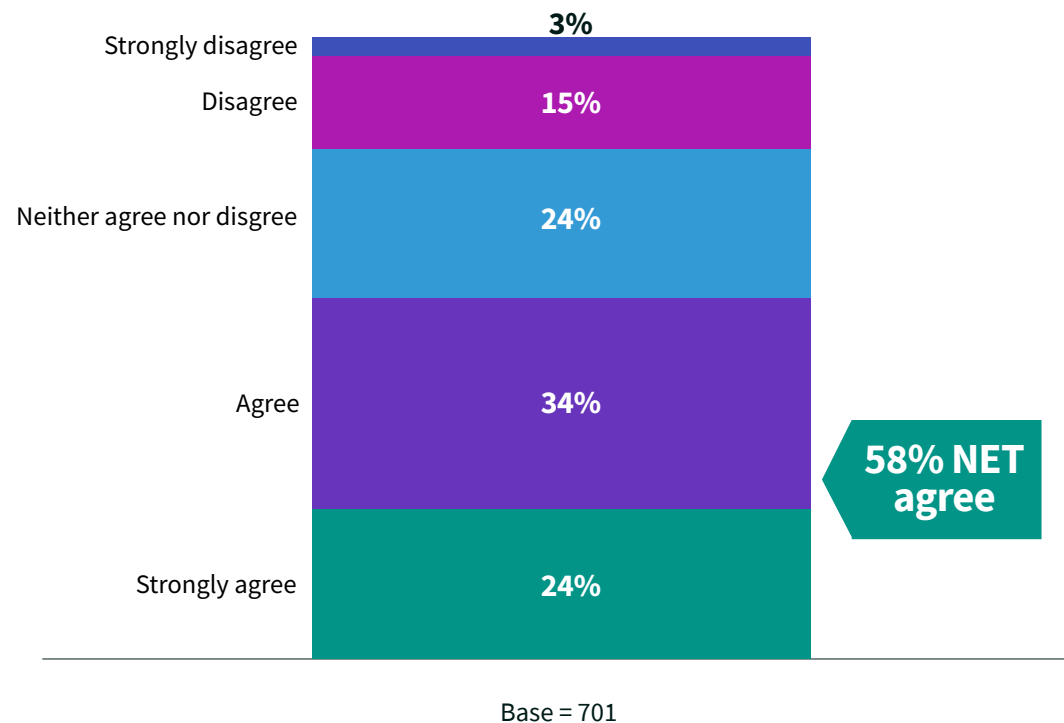
Employment and Entrepreneurship: Social connection

Findings:

Employment has a significant effect on social connection. It has helped nearly 3 in 5 respondents to make new friends.

Breaking this down:

“I have made more friends through my job”



Qualitative spotlight on Employment and Entrepreneurship: Social capital and employment

Unpacking this quote

This was the most positive employment journey we heard during our interviews. The interviewee was quite clear that a vital factor in him being able to find work that he enjoyed was the support and social capital provided by his family members who had lived in the same area of West London for a long time.

“When I grew up my passion was house building and now I have a job in a factory making double glazing which I love. I cut and seal glass and customers come and collect. I have lots of family in West London who really supported me in this. I am also interested in getting more involved in community interpreting because I want to give back to the community.”

A young man who received his leave to remain last year

Social Inclusion

A summary

Social inclusion is about ensuring that everyone in society has access to equal opportunities so that they can fully participate in – and enjoy feeling part of – that society. It supports those who are more vulnerable or whose characteristics have historically been taken into account less by society. Creating more social inclusion means configuring our societies so that these more marginalized communities have equal access of opportunity, and everyone in society is respected and included.

Through our research we explored how respondents have experienced social inclusion in the UK. The results were mixed and are broken down in this section of the report. What became strikingly clear is how crucial people's first 6 months in the UK are for social inclusion. 76% of respondents did not make any friends from the UK during their first month, and these early stages after people's arrival appear to be by far the most socially challenging.

In general, respondents were more likely to make friends with others from the migrant community than with people from the UK, although at least half of respondents reported having made a few friends from the UK. Establishing friendships with other refugees or people seeking asylum happened more quickly for respondents, and over 3 in 4 respondents reported making at least some friends in their first 6 months. Interestingly, 'neighbours' prove to be the strongest source of friendship with both people from the UK and also other refugees or people seeking asylum. This potentially underscores the importance of 'everyday life' to people's integration and the bonds that they form, as well as the social value of providing accommodation that creates opportunities for meeting and mixing. Those who have recently arrived in the country find it most difficult to know where to go for practical support. The specific challenges experienced by people during their first few months in the UK, and the need for more targeted support during this period, surfaced clearly through both our quantitative and qualitative research.

Social Inclusion: A summary

However, our research also unveils the social isolation people can experience in the UK. For example, 1 out of 3 respondents report having 3 friendly conversations or less per week. When we separated the Ukrainian sample to examine the same question, we also saw no statistically significant differences between the two groups. This coheres with our qualitative findings that disconnection and social isolation are experienced across the board by refugees and people in the asylum system, and it is an area that clearly warrants further attention.

This also links to our findings regarding the relocation and churn that people experience in the UK. Nearly 3 in 4 respondents have moved to a new part of the UK at least once, whilst over 1 in 4 respondents has moved to a new part of the UK 2 or more times. Respondents who are not on resettlement schemes are significantly more likely to experience this level of transience, which reflects how

frequently people in the asylum system are relocated around the UK. This transience brought about by relocation has an enormous impact on people's ability to get settled and build relationships with the people and communities around them, as they effectively have to start their integration process from scratch each time they are moved.

Despite these challenges, most respondents feel part of British Society at least sometimes (65%). Our data suggests a strong desire by respondents to involve themselves in society and feel like they are contributing, particularly through volunteering, which has enormous transformative potential. However, the data also suggests that the length of time people spend in the UK does not have a clear impact on how often they feel part of British Society. In this sense, people's sense of inclusion within the UK does not improve significantly over time. Clearly, more is still needed to be done to support people through a broad, long-term process of social inclusion.

Social Inclusion: Making friends

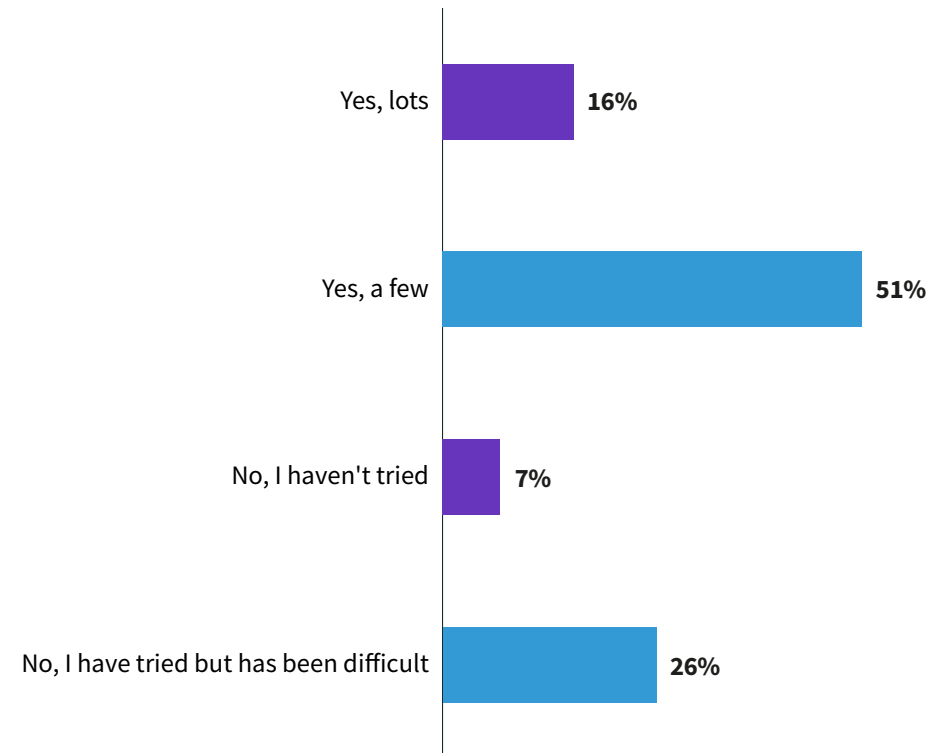
Findings:

1 in 4 has tried to make friends with people from the UK but have found it too difficult.

Half of respondents have made a few friends with people from the UK.

Breaking this down:

Have you made friends with people from the UK?



