

# Annual Report 2022-23

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The ESOL landscape is complex and can be difficult even for professionals to navigate. This is due in part to shifting funding patterns and resulting changes in provision, confusion around eligibility for free courses and barriers for dormant learners, many of whom have lived in the UK for more than 10 years and never accessed formal ESOL.

In response, the Camden and Islington ESOL Advice Service (EAS) mission is to help every learner who needs access to English to find a course that suits their needs so that they can take the next step in their lives, jobs and communities without being held back by language barriers.

In order to achieve this, the service designs its IAG infrastructure to be adaptable to both ongoing learner needs across the spectrum of learner profiles (e.g. long-term dormant learners, newly arrived refugees, transient asylum seekers) and external global changes and challenges.

By partnering with all known ESOL providers and services working with people with ESOL needs, the hope is that greater resilience can be built into the sector so that anyone who needs, provides or funds English language training can access the information they need to make the best evidence-based decisions for themselves and those they work with.

The strategic aim is to build a model that can be replicated across London (and beyond) that streamlines ESOL IAG through building:

- a neutral referral network across multiple services (including health, education and employment) enabling learners (and those who work on behalf of them) to find a course that suits their needs from one single point of contact (SPoC)
- a central database mapping supply and demand that provides the overview and evidence base for more accurate decision making and makes the most responsive and effective use of limited funding.
- a bespoke technical infrastructure (website and database) which matches learners to provision across London quickly and easily in real time

This report is a research document produced by the Camden and Islington ESOL Advice Service providing statistics on the demographic profile of ESOL learners in the borough, including information about their needs, interests, aspirations and the barriers that they face to fulfilling their learning goals.

The report also serves as a snapshot of the demand for ESOL in specific geographic areas of the two boroughs with a view to providing evidence to assist ESOL funders and providers with future planning to meet demand as effectively as possible.

The report is shared with local ESOL providers, local and national organisations that work with migrant communities and national research bodies.

Thank you to Shao-Lan Yuen for her management of the service and Mark Isherwood for his support, guidance and championing of the service since its launch; Steven Bray for his meticulous attention to detail in Marketing and MIS, including compiling and designing this report; Adeebah Shaheeduddin for her positivity, energetic co-ordination of the service and drive to establish streamlined systems as well as for her EAS advisor role; Malgorzata Jakubowska-Chaaban (Islington EAS coordinator) for steadfast commitment to learners, relationship building across the spectrum of providers and community venues and expansion of the service across the borough; EAS community partners who enabled the service to reach isolated people in the community and collect and collate their data for use in this report; the EAS network of providers and representatives from local authorities and the GLA, for their time, advice and guidance.

We would also like to thank staff and managers at libraries across Camden and Islington for hosting regular ESOL advice sessions prior to national lockdowns and continuing to help learners access the service during and after; work coaches and managers at Jobcentre Plus (JCP) offices for hosting regular ESOL advice sessions; ESOL provider partners for helping learners referred to them and reporting to us when vacancies in classes are available; and finally, the organisations and individuals who have supported learners across the borough to access the service.

### **Camden and Islington ESOL Advice Service**

July 2024

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c/o LB Camden, 5 Pancras Square, London N1C 4AG.  
[www.camden.gov.uk/esol](http://www.camden.gov.uk/esol)  
[www.islington.gov.uk/esol](http://www.islington.gov.uk/esol)

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ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses are vital for over 330,000 Londoners aged 19 or over who are unable to speak English well or at all (Source: Census 2021). They provide a gateway for people who are settled or soon to be settled in the UK to access services, gain employment and participate fully in their communities.

The courses are delivered by organisations in the voluntary, public and private sectors and take place in a variety of settings including further education colleges, primary and secondary schools, children's centres, community centres, libraries and places of worship.

In addition to the above venues, following the policy of accommodating Afghan refugee learners in bridging hotels and asylum seekers in contingency hotels in Camden and Islington, some bespoke provision was also delivered on-site in these hotels.

Courses usually take one academic year to complete, although some providers do offer more intensive options, across a single term for example. ESOL levels begin at Pre Entry, and progress through Entry Level 1 (E1), Entry Level 2 (E2), Entry Level 3 (E3), Level 1 (L1) and Level 2 (L2).

The courses may be informal or accredited, depending on the funding available, and are run by qualified or unqualified teachers, in paid or voluntary positions, depending on the kind of organisation hosting them.

Please refer to Appendix 2 for more details on the skills expected to be gained by a learner by the end of each level.

## THE ESOL ADVICE SERVICE

The Camden and Islington ESOL Advice Service (EAS) was set up in response to widespread recognition that there is a "lack of infrastructure to support increased planning and collaboration" (Mapping ESOL in London, May 2017) and drew lessons from [Hackney Learning Trust's model](#) with the aim of designing a cross-borough template for a regional model.

The London Borough of Hackney's EAS grew to regularly assist over 1200 learners a year into community ESOL provision and in December 2016, the service was presented to HOLEX, the lead body for Adult Community Education. Following strong interest in the service model, subsequent presentations were made to other local authorities that were keen to develop their own services.

The London Borough of Camden secured funding for a neutral ESOL Advice Service that would cover Camden in the first year (2018-19) and expand into Islington the following year (2019-20) with a key objective being to allow for greater collaboration between ESOL providers and partners to more effectively match demand to supply as well as access to quantitative data on barriers to learning.

From the outset, the bid gained support from Social Services and DWP as the service was seen as a key intervention for making referrals easier for their officers and clients.

In its first three years, the Camden and Islington ESOL Advice Service had a full team of coordinators and advisors delivering advice and assessment in the community across both boroughs. This was reduced owing to limited funding in subsequent years and changes that were made to service delivery as a result.

The EAS bespoke [www.learnenglish.london](http://www.learnenglish.london) website (with capacity to collect and store data on thousands of learners and match them to the most suitable class) has enabled the EAS to operate completely online with no disruption to service when needed (e.g. during the first national lockdown in March 2020) and continues to be the principle means by which learners are matched to the most suitable course for their level and needs.

### The ESOL Advice Service: Targeting hardest to reach and hardest to place learners

The Camden and Islington ESOL Advice Service welcomes all learners who need English but particularly targets those who do not use other means of accessing the support that they need to find suitable ESOL provision. For the academic year 2022-23, in addition to continuing demand from cohorts of Afghan and Ukrainian refugees following the Kabul evacuation and the war in Ukraine the year before, cohorts of asylum seekers accommodated in contingency hotels also needed specialised ESOL support.

As a result, in addition to targeting resident populations of potential ESOL learners via community routes such as local learning centres, housing estates and community halls, the EAS worked closely with partner organisations to set up bespoke advice sessions and bespoke ESOL classes on-site at bridging and contingency hotels and ensure that organisations working with Ukrainian families had access to clear referral pathways.

Relationships with partners across and beyond both boroughs enabled the service to continue identifying the hardest to reach learners and offering ESOL IAG by phone and online as well as mapping the ever-changing provision available.

In addition to online delivery of assessment and IAG, and bespoke advice sessions delivered on-site, particularly in bridging and contingency hotels, the service continued its delivery/collection model for assessment and registration to help learners who were unable to access support online.

Where it is not possible to refer a learner to suitable provision, the service uses data on their circumstances to identify barriers to learning and works with ESOL providers and other interested partners to overcome them so no learner is left without options for learning.

### Initial Assessment and Advice

Advice and guidance is available during term-time from September to July each academic year. Learners register with the service by referral from a partner organisation (e.g. JCP) or make direct contact via phone or email. A qualified ESOL advisor assesses their speaking, listening, reading and writing levels against the criteria set out in the National Adult ESOL Core Curriculum.

Information about circumstances such as their immigration and income status, childcare needs and long term goals is also collected via the EAS web-based data system, creating a comprehensive profile that enables the service to identify barriers and match learners to existing provision or broker new bespoke courses in community venues.

Advisors also explain the enrolment process to the learner during the advice session. They are provided with a letter, email or text message containing the course provider's contact details and ESOL assessment booking information to help them register for their chosen ESOL course. If needed, the advisor will help the learner to get to the course venue by providing detailed directions and public transport routes.

If no suitable provision is available, they are placed on a waiting list. When a space becomes available on a course that matches a learner's level and circumstances, they are contacted via phone and referred to the relevant provider.

## How do people with ESOL needs find out about the EAS?

A range of marketing strategies are employed to raise awareness of the EAS across the borough. Physical and electronic mail-outs of leaflets and posters to all local children's centres, schools, libraries, hospitals, health centres, places of worship and other community venues, are undertaken. Staff at those locations are encouraged to display the marketing materials prominently and refer interested learners to advice sessions or get in touch if they would like to arrange a free bespoke advice session at their venue.

Each advice venue also displays a large banner about the service, inviting residents to ask staff about the free sessions or contact the service via phone or email.

Where possible, information about the service is submitted for publication on community websites or in local newsletters. Contacts are sought at smaller community venues, especially those on housing estates, to get permission to run drop-in advice sessions.

Since the EAS has become known to key services across Camden and Islington, learners are often referred by employability advisors (e.g. JCP work coaches), GPs via social prescription and hotel managers at bridging and contingency hotels.

Severely isolated pockets of residents (e.g. on housing estates) need the service to be brought to their doorstep, especially if they don't work or have children, to help break down the chronic barriers that prevent them from engaging with the services that could help improve their lives.

Over time, as the network of contacts expands and more people visit the service, word-of-mouth advertising becomes the most powerful marketing tool and it is especially common for previous users to tell their friends and family about the service and encourage them to contact the EAS for advice.

Finally, all Council departments are kept up to date about ways for their clients to access the EAS via internal news outlets and by taking advantage of networking opportunities, contributing to a significant rise in enquiries on behalf of clients.

## Who does the EAS partner with?

In order to assist all learners who register, the EAS develops and maintains partnerships with all known ESOL providers across Camden and Islington as well as with neighbouring local authorities.

The EAS is a free addition to the existing recruitment processes of providers and can help those providers save on initial assessment costs and time particularly if they accept the service's pre-screened referrals of eligible learners. This can enable them to fill classes to capacity more quickly and easily.

When large numbers of learners with a similar profile are registered at the same time, the EAS arranges block bookings with providers that have capacity for them.

Smaller/community providers often secure funding for courses at short notice and can call on the EAS to assist them to fill spaces in a short amount of time. They also benefit from the marketing reach of the service thereby saving on publicity costs and reaching learners that might not otherwise be reached.

ESOL providers can refer learners back to the EAS if they are unable to progress them to the next level at their own organisation. They can also access EAS data on unmet need in the community and trends in the sector before developing future ESOL curricula with the aim of increasing the number of suitable courses available to learners and positively impacting on recruitment and retention.

## Which providers are EAS users referred to?

Learners who register with the EAS are made aware of a greater number of options across (and sometimes beyond) their local authority including accredited provision and embedded offers such as ESOL with Childcare. This is because the EAS follows a neutral and transparent process in order to place learners in classes (see Appendix 1 for the Neutrality Statement which is shared with all providers).

A single point of contact (SPoC) makes accessing ESOL simpler and less daunting particularly for emerging English language speakers and bespoke sessions are set up for learners at a place convenient to their needs if they can't access online advice.

## What happens when no suitable course is available?

The service maps a real-time directory of ESOL provision maintained via different funding streams meaning learners are not held on waiting lists with one provider when classes they are eligible for exist elsewhere.

The majority of learners who use the service are on low incomes, so where possible, the service always strives to find free or low-cost provision for those who need it.

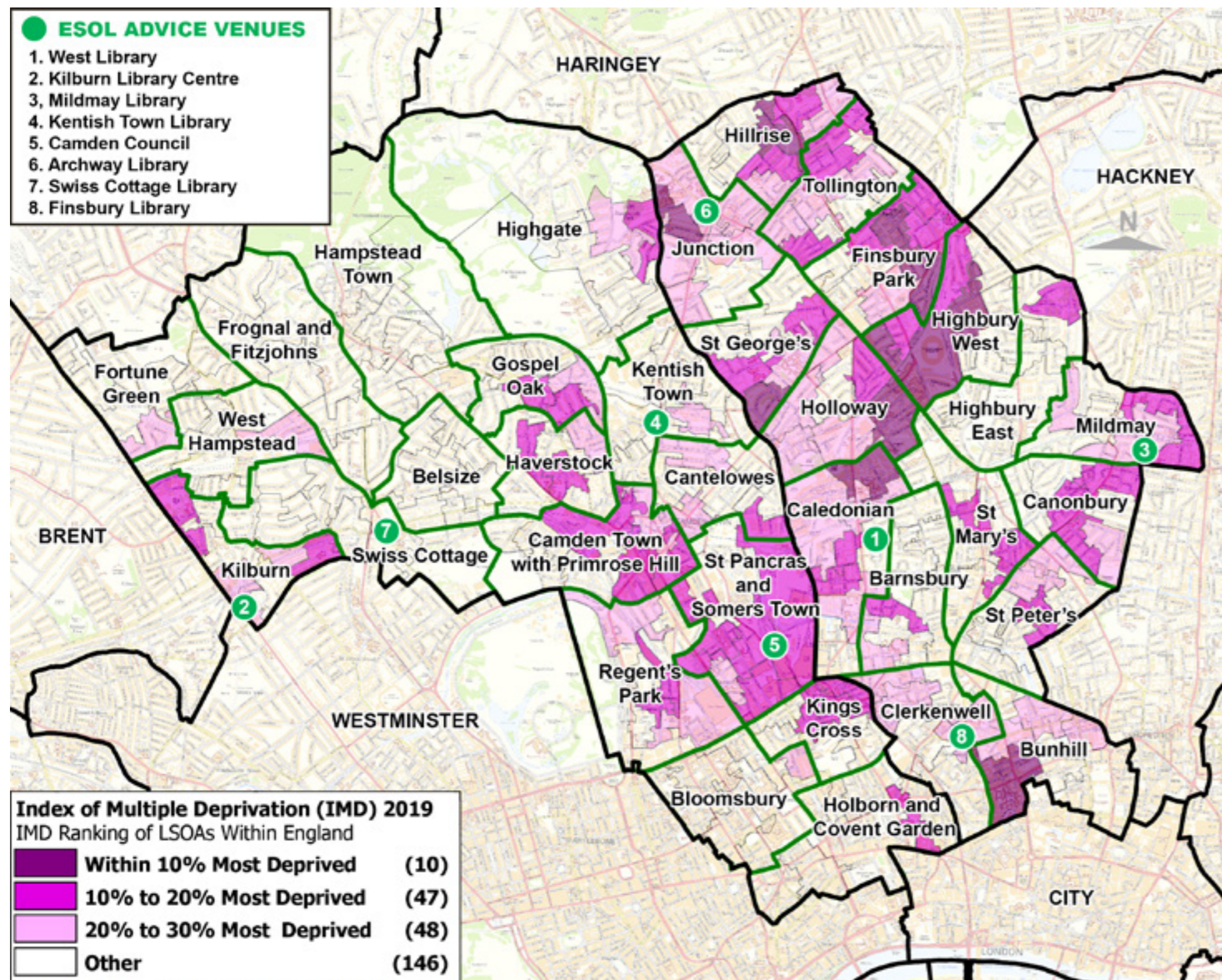
The more complex the needs, the scarcer the options might be for a learner. In cases where existing provision is unsuitable owing to barriers such as location, time or caring responsibilities, the EAS aims to source providers that can deliver bespoke provision.

While this takes high levels of coordination and therefore can take a long time to set up, the impact can be huge for learners who would otherwise be left without any access to language training which is essential for navigating daily life in the UK.

One cohort that faced particular barriers to learning in the 2022-23 academic year was asylum seekers staying in contingency hotels. The majority were ineligible for free classes and unable to afford to travel so their options were severely limited. In collaboration with a London university, the EAS brokered on-site courses which enabled those who would otherwise have been completely excluded from learning to access the training they needed. The level of alienation is often greater for asylum seekers. Learning English provides not only essential practical skills for integration into the community but also has a wider impact of making asylum seekers feel more accepted in society.

In addition to the above, the service forged new relationships and strengthened existing ones across many sectors including health (e.g. care homes), education (e.g. schools) employment (e.g. Jobcentre Plus) and organisations coordinating the response to incoming refugees and asylum seekers.

**Regular face-to-face ESOL Advice Sessions before lockdown and Indices of Deprivation**



Data source: English Indices of Deprivation 2019, ©MHCLG, 2019

Owing to reduced resources and a shift from in-person sessions (see ESOL Advice venue map left) to online advice in response to national lockdowns (2020-21), the Camden and Islington ESOL Advice Service continued to run assessments online and by telephone throughout the academic year 2022-23.

In addition to consistent demand for on-site sessions at local JCPs, one of the key sites of ESOL need that emerged in 2022-23 was contingency hotels housing asylum seekers. The EAS ran regular ESOL advice sessions on-site at these hotels liaising with the coordinating organisation and other Council services.

For learners who contacted the service via the dedicated website, advisors contacted them by phone to do a speaking and listening assessment and fillable PDF forms were created allowing reading and writing tests to be emailed to learners and returned for assessment.

For very low level learners who have difficulty communicating by phone, the EAS used a range of translation solutions to ensure they were not excluded from accessing IAG.

In addition to the web-based system capturing new learners' interest in ESOL, the EAS continued to offer a delivery/collection model where appropriate to allow learners who were unable to access the service online to do paper copies of the assessment.

See Appendix 4 for a map and index illustrating the expansion of the EAS's community network.

A total of **1330 cases** were dealt with by the Camden and Islington EAS during the 2022-23 academic year.

The table below presents the split of categories that these advice sessions fall into.

CAMDEN & ISLINGTON	
Unique learners	1078
Returners	204
Advised but not registered	48
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>1330</b>

‘Unique learners’ are the actual number of individual learners advised by the service within the academic year, including cases that originated in the 2021-22 academic year that were deferred.

‘Returners’ are unique learners coming back to the service within the academic year for further advice and placements.

‘Advised but not registered’ are learners that were advised by the service but did not go through the ESOL assessment and registration process. These learners are still counted towards the total number of cases because time was spent on them by the EAS advisors.

Due to limited resources and the high number of learners accessing the service this academic year, it was not always possible for advisors to spend the time needed to rectify any missing data. However, even with incomplete data, they can still support learners and direct them to appropriate ESOL provision in the community. This incomplete data is reflected as ‘Unspecified’ throughout this report. The Service feels that it is a better reflection of the need for ESOL in the community, providing a voice to those most in need of help.

Please note the following when reading this report:

- The data are not based on all ESOL learners in each borough, only the sample seen by the Camden and Islington ESOL Advice Service.
- The number of learners or records that a particular dataset is based on is stated under the title of each chart, where applicable. When no number is stated, the calculations are based on the total number of unique learners as stated in the table above.
- Due to rounding, for ease of presentation, some pie charts may not total exactly 100%.
- Benchmarking statistics have been sourced from a range of studies undertaken in recent years, and any correlation with the service’s data is therefore more speculative as the time since the study increases.
- When word clouds have been used to present data, ‘unspecified’ entries have been removed. The numbers of responses used for word clouds are included above the image. Individual learners may have given more than one response. The relative size of words indicates the frequency that the particular option was selected by the learners.
- Quotes from learners throughout the report have not been edited for mistakes, unless their intended message was unclear.

When the Census was taken in March 2021, it showed that the population of England and Wales had grown by 6.3% when compared to March 2011. Unusually though, the population of a few London boroughs had decreased, including Camden, whose population had reduced by 4.6%.

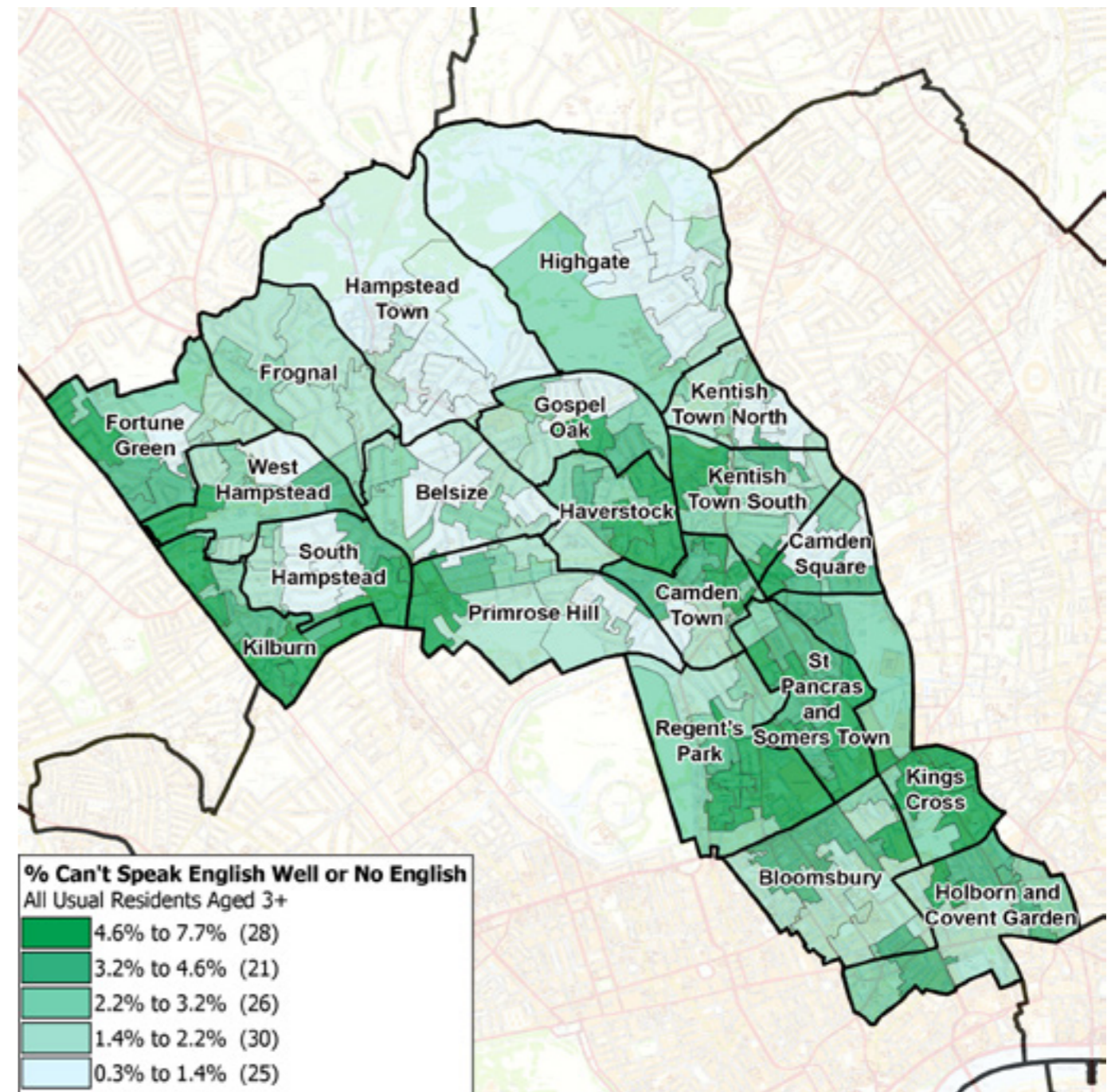
The Office for National Statistics (ONS) regularly provide updated population estimates based on the most recent Census data and expected growth rates. Camden’s revised population estimate was 218,049 in June 2022. 82% of residents were aged 19 or older and therefore able to access education provision for adults based on their needs and circumstances, including ESOL classes. (Source: MYE2: Population Estimates Mid-2022, ONS)

The Census taken in 2021 also provided updated datasets detailing Camden residents’ proficiency in English. The table below shows the data for residents aged 19 and above.

**Camden Proficiency in English (Age 19+ in March 2021)**  
(Source: Census 2021)

Response to Census question	Count	%	Count	%
Main language is English	130,114	76.4%		
Male			62,447	48.0%
Female			67,667	52.0%
Main language is not English: Can speak English very well or well	34,547	20.3%		
Male			15,158	43.9%
Female			19,389	56.1%
Main language is not English: Cannot speak English well	4,937	2.9%		
Male			1,804	36.5%
Female			3,133	63.5%
Main language is not English: Cannot speak English at all	809	0.5%		
Male			237	29.3%
Female			572	70.7%

**Camden Proficiency in English (age 3+ in March 2021)**  
**Concentration of residents stating they cannot speak English well or at all**



Data source: 2021 Census Topic Summary Table TS029, © Crown Copyright reserved (OGLv3)

The data presented on the map above reflects the population aged 3 and above. Whilst this is not a true reflection of those in scope for adult ESOL provision, it follows that children who have no proficiency in English likely live with family who have no proficiency in English. Therefore the data is still a useful representation of the number and geographic spread of those most in need of support with their English language skills.



When the Census was taken in March 2021, it showed that the population of England and Wales had grown by 6.3% when compared to March 2011. Islington's population increased by 5.1%.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) regularly provide updated population estimates based on the most recent Census data and expected growth rates. Islington's revised population estimate was 220,373 in June 2022. 83% of residents were aged 19 or older and therefore able to access education provision for adults based on their needs and circumstances, including ESOL classes. (Source: MYE2: Population Estimates Mid-2022, ONS)

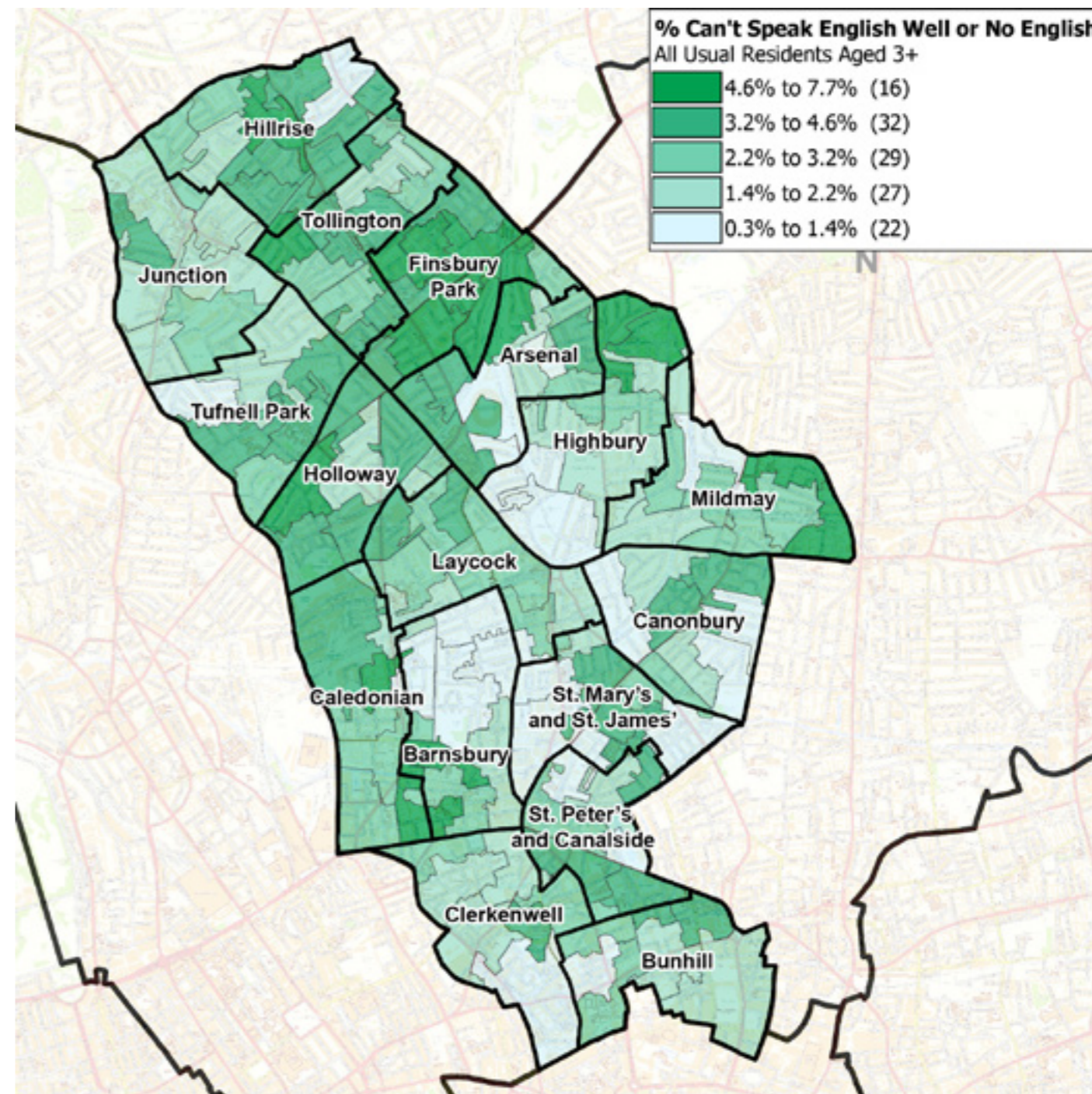
The Census taken in 2021 also provided updated datasets detailing Islington residents' proficiency in English. The table below shows the data for residents aged 19 and above.

**Islington Proficiency in English (Age 19+ in March 2021)**

(Source: Census 2021)

Response to Census question	Count	%	Count	%
Main language is English	139,955	78.8%		
Male			67,261	48.1%
Female			72,694	51.9%
Main language is not English: Can speak English very well or well	31,797	17.9%		
Male			14,283	44.9%
Female			17,514	55.1%
Main language is not English: Cannot speak English well	5,109	2.9%		
Male			1,793	35.1%
Female			3,316	64.9%
Main language is not English: Cannot speak English at all	793	0.4%		
Male			232	29.3%
Female			561	70.7%

**Islington Proficiency in English (age 3+ in March 2021)  
Concentration of residents stating they cannot speak English well or at all**



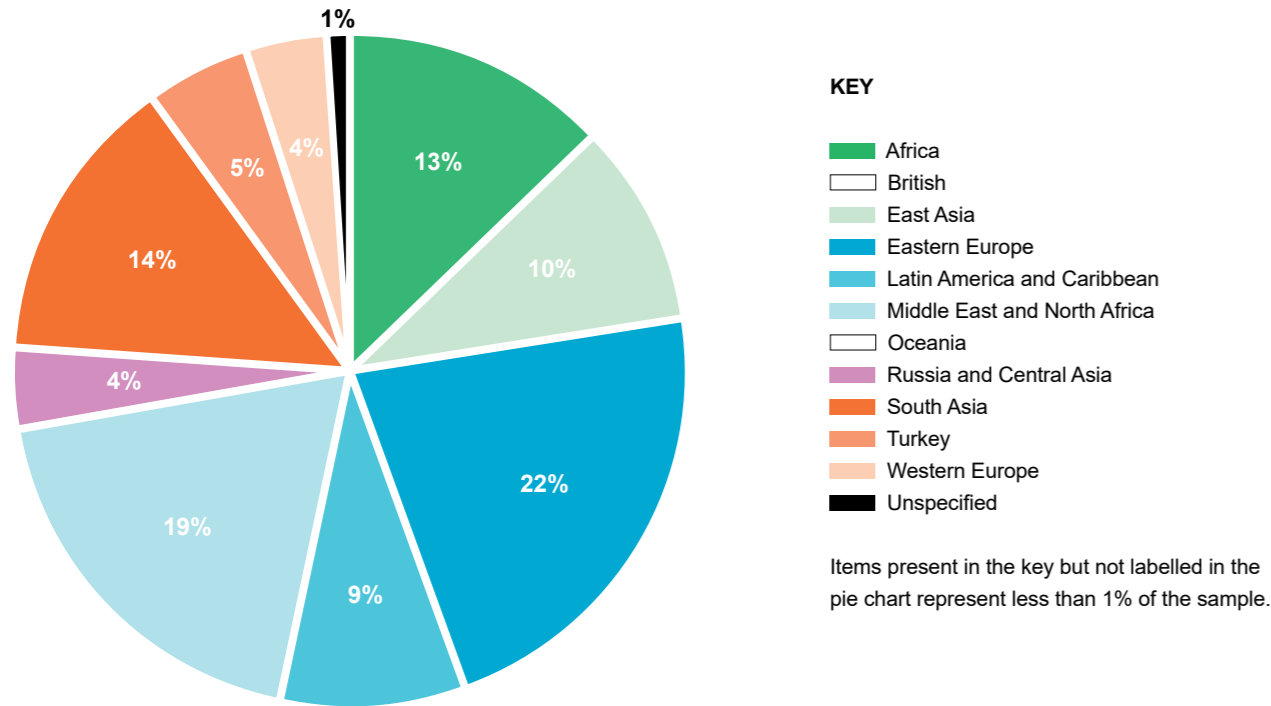
Data source: 2021 Census Topic Summary Table TS029, © Crown Copyright reserved (OGLv3)

The data presented on the map above reflects the population aged 3 and above. Whilst this is not a true reflection of those in scope for adult ESOL provision, it follows that children who have no proficiency in English likely live with family who have no proficiency in English. Therefore the data is still a useful representation of the number and geographic spread of those most in need of support with their English language skills.

## REGION OF ORIGIN

The learners who registered with the Camden & Islington EAS in 2022-23 were from all over the world, however, due to the ongoing war in Ukraine, the largest group were from Eastern Europe. The second largest group were from the Middle East and North Africa, which included more than half of those seeking asylum in the UK. The third largest group were from South Asia, almost half of which were born in Afghanistan.