Base = 755 (all respondents)

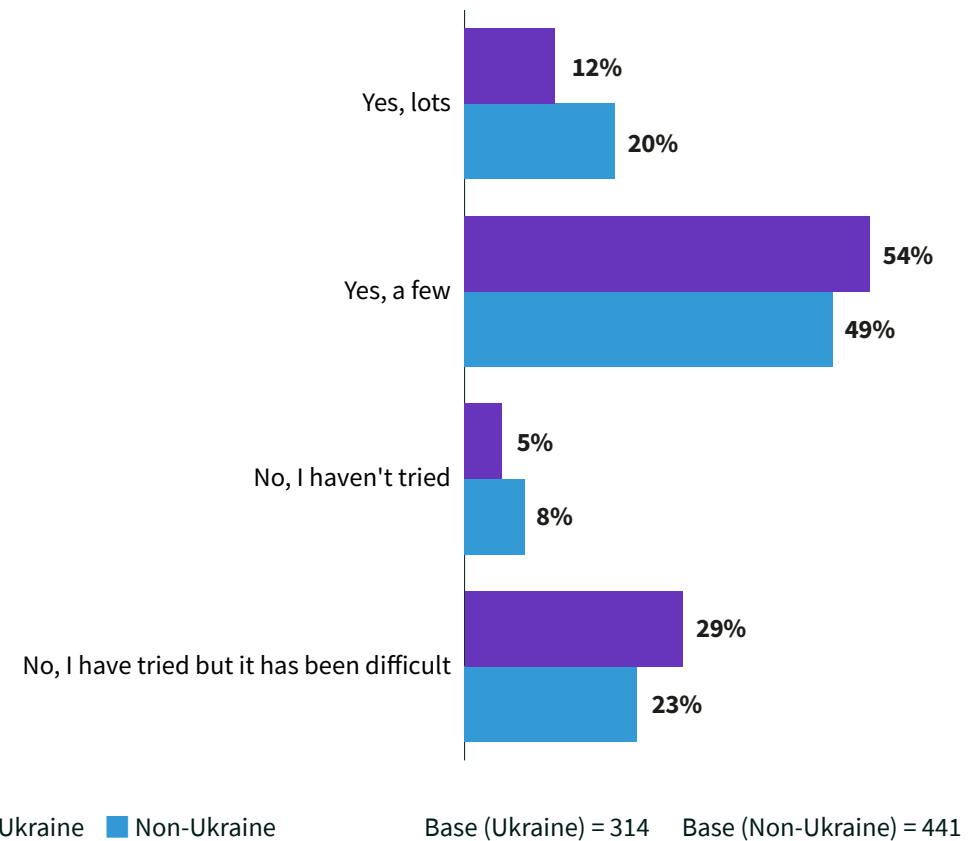
Social Inclusion: Making friends

Findings:

These patterns remain similar after separating out the Ukrainian sample, with both groups appearing to have similar experiences of making friends with people from the UK.

Breaking this down:

Have you made friends with people from the UK?



Social Inclusion: Making friends

Findings:

Meeting through being neighbours and volunteering are the most common ways for respondents to make friends with people from the UK.

Breaking this down:

The most common ways friends from the UK are made are:

- Through neighbours **(19%)**
- Through volunteering **(16%)**
- Through mutual friends **(16%)**

Base=755 (all respondents)

Findings:

Neighbours are also the most common way for respondents to make friends with other refugees or people seeking asylum, closely followed by community centres/ social clubs.

Breaking this down:

The most common ways friends with other refugees or people seeking asylum are made are:

- Through being neighbours **(22%)**
- In community centres / social clubs **(18%)**
- Through mutual friends **(16%)**

Base=755 (all respondents)

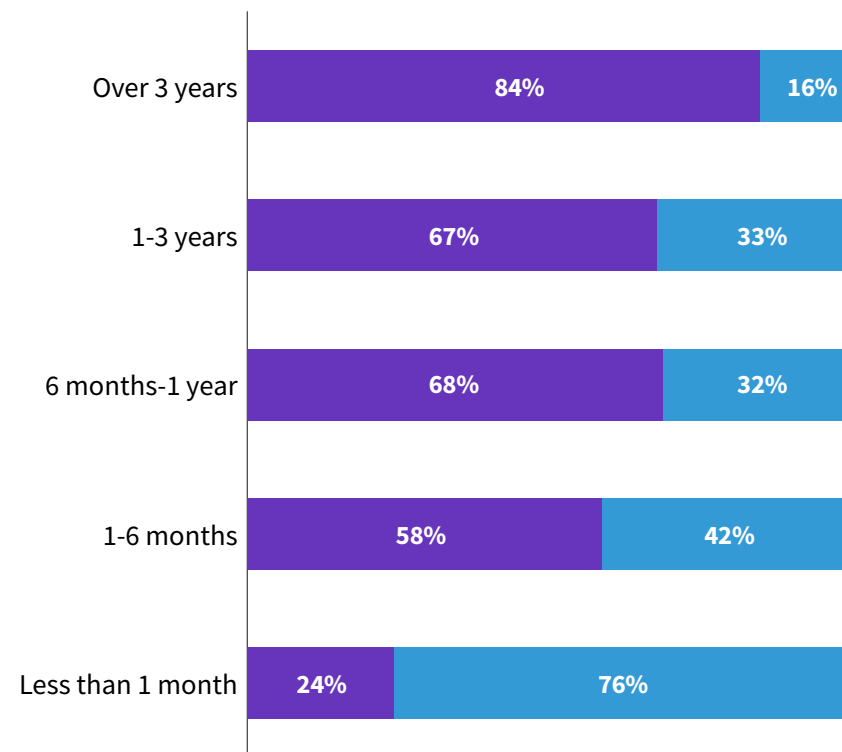
Social Inclusion: Making friends

Findings:

76% of respondents did not make any friends from the UK during their first month in the UK. **These early stages in people's arrival to the UK appear to be by far the most socially challenging.**

Breaking this down:

How long did it take you to make friends with people from the UK?



■ Yes ■ No

Base=755, Less than a month (76), 1-6 months (79), 6mths-1 year (192), 1-3 yrs (381), Over 3 years (86). Due to low base numbers the categories 3-5 years, 5-7 years, 7-9 years and 9-10 years have been combined.

Qualitative spotlight on Social Inclusion: Neighbours

Unpacking this quote

As we have seen neighbours are an important source of social connection for many respondents. This finding also emerged through our qualitative research. In this quote from an interview we see this come to life through the power of micro-interactions and general “neighbourliness” to forge meaningful bonds in the community and across lines of difference.

“It began by leaving food outside our door. During Ramadan I shared some food and sweets outside my door and then two of my neighbours began to leave food out their door as well. One was Muslim and one was not. And then we all started talking and became friends. It was six years ago and we’re still in touch and they’re always telling me to come back and visit.”

A woman with leave to remain who had recently moved to live in an apartment block in a northern city

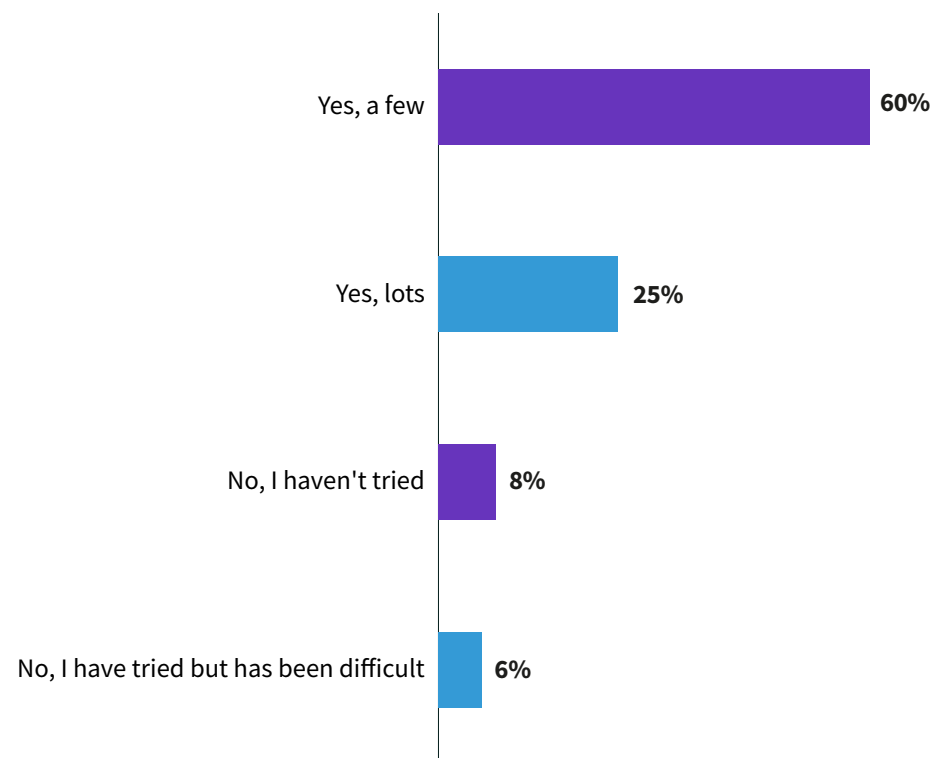
Social Inclusion: Making friends

Findings:

85% of respondents have made at least a few friends with refugees or people in the asylum system, and only **6%** have found it too difficult to make friends.

Breaking this down:

Have you made friends with other Refugees or Asylum Seekers?



Base = 755 (all respondents)

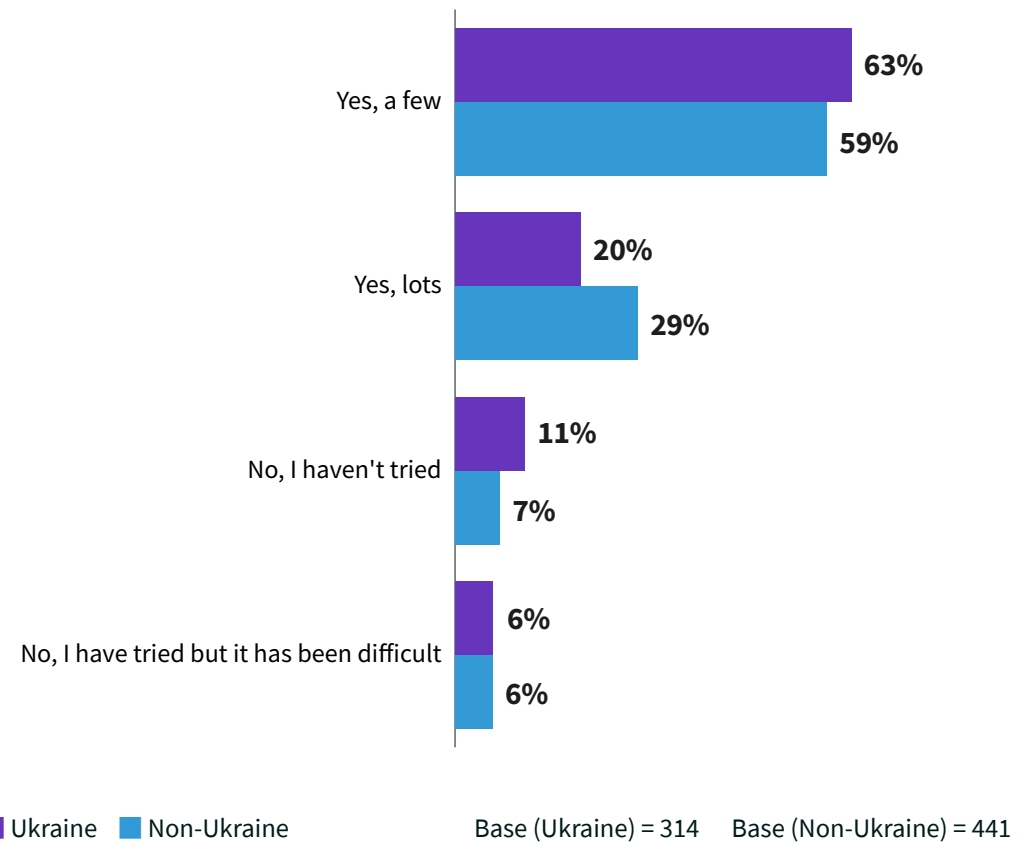
Social Inclusion: Making friends

Findings:

Again when separating out the Ukrainian sample, the number of people making friends with other refugees or people in the asylum system remains similar across both groups.

Breaking this down:

Have you made friends with people from the UK?



Social Inclusion: Making friends

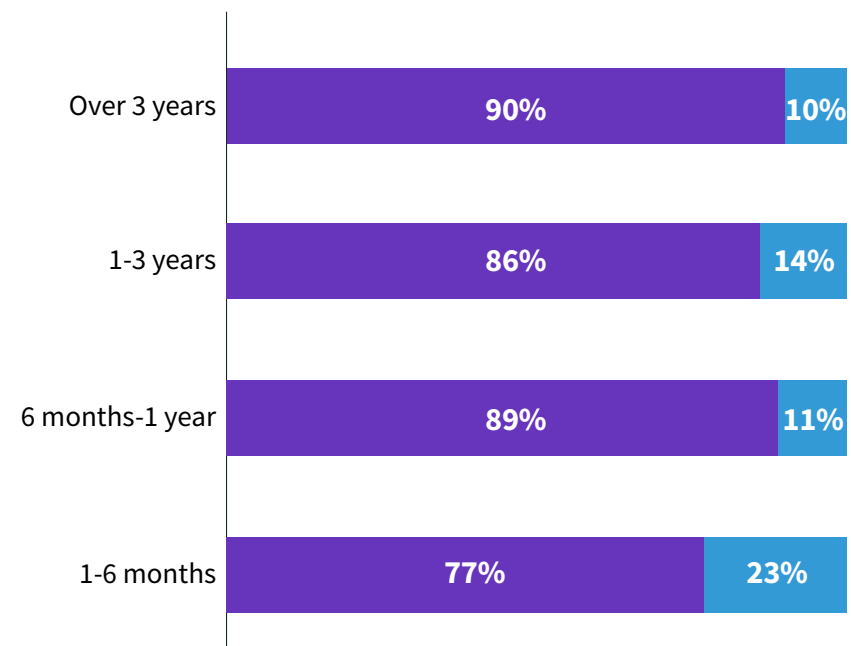
Findings:

Making friends with other refugees or people seeking asylum happened more quickly for respondents.

Over **3 in 4** reported that they had made at least some friends in the first 6 months, increasing to **9 in 10** amongst those who had been in the country for over 3 years.

Breaking this down:

Have you made at least some friends with other refugees or people seeking asylum?



■ Yes ■ No

Base=755, Up to 6 months (96), 6mths-1 year (192), 1-3 yrs (381), Over 3 years (86).

Due to low base numbers the categories less than one month and 1-6 months have been combined and 3-5 years, 5-7 years, 7-9 years and 9-10 years have been combined.

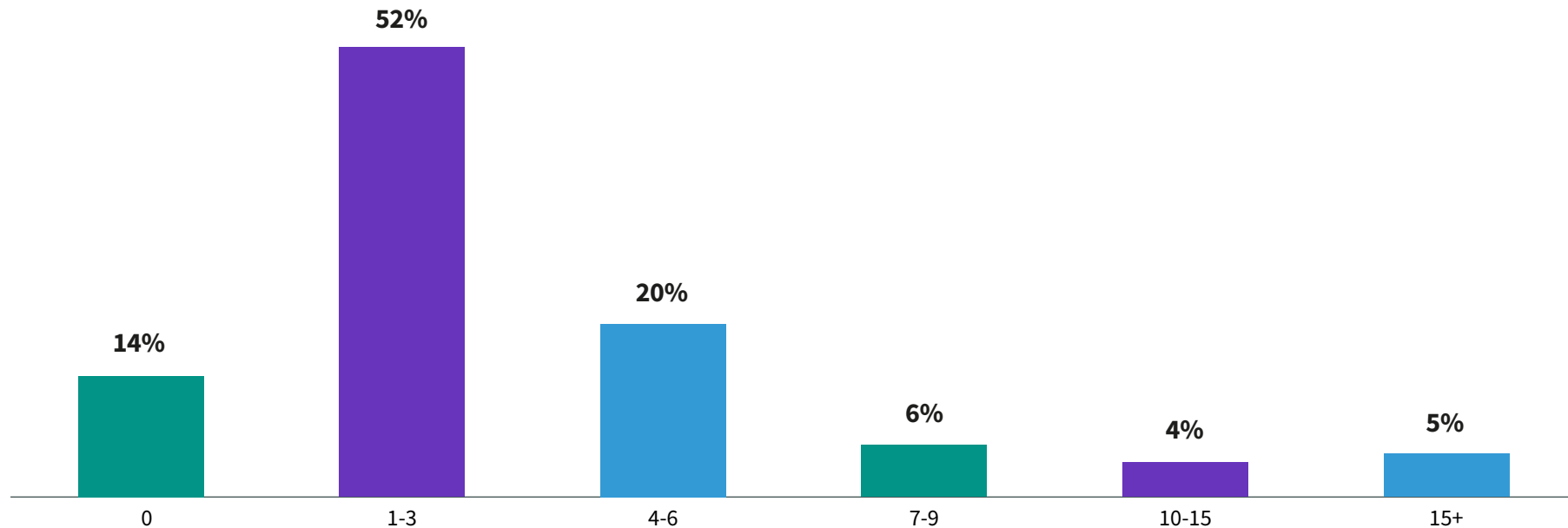
Social Inclusion: Making friends

Findings:

2 in 3 respondents report only having 3 friendly conversations or less per week.

Breaking this down:

How many friendly conversations do you have per week?