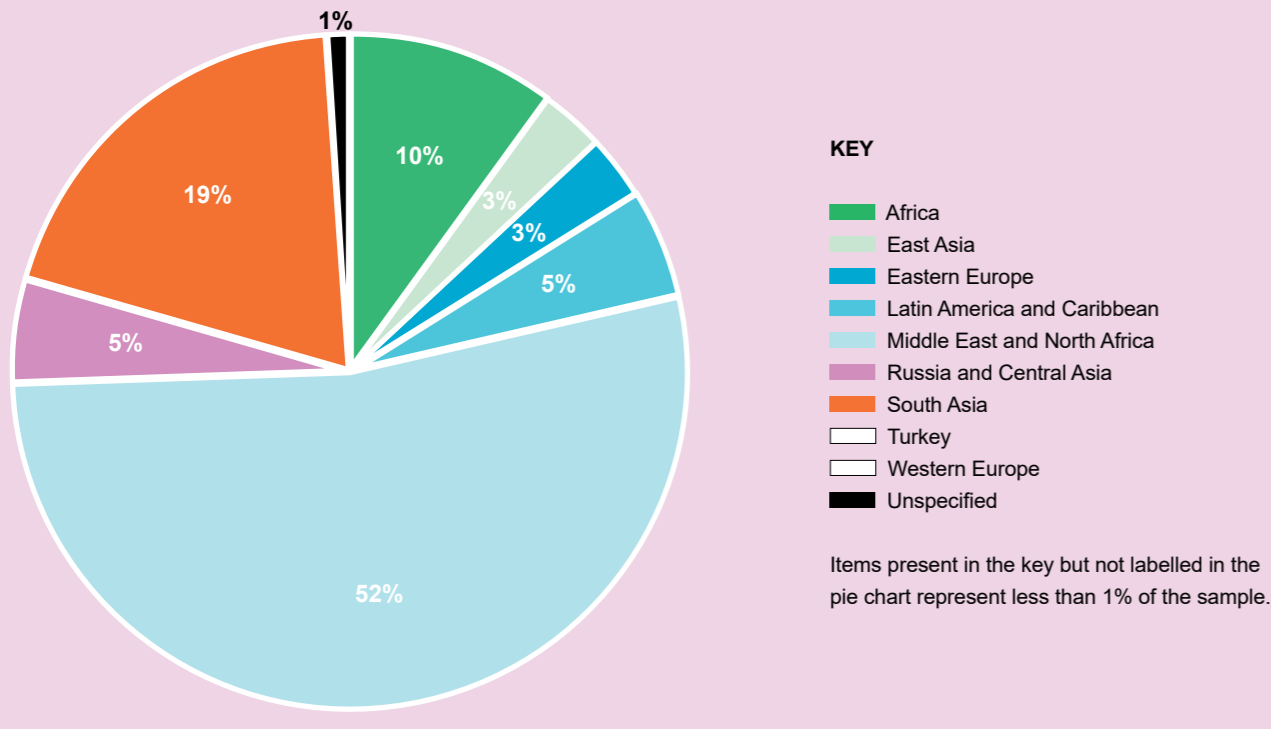
**Figure 1a: Region of origin**



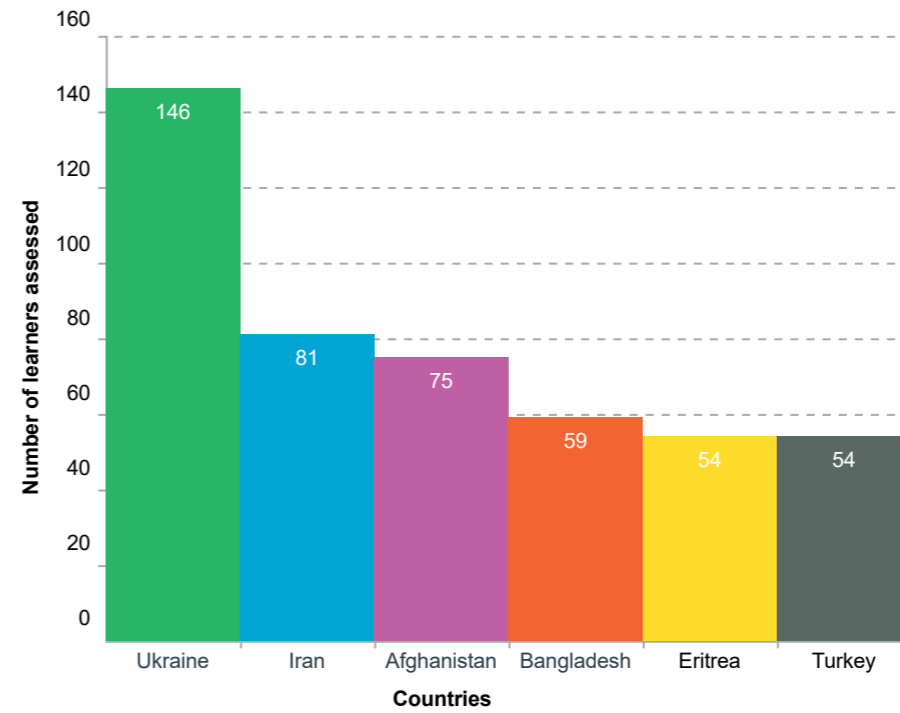
One British learner with literacy difficulties registered with the Service and was referred to Functional Skills provision.

**Figure 1b: Region of origin - ASYLUM SEEKERS ONLY**

Based on 244 records

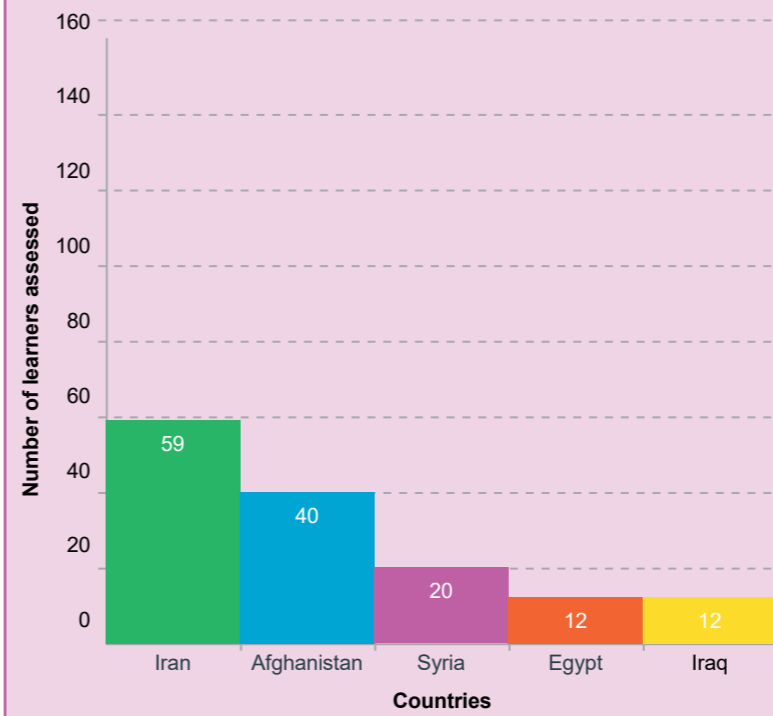


**Figure 2a: Top six countries of origin**



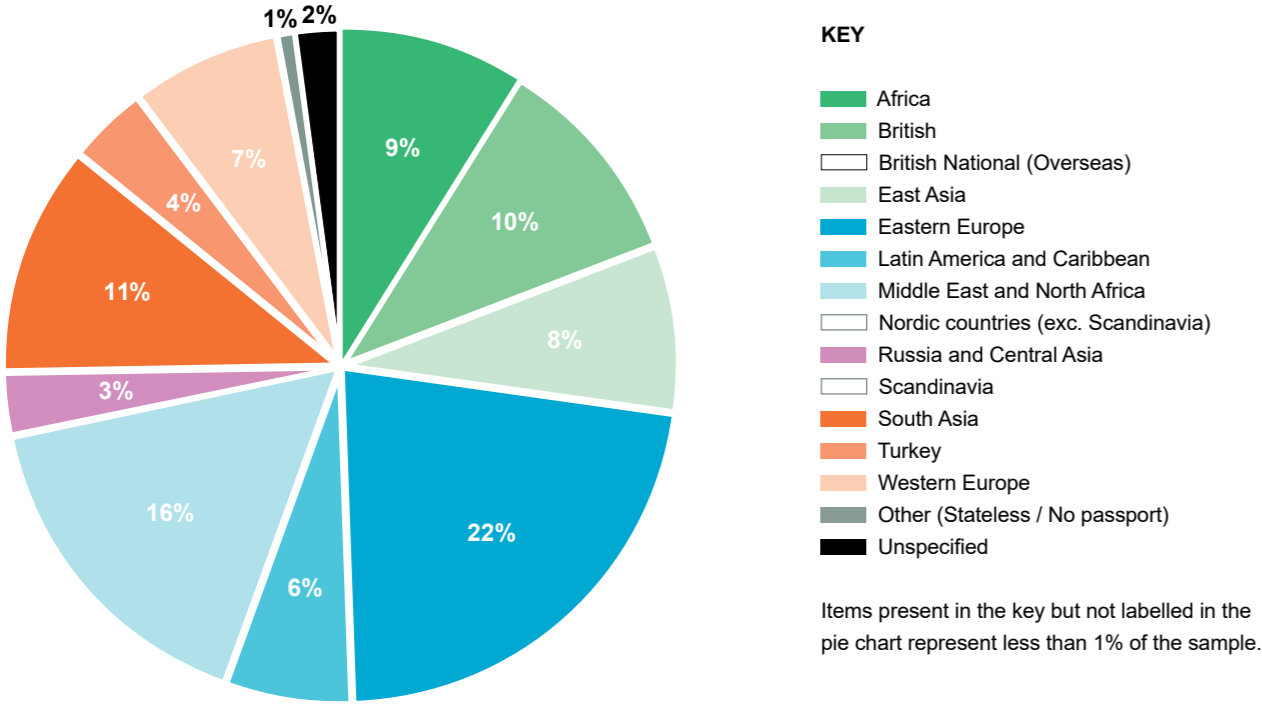
**Figure 2b: Top five countries of origin - ASYLUM SEEKERS ONLY**

Based on 244 records



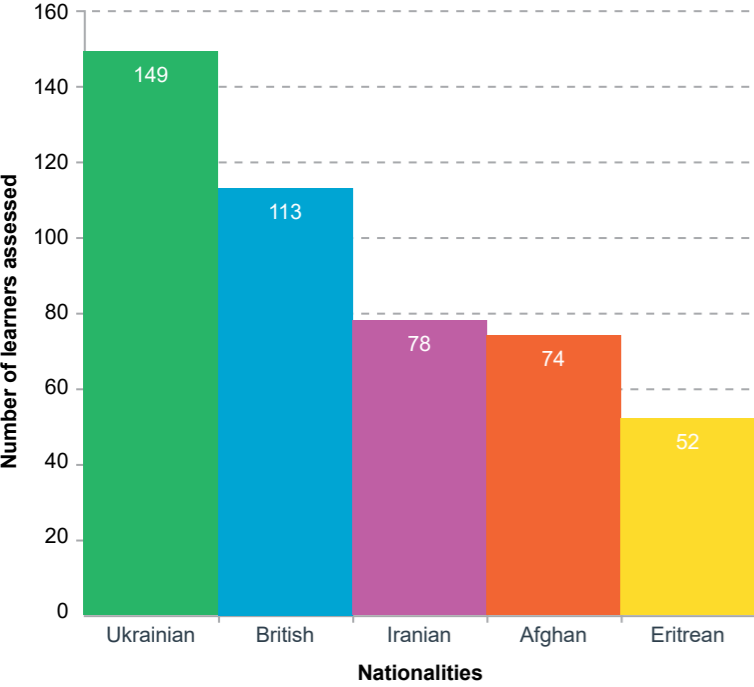
# REGION OF ORIGIN

Figure 3: Region of nationality



Nineteen learners reported dual nationality.

Figure 4: Top five nationalities



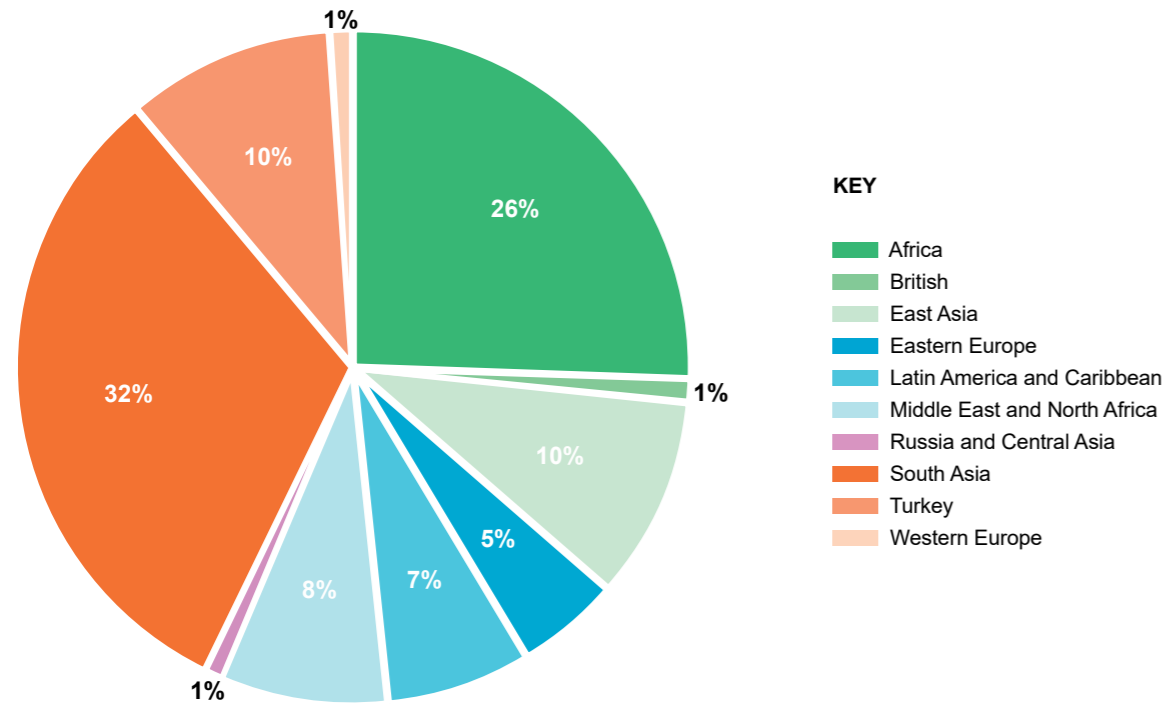
**FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS**  
 244 learners that registered with the Camden and Islington EAS in 2022-23 were seeking asylum in the UK. The largest group (52%) were from the Middle East and North Africa, the majority of which were from Iran, Syria, Egypt and Iraq. A further 19% were from South Asia, the majority of which were from Afghanistan.  
 In terms of nationalities, these largely coincided with the asylum seekers countries of birth, therefore separate charts for this have not been included in this report.

# REGION OF ORIGIN

The charts below are based on the immigration status declared by learners.

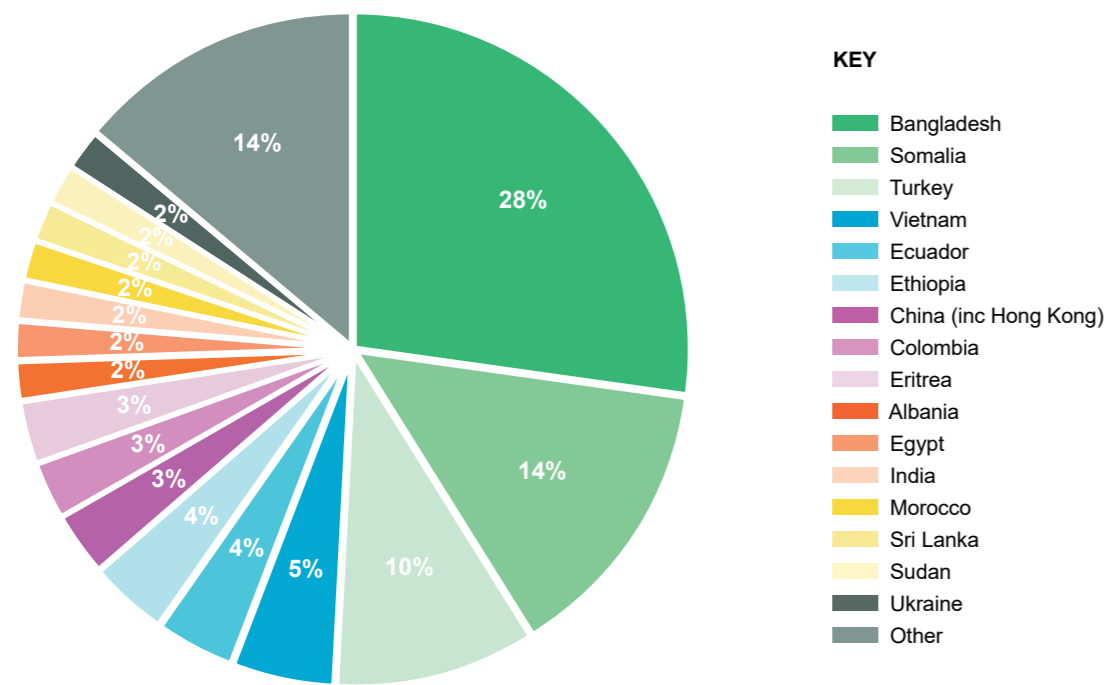
**Figure 5: British Nationals - Regions of origin**

Based on 115 records



**Figure 6: British Nationals - Countries of origin**

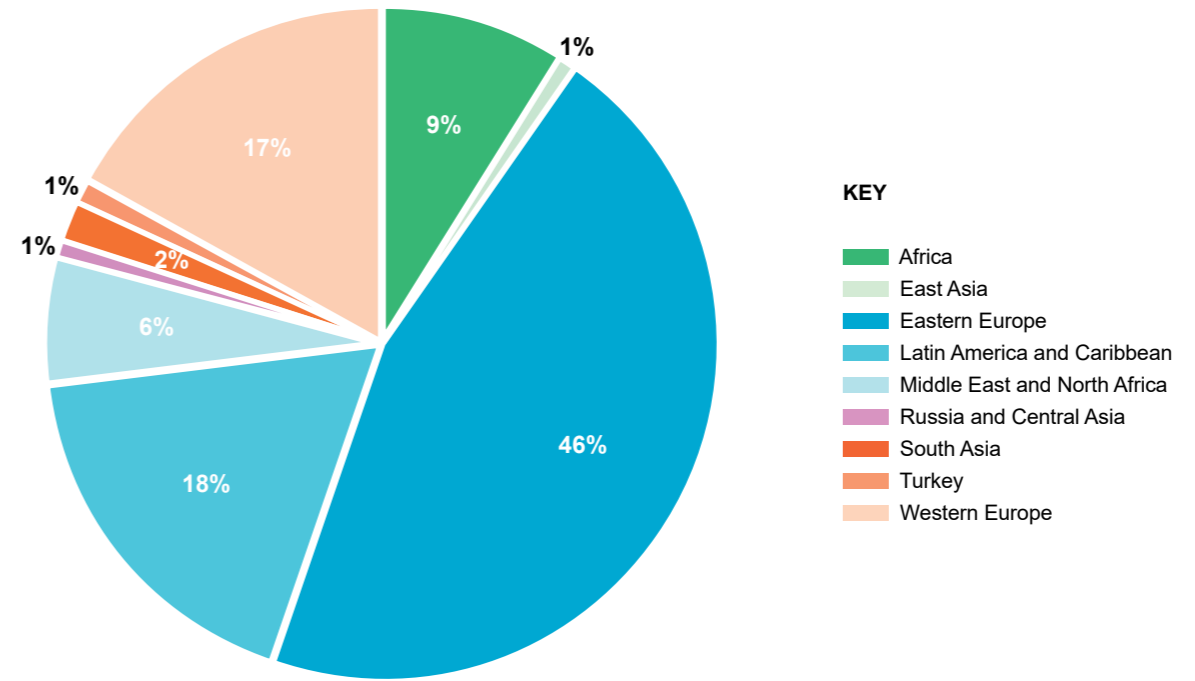
Based on 115 records



The 'other' category in the chart above comprises of learners from the following countries: Afghanistan, Angola, Azerbaijan, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Ghana, Iran, Jordan, Kosovo, Macedonia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nigeria, Syria and the United Kingdom (all 1%).

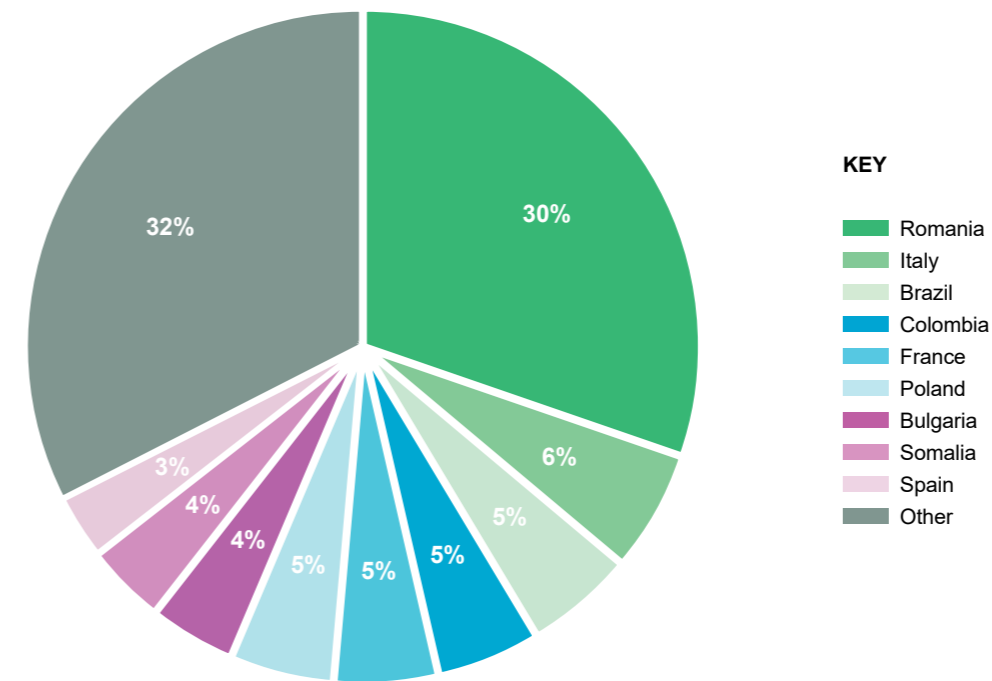
**Figure 7: EU Nationals - Regions of origin**

Based on 128 records



**Figure 8: EU Nationals - Countries of origin**

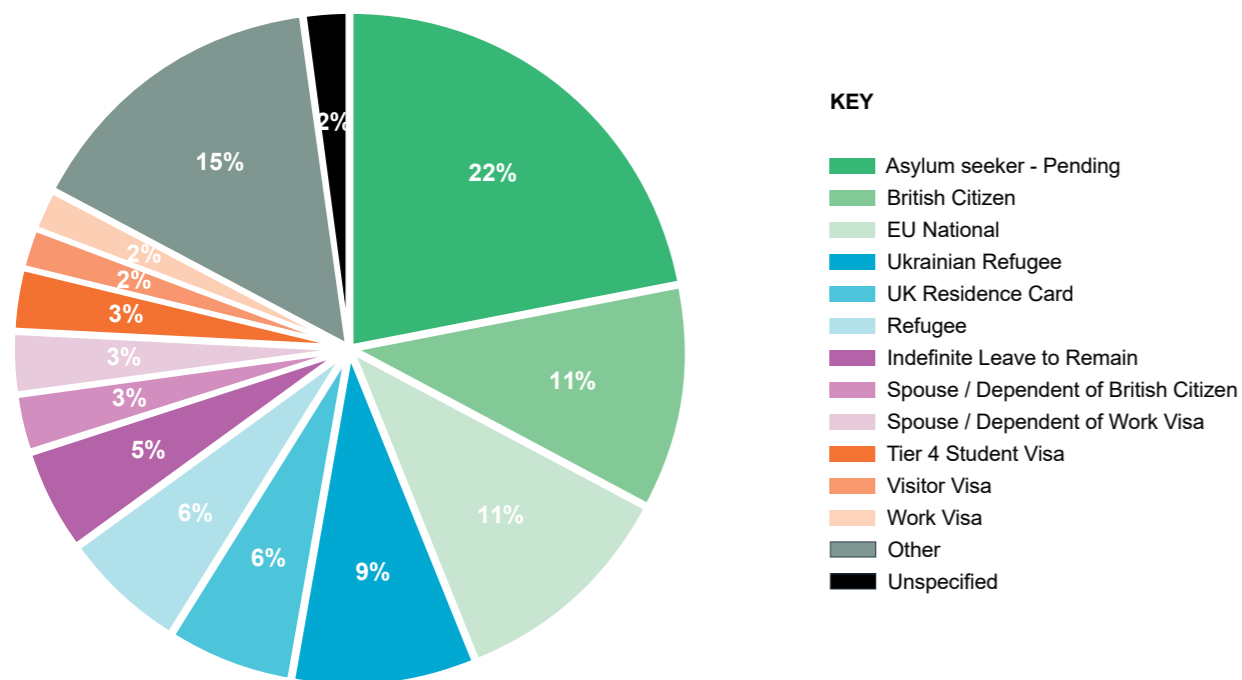
Based on 128 records



The 'other' category in the chart above comprises of learners from the following countries: Algeria, Angola, Ecuador, Lithuania, Morocco, Peru, Portugal, Ukraine and Venezuela (all 2%), and Afghanistan, Albania, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Cabo Verde, Egypt, Germany, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Hungary, Iran, Latvia, Moldova, Panama, Russia, Slovakia, Tunisia, Turkey, Vietnam and Yemen (all 1%).

## IMMIGRATION STATUS

Figure 9: Immigration Status



The 'other' category in the pie chart comprises of learners declaring the following immigration statuses, making up 12% of all responses: Family Reunion Visa (Spouse / Dependent of Refugee, Afghan Refugee, Spouse / Dependent of EU National, Asylum seeker - Appealing, British Overseas Citizen, Dependent of Tier 4 Visa - Non-EEA, Ankara Agreement, Spouse / Dependent of EEA National - EU (all 1%) and EEA National, Humanitarian Protection, Discretionary Leave to Remain, Indefinite Leave to Enter, Domestic Violence Visa, Exceptional Leave to Remain, Working holiday visa, Dependent of Turkish worker, Exceptional Leave to Enter, Spouse / Dependent of EEA National - Non-EEA, Spouse / Dependent of Indefinite Leave to Remain, Discretionary Leave to Enter, Leave outside the rules, Person granted stateless leave, Spouse / Dependent of Discretionary Leave to Enter, Spouse / Dependent of Discretionary Leave to Remain, Spouse / Dependent of EEA National - EEA (all below 1%).

The 'other' category also includes declarations of the following immigration circumstances which are not part of the standard list used by the EAS but still make up 3% of all responses: British Residence Permit, "COA", Diplomatic Exemption, Spouse of Diplomatic Exemption, Dependent of Global Talent Visa, Spouse of Leave to Remain, Dependent of Innovator Visa, Graduate Visa, Leave to Enter, Leave to Remain, Modern Slavery Visa, Spouse of Turkish Worker, Residence Permit, Spouse Dependent, T1 Investor Visa, Tourist and "Travel Documents (6 years in UK)".

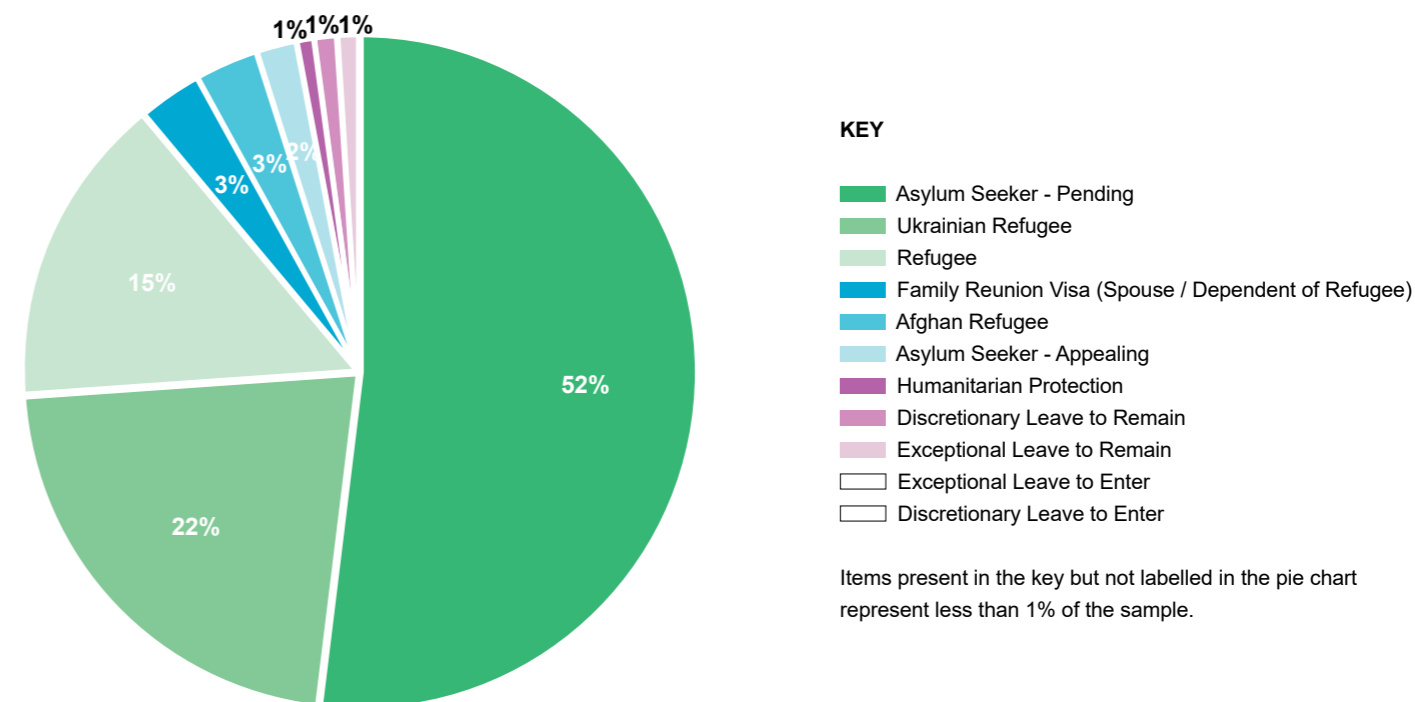
Many learners from outside the EEA have 'no recourse to public funds' stamped in their passport. This means they cannot claim benefits, but doesn't impact their eligibility for free ESOL provision. Learners are not required to present their documentation to the EAS during their advice session, so the service holds no data on the frequency of this.

## SEEKING PROTECTION IN THE UK

Figure 10: Immigration statuses of those seeking protection in the UK

Based on 451 records

42% of all learners registered with the Camden and Islington EAS during the 2022-23 academic year were seeking protection in the UK, comprising of 451 individuals from 56 different countries. The pie chart below details their immigration statuses.



Items present in the key but not labelled in the pie chart represent less than 1% of the sample.

### FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS

Almost a quarter (23%) of all learners registering with the Camden and Islington EAS in 2022-23 were asylum seekers. They made up 54% of the cohort who were seeking protection in the UK.

The charts above also reflect the developing circumstances of those coming to the UK from the Ukraine and Afghanistan. Those still declaring themselves as refugees were recorded as "Ukrainian refugee" or "Afghan refugee" in the data, for ease of presentation, but some fell into the other categories, for example, 53% of the Afghans registering with the service in 2022-23 declared they were seeking asylum.

Whilst the raw numbers show 146 Ukrainians and 75 Afghans registering with the service in 2022-23, only 105 Ukrainians (72%) and 55 Afghans (73%) declared an immigration status that categorised them as seeking protection in the UK.

17% of Ukrainians had a UK Residence Card, 3% were British or EEA citizens, 1% were spouses/dependents of EU citizens, 1% were spouses/dependents of someone with a work visa, 1% had Indefinite Leave to Remain, 1% had a work visa, 1% had a visitor visa, and the remaining 3% fell into the 'other' category, reporting they had a British Residence Permit.

15% of Afghans had Indefinite Leave to Remain, 4% were British or EEA citizens, 5% were spouses/dependents of someone with British or EEA citizenship, 1% had a work visa and 1% had a UK residence card.

**Figure 11: Origin of learners seeking protection in the UK**

Country of origin		
Afghanistan	France	Myanmar (Burma)
Albania	Georgia	Namibia
Algeria	Guatemala	Nicaragua
Azerbaijan	Guinea	Pakistan
Bahrain	Guinea Bissau	Peru
Bangladesh	Honduras	Philippines
Belarus	India	Russia
Benin	Indonesia	Saudi Arabia
Brazil	Iran	Somalia
Cameroon	Iraq	South Sudan
Chad	Japan	Sudan
China Inc Hong Kong	Kazakhstan	Syria
Colombia	Kuwait	Turkey
Cote Divoire	Libya	Ukraine
Democratic Republic Of The Congo	Malaysia	United Arab Emirates
Egypt	Mali	Uzbekistan
El Salvador	Mauritania	Vietnam
Eritrea	Mexico	Yemen
Ethiopia	Morocco	
<b>Total number: 451</b>		

42% of all cases where the learner concerned was identified as seeking protection in the UK resulted in a confirmed placement into ESOL provision. A further 31% received course offers, 9% were signposted out of borough or to other subjects and the remaining 18% were on waiting lists, declined the EAS's course offers or had barriers to learning.

62 learners who were seeking protection in the UK (11%) had barriers to learning. Almost two thirds of them (63%) had moved out of Camden and Islington following registration with the EAS, limiting the control that the EAS had over their success in finding suitable ESOL provision. The next most common barrier was Work commitments, but the numbers of individual learners reporting this barrier was not statistically significant.

The EAS continues to work closely with local organisations to support families seeking protection in the UK.

### FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS

Data regarding the outcomes for asylum seekers who registered with the EAS in 2022-23 will be discussed alongside the outcomes for the whole cohort later in this report.

We're highly aware of the potentially difficult circumstances surrounding some of these learners. They might have experienced trauma in the past. It's certainly unsettling for them being in a completely new country, in a new environment. So we really do see the acquisition of the English language as key to helping them integrate, to helping them feel more confident, essentially to liberate them so that they feel that they really are part of our society and hopefully that will lead to them then making friends, hopefully finding a job, possibly settling down too. So we really do see language as the key to to future success and happiness for them.

*Helen Connies-Laing, National Director of International & Pathway Programmes, University of Law*

ESOL Advice Service find for me Mary Ward Centre ...and I'm so grateful. For me it's very important because when I came here... I know maybe ten or twenty English words, but now I can communicate. I hope step by step I can speak fluent and easier. I love all my teachers here because [they] gave me very good start.

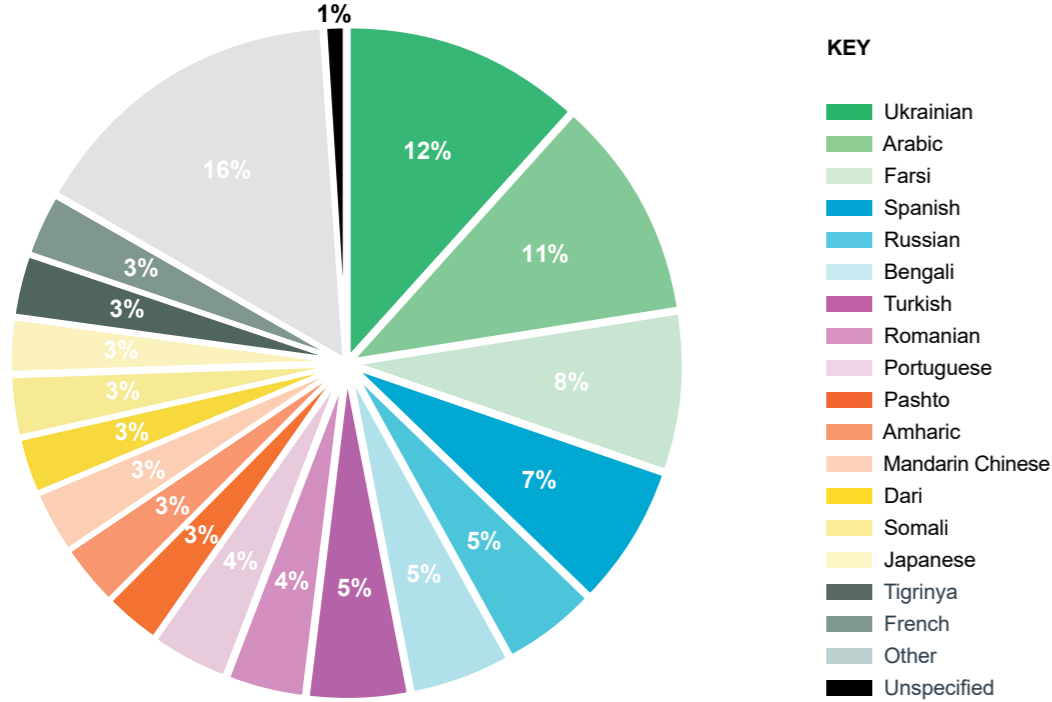
*Alla Maliarevych, Ukrainian refugee*

Alla is one of our standout students. She came to us via the the ESOL Advice Service and she worked her way very quickly through [the course content], and she's also managed to find herself a job. And she's really starting to bloom in this environment. She's told me how proud she is. Her son settled in well at sixth form college, in fact, got incredible marks in his mocks. And she's feels very proud and really pleased about the way her life's going here.