Base = 755 (all respondents)

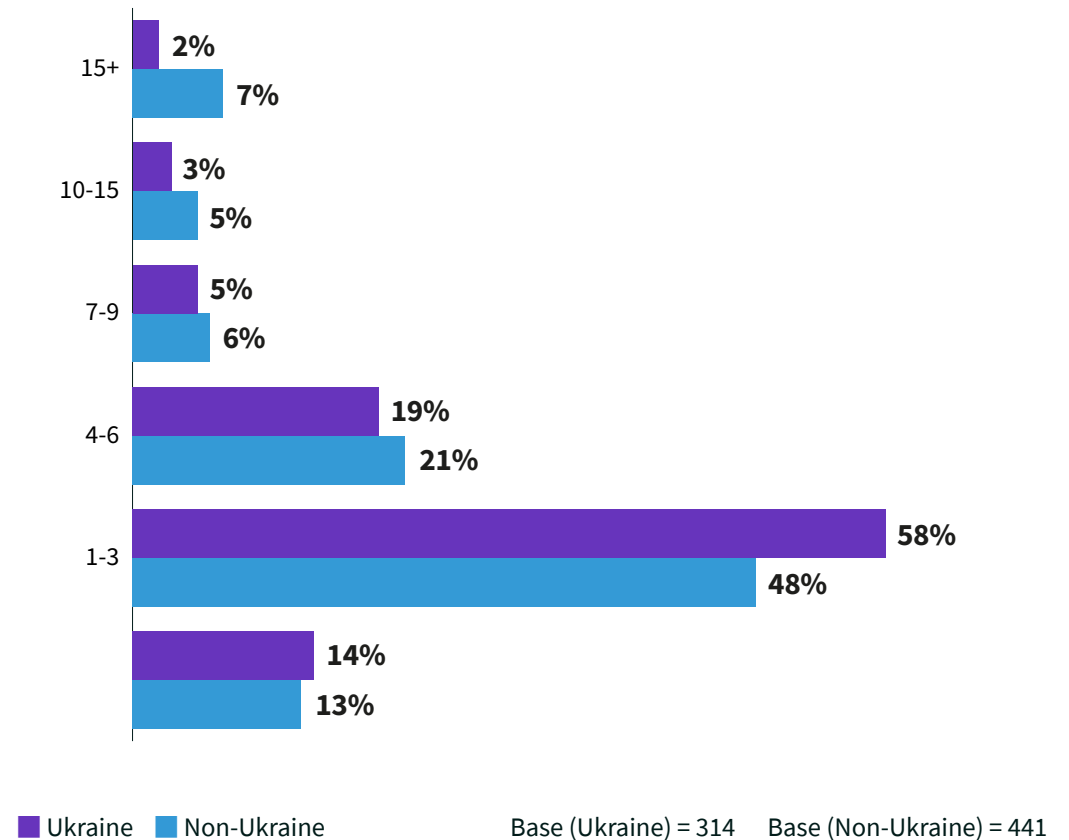
Social Inclusion: Making friends

Findings:

Here we see this data with the Ukrainian sample separated out. There is no statistically significant difference between the two groups.

Breaking this down:

How many friendly conversations do you have per week?



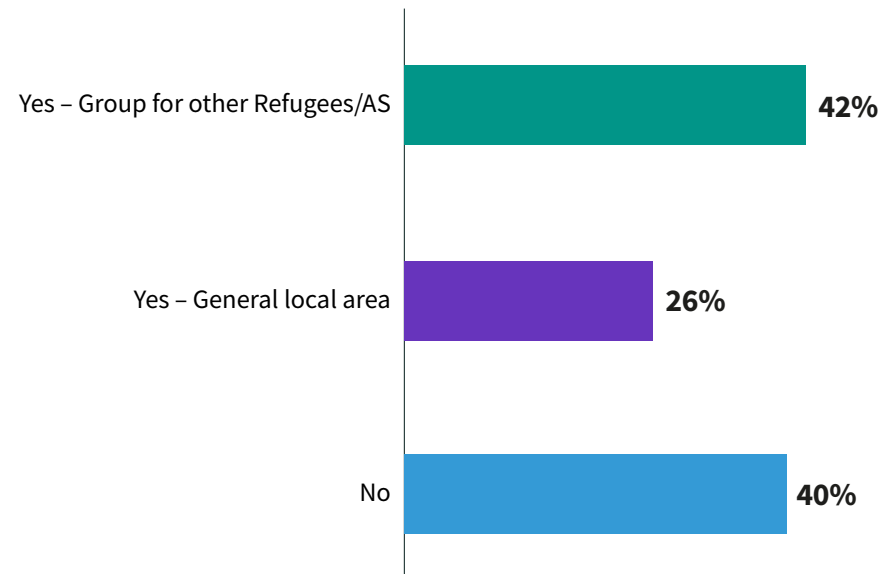
Social Inclusion: Online groups

Findings:

68% of respondents are using online groups to stay connected with people in their local area.

Breaking this down:

Are you on any online groups for people in your area?



Base = 755 (all respondents)

NB: This was a multiple choice question and therefore the percentages do not add to 100%.

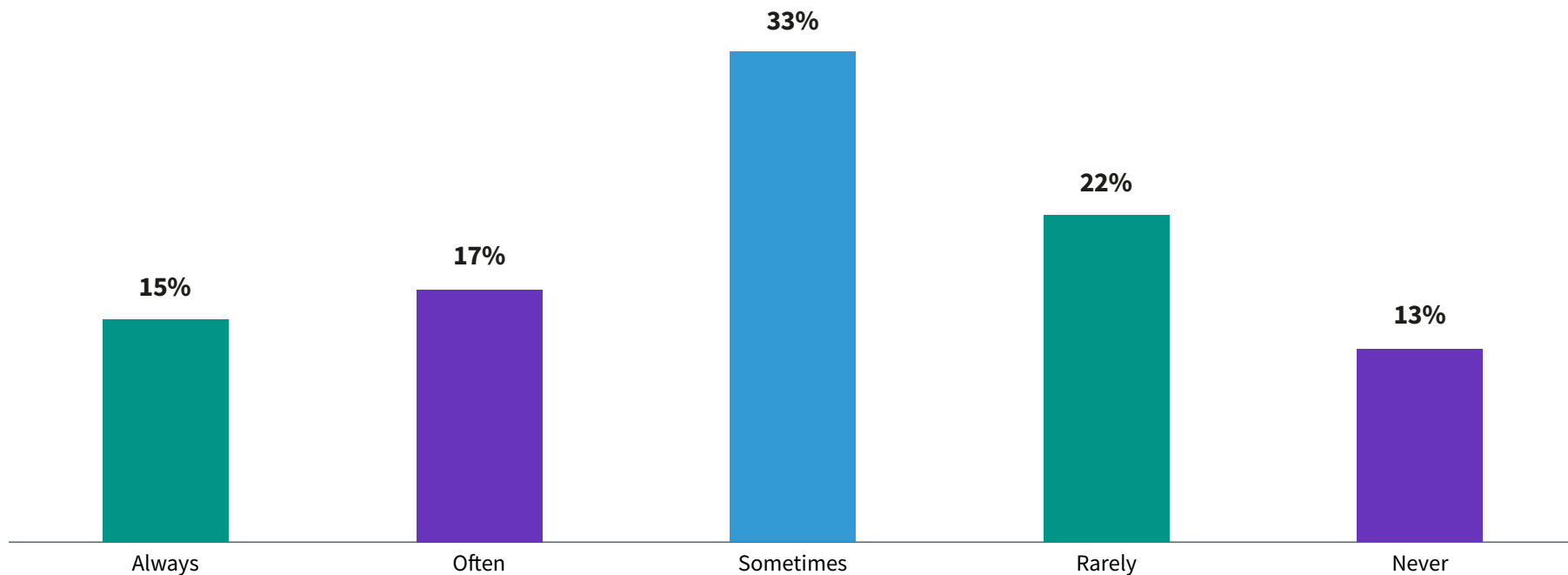
Social Inclusion: Belonging

Findings:

Most respondents feel part of British Society at least some of the time **(65%)**.

Breaking this down:

How often do you feel part of British society?



Base=688 (67 respondents did not answer this question)