*Kirsty Barlow, Essential Skills Manager, Mary Ward Centre*

The 1078 learners who registered with the Camden and Islington EAS in 2022-23 spoke and/or wrote in 70 languages between them. 60 of those were mother tongues (first languages).

**Figure 12: First languages (spoken and/or written)**



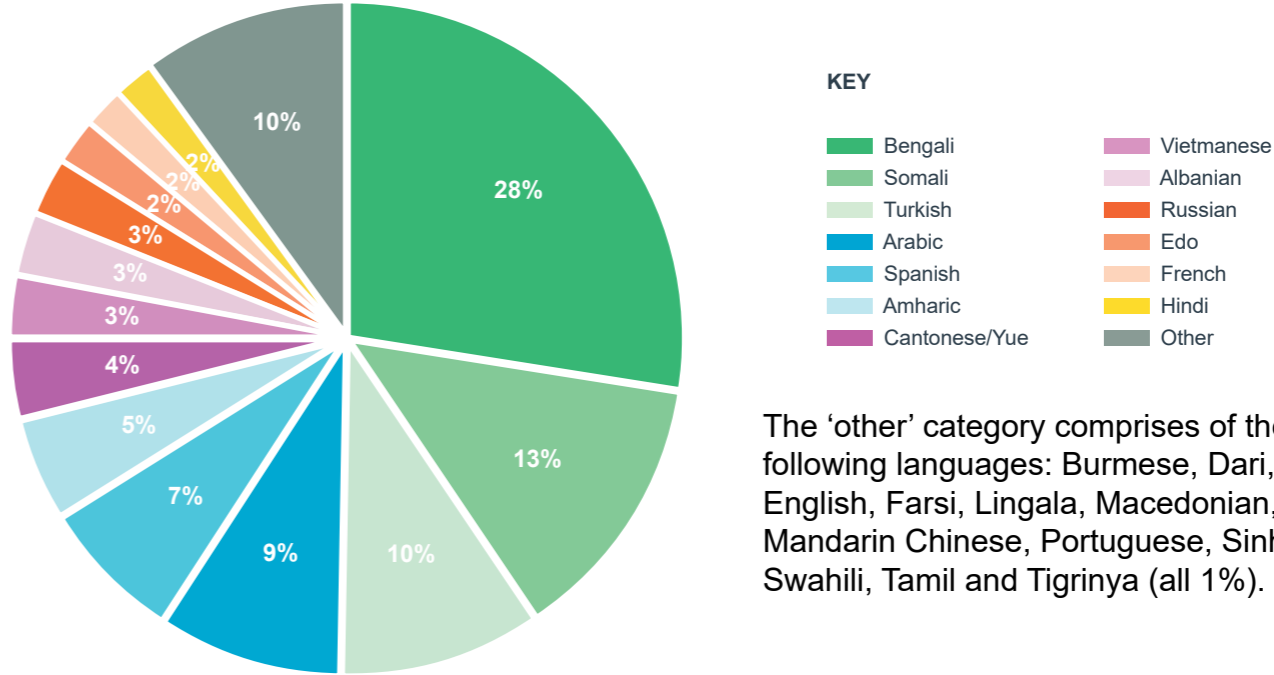
The 'other' category in the chart above comprises of the following languages: Albanian and Kurdish (both 2%), Italian, Cantonese (Yue), Polish, Vietnamese, Korean, English, Urdu, Bulgarian and Eritrean (all 1%), and Georgian, Burmese, Hindi, Punjabi, Chinese, Lingala, Edo, Lithuanian, Slovakian, Tagalog, Tamil, Akan, Croatian, Dinka, Filipino, Fula Fulfulde, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Indonesian, Macedonian, Malayalam, Mongolian, Oromo, Romani, Sinhalese, Swahili, Thai, Tuvaluan and Twi (all below 1%).

**Figure 13: All languages spoken and/or written**  
Based on 1391 responses



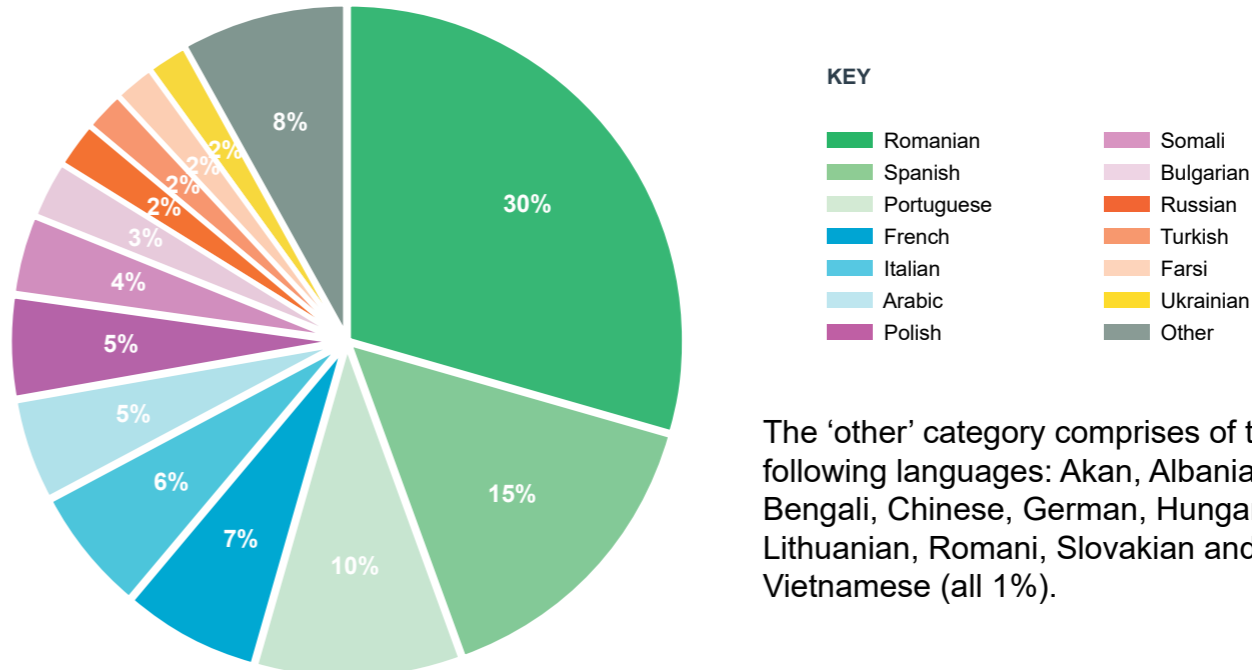
A small number of learners reported English as their first language. Anecdotally, this was likely due to them being illiterate in their mother tongue, so they considered learning to read and write in English since coming to the UK as their first experience of literacy in any language. The word cloud in Figure 13 represents all languages spoken or written between all the learners assessed, therefore it takes into account those who are multi-lingual. 313 learners spoke more than one language. Overall, the top five languages were Ukrainian, Arabic, Russian, Farsi and Spanish, representing 44% of the total. Ukrainian being the top language for EAS learners is unsurprising. Russian is often a second language for learners from Ukraine. Arabic and Farsi are spoken widely across the Middle East and North Africa and South Asia. According to the Census in 2021, after English, Spanish is the most widely spoken language in Islington and third most spoken in Camden.

**Figure 14: British Nationals - First languages (spoken and/or written)**  
Based on 115 records



The 'other' category comprises of the following languages: Burmese, Dari, English, Farsi, Lingala, Macedonian, Mandarin Chinese, Portuguese, Sinhalese, Swahili, Tamil and Tigrinya (all 1%).

**Figure 15: EU Nationals - First languages (spoken and/or written)**  
Based on 129 records



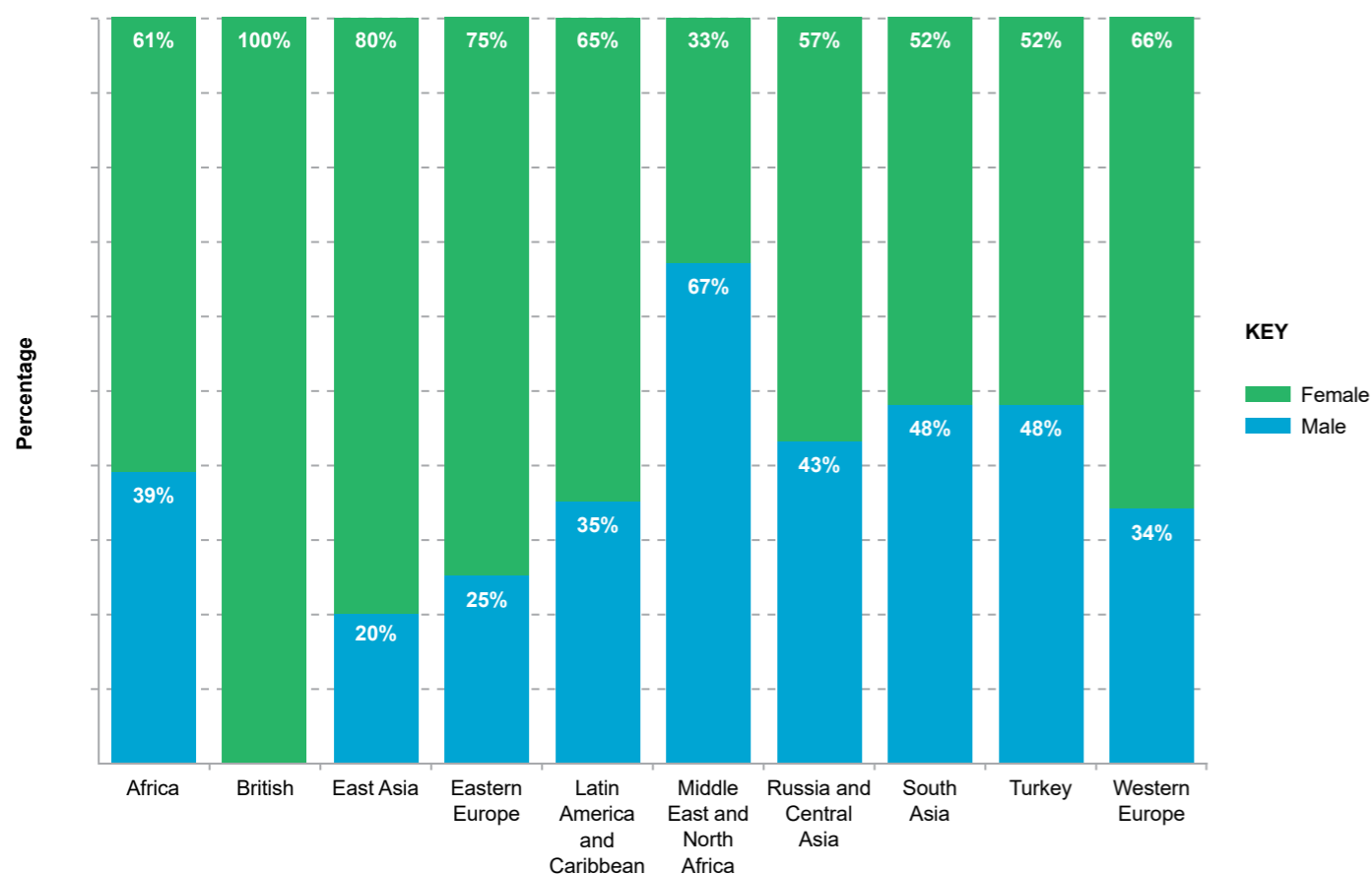
The 'other' category comprises of the following languages: Akan, Albanian, Bengali, Chinese, German, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Romani, Slovakian and Vietnamese (all 1%).

**Figure 16: Gender**

The majority of learners (59%) who registered with the Camden and Islington EAS in 2022-23 were female, however there was a significant rise in the percentage of male learners compared to previous academic years. This will be discussed further below.

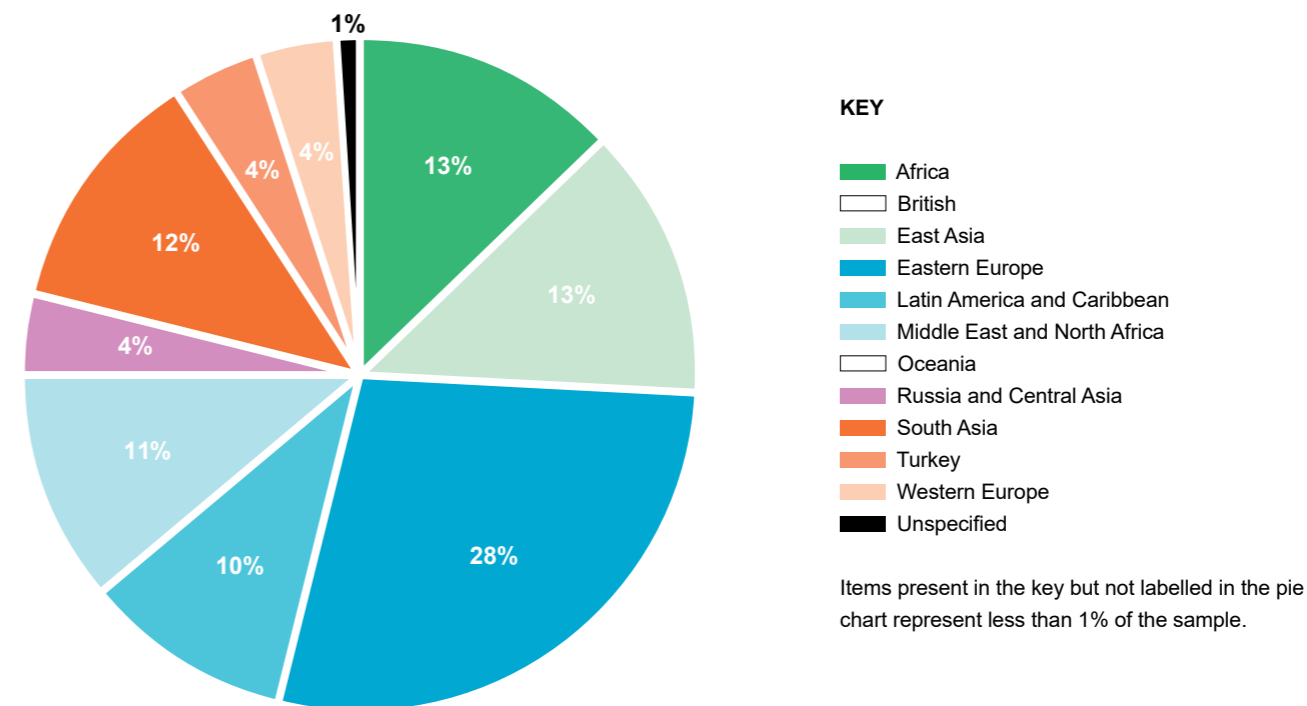


**Figure 17: Gender split by region**

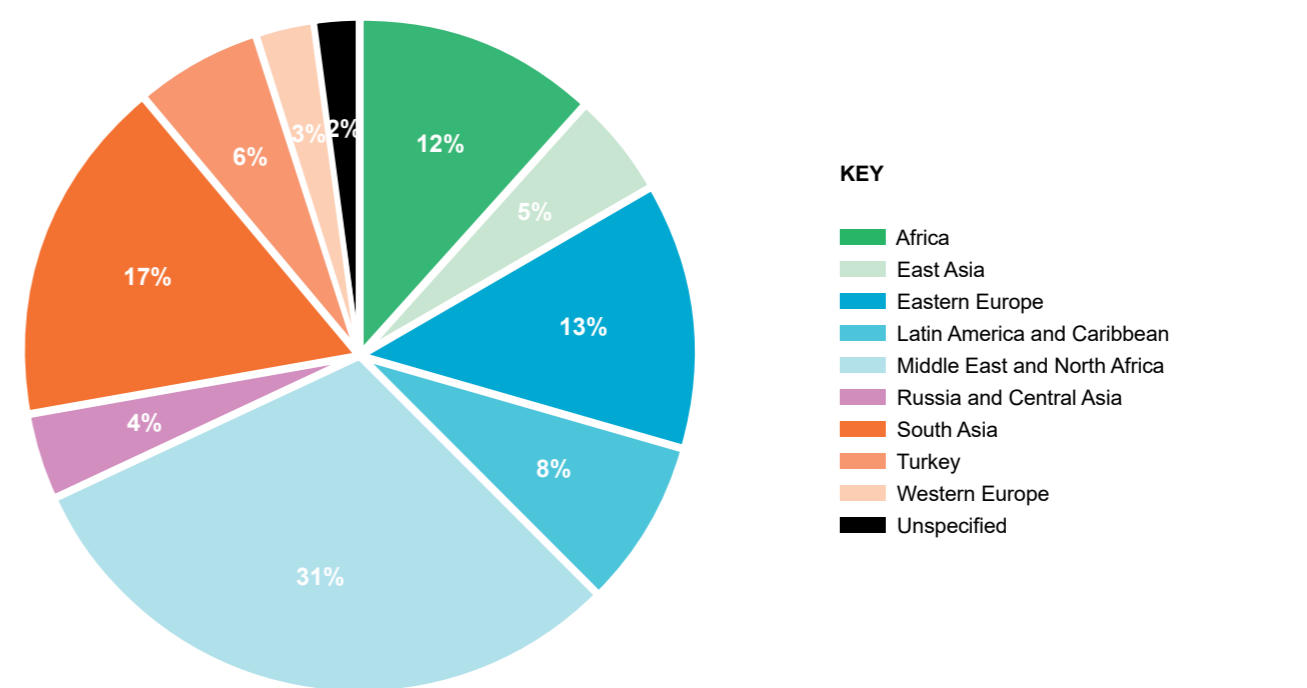


Aside from East Asia and Eastern Europe there was a significant rise in the percentage of male learners from all regions, particularly those from the Middle East and North Africa. Anecdotally, the EAS are aware that male family members from that region of the world often make the dangerous journey to the UK alone, start to build a life in the UK, and then make arrangement for their families to join them. In South Asia and Turkey, the statistics show the percentage of male and female learners equalling out. A skew towards female learners is still apparent in the remaining regions.

**Figure 18: Region by Gender - Female**  
Based on 638 records

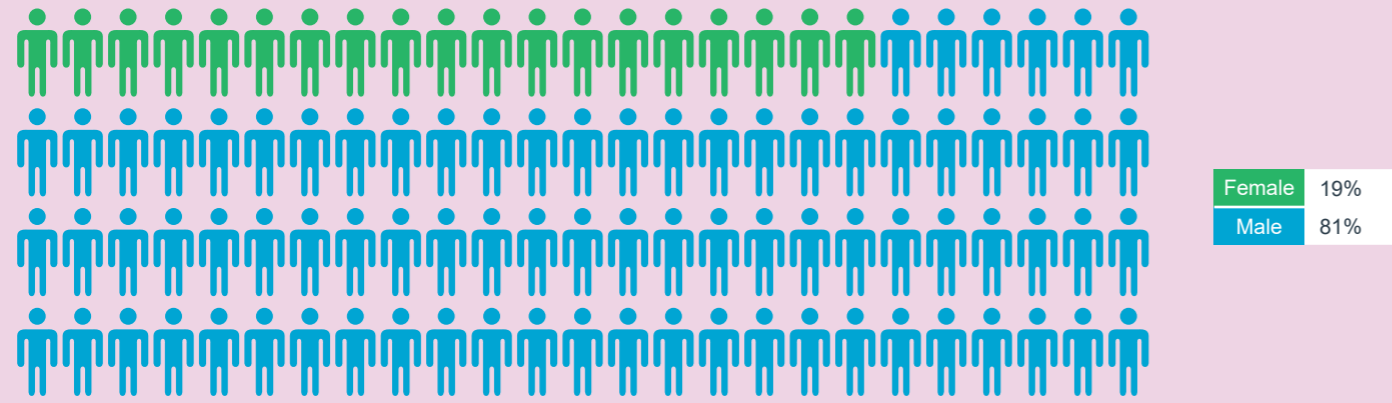


**Figure 19: Region by Gender - Male**  
Based on 440 records

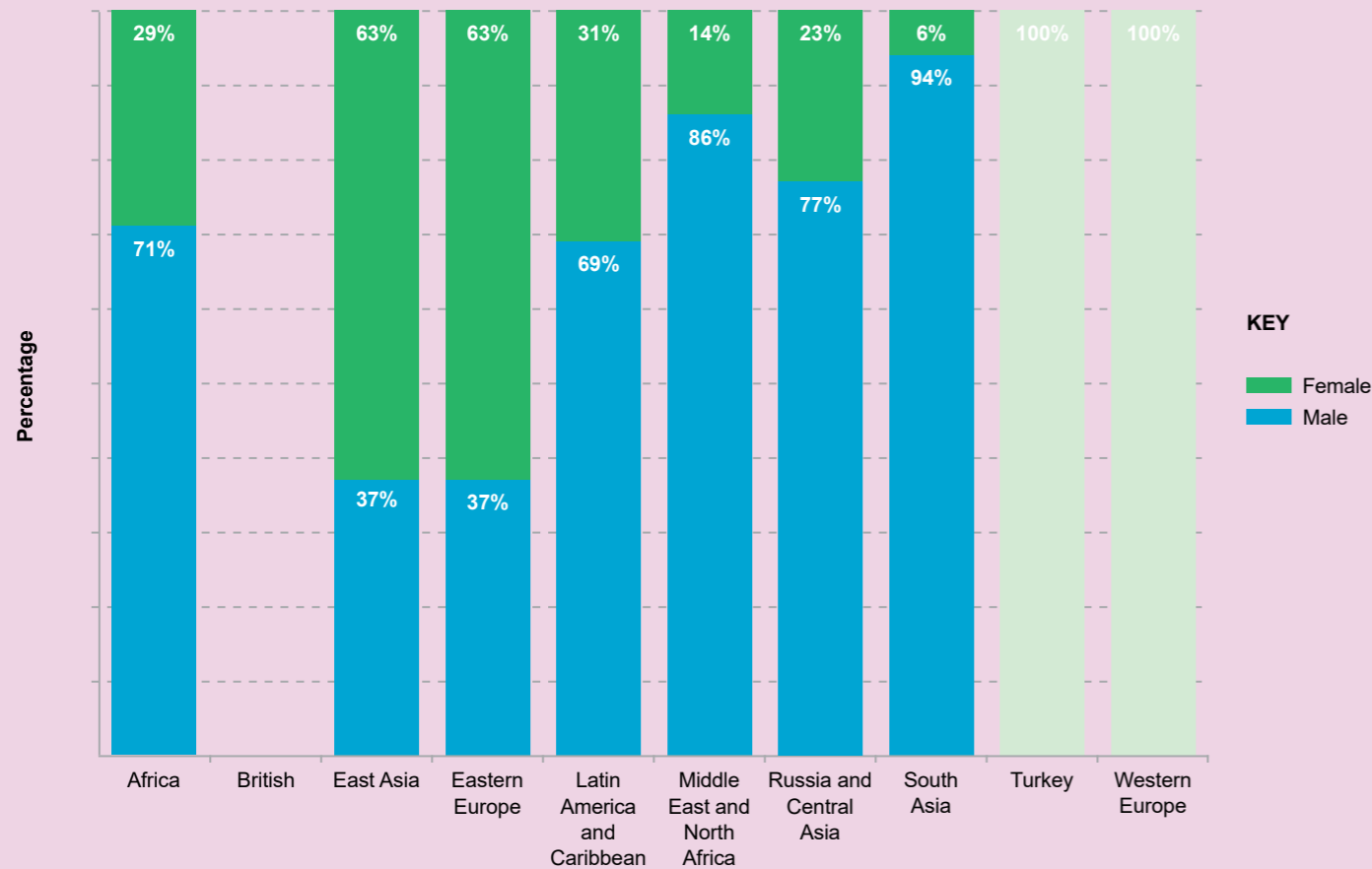




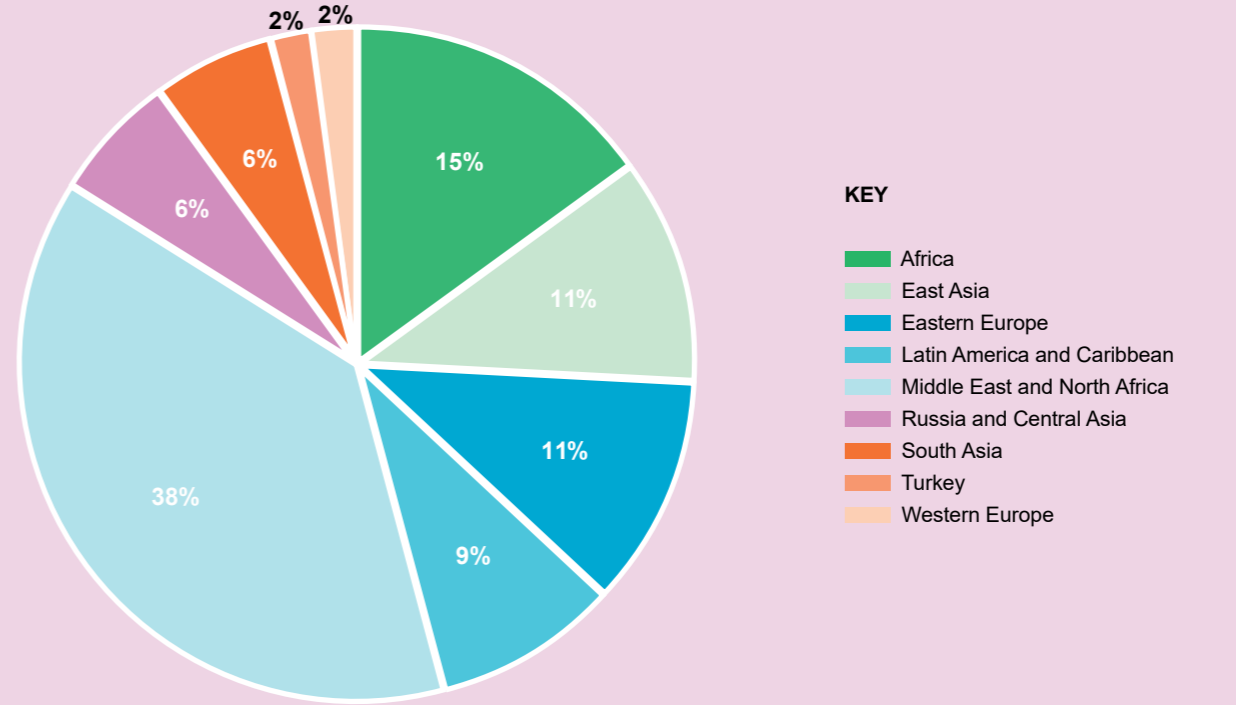
**Figure 16b: Gender - ASYLUM SEEKERS ONLY**  
Based on 244 records



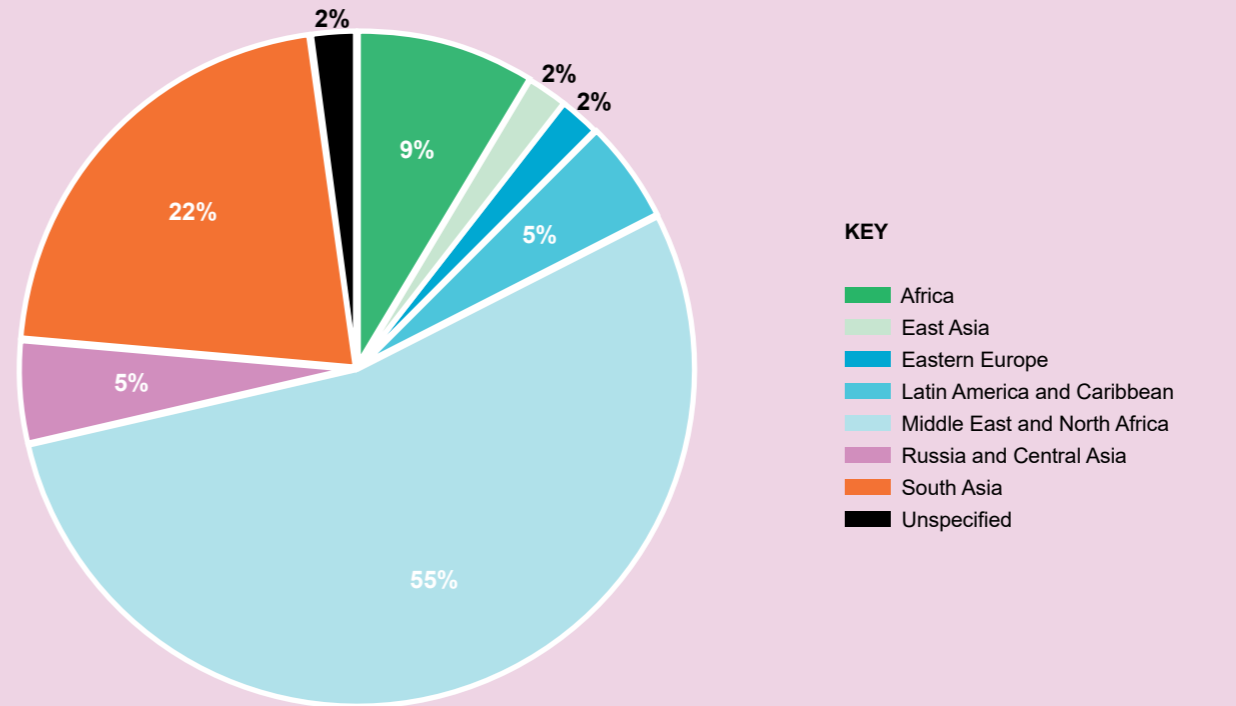
**Figure 17b: Gender split by region - ASYLUM SEEKERS ONLY**  
Based on 244 records



**Figure 18b: Region by Gender - Female - ASYLUM SEEKERS ONLY**  
Based on 47 records

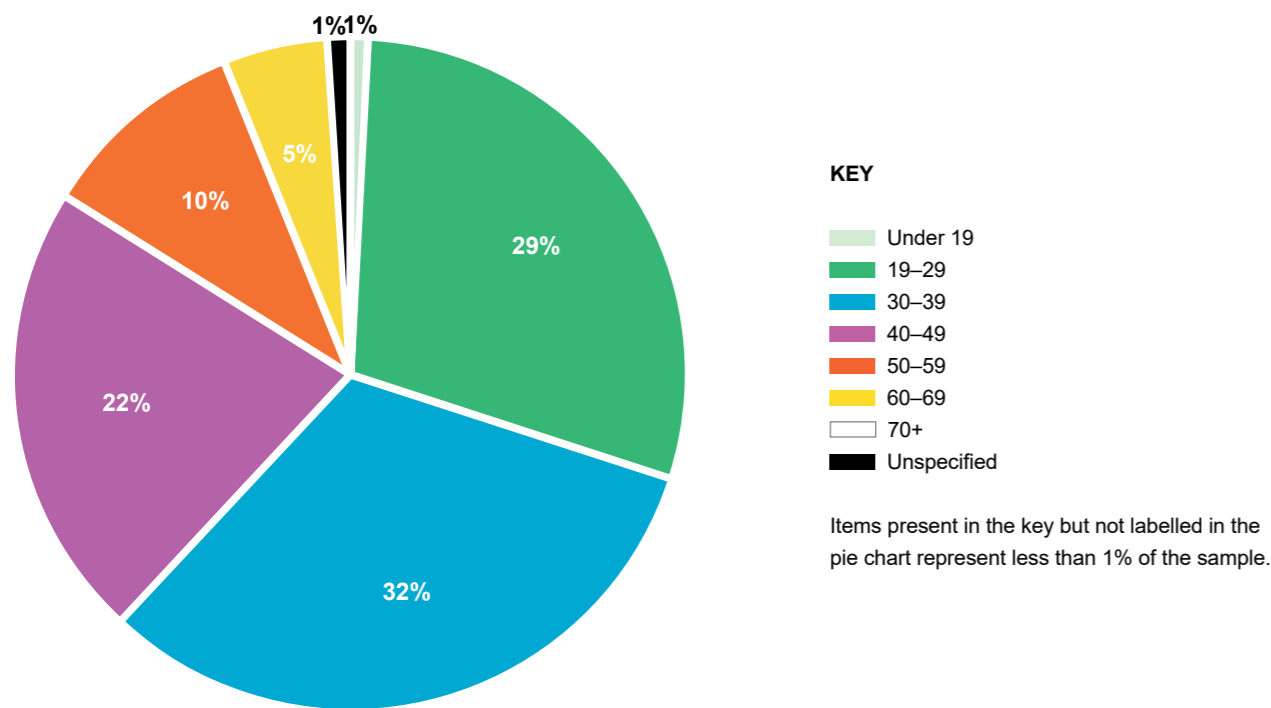


**Figure 19b: Region by Gender - Male - ASYLUM SEEKERS ONLY**  
Based on 197 records



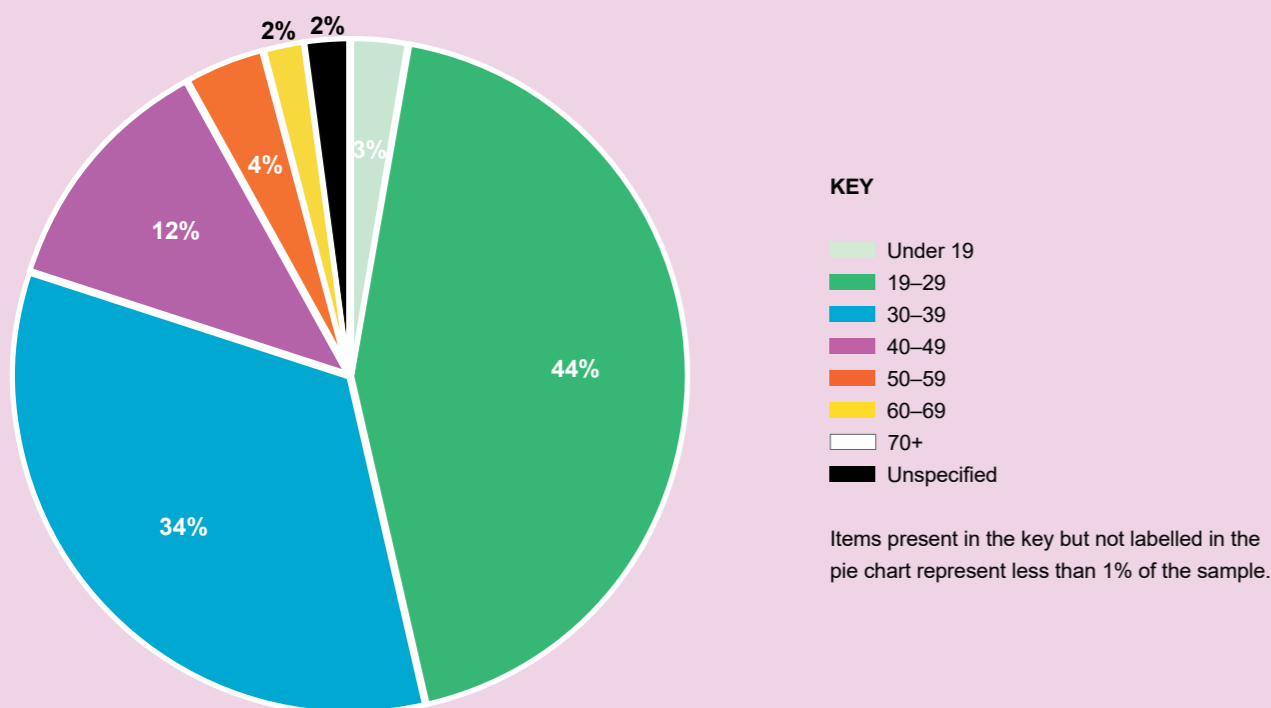
The ages of learners registering with the Camden and Islington EAS in 2022-23 spanned from 13 to 75. The majority (63%) were in their 20s and 30s, and 84% were below the age of 50.