Social Inclusion: Belonging

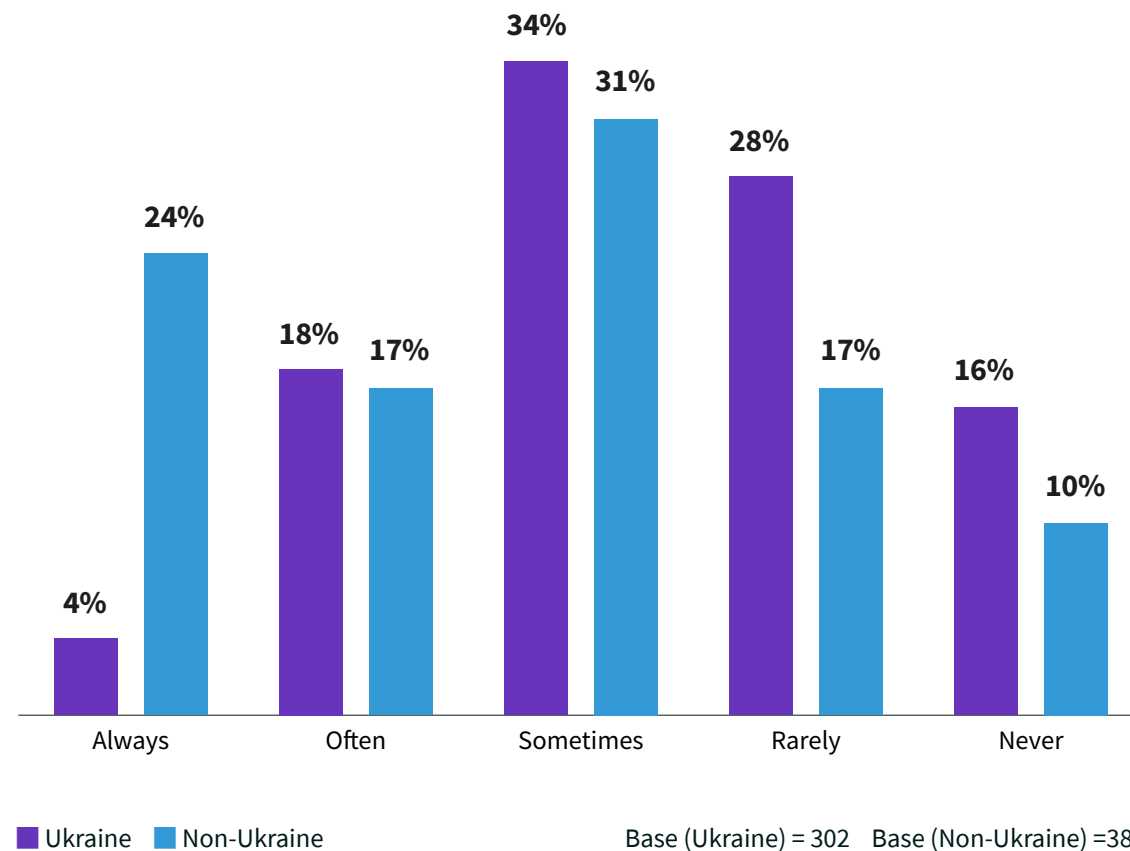
Findings:

A significantly higher proportion of non-Ukrainians always feel part of British society (**24%**), whereas over 2 in 5 (**44%**) Ukrainians rarely or never feel part of British society.

This supports our qualitative findings that Ukrainians tend to view their time in the UK as more temporary than other groups, as they believe they will be able to return home sooner.

Breaking this down:

How often do you feel part of British society?



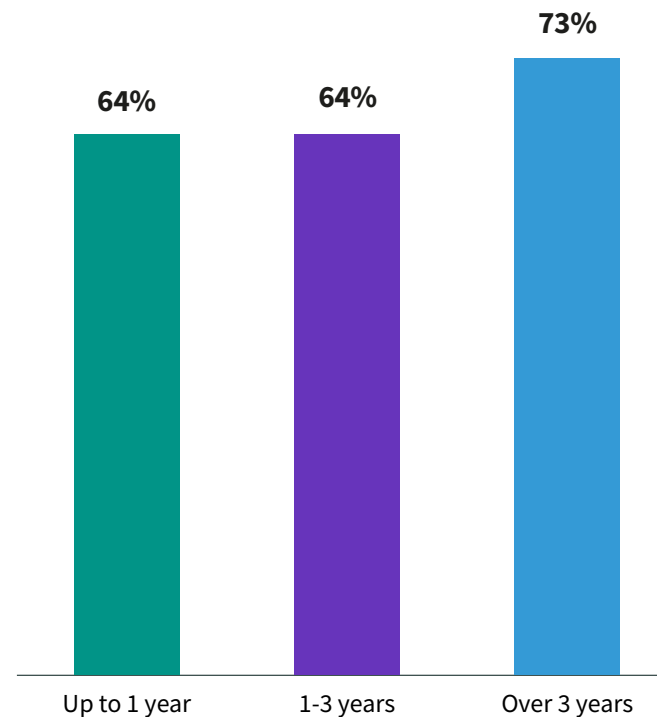
Social Inclusion: Belonging

Findings:

However, the length of time that people spend in the UK does not have a clear impact on how often they feel part of British Society (there is no statistically significant increase over the 3 year period assessed).

Breaking this down:

Do you feel part of British society? (respondents who specified always/often/sometimes)



Base: Up to 1 year (260), 1-3 years (355), Over 3 years (73). Due to the low base size for the over 3 years category care should be taken into the interpretation of this data.

Qualitative spotlight on Social Inclusion: Volunteering

Unpacking this quote

We have seen quantitatively that lots of respondents are having relatively few friendly conversations. Social isolation is frequently linked to loneliness - an experience that many of our interview participants also suffered from. However, we often simultaneously heard about the transformative power of volunteering to address people's isolation. The woman in this interview experienced crippling social anxiety when she was first relocated to a new city in the UK. She pinpointed volunteering as crucial in improving her anxiety, increasing her confidence to get out the house, and to make new friends. Through volunteering she has embedded herself in a thriving arts scene and now performs regularly to audiences. Her positive journey also reflects the power of social prescribing and the support that can be available from the NHS.

“When I arrived in this city my GP socially prescribed me to a charity where I met a woman who spoke my language. She told me about a different drop-in space for refugees and asylum seekers to attend... from there I started involving myself in lots of different groups. Volunteering has been an opportunity to meet people and make friends.”

A woman seeking asylum and living in shared accommodation in a northern city

Qualitative spotlight on Social Inclusion: Volunteering

How volunteering can facilitate integration:

- › Volunteering gives people the opportunity to generate social connections and meet and mix (with people from their community but also across lines of difference)
- › It also gives people (particularly those in the asylum system) a sense of purpose and contribution whilst they are unable to work
- › We have also heard how volunteering intersects with language learning as it provides opportunities for people to develop their language skills in a practical, applied context

How volunteering can risk hindering integration

- › We heard some interview participants describe how they know people who have been exploited and overworked whilst volunteering. Often in these situations these people don't know how to report this and feel powerless
- › We also heard about the risk of getting “stuck” volunteering even after people receive their leave to remain. There is a massive challenge in moving from volunteering to paid employment

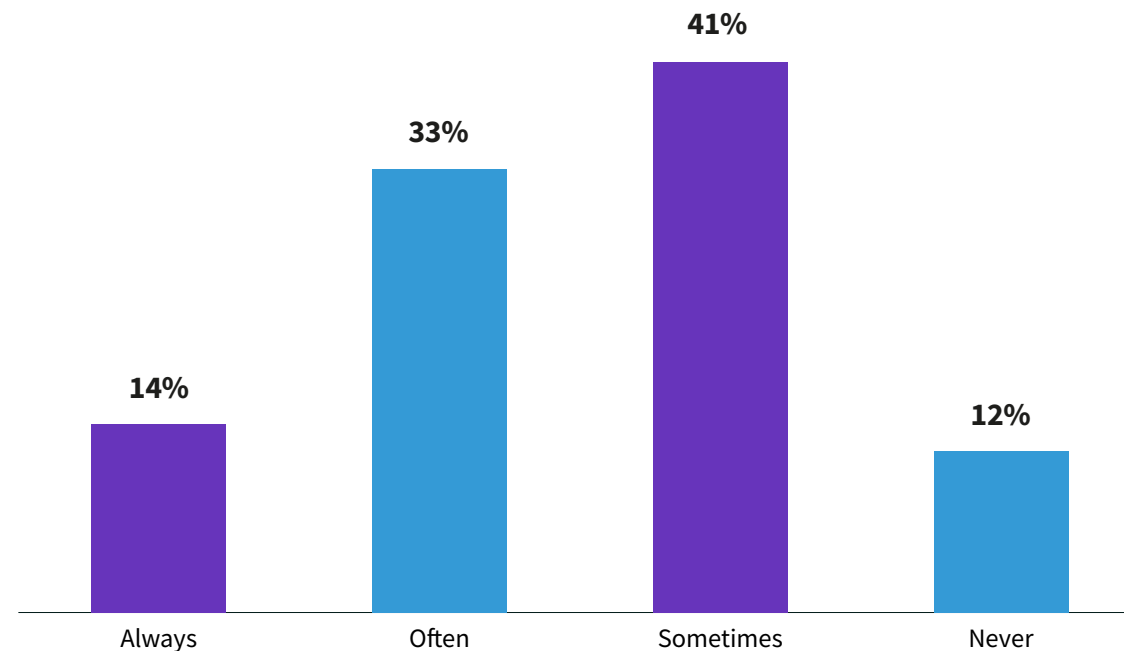
Social Inclusion: Support and information access

Findings:

Overall, nearly **9 in 10** respondents (**88%**) knew where to access relevant information for practical support at least some of time.

Breaking this down:

When you need help with practical support, how often do you know how to access the relevant information?