**Figure 20a: Age bands**

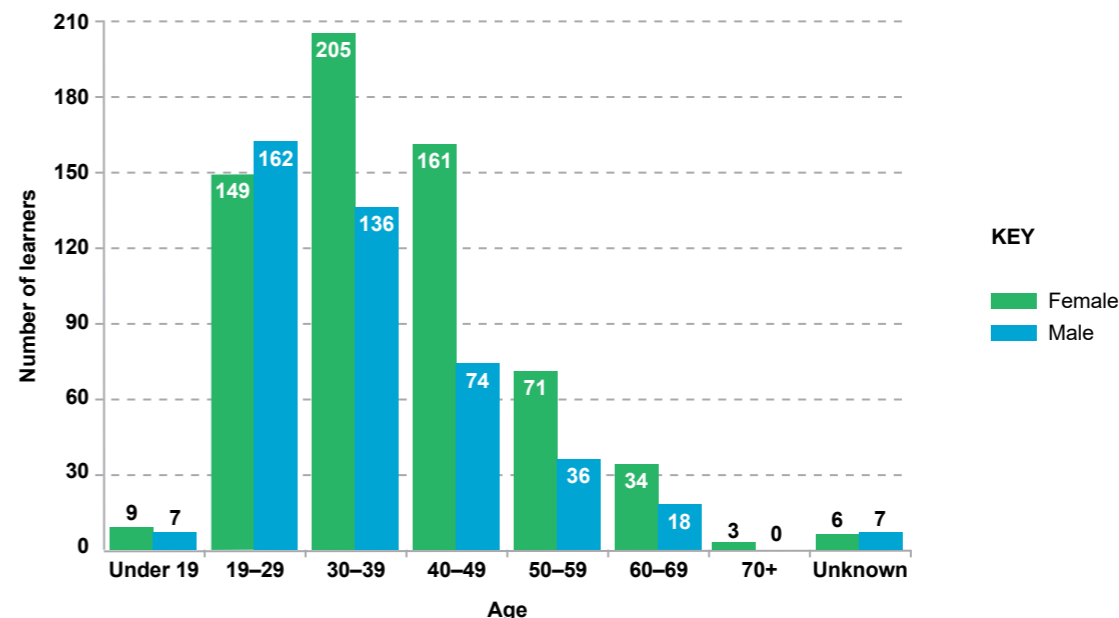


By the definition set out by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and the Greater London Authority, learners must be aged 19 or over on the 31 August 2022 to be eligible for adult learning funding during the 2022-23 academic year. Sixteen learners were recorded as being under 19 in the EAS records. Some of these went through the full online registration process in error. Thirteen learners were due to turn 19 within the academic year and were told they would need to wait.

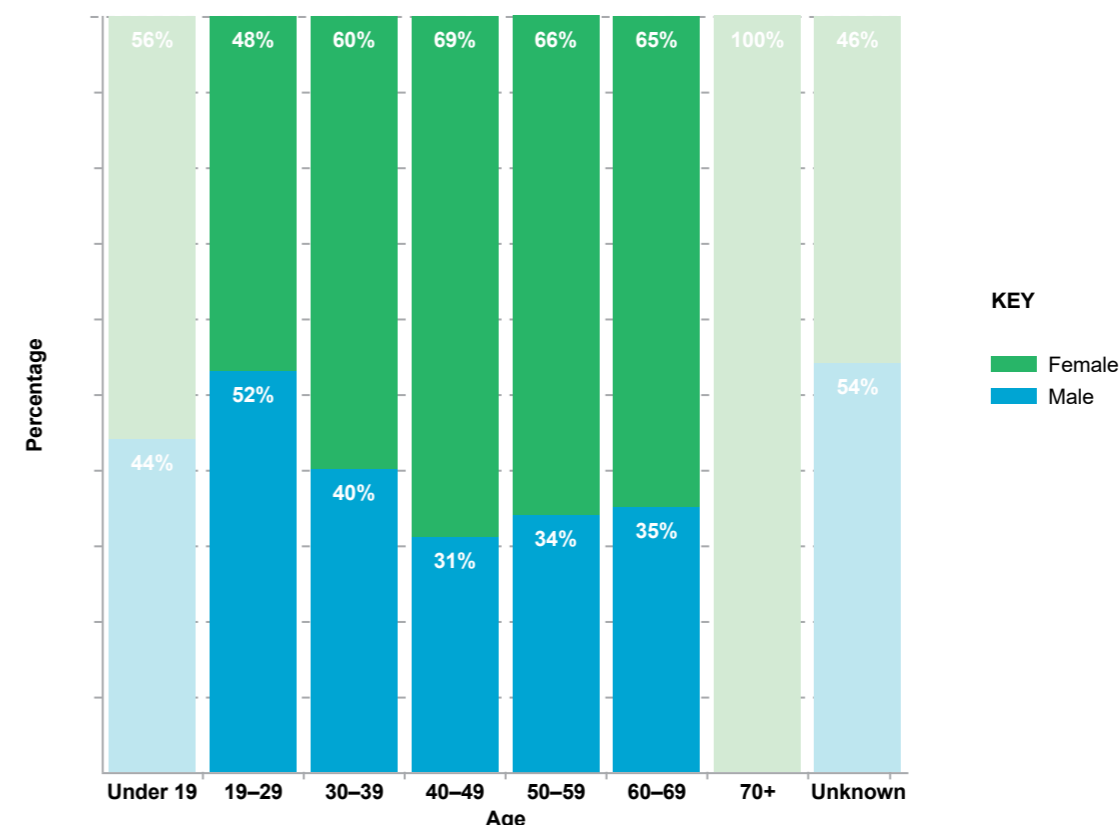
**Figure 20b: Age bands - ASYLUM SEEKERS ONLY**  
Based on 244 records



**Figure 21: Gender and age**



**Figure 22: Gender split by age**



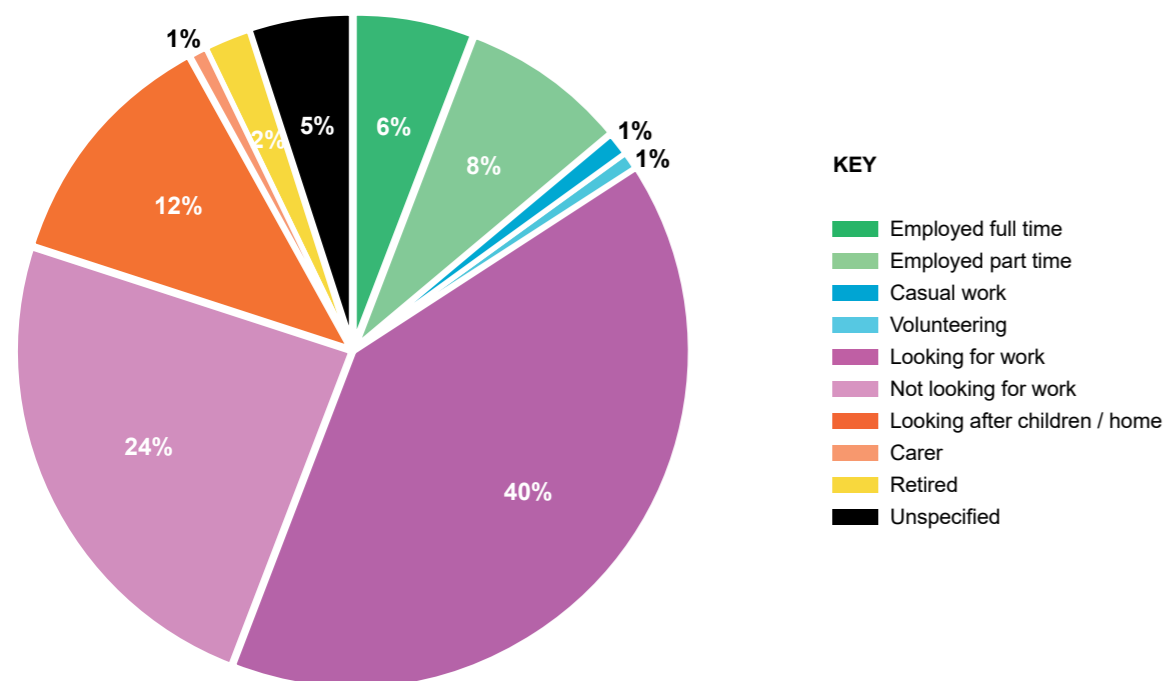
Overall, there was a steep dip in the number of learners from the 50-59 age band onwards. This is perhaps due to learners in those age ranges being more likely to have underlying health issues and/or less perceived need to improve their English. Comparisons for under 19s, unknowns, and 70+ are not statistically significant due to the lower numbers of learners in these categories. Male learners were better represented across all age ranges, compared to previous years when the average was nearer 25%. Women remain well represented across all age ranges, but for the first time since the EAS started operating in Camden and Islington, the proportion of male learners in the 19 to 29 age range was higher (52%).



## EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Just under a sixth of learners (16%) assessed by the Camden and Islington EAS in 2022-23 were in paid employment in some capacity. This is significantly lower than the 70.7% employment rate for Camden and the 79.0% employment rate for Islington. (Source: Annual Population Survey, NOMIS, June 2023). 40% were actively looking for work, however another 39% reported circumstances that meant they were not currently seeking employment.

**Figure 25: Employment status**



The employment rate of EAS learners has gone down by 3% compared to the previous academic year. This is likely due to the higher number of asylum seekers seen by the service during 2022-23.

The lower employment rate could also indicate that more learners are recognising that proficiency in English is crucial to improving their employability and are therefore seeking out ESOL opportunities to improve their language skills before applying for jobs. This will be discussed more later in this report when looking at learners' reasons for learning English.

Your work is very important for people like me... It's really annoying that [I] don't understand people and can't express my thoughts. Now I'm writing you a letter using a Google translator. I believe that an ESOL and English language courses will help me get a job and give an impetus (in my case) to study and further improve the English language.

*Ukrainian refugee*

### FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS

Asylum seekers are not normally allowed to work in the UK whilst their claim is being considered. However, if their asylum application is outstanding for more than 12 months and the delay is not considered the fault of the applicant, they can request Right to Work from the Home Office. This permission is restricted to jobs that are part of the Shortage Occupation List.

Any permission to work will come to an end if their asylum claim is refused and any rights to appeal are exhausted. Those who are granted leave to remain have unrestricted access to the labour market.

Asylum seekers who are not allowed to work are encouraged to volunteer while their asylum claim is being considered. Volunteering helps them make a valuable contribution to the wider community and can help them integrate into society more easily if they qualify for leave to remain in the UK in the future.

Some asylum seekers may have leave to remain in the UK in another capacity. If they apply for asylum before that leave expires and if that leave allows them to work, they are able to continue working under the same conditions as that leave permits until their asylum claim is processed.

(Source: Permission to work and volunteering for asylum seekers: Version 17.0, Home Office, October 2024)

44% of asylum seekers who registered with the Camden and Islington EAS in 2022-23 reported they were not looking for work, with almost all of them confirming that they were aware they are not allowed to work in the UK, however another 50% reported that they were looking for work when asked. 59% of those looking for work had been in the UK for less than a year so this response most likely reflected their ambition to work rather than demonstrating that were actively seeking employment.

### CASE STUDY

Learner X\* is an Afghan learner who used to work as a High Court judge in his country. In spite of his refugee status and right to work in the UK, he was unable to pursue any employment opportunities as he first needed to improve his English language skills. He has now joined an ESOL course at a college and is working hard to attain a good level of English to find a good job related to his former academic and professional background.

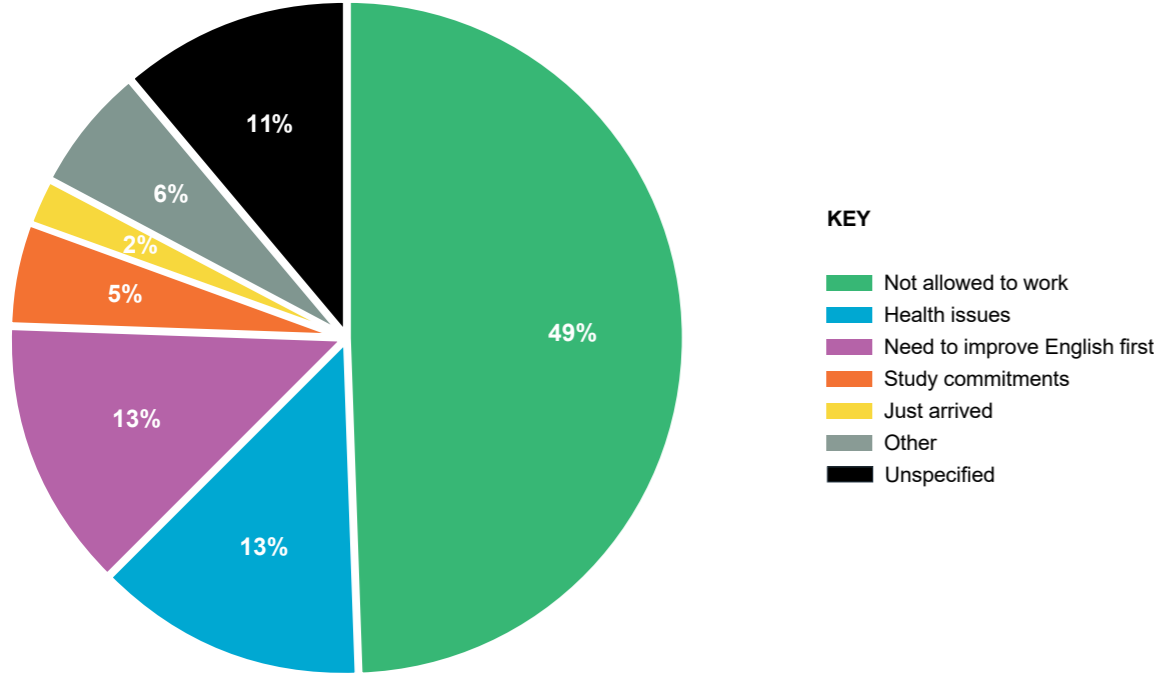
The students talk in terms of I want to work. We have very well qualified, professional people in the [class] who want to work and would be such an asset ...such cultural capital.

*Dr. Molly Bellamy, Tutor, University of Law*

\*Identity of learner anonymised for confidentiality purposes

# EMPLOYMENT STATUS

**Figure 26: Reasons for 'not looking for work'**  
Based on 261 responses



The 'other' category in the chart above comprises of learners who stated the following reasons for not looking for work: Homeless, Pregnancy, Underage, Want to return to Ukraine (all 1%), and Family commitments, Husband works, Living in supported accommodation, Looking for accommodation, Nearly retired, Visiting family (all below 1%)

**Figure 27a: Work experience (Abroad)**  
Based on 605 responses



**Figure 27b: Work experience (UK)**  
Based on 238 responses

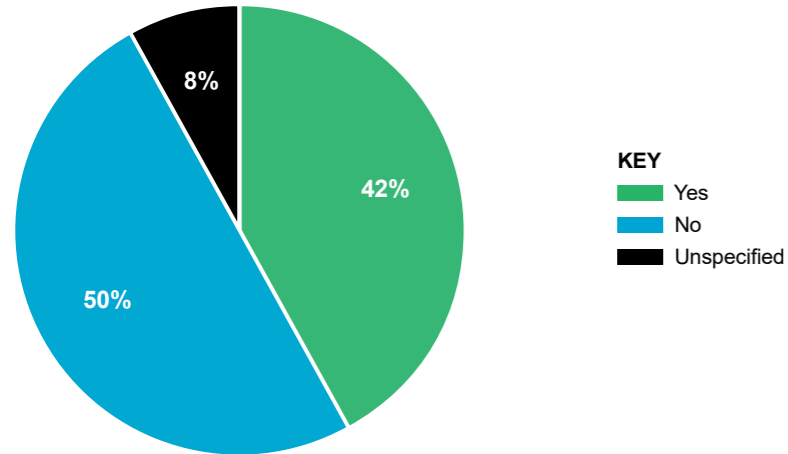


**Figure 28: Current employment**  
Based on 150 responses

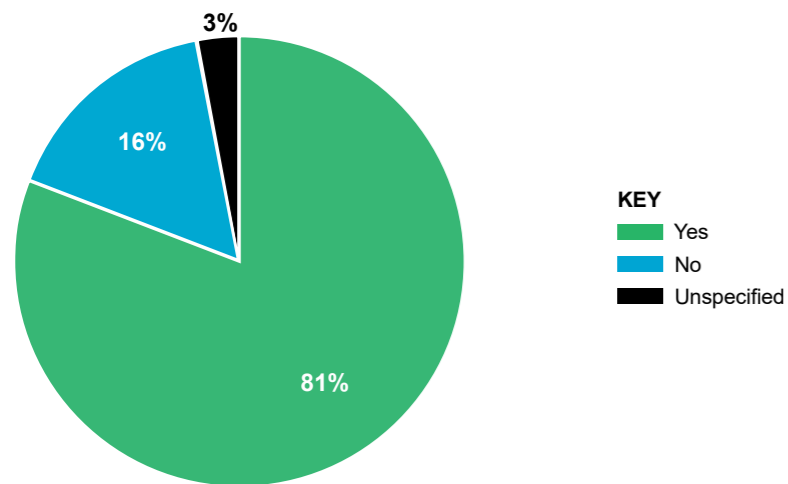


Prior to coming to the UK, the most common job held by learners was being a teacher (6% of all responses), whereas when asked about work experience since coming to the UK, the most common response was cleaner (19% of all responses). Working as a cleaner was also the most common area of current employment (15% of all responses).

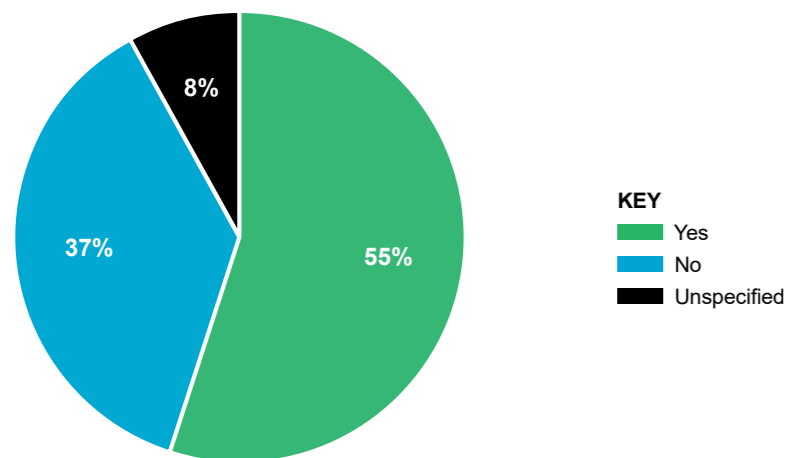
**Figure 29: Receiving income-based benefits?**



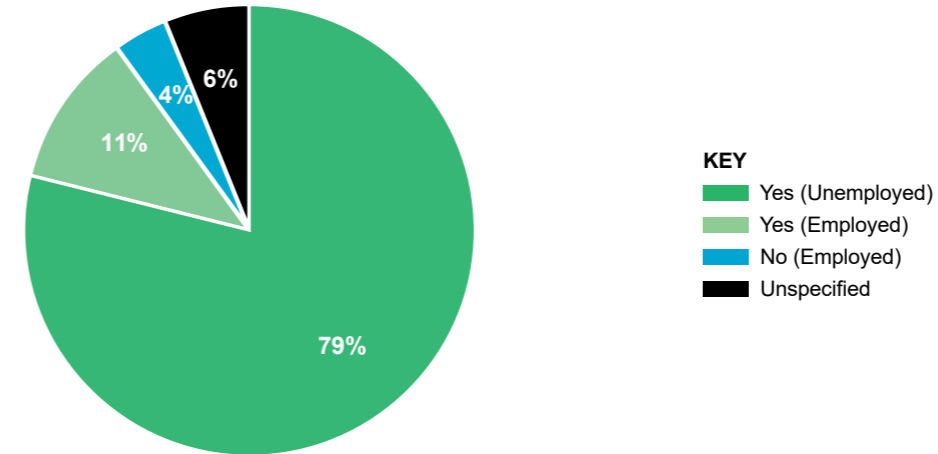
**Figure 30: If yes, are you claiming one of the following: Jobseeker’s Allowance, Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit?**



**Figure 31: National Insurance Number?**



**Figure 32: Low income?**



A clause in the funding rules provides greater flexibility to place low income learners in free provision. Low income is defined by the Greater London Authority (GLA) as those earning less than the annual London Living Wage, before tax. During the 2022-23 academic year this started off as £21,547 but rose to £23,302.50 in November 2022. On average, 17.8% of households in Camden earn under £25,000, however this varies from 6.3% up to 37.9% when looking at the rate for individual wards. In Islington, an average of 17.5% of households earn under £25,000. (Source: Paycheck, CACI Ltd, reported in “Camden Business and Employment Bulletin Databook”, August 2023).

19.0% of children in Camden and 18.8% in Islington live in low income households. In both cases, this is higher than the London average of 15.8% (Source: Children in Low Income Families 2014-2023, DWP)

**FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS**

All asylum seekers fall under the GLA clause for low income. Irrespective of this, the funding rules state that education providers cannot enrol them on free provision until they have been in the UK for more than 6 months.

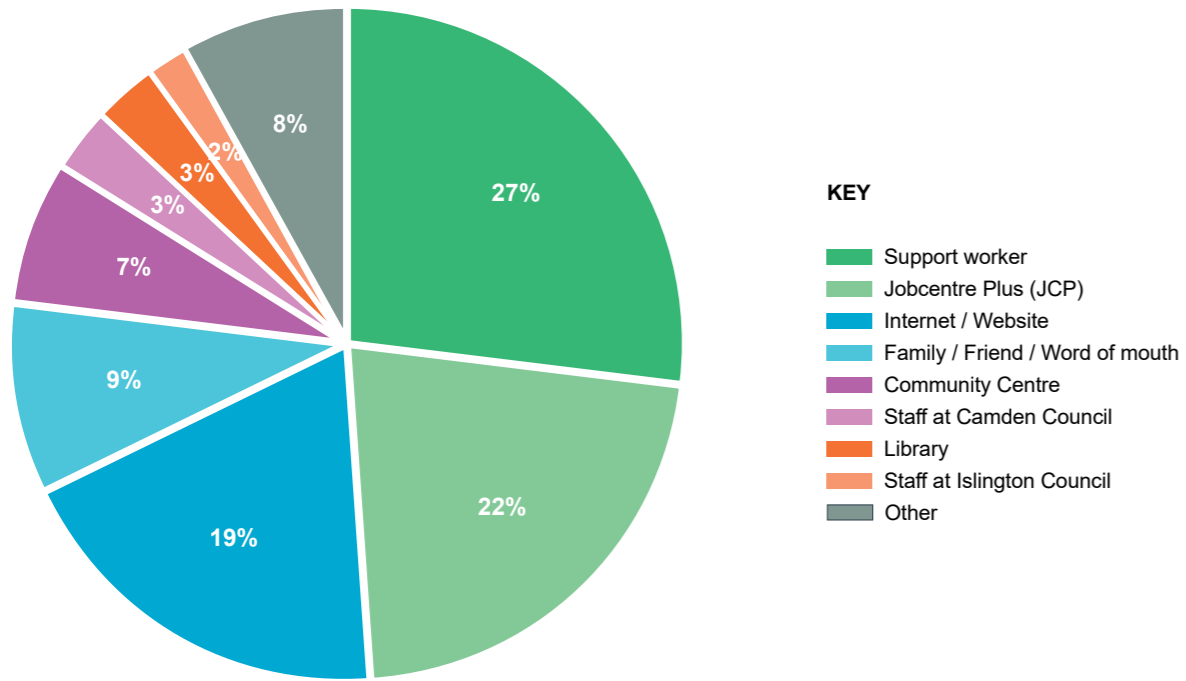
EAS data shows that 30% of asylum seekers reported that they receive benefits. In the majority of cases this refers to their weekly entitlement to a small amount of money for food and other basic expenses that is loaded onto an “ASPEN” card.

However, 6% of those receiving benefits reported getting Universal Credit, which they wouldn’t be eligible for if claiming asylum, and 7% reported having a National Insurance number, which is only issued when a person has permission to work. The conclusion is that, prior to claiming asylum, these learners’ immigration circumstances were different and they were allowed to work. Alternatively, it’s possible that a lack of knowledge about the processes and terminology used in the UK may contribute to these details in the data.

While EAS advisors are always updating their knowledge of a wide range of eligibility criteria, learners’ income and benefit status, as well as their immigration status, can change across an academic year adding layers of complication to the information that advisors work with. As far as possible, the EAS helps learners navigate these, often confusing, systems.

# REFERRAL ROUTES

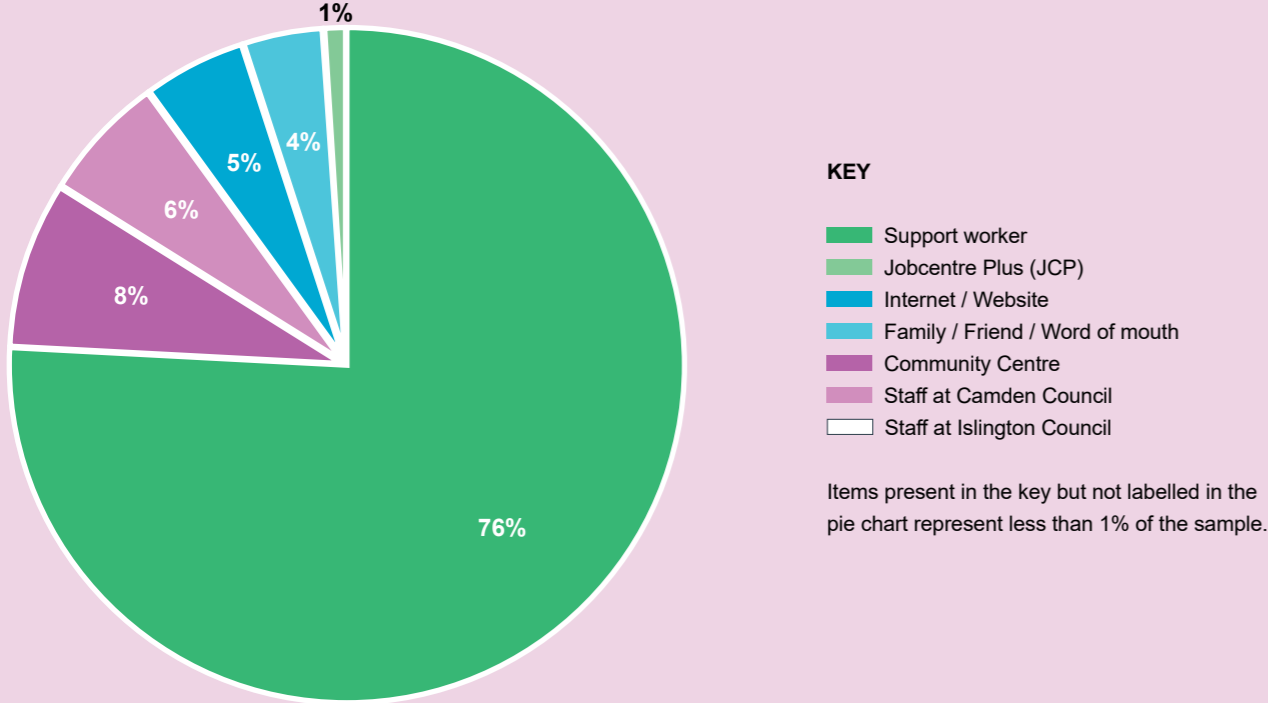
**Figure 33a: Referral Routes**  
 Based on 961 responses



The 'other' category in the chart above contains the following wide range of additional referral routes, accounting for 81 learners: Adult Community Learning (ACL), Charity, Primary School, Social Media, Leaflet, Sponsor, Letter, Poster (all 1%), and GP, Home Office, Local Council, Newsletter, Advert, Email, Employability worker, Nursery, Other job related, Social Prescribing (all below 1%).

**FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS**  
 The EAS took a focussed approach to plan and commission ESOL provision for asylum seekers by partnering with contingency hotels and local specialist ESOL providers in Camden and Islington. This was the most effective way of processing these learners as funding rules prevented most of them from accessing mainstream provision.

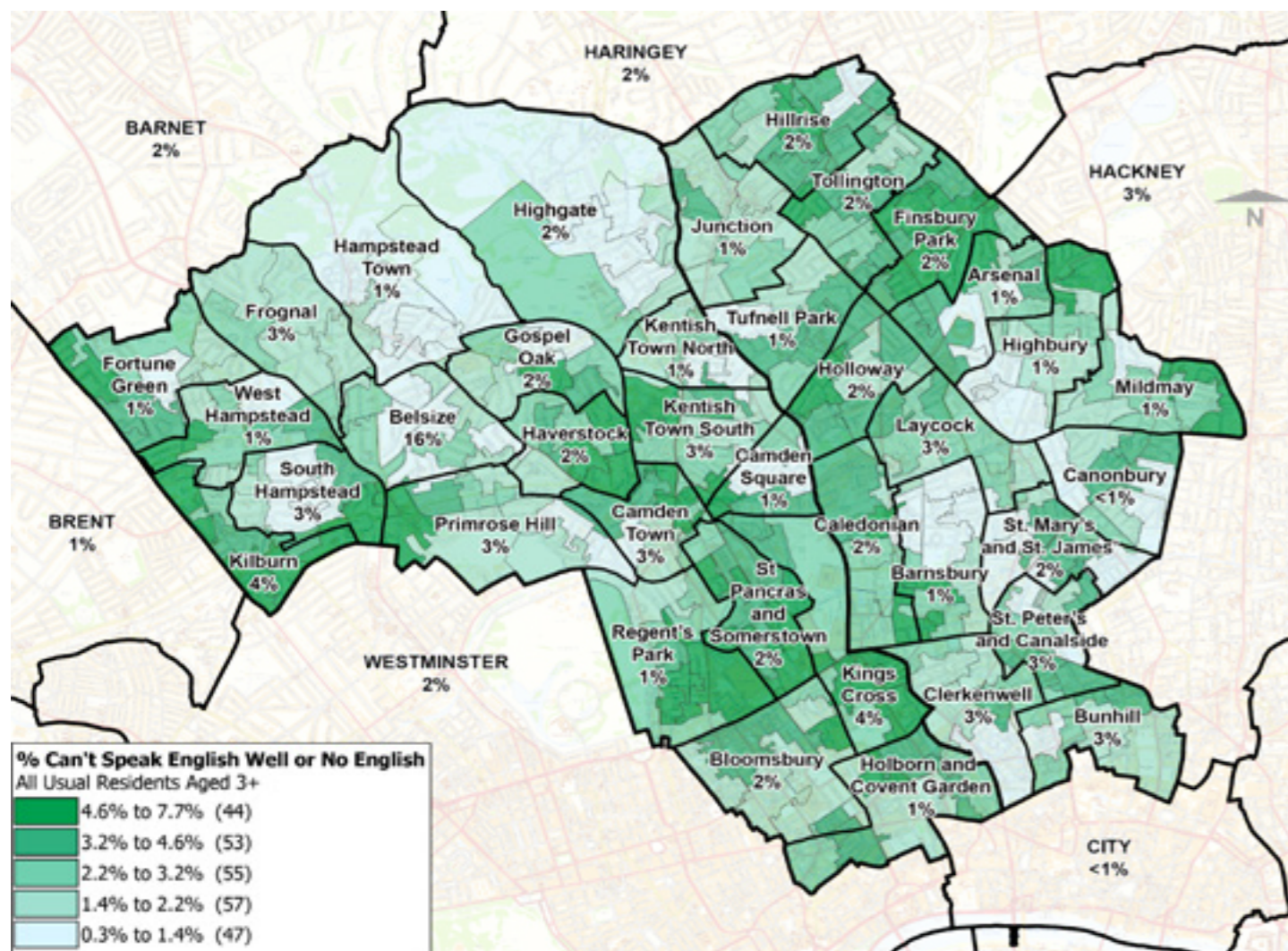
**Figure 33b: Referral Routes - ASYLUM SEEKERS ONLY**  
 Based on 231 responses



The relationship we have with EAS is absolutely fantastic and it's absolutely vital. I think without that provision we would struggle. Simply, we would find it very difficult to find adequate provision. Often work coaches have a very limited amount of time, it can be ten, fifteen minutes to complete a lot of different tasks with the claimant. So certainly without the support of EAS, our work coaches would be very much up against it. The onus would be upon them to do quite a bit of learning.

*Geoffrey Taylor-Meade, Partnership Manager, Barnsbury Jobcentre Plus*

**Figure 34: Learner locations in Camden and Islington, with concentration of residents stating they cannot speak English well or at all (Census 2021)**



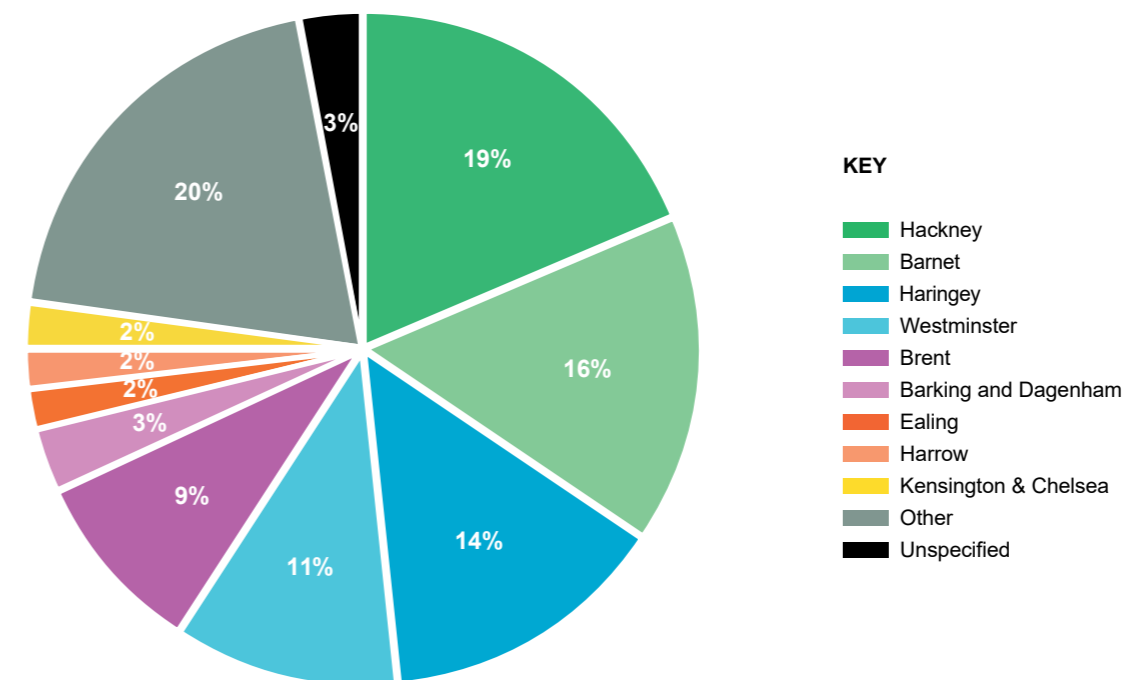
Data source: 2021 Census Topic Summary Table TS029, © Crown Copyright reserved (OGLV3)

56% of learners assessed by the Camden and Islington EAS in 2022-23 lived in the London Borough of Camden, 29% lived in the London Borough of Islington and 15% resided elsewhere.

Of the 15% of learners that resided elsewhere, 70% lived in bordering boroughs and 18% lived in other London boroughs. In total, 22 of the 32 London boroughs were covered. 9% lived outside of London and the remaining 3% did not clearly specify their postcode.

The percentage spike in the Camden ward of Belsize is due to this being the location of one of the major contingency hotels housing asylum seekers in the borough.

**Figure 35: Out of borough learner locations**  
Based on 159 records



The 'other' category comprises of learners who reside in the following London boroughs: City of London, Croydon, Hammersmith and Fulham, Havering, Hillingdon, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond upon Thames, Southwark, Waltham Forest and Wandsworth, as well as those living outside of London in the following areas: Aberdeen, Birmingham, City of Edinburgh, Cornwall, Coventry, Hampshire (East Hampshire), Hertfordshire (Welwyn Hatfield), Leicestershire (Charnwood), Solihull, South Lanarkshire, Suffolk (Mid Suffolk), Surrey (Guilford), Surrey (Woking), West Sussex (Chichester).

### FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS

84% of asylum seekers registering with the EAS in 2022-23 lived in the London Borough of Camden, 14% lived in the London Borough of Islington. The remaining 2% resided in Ealing, Hackney, City of London and East Hampshire.

55% of the Camden asylum seekers were residing in the Belsize ward, due to this being the location of a contingency hotel that the EAS had a key partnership with during 2022-23.



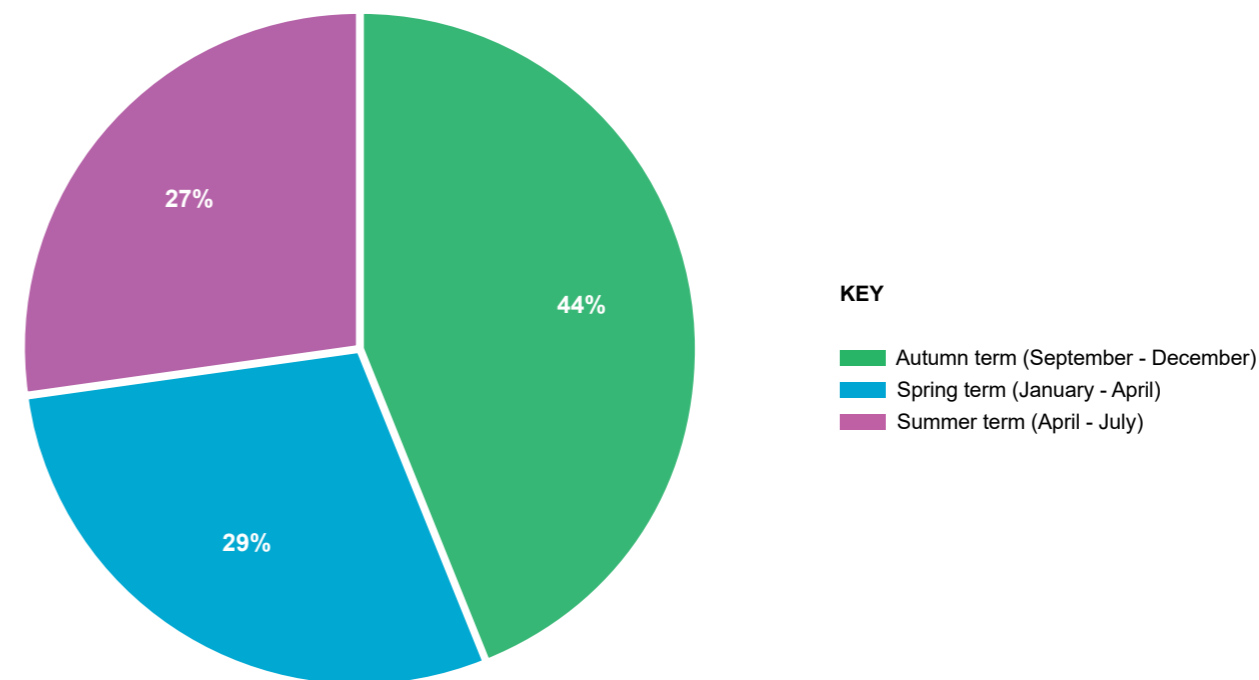
The table below shows data on Proficiency in English from the Census 2021 indicating that over 102,000 residents across 9 local boroughs cannot speak English well or at all. As a percentage of the total population of a borough aged 19+, Brent comes out as the borough with the most need, followed by Haringey and Tower Hamlets.

Possibly owing to the ESOL IAG Single Point of Contact (SPoC) model being available in very few boroughs, the EAS continues to attract learners from surrounding boroughs and across London (see Figure 35a).

**Figure 36: Cannot speak English well or at all: Local borough detail (Aged 19+, Census 2021)**

Borough	Count	% of 19+ population
Camden	5,737	3.4%
Islington	5,900	3.3%
Brent	23,147	8.8%
Haringey	17,539	8.5%
Tower Hamlets	17,919	7.4%
Barnet	14,421	4.9%
Hackney	10,479	5.2%
Westminster	6,932	4.0%
City	133	1.7%

**Figure 37: Term of registration**



The chart above reflects the term when each learner first registered with the EAS. The majority of learners (44%) were registered during Term 1. This statistic includes learners from the previous academic year whose cases were not yet concluded and therefore rolled over into 2022-23.

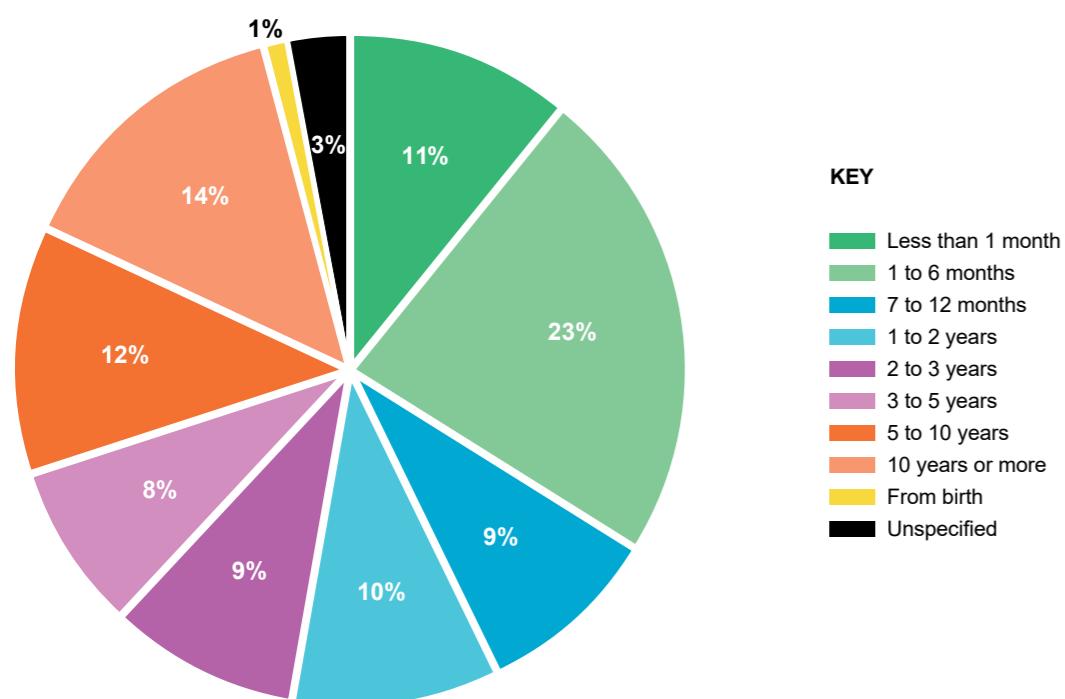
**FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS**

38% of asylum seekers registered with the EAS during the Autumn term, 40% registered during the Spring term and the remaining 22% registered during the Summer term.

The [ESOL] Advice Service is brilliant at fast tracking results and getting learners into the right course at all levels, but especially those that are closer to employment. They can get their qualifications, they can move up the levels, they can progress onto Functional Skills, onto employment, onto vocational courses, which is the best thing for them... As a curriculum manager, I would advise any similar manager in [another] borough to think about putting in something like this because it's so responsive and so accurate. It's a real weapon that I have to use to get those learners on the right courses in a timely manner.

*Simon Fuller, Curriculum Manager, Islington Adult Community Learning*

**Figure 38a: Time in the UK**



**FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS**

44% of asylum seekers who registered with the EAS in 2022-23 had been in the UK for up to 6 months, and a further 14% had been in the UK for 7 to 12 months.

GLA funding rules state that asylum seekers can only access free education provision after being in the country for 6 months, however some education providers have other funding streams that allow asylum seekers to start classes before this time.

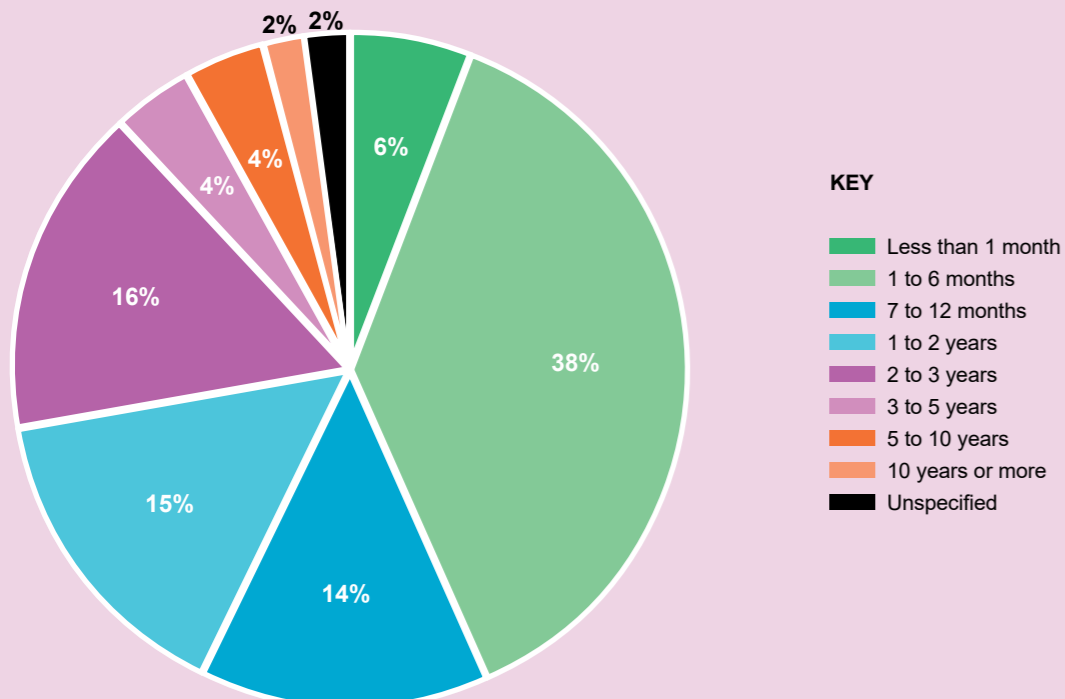
Historically, the target for making a decision about an asylum claim has been 6 months. Once a decision has been reached, the claimant's immigration status is updated, potentially opening up other avenues of support, including benefits and the right to work.

In February 2023, it was reported by the BBC that the backlog of immigration cases had reached 166,000, two thirds of which had been waiting for 6 months or more. (Source: "Asylum backlog at record high, Home Office figures show", BBC News, February 2023)

It is also likely that some learners claiming asylum originally entered the UK with a different immigration status before their circumstances changed and they decided to claim asylum instead. In combination with the previously mentioned backlog, this potentially explains why 41% of asylum seekers in the EAS data appear to have been in the UK for more than a year.

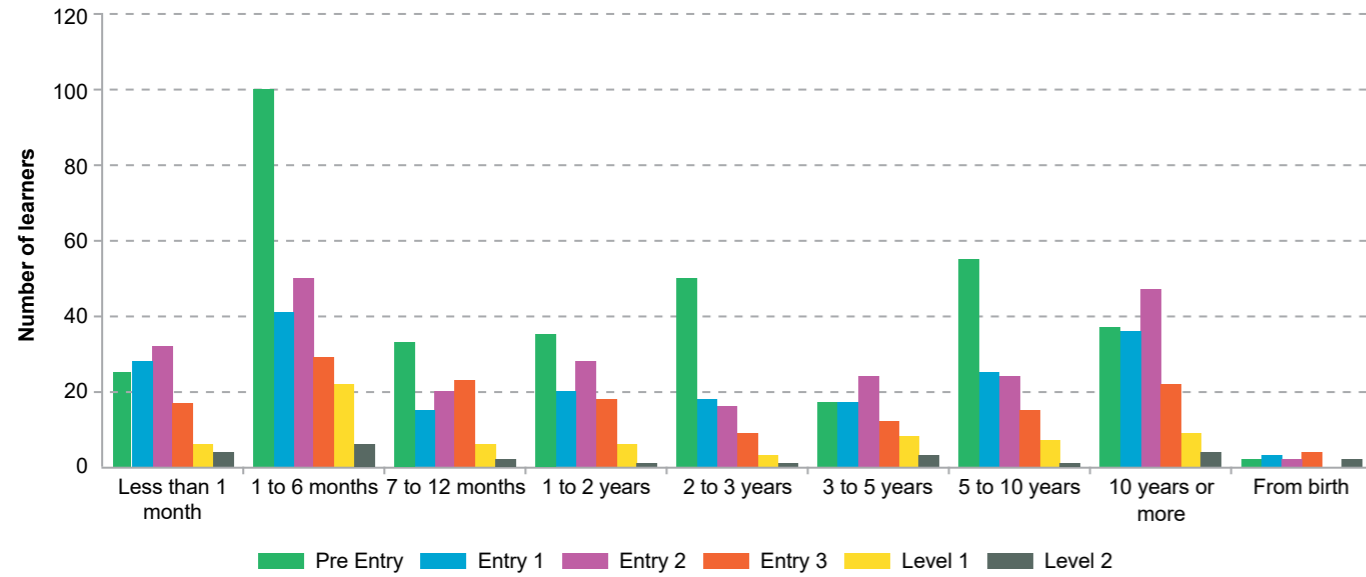
**Figure 38b: Time in the UK - ASYLUM SEEKERS ONLY**

Based on 244 records

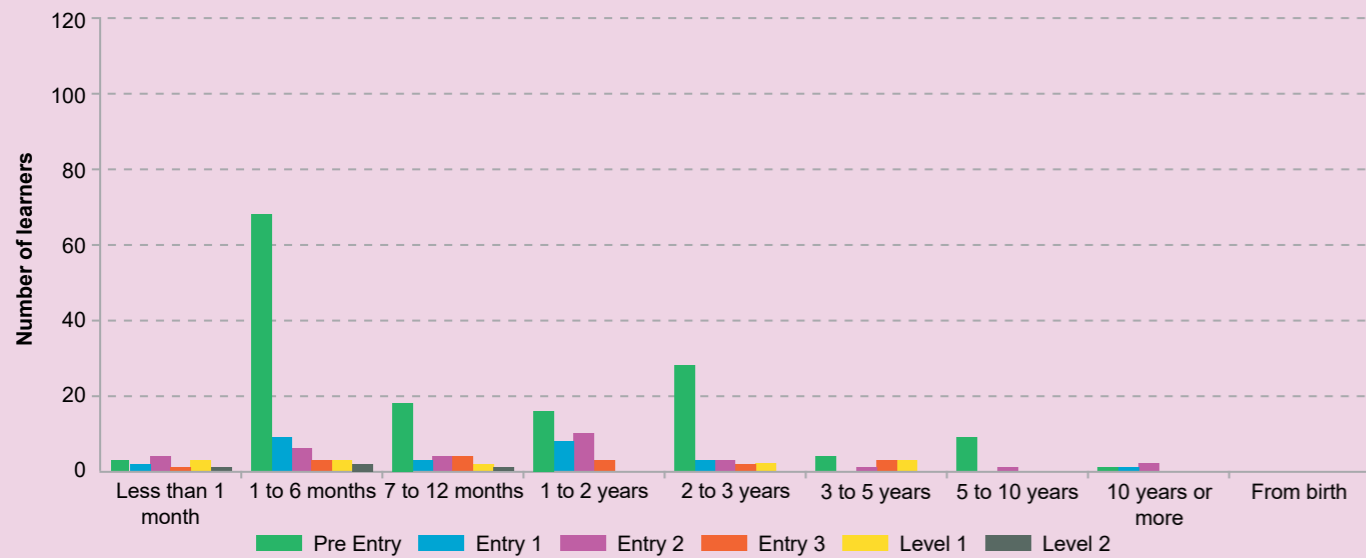


# LENGTH OF TIME IN THE UK AND EXPERIENCE OF ESOL

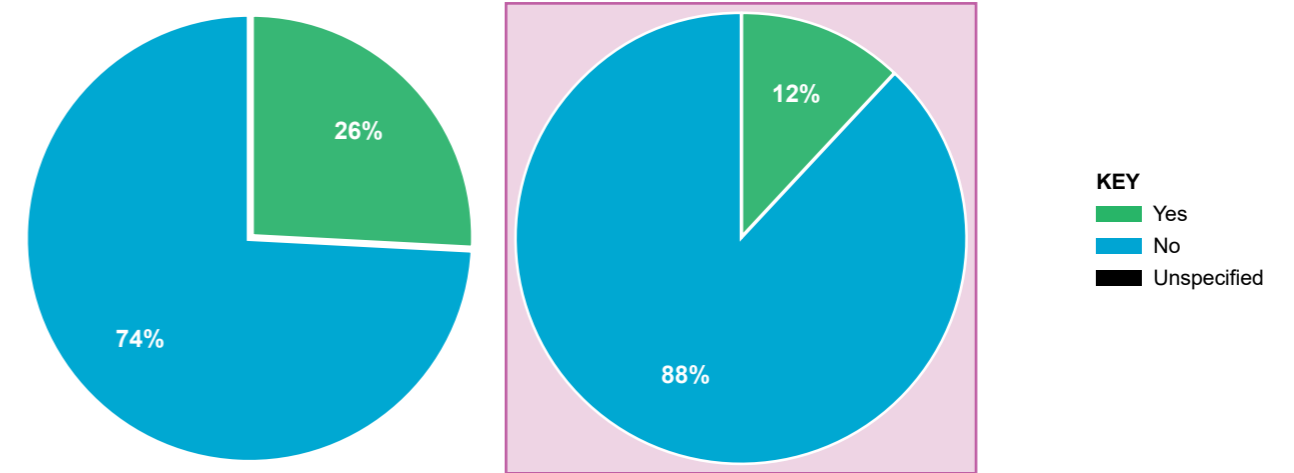
**Figure 39a: Time in the UK by level of English (Speaking)**  
Based on 1027 records



**Figure 39b: Time in the UK by Speaking level - ASYLUM SEEKERS ONLY**  
Based on 234 records



**Figure 40: Previous ESOL experience?**  
Based on 991 records / Based on 234 asylum seeker records



**FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS**

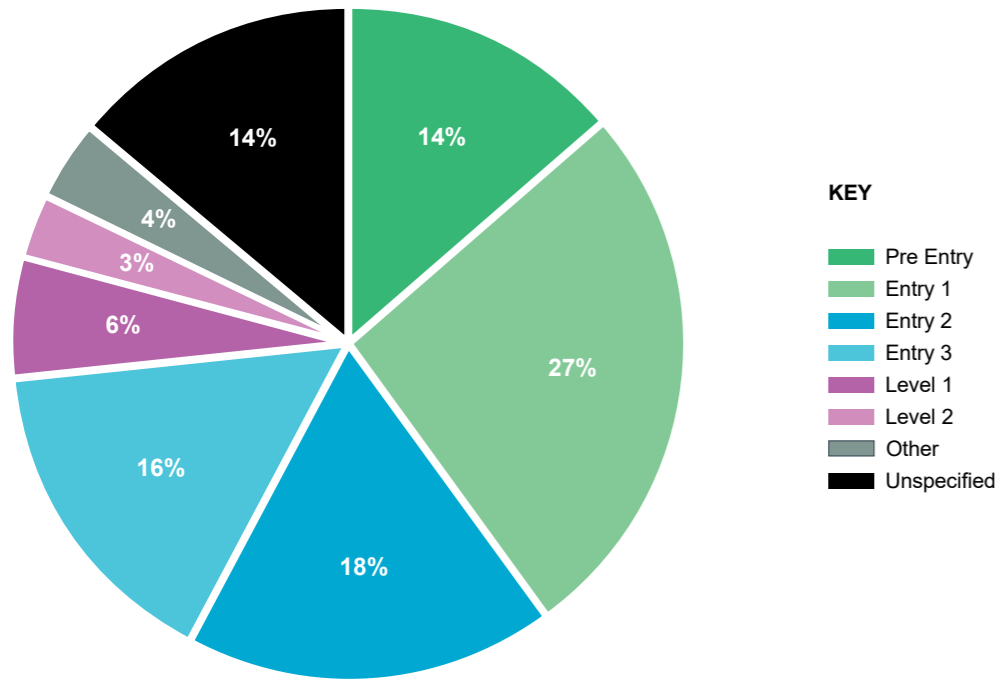
Whilst the vast majority of asylum seekers (88%) had not taken part in ESOL classes before, the 12% who had likely corresponds to the length of time they had been in the UK. 10 asylum seekers had studied ESOL at E2 and above.

Originally, the chart above was designed to highlight the issue of dormant learners - those who have been in the UK for more than 10 years but not recently taken part in ESOL learning. This is an ongoing feature of the 2022-23 data, but last academic year, the chart also helped to demonstrate learner vulnerability at the opposite end of the scale by highlighting the Afghan and Ukrainian refugees that had recently arrived in the UK and were likely to be speaking English at a Pre Entry level, limiting their access to information about many aspects of life, for example guidance about the benefits system, education and employment opportunities. This academic year, the charts reflect all of this alongside the added complexity that the asylum seeker data brings. It is therefore difficult to use the data to make any clear conclusions, as it can be looked at from many different angles.

As with all the data in this report, we invite anyone who uses it as a springboard to further research to get in touch with us and discuss their insights.

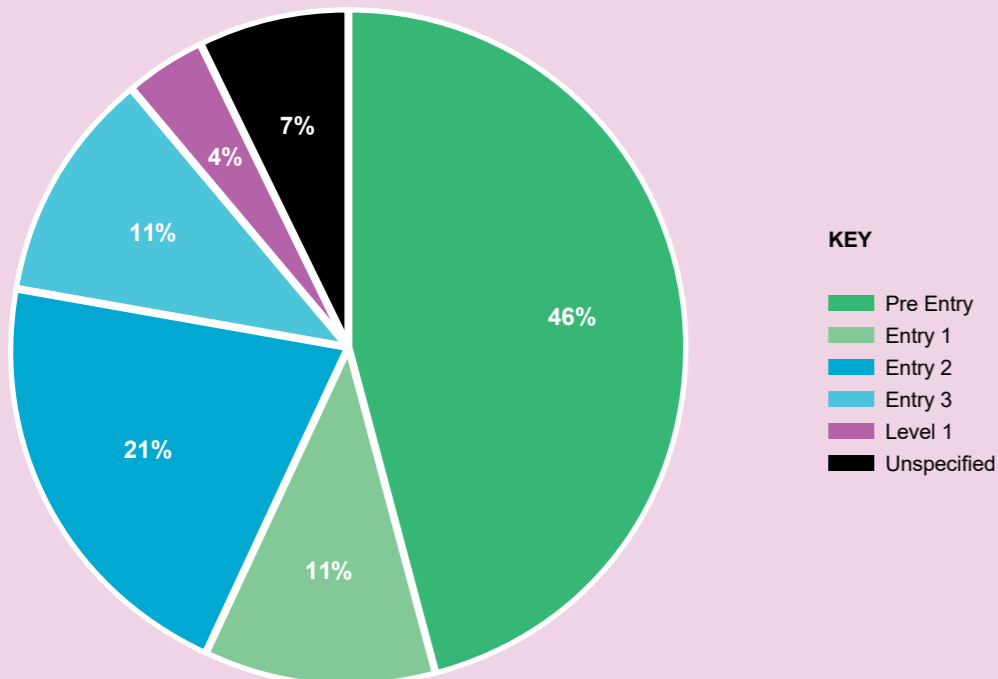
## LENGTH OF TIME IN THE UK AND EXPERIENCE OF ESOL

**Figure 41a: ESOL qualifications already attained**  
Based on 250 records



The 'other' category in the chart above includes 2 learners who had studied at IELTS level and were therefore referred to alternative provision for higher level students. 2 more learners had studied for their B1 qualification, which is loosely equivalent to Entry 3. A further two learners had studied an 'FCE' which refers to the 'Cambridge English: First', formerly known as the 'B2 First', which is loosely equivalent to Level 1. One other learner referred to a failed attempt to pass an E3 qualification.

**Figure 41b: ESOL qualifications already attained - ASYLUM SEEKERS ONLY**  
Based on 28 records



**Figure 42: Barriers to progressing**  
Based on 225 responses

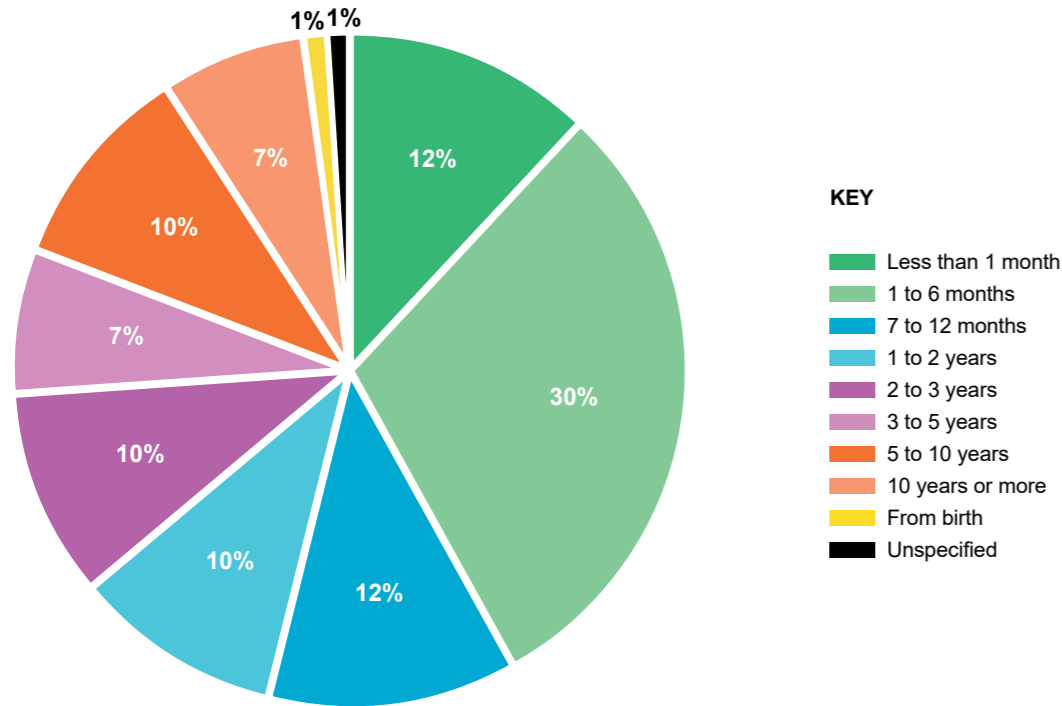


In the above word cloud, 'Course ended' means the class finished and no progression route was taken up by the learner or offered by the course provider.

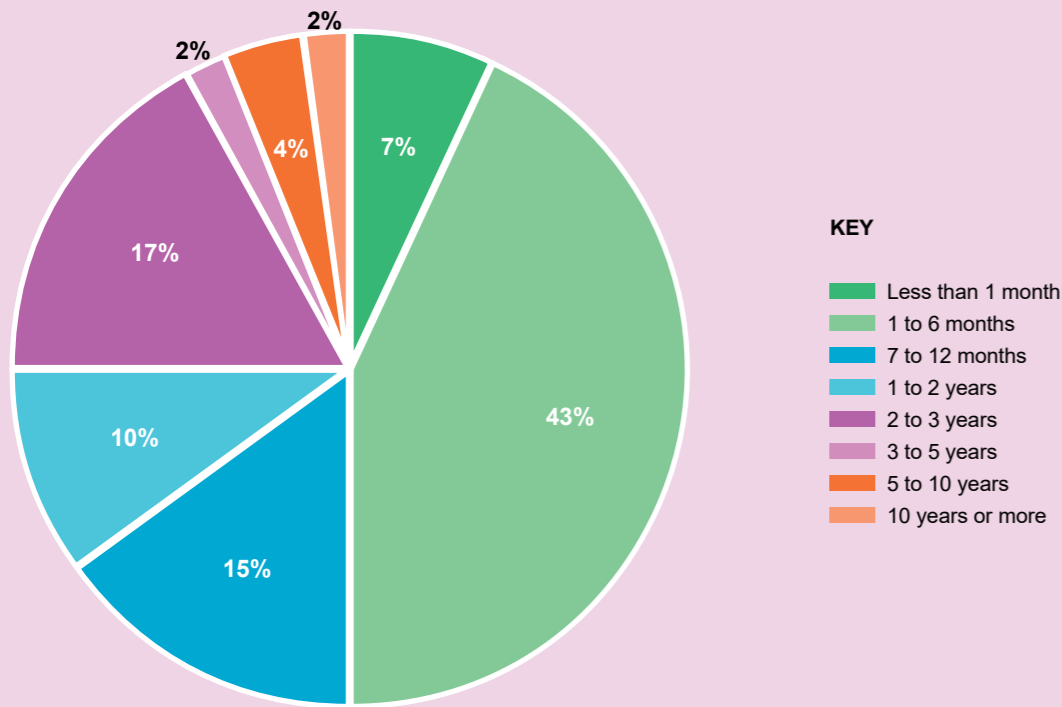
### FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS

Only 15 of the responses detailed in the word cloud above were from asylum seekers, which is not a significant sample size to draw any specific conclusions from, however, asylum seekers were more likely to experience being moved to a new borough or another part of the UK at short notice, meaning they would need to interrupt their learning until they could find alternative provision.

**Figure 43a: No ESOL experience: Time in the UK**  
Based on 734 records



**Figure 43b: No ESOL experience - ASYLUM SEEKERS ONLY**  
Based on 206 records



## Improving Job prospects and economic status

The EAS works closely with employability services to help residents improve their job prospects. The EAS is embedded in Camden and Islington JCPs to support job coaches and learners with ESOL needs to find the course that best suits their needs, taking into account barriers to learning that they may have experienced in the past or be experiencing at the time of registration. This can include those who are socially isolated due to responsibilities at home, cultural background and domestic violence. By working with referral partners that specialise in helping people with complex needs, EAS users can access provision designed not only to provide language training but also to improve mental wellbeing, raise aspirations and enable them to contribute positively to their communities.

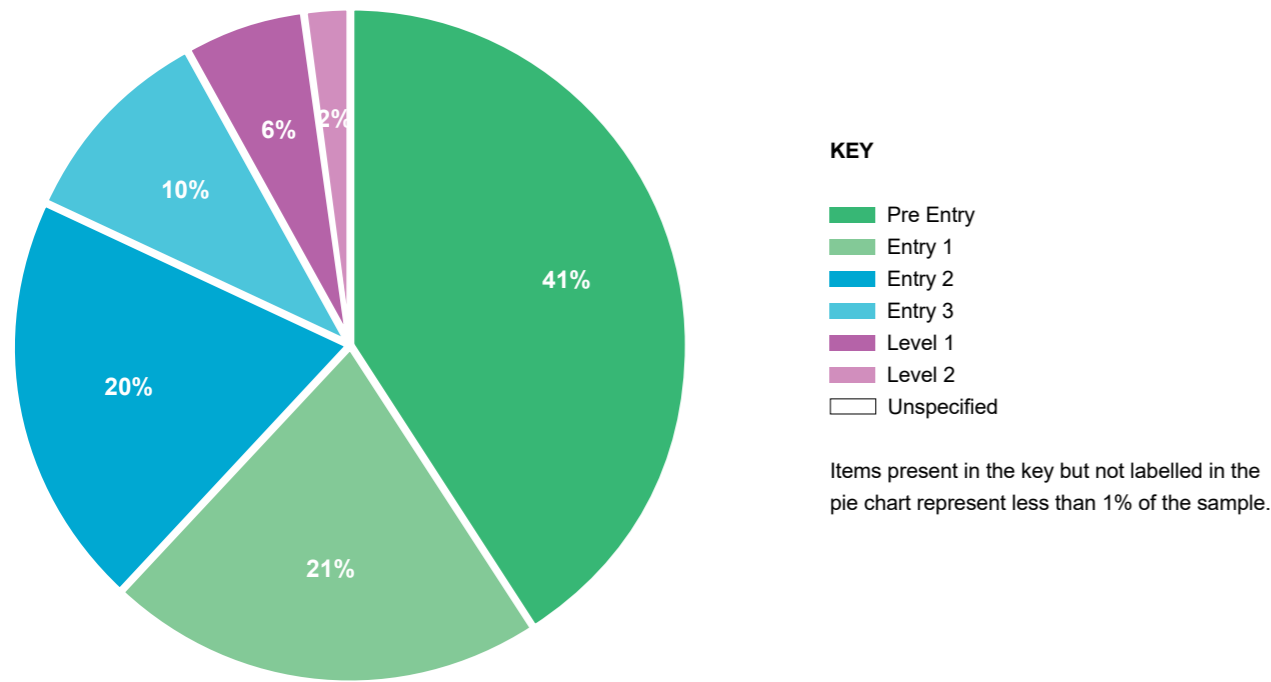
Another aim is to help JCP clients break dependence on benefits arising from poor language or literacy skills. As noted in previous years, although many find unskilled jobs, they continue to rely on benefits to meet daily living costs. As they become more used to being able to function with this level of English, they become more isolated from the larger community and less likely to pursue any education.