Base=733 (22 respondents did not answer this question)

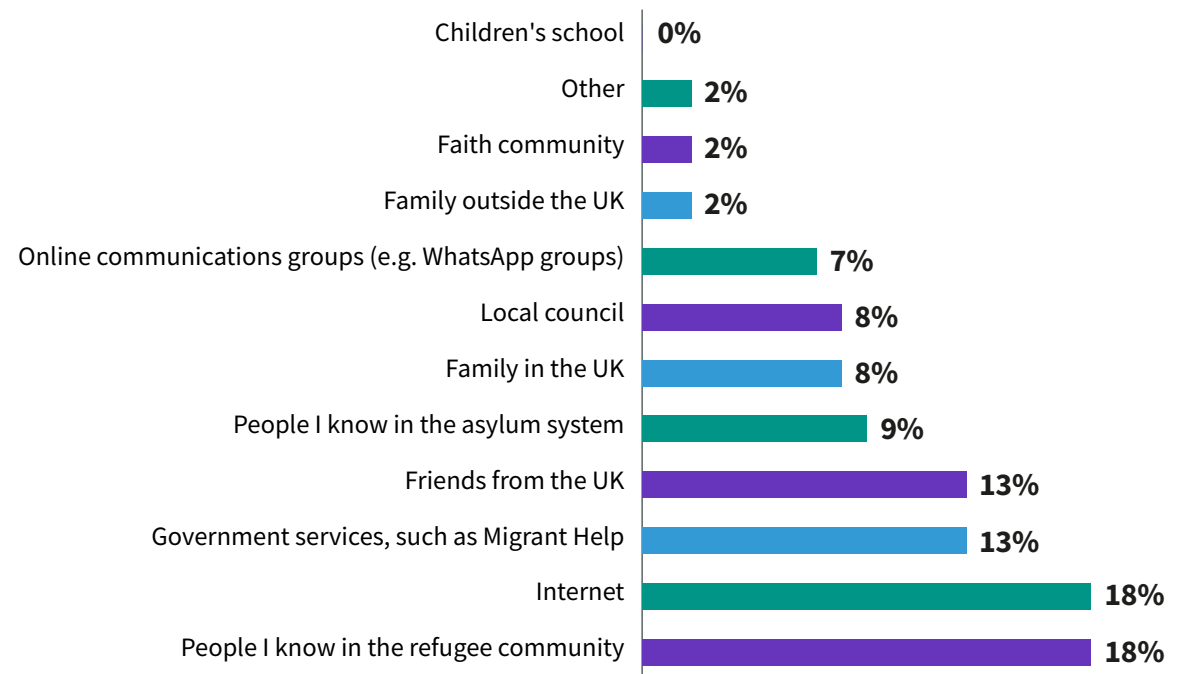
Social Inclusion: Support and information access

Findings:

Respondents are most likely to turn to people in the refugee community or use the internet when trying to access help and support when they need it.

Breaking this down:

Where are you likely to go first for support?



Base = 723 (32 respondents did not answer this question)

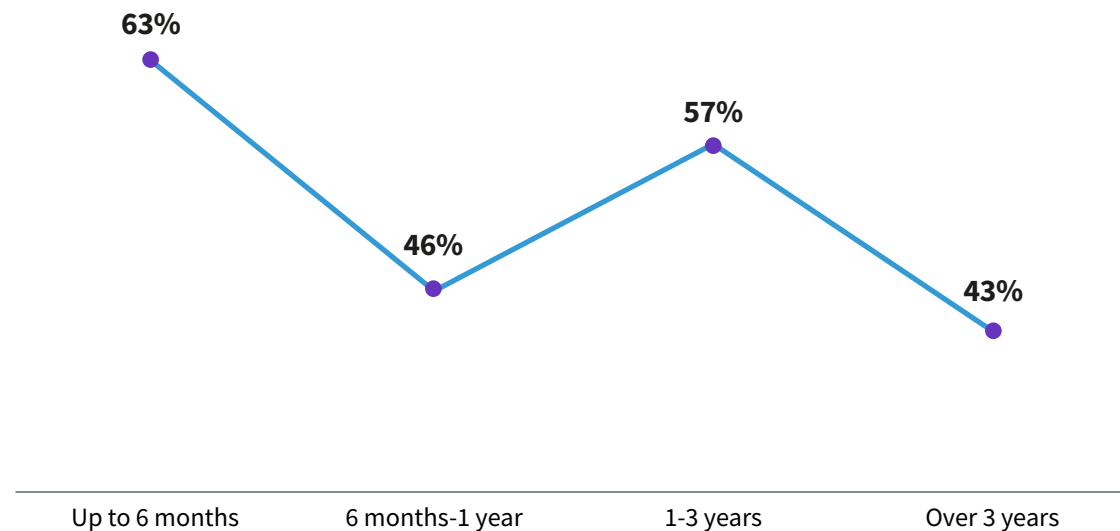
Social Inclusion: Support and information access

Findings:

Information access is a significant barrier for people who have just arrived in the UK. Those who have recently arrived in the country find it the most difficult to know where to go for practical help and support, but this remains an issue for many respondents even when they have been in the country for a while.

Breaking this down:

Do you sometimes or never know where to go for practical help and support?



Base: Up to 6 months (95), 6 months - 1 year (184), 1-3 years (373), Over 3 years (81)

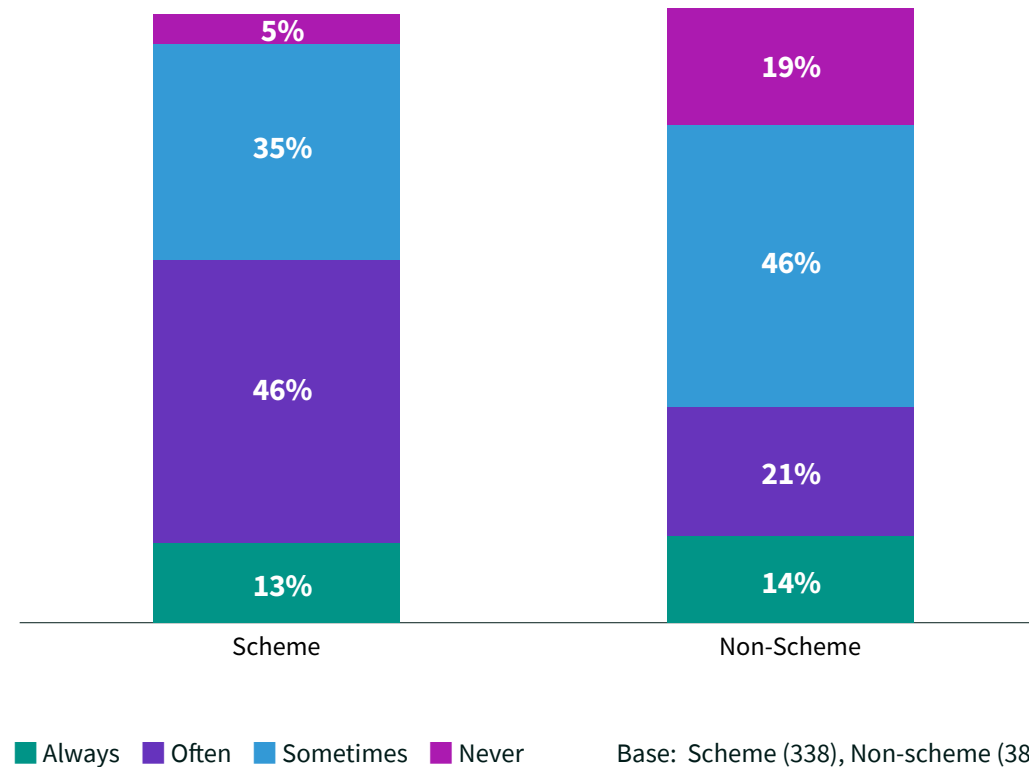
Social Inclusion: Support and information access

Findings:

Respondents who came to the UK on a scheme find it easier to know where to go to access practical support.

Breaking this down:

When you need help with practical support, how often do you know how to access the relevant information?



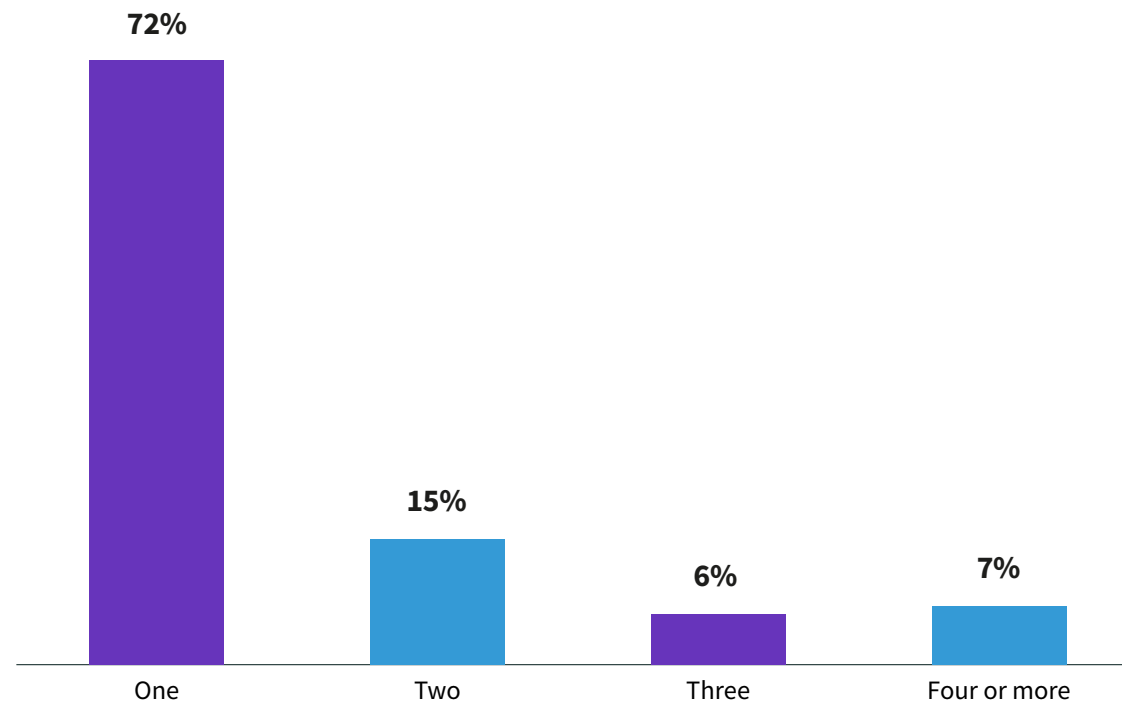
Social Inclusion: Churn and mobility

Findings:

Nearly **3 in 4** respondents have moved to a new part of the UK at least once, whilst over **1 in 4** respondents have moved to a new part of the UK two or more times. This transience can negatively impact people's integration experiences (detailed further in the upcoming qualitative spotlight).

Breaking this down:

How many times have you moved to a new town or city since arriving in the UK?



Base = 659 (96 respondents did not answer this question)

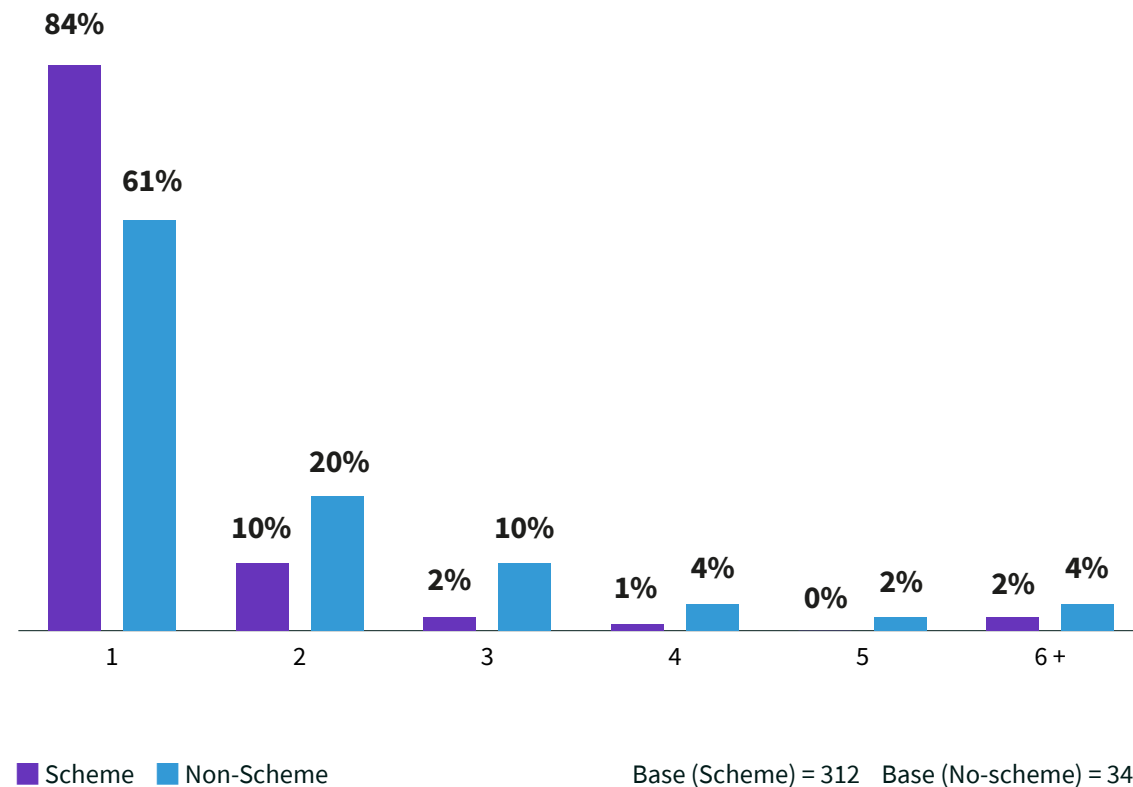
Social Inclusion: Churn and mobility

Findings:

Additionally, we have seen that respondents not on schemes are more likely to have moved around compared with the rest of the sample.

Breaking this down:

How many UK towns or cities respondents have you lived in?



Qualitative spotlight on Social Inclusion: Relocation and churn

Relocation as a barrier to integration:

Transient lives in the asylum system

Many of our interviewees described a continuous cycle of relocation, particularly during their time in the asylum system. This massively impacts their ability to integrate within a community as their first 2-4 years in the country are so transient.

The crucial first year of arrival

This is experienced even more profoundly in the first year of arrival, as people are often moved 2-3 times. More significantly, the quality of the accommodation in people's first year is poor as they are moved around places like hostels and other forms of temporary accommodation.

Untying people's social connections

Several participants noted how being relocated to a new home was particularly painful because, for example, it meant being separated from their faith space which was a huge source of social connection.

Qualitative spotlight on Social Inclusion: Relocation and churn

Unpacking this quote

Here we see a young person who has spent 6 years in the asylum system and experienced lots of different social services. Not only has his regular relocation made it harder to sustain social connections, we also see unnecessary rigidity in the system. The interview participant went on to describe how disinterested his social worker was in his situation. But as soon as a charity stepped in and threatened legal action on his behalf, he was moved to a newer, nicer accommodation which he was able to stay in for 3.5 years.

“I’ve been moved 4 times in the last 6 years. Every time I move I have to try and make a new group of friends and learn a new area. When my social worker moved me to Thornton Heath I hated it because there were a lot of gangs who tried to fight you and the transport links meant it was hard to leave. When I asked my social worker she refused to help me find somewhere else until eventually a charity escalated my case for me.”

A young person in London who arrived in the UK aged 17 and has been in the asylum system for 6 years

Health and Mental Health

A summary

Arriving into the UK through the asylum system or a resettlement scheme can place an acute strain on people's physical and mental health. Previously mentioned barriers like language, lack of social capital and information, and financial hardship are just a few factors that make healthcare access and provision difficult for the people we surveyed and interviewed.

Less than a third of all our respondents said they could access all the healthcare that they need and it is mental health that is the most severe health challenge faced by our respondents (mental health is nearly twice as prevalent across the cohort as any other health challenge). During our interviews and observations, the mental toll that the integration "system" has on people was obvious and intersects with other aspects of integration like employment and social connection. We heard from people whose experiences of loneliness and social isolation had had profound impacts on their mental health. We also heard of the difficulties in receiving adequate support from NHS

services, mostly due to capacity issues, language barriers, and a lack of suitable signposting. In some instances we did also hear about the discrimination that people had experienced within the NHS.

Similarly to our findings relating to living conditions, it is clear that passing through the asylum system creates a different level of strain on people's mental health. But that is not to say resettlement schemes are working effectively either in the provision of healthcare, as we also discovered even fewer Ukrainian respondents can access all the healthcare they need. We found that people who did not arrive in the UK via a scheme are three times more likely to suffer from a health condition that limits their day-to-day activity than those who arrived via a scheme. Evidently, more support is required to ensure that people in the asylum system are supported equitably to access the health and mental health support they need.