Many learners are embarrassed about their lack of previous education or do not believe they will be able to learn and need a supportive, community learning environment. Large further education colleges can seem intimidating to learners who do not realise there are Adult Education courses suitable for them or do not know how to register for classes. The EAS quickly identifies and removes small barriers which seem insurmountable to JCP customers.

At the other end of the scale, keen learners attending college can be offered supplementary classes to accelerate their learning and become economically active more quickly. ESOL is an essential part of the employability journey for JCP customers with English learning needs contributing to a better integrated and economically vibrant community, yet ESOL provision often remains inaccessible to JCP customers and work coaches without EAS intervention.

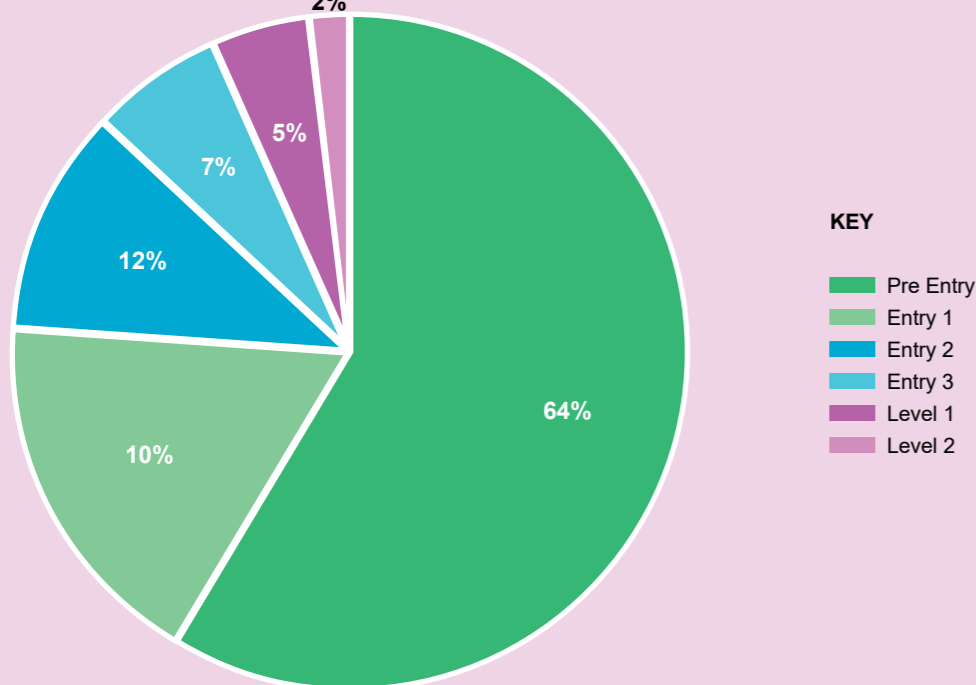
The majority of learners (82%) were assessed to be E3 or below, with 41% being Pre Entry.

**Figure 44a: ESOL levels**



**Figure 44b: ESOL levels - ASYLUM SEEKERS ONLY**

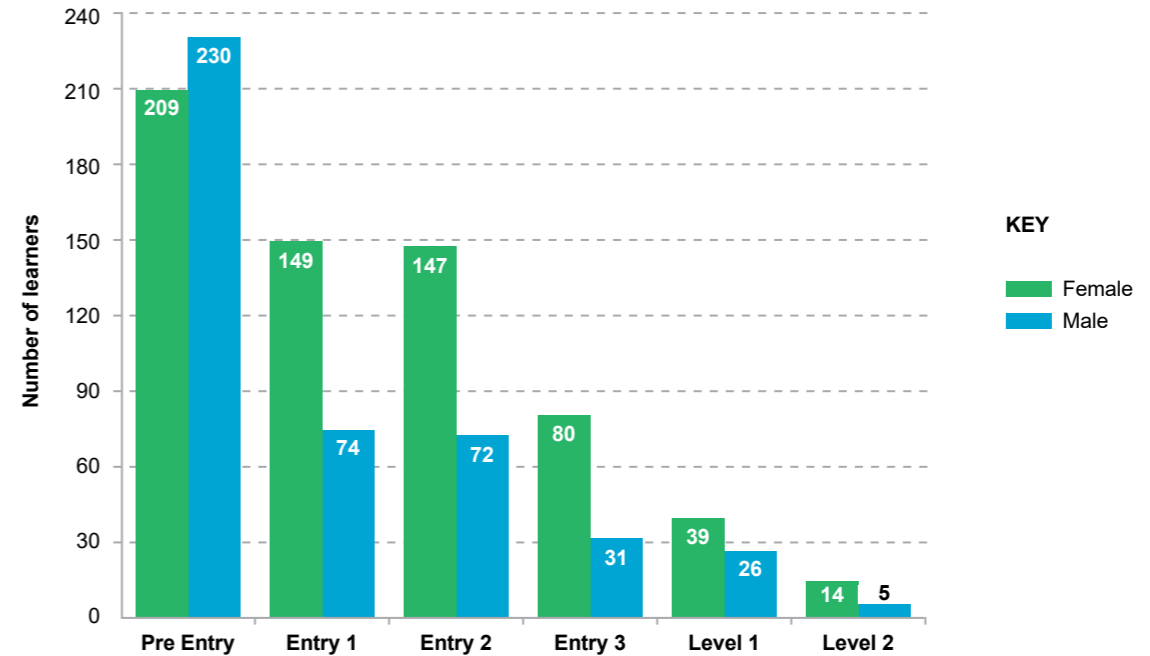
Based on 244 records



**FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS**

Almost three quarters of asylum seekers were assessed as either Pre Entry or E1, compared to 62% when analysing data from all learners who registered in 2022-23. The gender comparison based for the whole cohort shows that 52% of Pre Entry learners were male, but considering that 81% of the asylum seeker cohort were male, if the asylum seekers are removed from the data, the percentage of Pre Entry male learners reduces significantly to 33%.

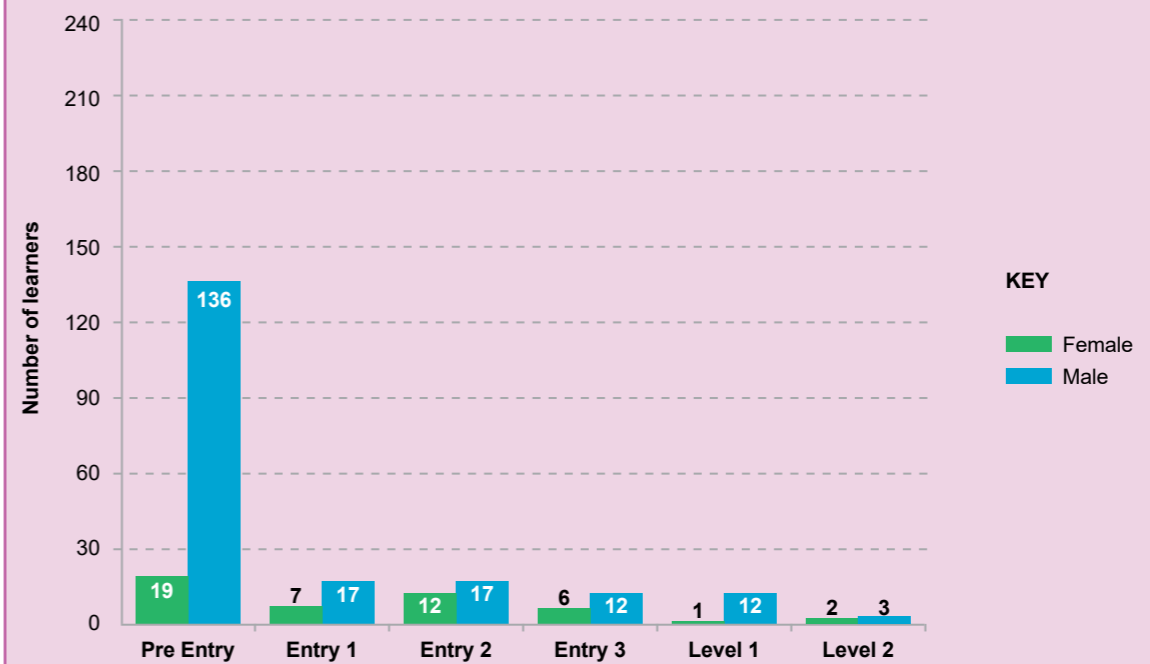
**Figure 45a: Levels by Gender**



52% of those assessed to be Pre Entry were male, overtaking females for the first time, however, for full context, please refer to the 'Focus of Asylum Seekers' information box. The level with the highest proportion of female learners was also Pre Entry (48%). The number of learners decreased as the level increased. The number of learners studying at E1 and E2 level were very similar, but the females outnumbered the males by a factor of two.

**Figure 45b: Levels by Gender - ASYLUM SEEKERS ONLY**

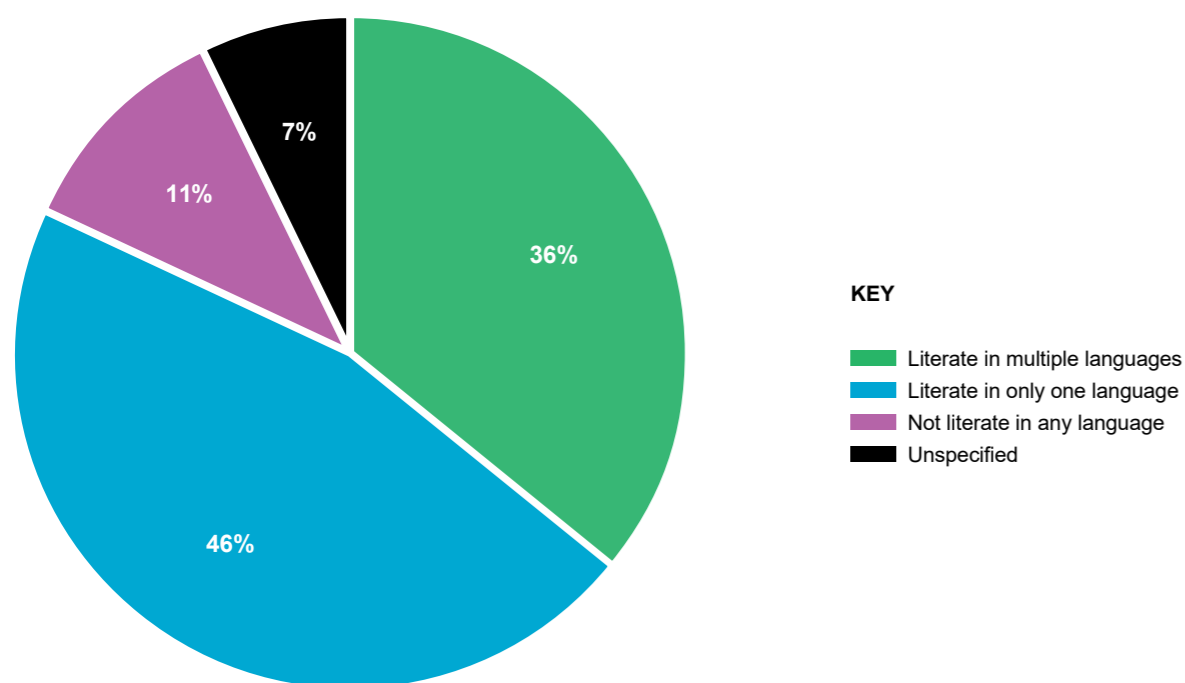
Based on 244 records



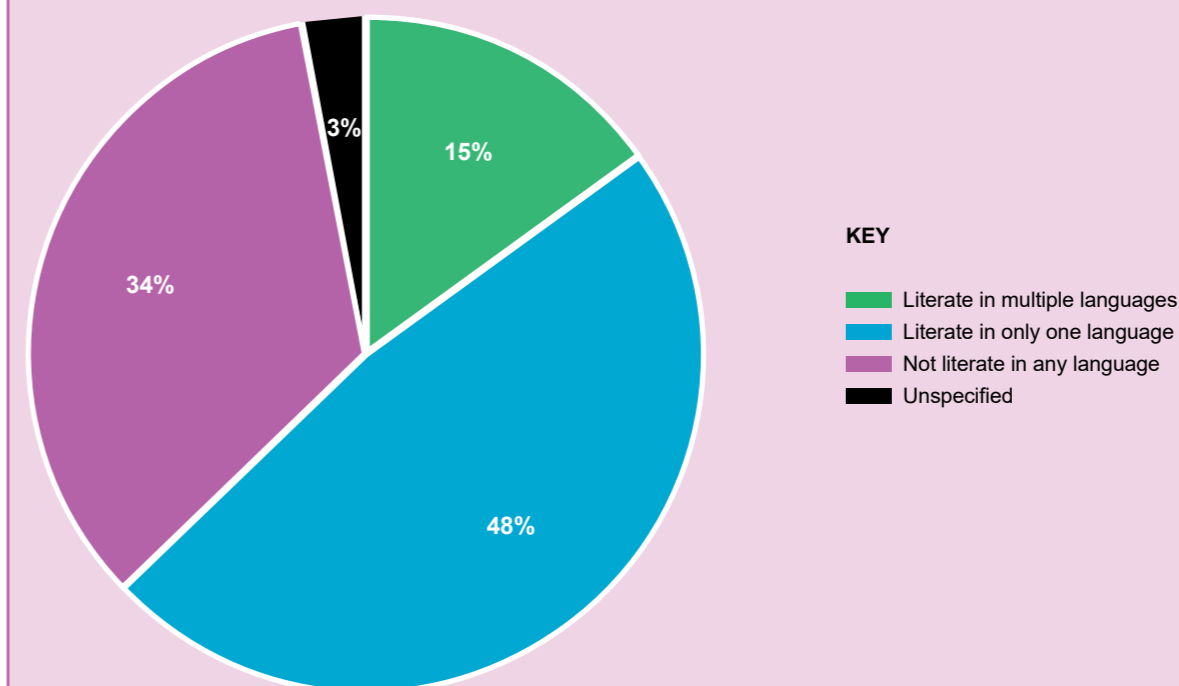
When ESOL learners demonstrate significantly stronger skills in some modes compared to others, they are said to have a 'spiky profile'. For instance, a learner may be assessed as L1 for speaking and listening but Pre Entry for writing and E1 for reading. This could be exacerbated by chronic literacy issues in the learner's background, as seen with some of the Afghan cohort this academic year.

Most second language acquisition occurs through slowly learning vocabulary that is useful for dealing with everyday life for the particular learner. Confident learners who regularly interact with English speakers may improve their level of spoken English more quickly than others, especially if they live and work with them. However, unless the learning process can be complemented in a classroom setting, mistakes can creep in and become fossilised over time, something which is difficult to undo. The sooner learners can access ESOL provision, the sooner they can benefit from structured learning and progress more quickly.

**Figure 46a: Literate in first or other languages?**



**Figure 46b: Literate in first or other languages? - ASYLUM SEEKERS ONLY**  
Based on 244 records



**FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS**

34% of asylum seekers reported they were not literate in any language, compared to 11% across all learners registering in 2022-23. If the asylum seekers are removed from the data, the percentage of learners reporting literacy issues drops to 4%.

**CASE STUDY**

Learner Y\* is an asylum seeker who is very keen to learn how to read and write so that he can be independent and get a job. He did not have the right to education or employment in his country as the government deemed him and his family as 'stateless'. He also has health problems and therefore needs an ESOL class near his accommodation. Learner Z\*, his wife, is also illiterate and eager to learn English, however, she is unable to join the ESOL classes with her husband as she has to stay home to look after their young children.

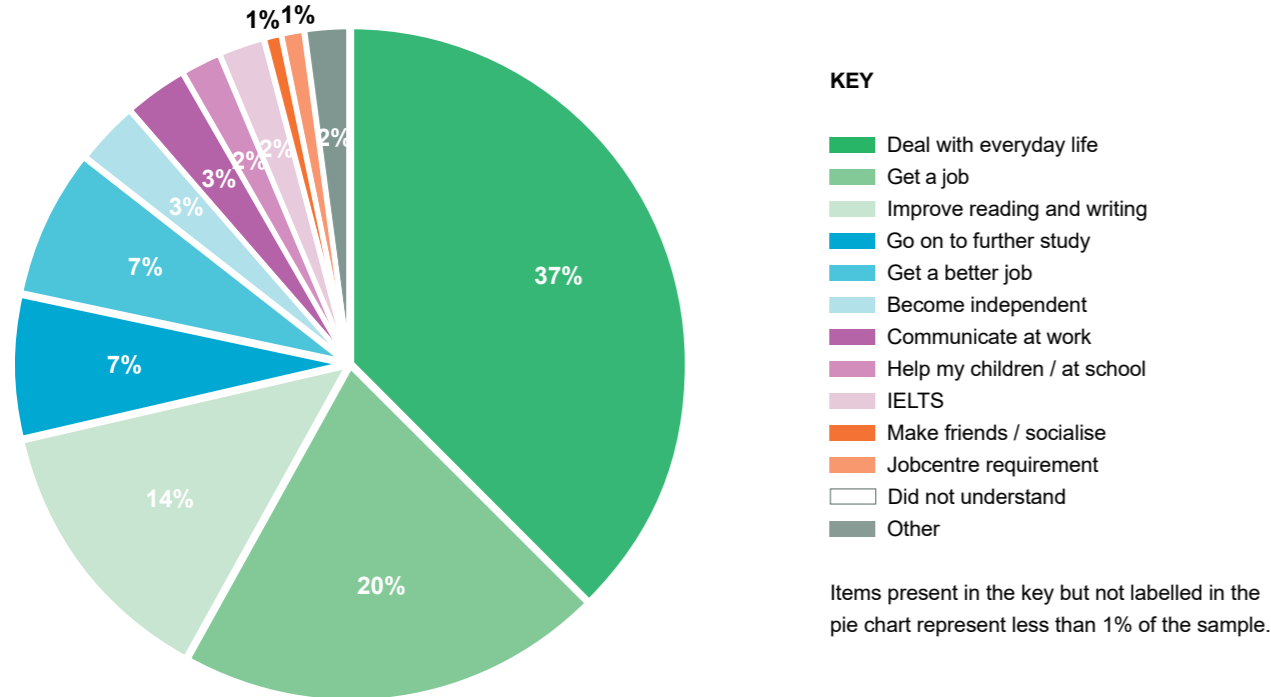
\*Identity of learners anonymised for confidentiality purposes

## REASONS FOR LEARNING ENGLISH

The EAS initial assessment system asks learners to select the main reasons they want to learn English from a prescribed list of options. The pie chart below reflects these responses.

**Figure 47: Main reasons for learning English**

Based on 904 responses



Reasons for learning English that didn't fit into the prescribed responses included learners who wanted to improve their speaking and pronunciation, improve their general confidence and ability to communicate with others, to help them talk to their children's teachers, gain citizenship and especially to improve their employability. Nearly a third (31%) of responses related to categories linked with the learners' employability prospects.

### FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS

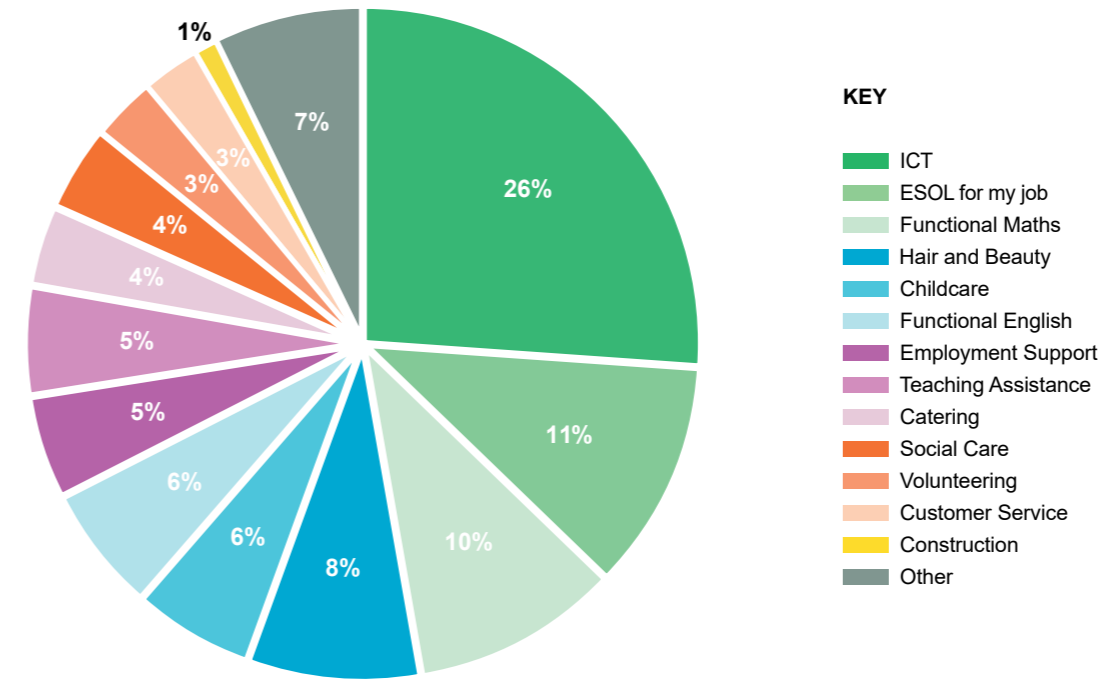
75% of asylum seekers stated they were learning English to help them deal with everyday life. A further 11% wanted to improve their reading and writing. 8% wanted to learn English to help them get a job in the future.

If the asylum seekers were removed from the data, the top three categories would remain the same, but the percentage of responses for 'Deal with everyday life' would reduce to 25%. Responses for 'Get a job' would increase to 24%, and 'Improve reading and writing' would increase to 15%.

## EMBEDDED ESOL

**Figure 48: Embedded ESOL**

Based on 265 responses



The 'other' category in the chart above contains responses from learners who wanted to register their interest in learning ESOL in the context of specific subjects or professions including accountancy, arts, business management, communications, design, electrical engineering, law, politics, security, marketing, playing guitar, pottery, psychotherapy, science, sewing, trading, tourism and hospitality.

There are so many of our learners who lack that self-belief and the motivation that they can achieve. When [they come] to the Advice Service, they get that excellent, personal, one to one bespoke, friendly advice. And it means that they come back to us because it's advice that they can trust.

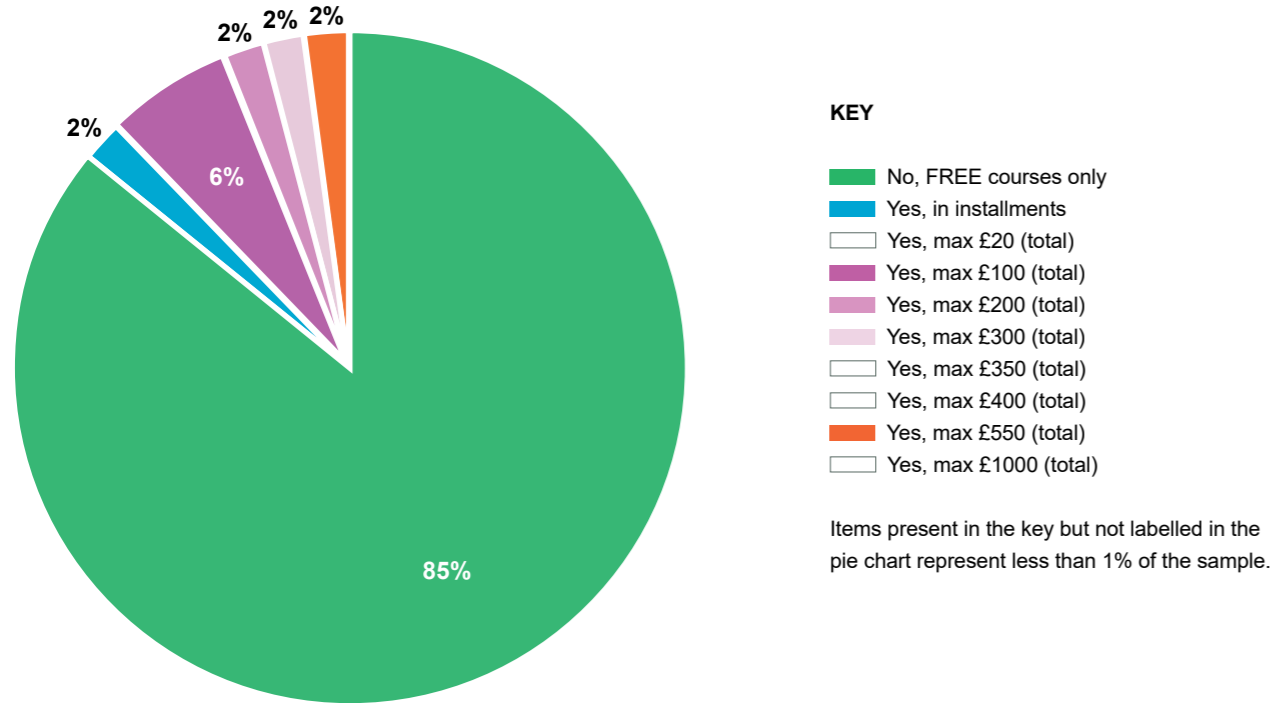
It develops the individual. It prepares them for their next steps. It provides them aspirations... that they can do something... they do have the ability.

*Akeel Ahmed, Head of Service, Islington Adult Community Learning*



# PREFERENCES

**Figure 49: Can the learner afford to pay?**  
Based on 977 responses

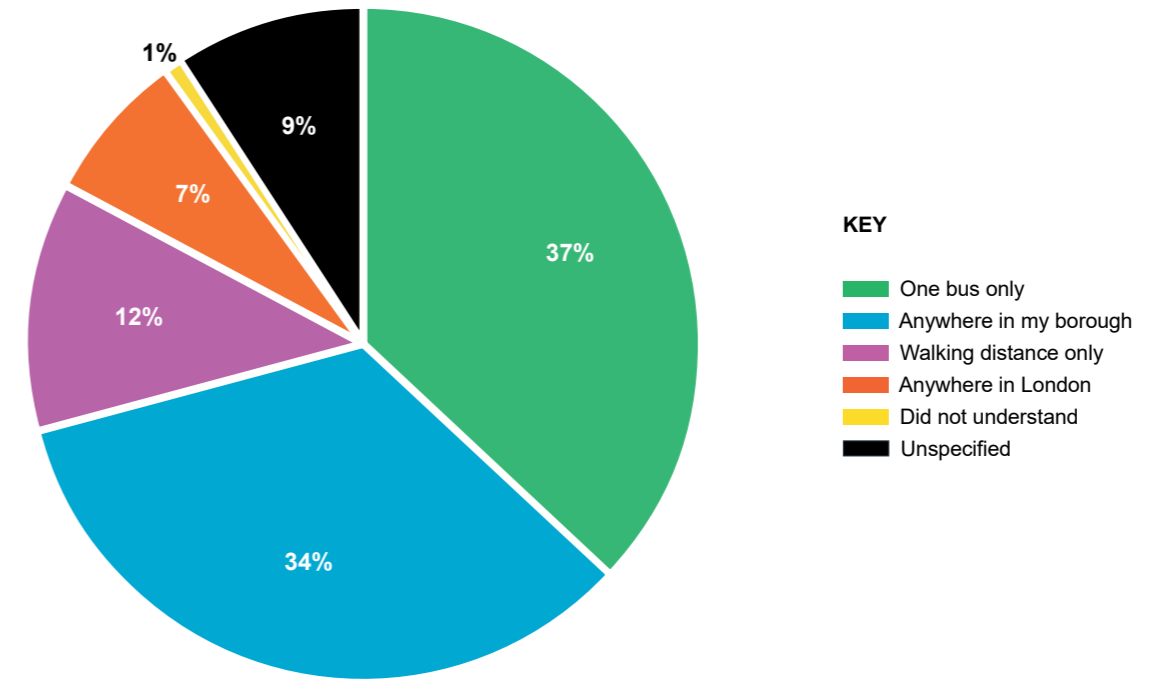


85% of all learners who registered with the Camden and Islington EAS in 2022-23 were looking for free ESOL provision. 10% were happy paying between £100 and £300 in total for their course. The highest maximum amount declared affordable was £1000. The course costs in Camden range from £100 to £1000, depending on the level and eligibility of the learner, leaving most learners isolated from the provision they need. By contrast, the vast majority of learners in Islington have access to free provision.

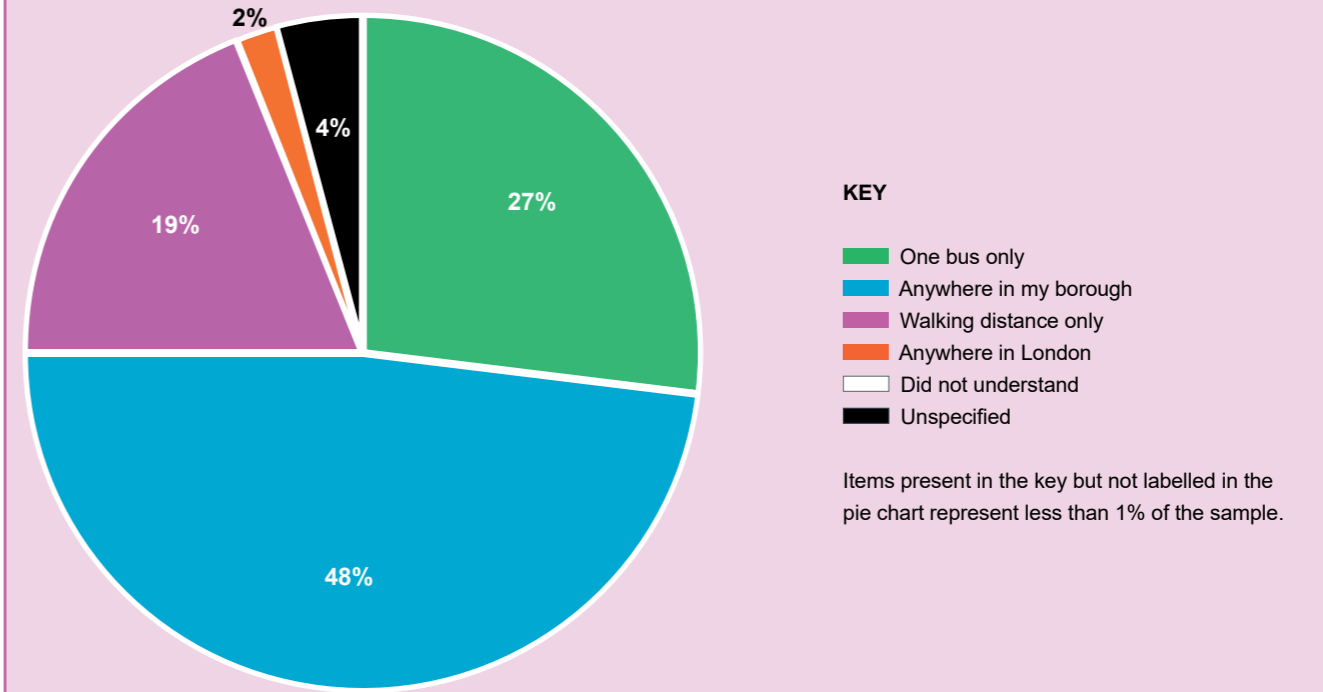
### FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS

99% of asylum seekers wanted access to free ESOL provision. The remaining 1% was made up of one learner who stated they could pay in installments of £75, and another who said they could pay a maximum of £100.

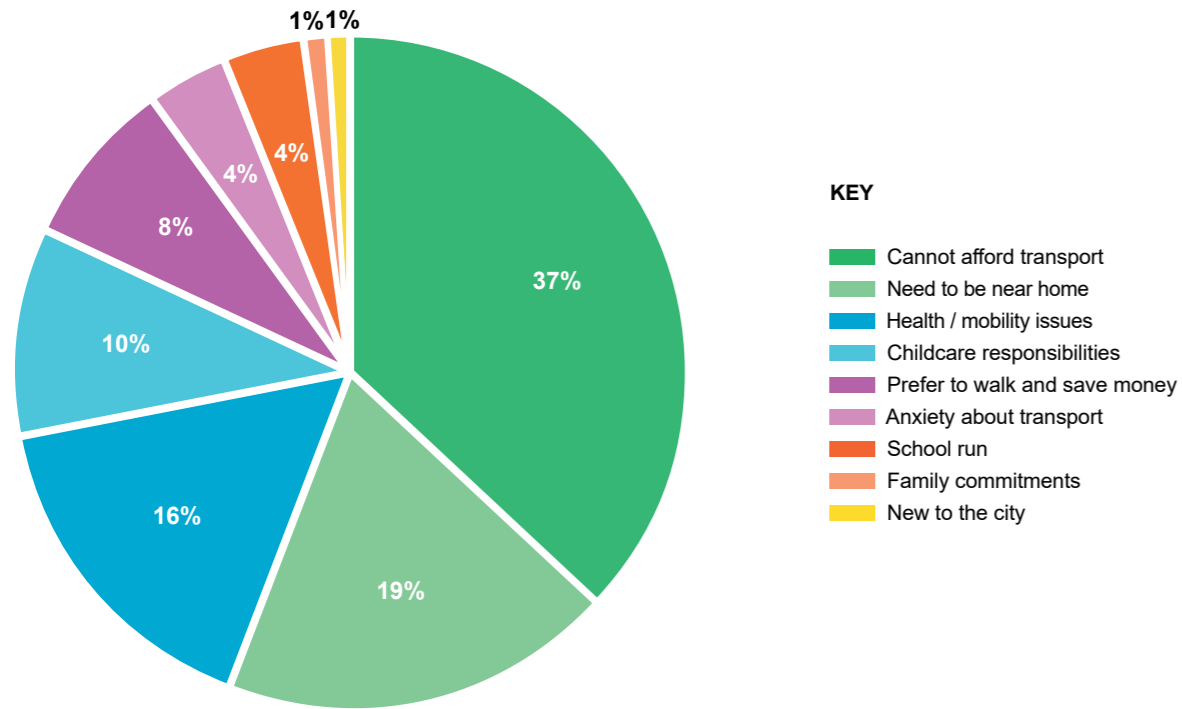
**Figure 50a: Travel preferences**



**Figure 50b: Travel Preferences - ASYLUM SEEKERS ONLY**  
Based on 244 records



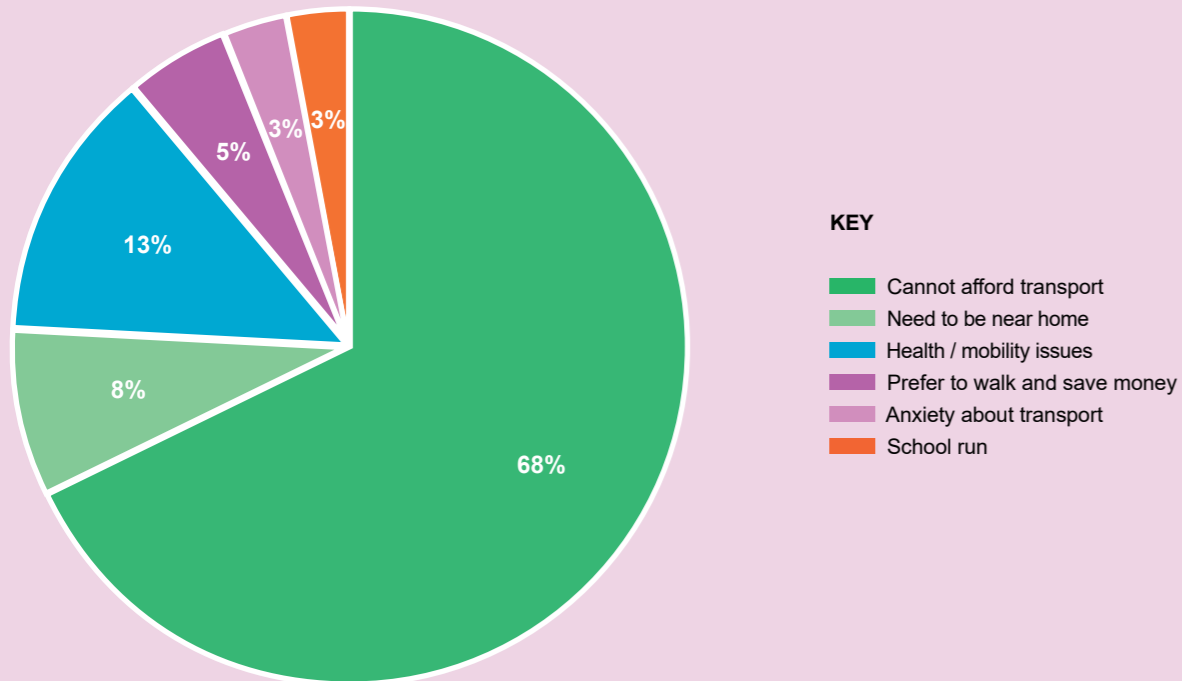
**Figure 51a: Walking distance only - Why?**  
Based on 100 responses



**FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS**

EAS data shows that asylum seekers were prepared to travel further to take part in ESOL classes. Of those who wanted their classes to be within walking distance of their home, over two thirds stated that this was because they couldn't afford transport, compared to over one third across all 2022-23 registrations.

**Figure 51b: Walking distance only - Why? - ASYLUM SEEKERS ONLY**  
Based on 38 responses

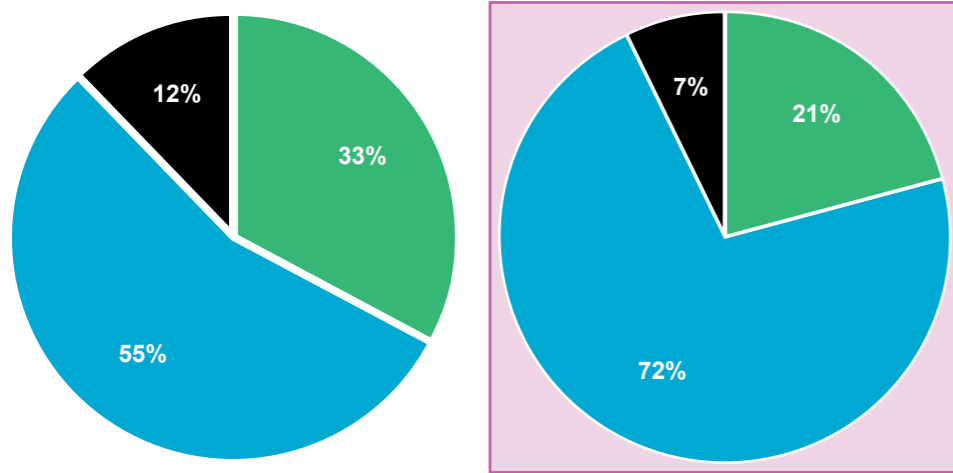


# CHILDREN AND CRÈCHE NEEDS

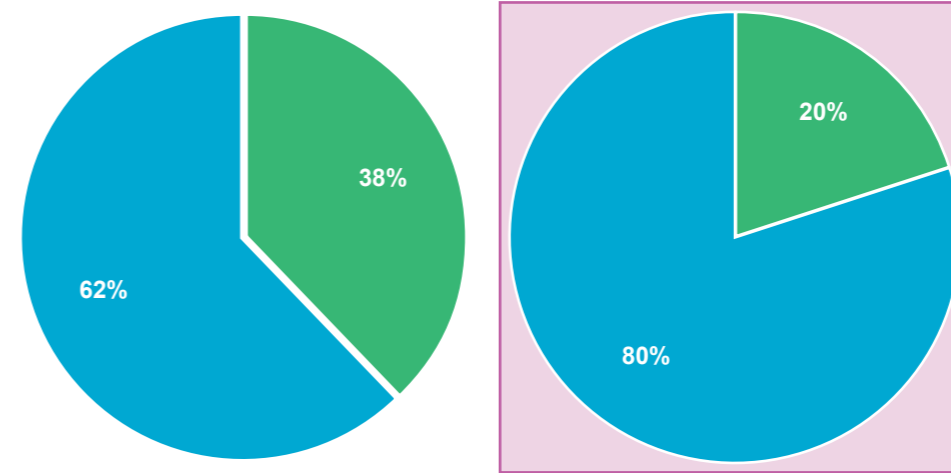
**KEY FOR FIGS 52-56**

- Yes
- No
- Unspecified

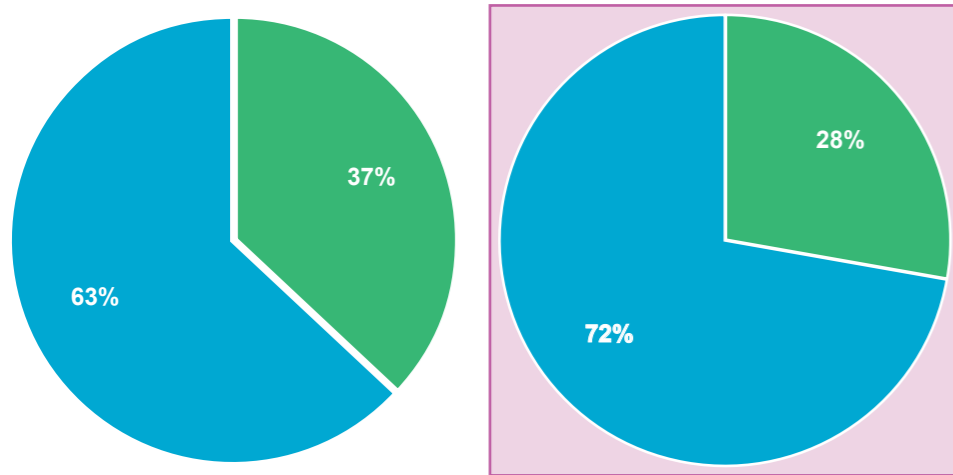
**Figure 52: Parent?**



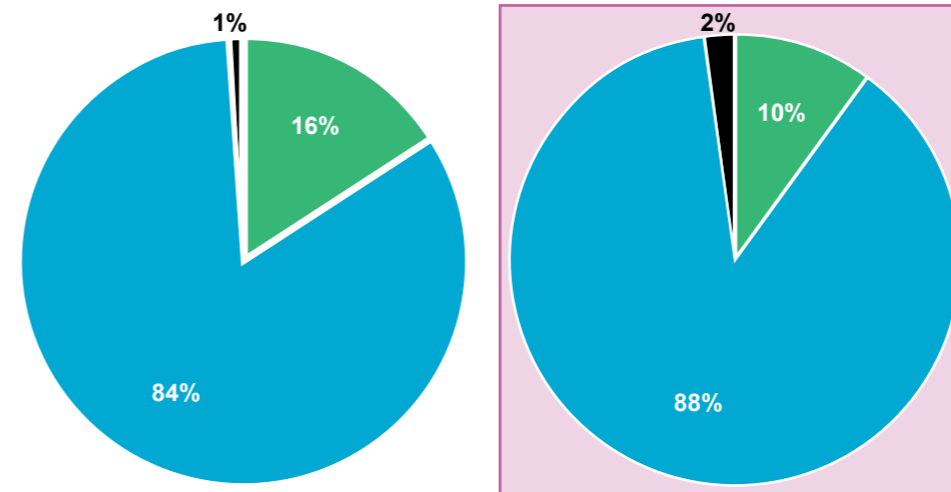
**Figure 55: At least one child aged 11-18 years?**



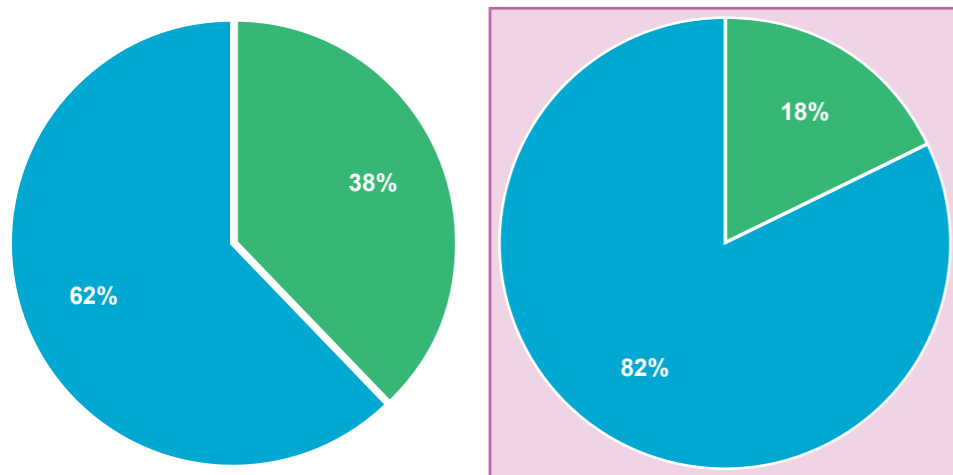
**Figure 53: At least one child under 5?**



**Figure 56: Crèche needs?**



**Figure 54: At least one child aged 5-10 years?**



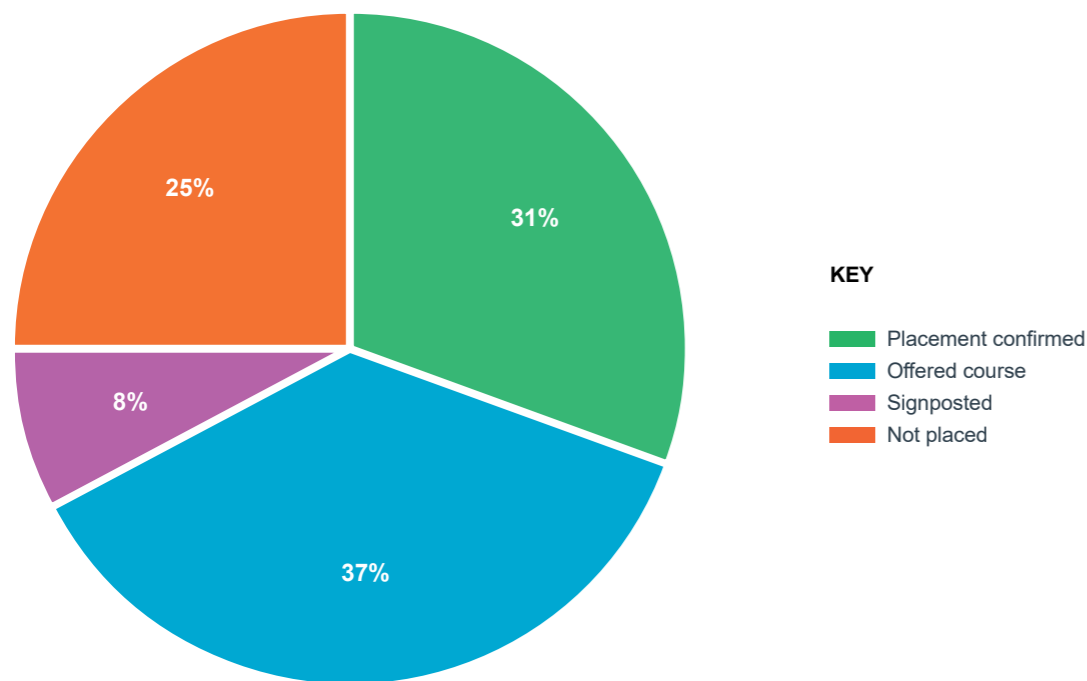
**FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS**

21% of asylum seekers reported being a parent, compared to 33% of the whole cohort, and over a quarter of those had children under 5 years old. However, there was less of a reported need for creche provision to enable these learners to take part in ESOL classes.

The questions about children and creche needs are designed to capture data about the family circumstances of a learner, allowing the advisors to make a more informed decision about the best provision for that particular learner to be referred to. Due to the way that the questions are worded, it is possible that some asylum seekers were providing information about children that were not in the UK with them. In cases where EAS advisors assisted them with the registration this would not be an issue.

**Figure 57a: Placed in a class within academic year?**

Based on 1283 advice records



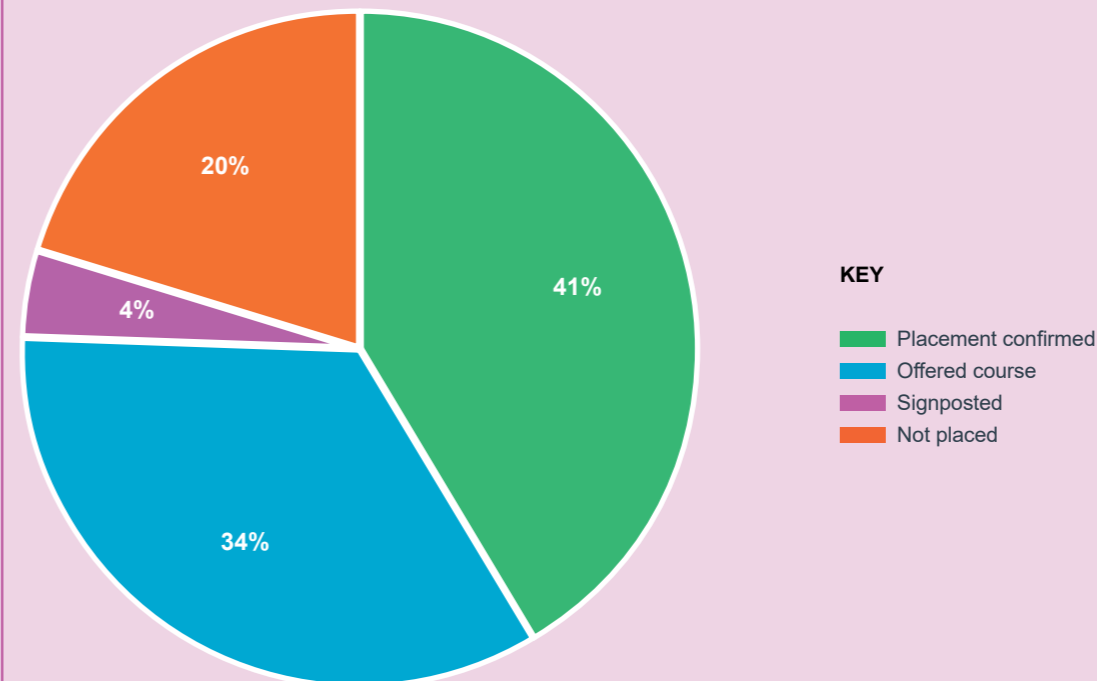
Overall, 31% of cases resulted in a confirmed placement into ESOL provision in Camden or Islington within the 2022-23 academic year and a further 37% of cases were recorded as 'offered course' by the end of that academic year. It is very important to note that significant proportion of the learners who were offered courses will have attended that provision, however, due to limited resources, it was not possible to follow up on these cases to confirm if their status could be updated to 'Placement confirmed'.

8% of cases were signposted to other learning opportunities. 70% of this group were referred to other London boroughs to register for ESOL provision available there. 16% were referred to Functional Skills provision or higher level English language options such as IELTS. The remaining were referred to appropriate online provision or to other subjects they had requested. In all cases of signposting, it is not known if the learners attended the provision or not.

At the end of the 2022-23 academic year, 25% of cases were still categorised as 'Not placed'. 19% of this group were on waiting lists for provision expected to take place the following academic year. 36% had various barriers to learning, which will be discussed in more detail later in this report. 9% declined all offers that were presented to them and the remaining 36% stopped responding to the EAS's repeated attempts to communicate with them or did not provide valid contact details when registering.

**Figure 57b: Placed within academic year? - ASYLUM SEEKERS ONLY**

Based on 258 advice records



**FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS**

41% of asylum seeker cases resulted in a confirmed placement in 2022-23. A further 34% were recorded as 'offered course' by the end of the academic year. 4% were signposted to other learning opportunities. 60% of this group were referred to other London boroughs for their ESOL provision, and a further 20% were referred to Functional Skills.

At the end of the academic year, 20% of asylum seekers cases were still categorised as 'Not placed'. 78% of this group had various barriers to learning, which will be discussed later in this report. 10% were on waiting lists for provision expected to take place the following academic year. 8% declined all course offers made to them and 4% stopped responding to EAS communications or did not provide valid contact details when registering with the service.

**ONGOING SUPPORT FOR AFGHAN LEARNERS**

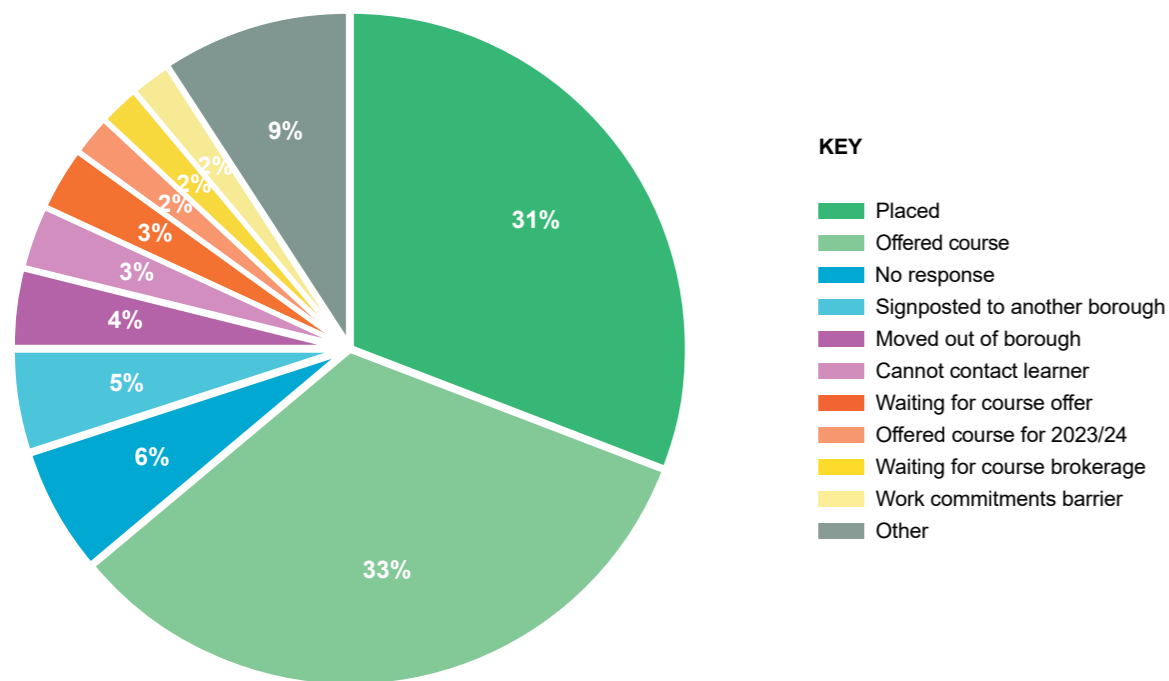
63% of Afghan learner cases resulted in a confirmed placement in 2022-23. A close working partnership with an advocate from a local charity who spoke Dari and Pashto allowed the EAS to stay in touch with the Afghan cohort of learners for a much longer period than usual, providing greater detail about their ongoing learning journey.

A further 17% of Afghans were offered courses, but the EAS and partners were unable to confirm that they had attended that provision. 11% were signposted to provision in other boroughs. 2% stopped responding to EAS communications or did not provide valid contact details when registering with the service.

The remaining 7% of Afghans experienced barriers to learning, the most common of which (for 83% of the group) was moving away from Camden and Islington, reducing the level of support the EAS was able to provide. To help provide continuity of service between the EAS and ESOL providers in other boroughs or other parts of the UK, the EAS introduced a system of "ESOL passports" which will be discussed in more detail in the Conclusion chapter.

**Figure 58a: Status of all advice records (July 2023)**

Based on 1283 advice records



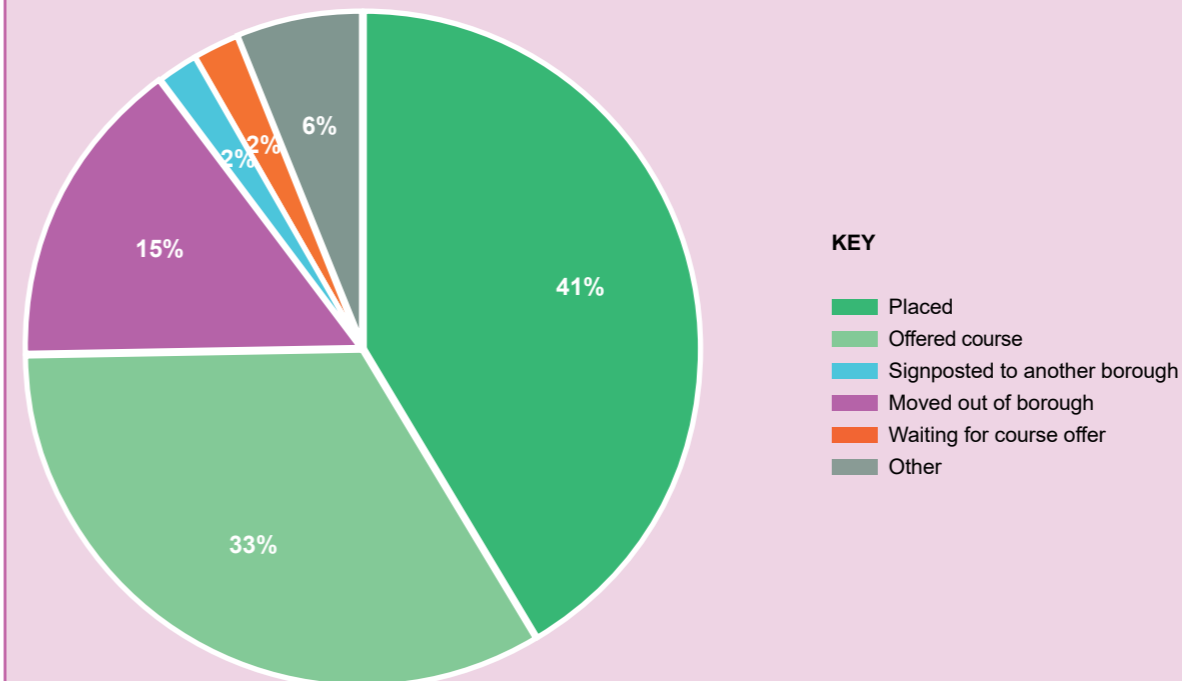
In addition to other barriers to learning and course offers that were declined, which will be detailed separately in Figures 59 and 60, the 'other' category in the chart also includes learners with the following statuses: Offered - No response, Signposted to Functional Skills, Signposted (Underage, Signposted to online provision, Referred but not contacted, Signposted to another subject, and Signposted to IELTS.

The chart above includes multiple categories pertaining to learners being offered courses. In all cases this means that an advisor formally offered a learner a place on a course and the learner was sent a letter or text detailing the offer. 'Offered course for 2023/24' relates to courses due to run in the following academic year. 'Waiting for course offer' means the learner registered towards the end of the academic year and their case has been deferred to the following year.

Overall, 6% of cases were recorded as 'No response'. This means that the learner didn't respond to communication attempts from the EAS and their case couldn't be taken any further at that time. 3% of cases resulted in a 'cannot contact learner' status. This means that the learner did not leave valid contact details when registering, or a previous contact method held for them was no longer valid.

**Figure 58b: Status of advice records (July 2023) - ASYLUM SEEKERS ONLY**

Based on 258 advice records

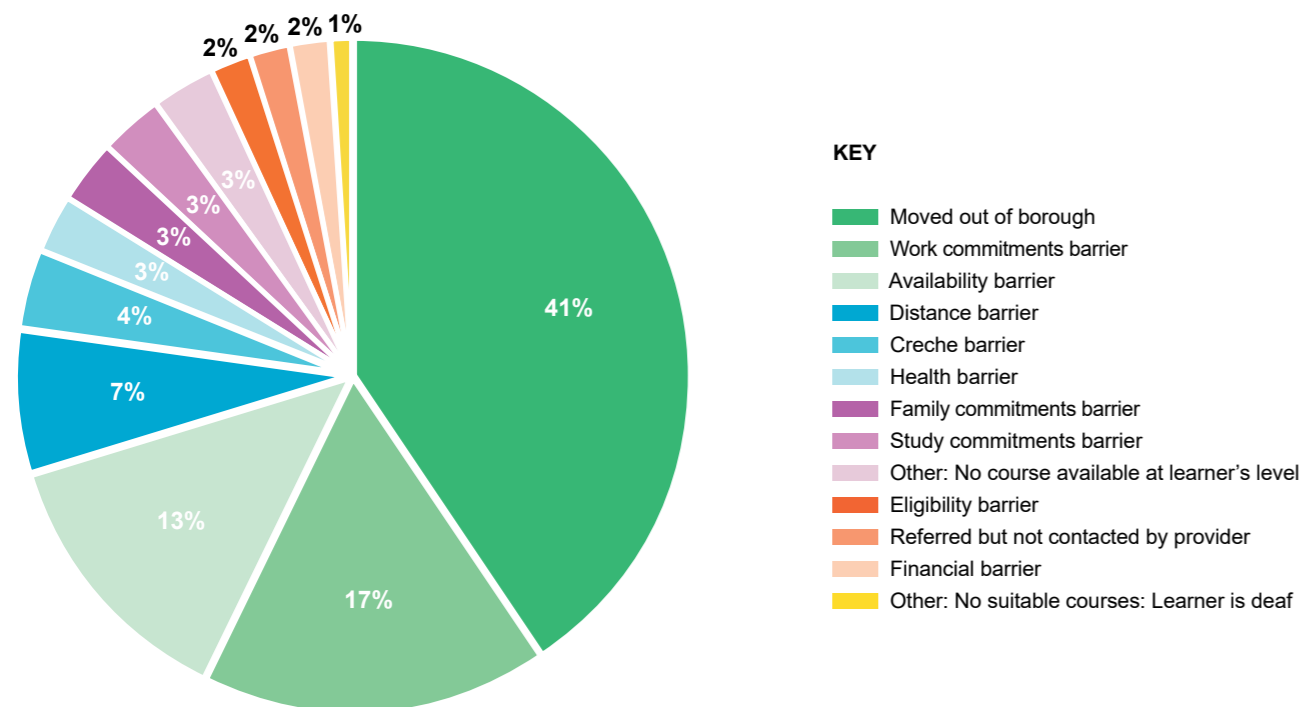


**FOCUS ON UKRAINIAN LEARNERS**

24% of Ukrainian learner cases resulted in a confirmed placement in 2022-23. A further 32% were offered courses, but the EAS were unable to confirm that they had attended that provision. 20% were signposted to provision in other boroughs. 2% were on waiting lists. 16% stopped responding to EAS communications, did not provide valid contact details when registering with the service or declined course offers made to them.

The remaining 7% of Ukrainians experienced barriers to learning, the most common of which (for 55% of the group) was work commitments. Other barriers encountered included study commitments, availability issues and eligibility issues.

**Figure 59: Barriers to engaging in learning**  
Based on 115 responses

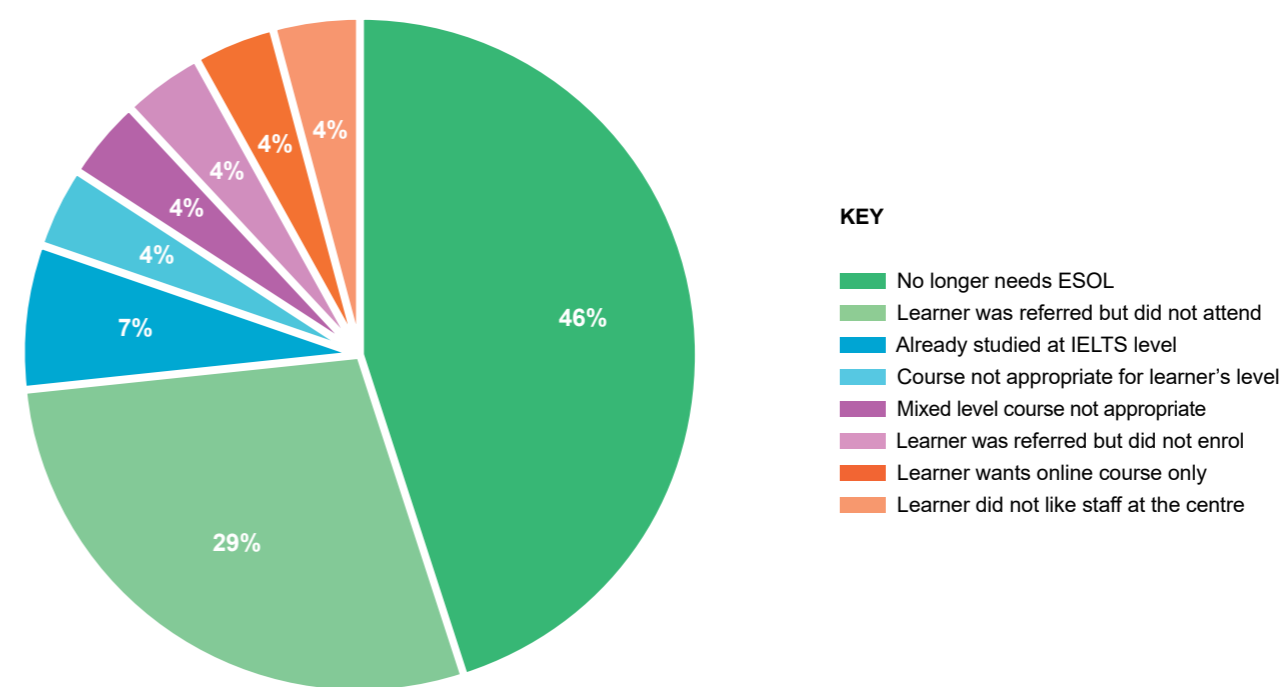


'Moved out of borough' is a distinct category from 'Signposted to another borough' due to the lack of control over the situation on the part of the EAS advisor. Half of this cohort simply told the EAS that they were moving away from the area, but gave no further details, so the EAS was unable to advise them any further. In those cases, the learners were advised to contact the local authority in the area they were moving to, but as this referral wasn't official and relied on the learner themselves pursuing it, it was felt that recording them as signposted was not an accurate reflection of their outcome, and them falling outside the direct jurisdiction of the EAS was a valid barrier to their progression into the correct provision for them.

### FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS

16% of asylum seekers encountered barriers to learning, with the main barrier affecting 95% of those learners being a sudden change in accommodation, often meaning they had to move away from Camden. This situation is included in Figure 59 as part of the 'Moved out of borough' category. If the asylum seekers are removed from the data, this category reduces drastically from 41% to 12%.

**Figure 60: Reasons for declining course offers**  
Based on 28 responses



Due to the small number of cases that resulted in learners declining course offers, it is not possible to infer any statistical significance regarding the reasons presented. The chart above is for illustrative purposes only and provided to simply show the range of reasons given for declining a course offer. Over half (54%) of the responses pertained to the learners no longer needing or wanting to pursue ESOL learning opportunities.

### CASE STUDY

In May 2022, a newly arrived refugee from Ukraine registered with the EAS. His case required an even more personalised approach than usual as he was deaf and didn't speak English at all. He had also requested to join a class in a smaller setting as he found college environments too daunting.

Over the following months, the EAS advisor researched the options available through various organisations that support deaf residents, and discovered that to join an ESOL course, the learner would need to have some knowledge of British Sign Language (BSL). By October 2022, a place of a suitable BSL course had been offered to the learner, but he had recently found full-time employment and was not able to attend the class.

Behind the scenes, the EAS advisor remained in touch with support organisations, striving to find suitable BSL provision for the learner. Various options didn't come to fruition, but at the end of May 2023, the learner informed the EAS that he had been able to learn some BSL through his workplace and was now ready to be placed on a ESOL course with BSL support. A suitable course, due to begin in the following academic year, was located and the EAS advisor secured an interview for him.

Following the interview, the learner told the EAS that he would prefer a course with more learning hours per week, but the EAS advised him to accept the current offer, as provision of this nature was very difficult to secure. Following the start of the course in September 2023, the learner stopped responding to messages from the EAS and it is not known how he has progressed.

Mary Ward Centre has a long history of providing ESOL for people seeking asylum and refuge. There's a temporary nature to accommodation for asylum seekers, so whatever [classes] you set up have to be flexible... because people get moved on and they find more permanent accommodation. [The challenge] was finding somewhere to set up a short term course that had a meaningful outcome and that would support people to get some form of accreditation and help them to start to understand what life here in Britain is all about.

*Kirsty Barlow, Essential Skills Curriculum Manager, Mary Ward Centre*

The pie charts below show the distribution of advice sessions and number of returners across the three terms in the academic year.