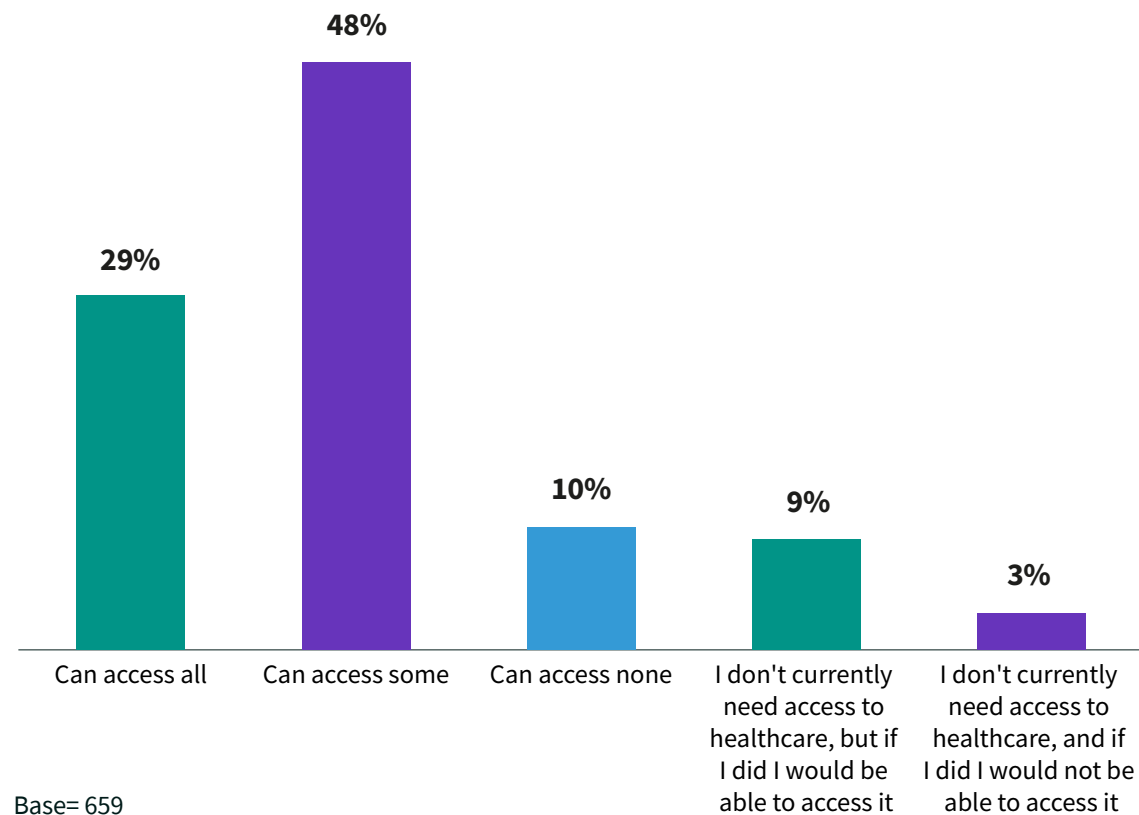
Health and Mental Health: Healthcare access

Findings:

Only 3 in 10 respondents can access all the healthcare that they need.

Breaking this down:

To what extent can you access the healthcare that you need?



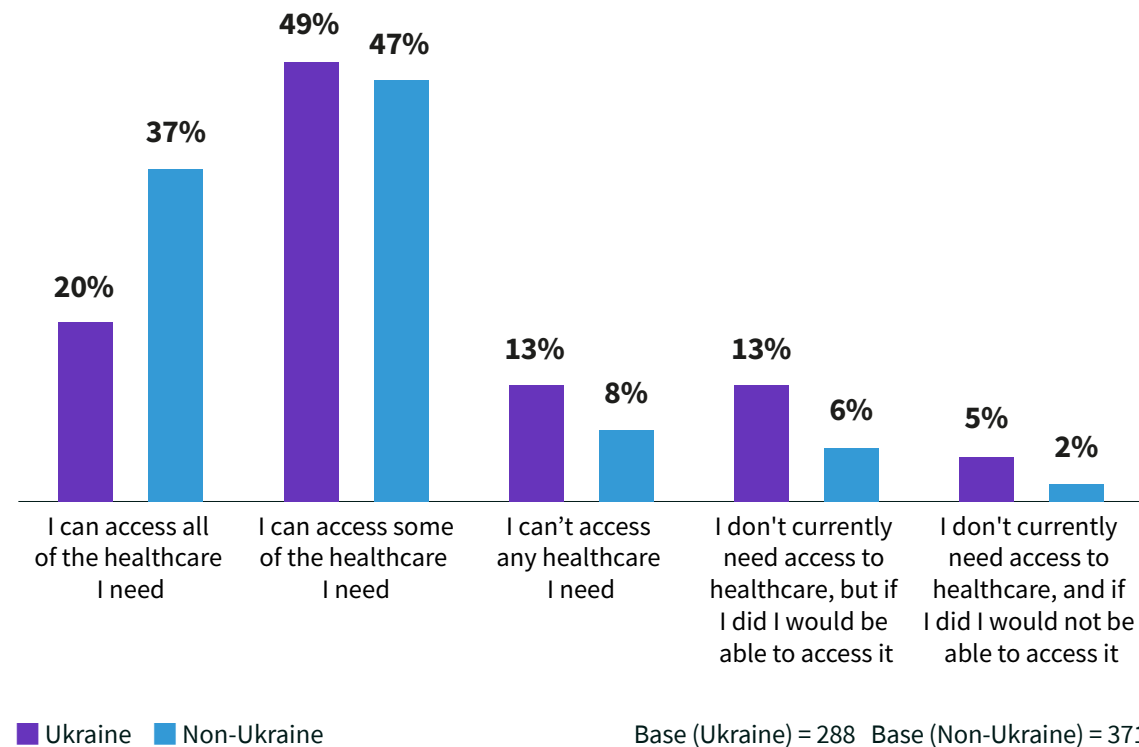
Health and Mental Health: Healthcare access

Findings:

For Ukrainian respondents, even fewer can access all the healthcare they need (1 in 5).

Breaking this down:

To what extent can you access the healthcare that you need?



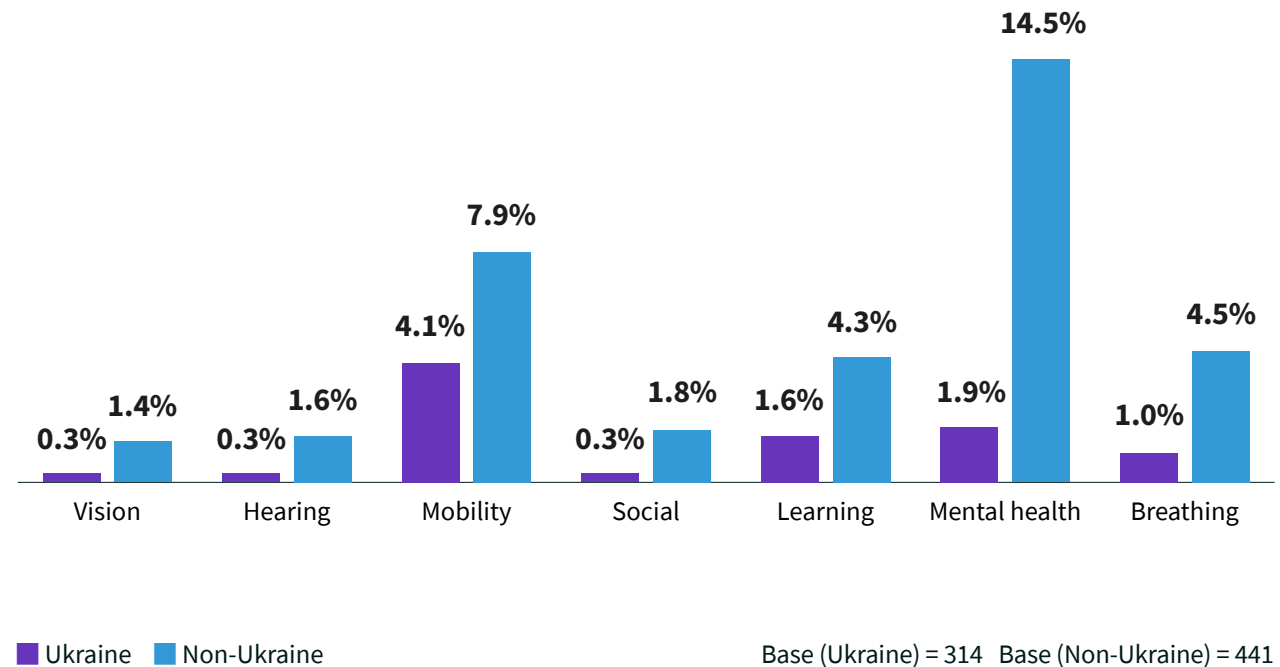
Health and Mental Health: The mental health impact

Findings:

Mental health conditions are significantly more prevalent amongst non-Ukrainians when we separate out the two groups.

Breaking this down:

Prevalence of health conditions



Qualitative spotlight on Mental Health: Impact of asylum reporting system

Unpacking this quote

In this interview we heard about the repetitive nature of in person reporting for people in the asylum system and the mental health impacts this has. As the interview participant described, this in-person reporting was cancelled during the covid-19 lockdown “and no-one ran away”, but it was resumed after lockdown despite the obvious toll it would take on a person’s mental health. Other respondents also described how these repetitive types of engagements with the Home Office create severe anxiety.

“I’m waiting for my decision for leave to remain to be concluded and I’ve been waiting for more than 4 years. I don’t receive updates and they say they don’t know. I do an in-person reporting with the Home Office every week and have been doing it for over 4 years. It’s not a hard process because I go regularly, you just go in person and check your stuff, but the procedure makes you severely mentally disturbed because they can detain you from there to a detention centre and it’s really stressful.”

A solo woman describes how the system of reporting in the asylum system erodes her mental health

Health and Mental Health: Limiting health conditions

Findings:

Respondents who had not arrived in the UK via a scheme reported higher levels of health problems or disabilities that limited their day-to-day activities.

Breaking this down:

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