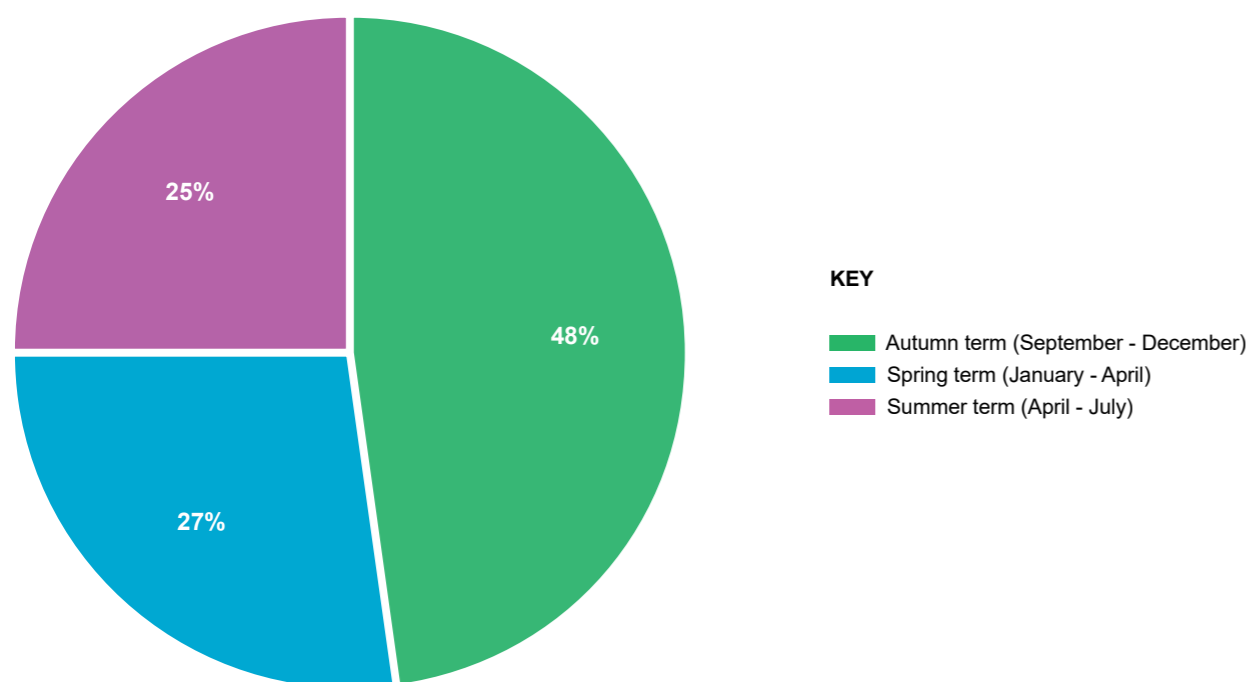
The majority of cases dealt with across the academic year originated in the Autumn term. This is largely due to the cases that were deferred from the end of the previous academic year when enrolment onto continuing courses was already closed, but it also reflects the common pattern of people eager to start learning following the Summer break when their children go back to school and a fresh academic year begins. Learners who returned to the service throughout the year also had a strong preference for Autumn term, showing their eagerness to continue their learning at the start of the academic year, as well as demonstrating their continued trust in the EAS to support them in finding the provision most appropriate for their circumstances.

### FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS

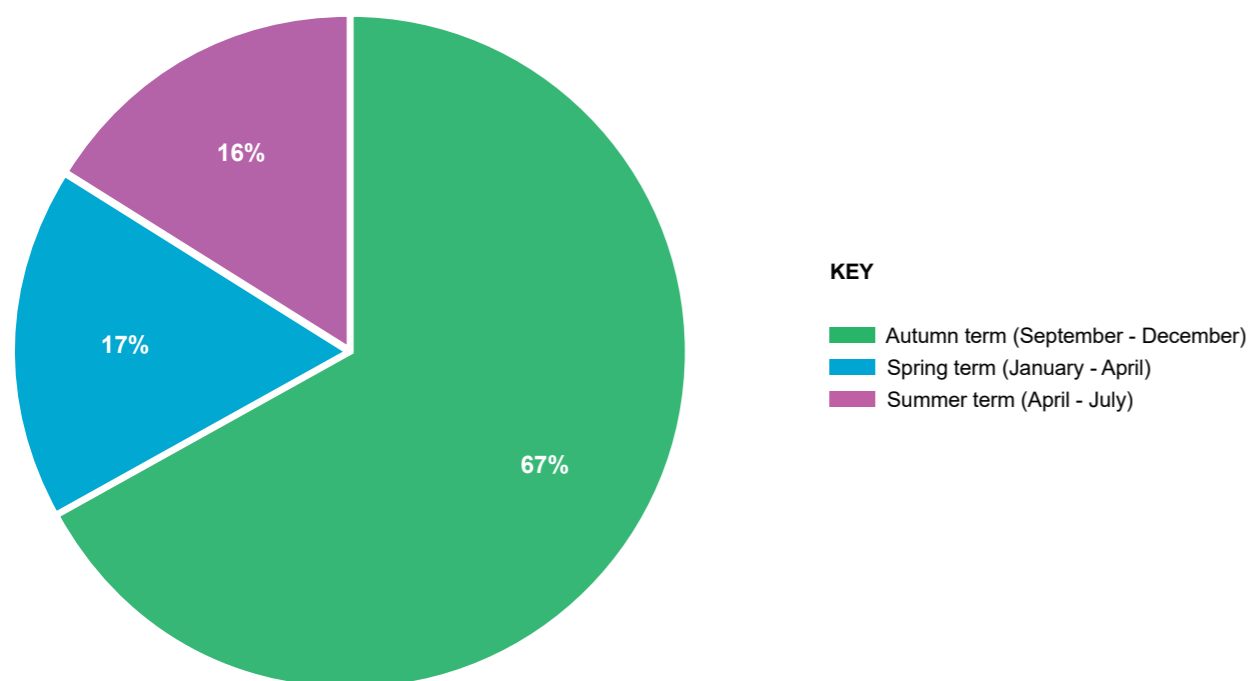
38% of asylum seeker cases originated in the Autumn term, 38% in the Spring term, and 23% in the Summer term.

Only 12 asylum seekers returned to the service for further advice, within the 2022-23 academic year, but this is largely due to the instability of their accommodation situation, with many being moved away from London at short notice to be housed elsewhere in the country. The EAS endeavours to support all learners, even when they are referred out of borough.

**Figure 61: Number of cases per term**



**Figure 62: Returning learners: Term of re-registration**

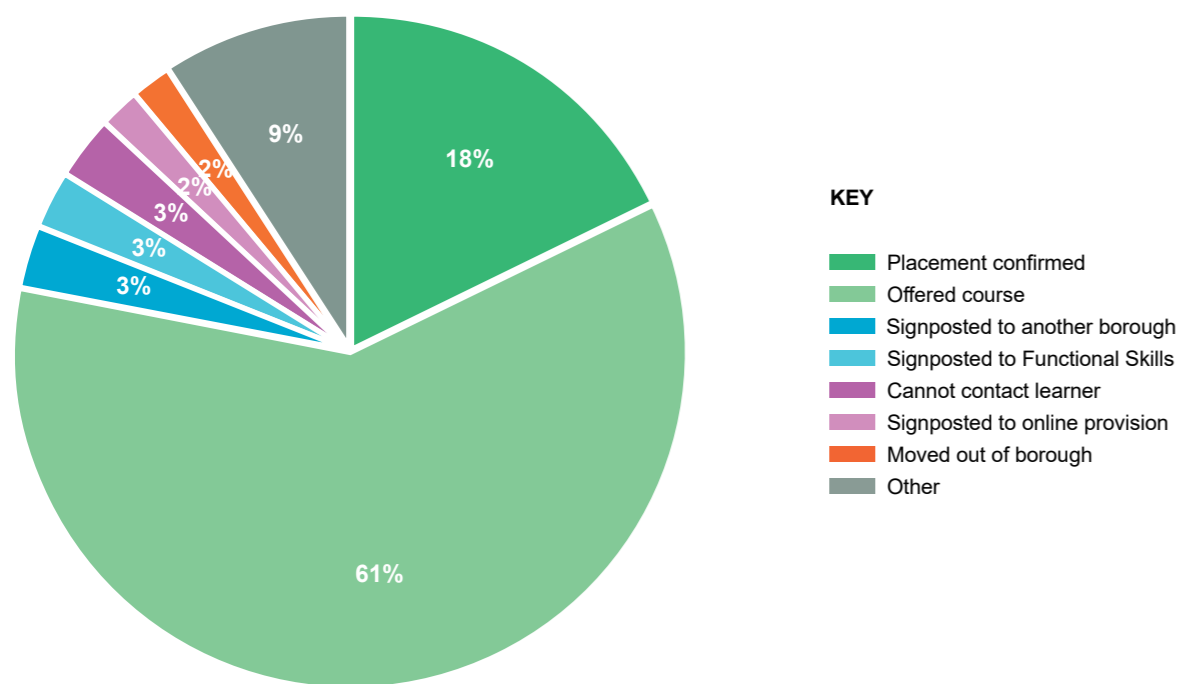


During the Covid-19 pandemic, the EAS was concerned about learners falling into dormancy due to the lack of available provision during extended periods of lockdown and uncertainty. A weekly 'ESOL Activities' publication was developed and distribution to all learners who were interested began in May 2020. Each pdf collates self-teaching materials from trusted online sources across all levels, along with useful links to additional websites for learning and to promote available community support services. Topics are split across a number of categories including Life in the UK, Home and Family, Work, and Leisure and Interests. The back catalogue of issues is available online on the ESOL Advice Service's series of webpages. The pdfs are checked and updated periodically to ensure the links to online resources are still available and relevant. By the end of the 2022-23 academic year, 586 people were subscribed to the mailout.

169 of those subscribers were live cases with the EAS throughout 2022-23. The chart below shows the current statuses of those learners, demonstrating that for 82% of them, the ESOL Activities pdf may have been the only access they had to improve their English language skills at the time of reporting.

**Figure 63: Current status of ESOL Activities pdf subscribers 2022-23**

Based on 169 learners



The 'other' category in the chart above comprises of the following responses: No response, Offered - No response, Offered course for 2023/24, Work commitments barrier, Availability barrier, Creche barrier, Financial barrier, Health Barrier, Offer declined: Learner wants online course only, Other: No suitable courses: Learner is deaf, Signposted to another subject, Study commitments barrier, and Waiting for course offer (all 1%).

### FOCUS ON ASYLUM SEEKERS

33 asylum seekers were subscribed to the newsletter during the 2022-23 academic year. 21% had confirmed placements, but for the other 79% the newsletter may have been the only access they had to improve their English language skills at the time of reporting.

All the statistics throughout this report, demonstrate that it is not enough just for provision to be available in the community. A learner's journey towards finding the right ESOL provision is often long and slow, due to the numerous barriers they can face, especially if studying at a lower level. For many, finding the courage to leave their house is challenging enough, reducing the likelihood that they will approach community providers directly themselves. There are also added complexities when it comes to understanding funding eligibility and many presume they are not able to access the provision that is available in the community.

The Camden and Islington EAS remains unique in the sector by being able to retain records about learner's circumstances and stay in touch with them over long periods of time to ensure that they ultimately find the ESOL provision that is best suited for them. Learners trust that they can return to the EAS at any time for updated information and advice. The EAS removes complexities in the process, plugs gaps in knowledge and provides one-to-one support and encouragement for those who need it the most.

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for the partnership and collaboration we have enjoyed with Camden ESOL Advice Service. Your team's professionalism, compassion, and commitment have had a profound impact on the lives of our service users. Your efforts in empowering them with language skills and helping them navigate their new environment have made a lasting difference.

We firmly believe in the power of collaboration and the collective effort to make a positive impact on the lives of those in need. We are immensely grateful for your partnership and the transformative effect you have had on the lives of our service users.

*Ahsanul Haque, Welfare Officer (Contingency hotel)*

Thank you for sending me online ESOL activities! They are wonderful! I can not only learn English, but also learn about various cultures through these activities. It is my pleasure to understand other cultures. I am looking forward to the next issue.

*ESOL Activities subscriber*



## Summary of key findings

During the 2022-23 academic year, the Camden and Islington ESOL Advice Service supported 1078 unique learners.

Almost three fifths of learners (59%) were female. The average age was within the 30-39 age band. 22% were from Eastern Europe, of which almost two thirds were from Ukraine. 19% were from the Middle East and North Africa, half of which were seeking asylum in the UK. 14% were from South Asia, almost half of which were born in Afghanistan. 63% of learners confirmed they were literate in one or more languages.

20% of learners were seeking asylum in the UK. 11% were British Citizens and a further 11% were EU nationals. 9% were Ukrainian refugees. 42% of all learners were seeking protection in the UK. 43% had been resident in the UK for less than 12 months. 14% had been in the UK for 10 years or more. 74% declared they had no ESOL qualifications at the time of registration. 62% of learners were assessed to be at Pre Entry or E1 level. Overall, 94% were E3 level or below.

Out of all learners who were of working age, 85% confirmed they were unemployed. 68% of those who were working were on a low income. Most learners who had employment experience in the UK had worked as cleaners and this was also the most common current job role, but being a teacher was the most common occupation in their home country. Of those who were unemployed, 50% declared they wanted to work, 1% were volunteering, 30% were not looking for work, and 16% stated they were looking after the home, children or other dependents. 2% were retired.

33% of all learners declared they were parents, and of those, 37% had at least one child under the age of five. 16% declared they needed crèche provision to be able to study ESOL.

Most learners wanted to learn English to help them deal with everyday life (37%), get a job (20%) or improve their reading and writing (14%). Overall, nearly a third (31%) related to categories linked with the learners' employability prospects.

Of those who had an interest in embedded ESOL, most wanted to study ESOL with ICT (26%). A further 16% wanted to study ESOL in a context that would help them with their job. 32% had taken part in higher education including 5% who declared they had studied for a Masters degree. Economics, Medicine, Law and Teaching were the most cited areas of study for learners who had post-secondary education in their home countries.

ESOL provision was available at all levels from Pre Entry to Level 2. Alternative options were available for learners who didn't qualify for GLA-funded provision or couldn't afford to pay fees. These included classes held at language schools that run CELTA teacher training. A DELTA trained tutor was always present, but the classes were led by teacher who was training for their CELTA qualification. There were no eligibility criteria and the sessions were free if the learner committed to attending 80% of the course.

Overall, the EAS dealt with 1330 active cases during 2022-23. 31% of all cases resulted in a confirmed placement on an ESOL course. A further 37% were offered courses but due to limited resources these cases couldn't be followed up to confirm if the learner had been placed or not. 8% were signposted to other boroughs or other subjects, and 5% were on waiting lists for provision. A 11% did not respond, could not be contacted, or declined all offers made to them. The remaining learners were prevented from learning for a range of reasons. The most commonly cited barrier to joining an ESOL class among this group was moving away from Camden and Islington (41%), followed by work commitments (17%) and availability issues (13%).

## The cost of not delivering neutral ESOL advice in London

With 11,637 residents who don't speak English well or at all in Camden and Islington (Census 2021) the estimated cost of not providing ESOL intervention is **£232 million\*** per year across both boroughs. While several proxies are used to calculate this figure, undoubtedly it is in the hundreds rather than tens of millions and this is only the economic cost. The social and wellbeing cost is even more difficult to calculate. In addition, this figure does not include the cohorts of refugees and asylum seekers that were placed in hotel accommodation in the 2022-23 academic year.

As UK specific and global crises move more people with ESOL needs into and out of Camden and Islington, the need for an efficient system for processing them becomes more urgent to help learners to access the support that will help them to survive, thrive and contribute to their communities.

In addition, data on learner needs and barriers assists providers to facilitate learning as tailored as possible to learners and gives funders an evidence base with which to make budgeting decisions. This is evidenced through the number of bespoke courses brokered by the EAS with local providers.

## An intervention for matching supply to demand

With a mission to help every learner who would like to access English to find a course that suits their needs so that they can take the next step in their lives without being held back by language barriers, the EAS seeks to locate demand and, where necessary, intervene to meet it.

While it would be helpful if learners could find, understand their eligibility for and access the most suitable ESOL provision for their needs, the year-on-year growth in the numbers of EAS users strongly suggests this is not how it works on the ground.

Even the perception that classes matching their needs is unlikely to exist can be enough to prevent a learner from seeking it out. In addition, other barriers to learning include previous negative experiences, mistrust of institutions, complex needs and unclear progression routes. In other words, demand for ESOL cannot be understood simply as recognition of the need for English tuition. It sits within a wider context of understanding how that need interacts with each individual's background, circumstances and aspirations.

For refugees and asylum seekers, even more barriers to learning exist in the form of insecure accommodation and the possibility of being moved at any moment so even if suitable provision can be found, they may have been moved out of borough before they can access it (*see Impact of accommodating asylum seekers in contingency hotels* below).

On the supply side, a key role of the EAS is supporting non-ESOL specialist organisations to serve the needs of specific cohorts as has been the case since 2021-22 with organisations coordinating the response to Afghan, Ukrainian and, albeit to a much lesser extent, learners on the Hong Kong British Nationals Overseas (BNO) route.

This has given rise to the need for more bespoke provision for learners who need extra support (e.g. on-site classes at hotels) before accessing more formal provision.

The EAS bespoke website is used widely and continues to be developed to provide an evidence base for decision making that has historically been limited or unavailable in ESOL.

\*Based on the benefit entitlements of residents with little or no English across Camden and Islington.

In addition, the high number of cross-borough referrals in the 2022-23 academic year demonstrates the continuing need for the service and the value of a two-borough IAG solution and the EAS is working with some neighbouring boroughs to explore the possibility of a tri-borough collaboration.

In addition to existing partnerships with JCPs and employability hubs, relationships across the spectrum from small community-based organisations to large corporate employers grew, helping the EAS to collect more data on links between the need for English language training and other important aspects of learners' lives. As in the previous academic years, two thirds of EAS users are on low incomes, up to half are on benefits and the second highest proportion of referrals to the service are from JCPs, highlighting the intersection between ESOL, income and employability.

Although the EAS mission remains the same as when the service launched in 2018, the ever-changing backdrop demands a flexible approach to enable the service to respond quickly, communicate with partners effectively and triage learners to the right place efficiently.

An uncertain funding future makes it difficult to plan for future of the EAS. However, as indications for 2023-24 suggest further national and global factors will disproportionately affect some of the individuals and groups targeted by the EAS, it is predicted that the service will become a more necessary intervention for the sector.

## **Impact of contingency hotel accommodation for asylum seekers policy**

### **ESOL passports**

As a result of ongoing geopolitical events where guidance around factors such as eligibility for free courses is regularly being adjusted it is difficult for ESOL stakeholders to develop a clear response, confusing for ESOL learners to understand their entitlement and challenging for the EAS to measure impact.

In addition, the EAS faced challenges reaching learners who come to the UK fleeing war and persecution. In the case of Afghan and Ukrainian refugees, the first group was concentrated in the same accommodation (bridging hotels) so once the organisations coordinating the response allowed, the EAS was able to quickly establish weekly sessions and bespoke ESOL classes on-site. While initial bureaucracy prevented the EAS from accessing learners immediately, once these barriers were overcome, all learners could be registered swiftly.

Because the Homes for Ukraine Scheme model dispersed Ukrainians much more widely across the boroughs, ensuring that they were aware of the service required a more creative marketing effort and partnership building and therefore took longer.

In the academic year 2021-22, the EAS anticipated that refugee and asylum seeking learners would be relocated, often within 24 hours. Given the challenges they were likely to face continuing their ESOL journey, EAS introduced the "ESOL Passport Intervention" in 2022-23 to help mitigate some of these barriers to learning.

When learners are moved to other areas of the country, their learner journeys are disrupted, potentially several times, making it difficult and frustrating for them to find the provision they need and more difficult for providers to plan for meeting this need.

In order to address this issue, the EAS partnered with coordinators in hotels to track individual learner journeys on one document. This 'ESOL passport' included the learner's level and any courses attended. This meant that if they were relocated, they would have evidence of their learning and potentially be able to avoid the frustration of repeating the entire assessment experience in their new location.

By the end of the academic year, every learner who wished to have one was given an ESOL passport.

There was widespread interest in ESOL passports in the ESOL community and while there were questions around how they could be produced on a larger scale, many providers agreed that in principle they would cut down on duplication and empower learners to feel more in control of their learning and enrolment experience.

### **What's next for the Camden and Islington ESOL Advice Service?**

While the EAS continues to serve every learner who needs help accessing ESOL, funding from the Home Office means that efforts will be focused on refugee and asylum seeker cohorts. The EAS anticipates continuing to deliver IAG in both bridging and contingency hotels where refugees and asylum seekers are housed pending the processing of their claims and helping them to navigate the options available to them and the systems in which these options sit.

The EAS will continue to develop its data collection and service delivery model to be able to act as a key intervention in the sector when institutional factors may prevent larger stakeholders from such a targeted response.

Given that provision for certain groups of learners can be much more specialised owing to particular vulnerabilities as well as uncertainty around how long they will be living in the same area, the EAS will seek to broker courses that can be as flexible as possible to suit these needs and develop systems such as ESOL passports (see above) that help to reduce duplication and stress when learners are moved at short notice and need to seek ESOL in other boroughs and even other cities.

Nearly three quarters of EAS users would not access ESOL learning by any other means.

The EAS continues to adjust staffing, on-site delivery and tech development plans in response to limited funding. By July 2023 the Camden and Islington ESOL Advice Service had sufficient funds to continue delivery until March 2024 but was seeking longer term funding.

We welcome comments and suggestions about this report and would also be very happy to hear from organisations who offer ESOL provision in Camden and Islington and the surrounding boroughs especially if they are in a position to support learners with chronic barriers to learning.

We look forward to continuing to support learners and providers across Camden, Islington and beyond in 2023-24.

## APPENDIX 1: EAS NEUTRALITY STATEMENT

The EAS is committed to following a neutral, fair and transparent process in order to place learners in classes across Camden, Islington and beyond.

The service signposts learners to courses based on the needs and level identified at EAS sessions.

The EAS is set up to reach people who have not been engaged in ESOL and is not meant in any way to undermine providers' existing recruitment practices and/or modes of delivery.

The EAS encourages providers to share their models and locations of delivery so that where possible, they can be complemented rather than duplicated.

Questions and concerns providers have about the Service are welcome to ensure neutrality, transparency and positive working relationships that enable all learners to identify the most suitable provision for their needs.

Please send all questions and comments to:

**Shao-Lan Yuen**

Camden and Islington ESOL Advice Service Manager

[shao-lan.yuen@camden.gov.uk](mailto:shao-lan.yuen@camden.gov.uk)

## APPENDIX 2: LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

READING & WRITING: LEVEL DESCRIPTORS	SPEAKING AND LISTENING: LEVEL DESCRIPTORS
<p><b>E1</b></p> <p>Read and understand short texts with repeated language patterns on familiar topics.</p> <p>Read and obtain information from common signs and symbols in texts such as public signs and notices, lists, forms, notes, records, simple narratives.</p> <p>Write to communicate information to an intended audience.</p>	<p><b>E1</b></p> <p>Listen and respond to spoken language, including simple narratives, statements, questions and single-step instructions.</p> <p>Speak to communicate basic information, feelings and opinions on familiar topics.</p> <p>Engage in discussion with another person in a familiar situation about familiar topics in simple and familiar formal exchanges.</p>
<p><b>E2</b></p> <p>Read and understand short, straightforward texts on familiar topics.</p> <p>Read and obtain information from short documents, familiar sources and signs and symbols in texts such as public signs and notices, lists, forms, notes, records, e-mails, simple narratives, letters and diagrams.</p> <p>Write to communicate information with some awareness of the intended audience</p>	<p><b>E2</b></p> <p>Listen and respond to spoken language, including straightforward information, short narratives, explanations and instructions.</p> <p>Speak to communicate information, feelings and opinions on familiar topics.</p> <p>Engage in discussion with one or more people in a familiar situation, to establish shared understanding about familiar topics in straightforward familiar formal exchanges.</p>
<p><b>E3</b></p> <p>Read and understand short straightforward texts on familiar topics accurately and independently.</p> <p>Read and obtain information from everyday sources in texts such as forms, notes, records, e-mails, narratives, letters, diagrams, simple instructions, short reports.</p> <p>Write to communicate information and opinions with some adaptation of the intended audience.</p>	<p><b>E3</b></p> <p>Listen and respond to spoken language, including straightforward information and narratives, and follow straightforward explanations and instructions, both face-to-face and on the telephone.</p> <p>Speak to communicate information, feelings and opinions on familiar topics, using appropriate formality, both face-to-face and on the telephone.</p> <p>Engage in discussion with one or more people in a familiar situation, making relevant points and responding to what others say to reach a shared understanding about familiar topics in familiar formal exchanges.</p>
<p><b>L1</b></p> <p>Roughly equivalent to GCSE grades D–E</p>	<p><b>L1</b></p> <p>Roughly equivalent to GCSE grades D–E</p>
<p><b>L2</b></p> <p>Roughly equivalent to GCSE grades A–C</p>	<p><b>L2</b></p> <p>Roughly equivalent to GCSE grades A–C</p>

Source: Adult ESOL Core Curriculum

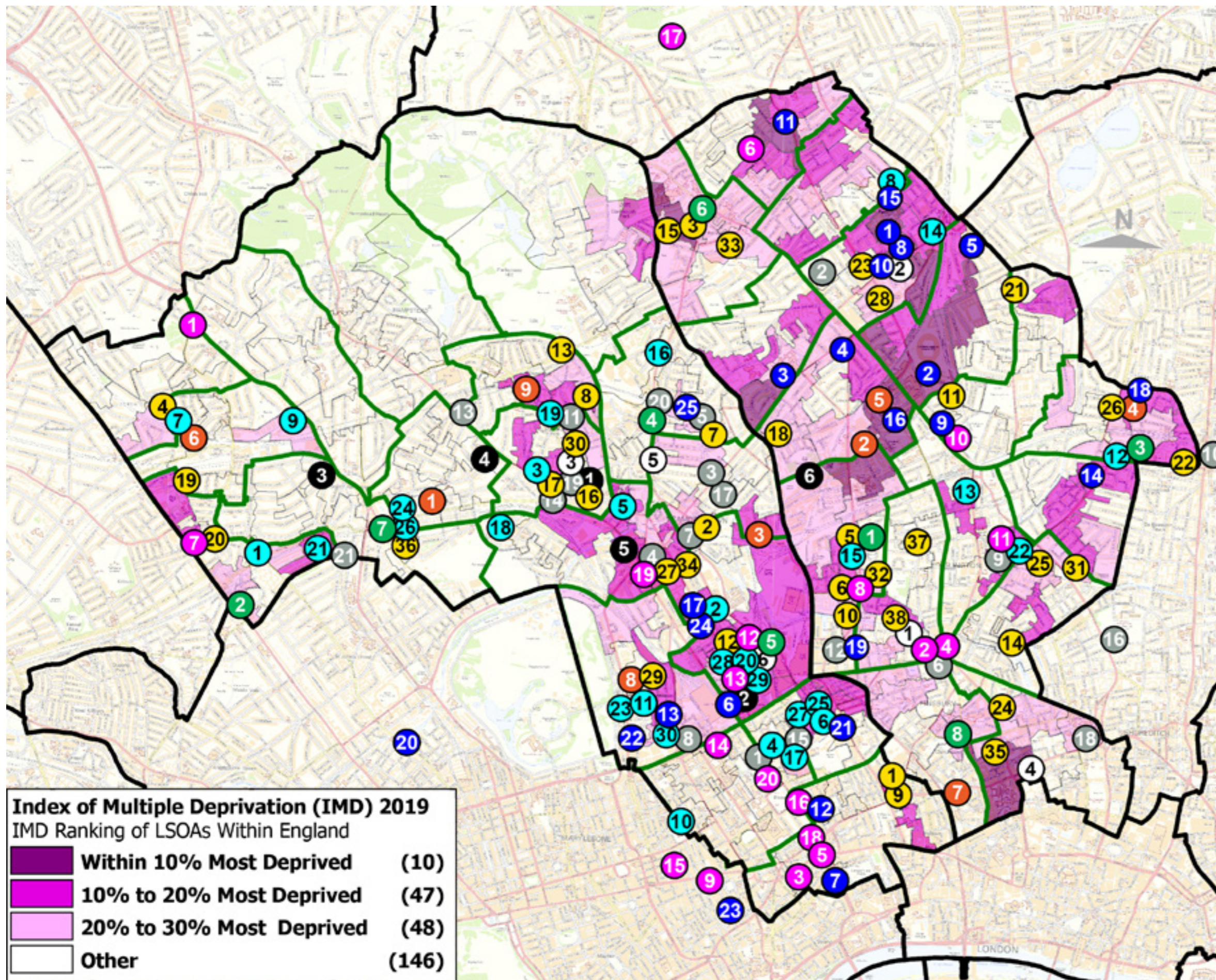
## APPENDIX 3: REGIONS

COUNTRY	REGION
<b>Afghanistan</b>	South Asia
<b>Albania</b>	Eastern Europe
<b>Algeria</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>Angola</b>	Africa
<b>Argentina</b>	Latin America and Caribbean
<b>Armenia</b>	Russia and Central Asia
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	Russia and Central Asia
<b>Bahrain</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>Bangladesh</b>	South Asia
<b>Belarus</b>	Russia and Central Asia
<b>Belgium</b>	Western Europe
<b>Benin</b>	Africa
<b>Bolivia</b>	Latin America and Caribbean
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	Eastern Europe
<b>Brazil</b>	Latin America and Caribbean
<b>Bulgaria</b>	Eastern Europe
<b>Burundi</b>	Africa
<b>Cabo Verde</b>	Africa
<b>Cameroon</b>	Africa
<b>Chad</b>	Africa
<b>Chile</b>	Latin America and Caribbean
<b>China (inc. Hong Kong)</b>	East Asia
<b>Colombia</b>	Latin America and Caribbean
<b>Congo, Democratic Republic Of The</b>	Africa
<b>Congo, Republic Of The</b>	Africa
<b>Cote Divoire</b>	Africa
<b>Cuba</b>	Latin America and Caribbean
<b>Djibouti</b>	Africa
<b>Dominican Republic</b>	Latin America and Caribbean
<b>Ecuador</b>	Latin America and Caribbean
<b>Egypt</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>El Salvador</b>	Latin America and Caribbean
<b>Eritrea</b>	Africa
<b>Ethiopia</b>	Africa

COUNTRY	REGION
<b>France</b>	Western Europe
<b>Georgia</b>	Russia and Central Asia
<b>Germany</b>	Western Europe
<b>Ghana</b>	Africa
<b>Guatemala</b>	Latin America and Caribbean
<b>Guinea</b>	Africa
<b>Guinea Bissau</b>	Africa
<b>Honduras</b>	Latin America and Caribbean
<b>Hungary</b>	Eastern Europe
<b>India</b>	South Asia
<b>Indonesia</b>	East Asia
<b>Iran</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>Iraq</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>Israel</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>Italy</b>	Western Europe
<b>Japan</b>	East Asia
<b>Jordan</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	Russia and Central Asia
<b>Kosovo</b>	Eastern Europe
<b>Kuwait</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	Russia and Central Asia
<b>Latvia</b>	Eastern Europe
<b>Lebanon</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>Libya</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>Lithuania</b>	Eastern Europe
<b>Macedonia</b>	Eastern Europe
<b>Malaysia</b>	East Asia
<b>Mali</b>	Africa
<b>Mauritania</b>	Africa
<b>Mexico</b>	Latin America and Caribbean
<b>Moldova</b>	Eastern Europe
<b>Mongolia</b>	East Asia
<b>Morocco</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>Mozambique</b>	Africa
<b>Myanmar (Burma)</b>	East Asia

COUNTRY	REGION
<b>Namibia</b>	Africa
<b>Nicaragua</b>	Latin America and Caribbean
<b>Nigeria</b>	Africa
<b>Pakistan</b>	South Asia
<b>Panama</b>	Latin America and Caribbean
<b>Peru</b>	Latin America and Caribbean
<b>Philippines</b>	East Asia
<b>Poland</b>	Eastern Europe
<b>Portugal</b>	Western Europe
<b>Romania</b>	Eastern Europe
<b>Russia</b>	Russia and Central Asia
<b>Sao Tome and Principe</b>	Africa
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>Slovakia</b>	Eastern Europe
<b>Somalia</b>	Africa
<b>South Korea</b>	East Asia
<b>South Sudan</b>	Africa
<b>Spain</b>	Western Europe
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	South Asia
<b>Sudan</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>Syria</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>Taiwan</b>	East Asia
<b>Tajikistan</b>	Russia and Central Asia
<b>Thailand</b>	East Asia
<b>Tunisia</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>Turkey</b>	Turkey
<b>Tuvalu</b>	Oceania
<b>Ukraine</b>	Eastern Europe
<b>United Arab Emirates</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>United Kingdom</b>	British
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Russia and Central Asia
<b>Venezuela</b>	Latin America and Caribbean
<b>Vietnam</b>	East Asia
<b>Yemen</b>	Middle East and North Africa

# APPENDIX 4A: EAS LOCAL PARTNERSHIP NETWORK MAP



Data source: English Indices of Deprivation 2019, © MHCLG, 2019

# APPENDIX 4B: EAS LOCAL PARTNERSHIP NETWORK MAP KEY

ESOL ADVICE VENUES	
1	Kilburn Library Centre
2	West Library
3	Mildmay Library
4	Kentish Town Library
5	Camden Council
6	Archway Library
7	Swiss Cottage Library
8	Finsbury Library

MAIN ESOL PROVIDERS			
1	Andover Estate Community Centre	14	New River Green Children's Centre
2	Arsenal Learning Centre	15	North Islington Children's Centre*
3	Cat and Mouse Library	16	Paradise Park Children's Centre*
4	City & Islington College - Camden Road Centre*	17	Richard Cobden Primary School*
5	City & Islington College - Finsbury Park Centre*	18	The Factory Children's Centre
6	City Lit: EC in Euston	19	The Parent House*
7	City Lit: Keeley Street	20	Westminster Adult Education Service*
8	Durham Road - Finsbury Park Community Hub	21	Westminster Kingsway College: Kings Cross Centre
9	First Steps Learning Centre / Central Library	22	Westminster Kingsway College: Regent's Park Centre
10	Hornsey Road Children's Centre*	23	Westminster Kingsway College: Soho Centre
11	Margaret McMillan Children's Centre*	24	Working Men's College: Crowndale Road Centre
12	Mary Ward Centre: Queen Square	25	Working Men's College: Kentish Town Centre
13	Netley Primary School*	* denotes crèche available depending on child's age	

CHARITY & SOCIAL CARE SECTOR			
1	Age UK Camden	12	London Friend
2	Age UK Islington	13	One Support
3	Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust	14	Salvation Army (Chalk Farm)
4	Camden Early Intervention Service	15	Salvation Army (Cambria House)
5	Elfrida Rathbone Camden	16	Salvation Army (Hoxton)
6	Groundwork London	17	Single Homeless Project
7	Helen Bamber Foundation	18	St Mungo's Camden Mental Health
8	Hopscotch Asian Women's Centre	19	Voluntary Action Camden
9	Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants	20	Whittington Health NHS Trust: Kentish Town
10	Latin American Women's Aid	21	Whittington Health NHS Trust: St John's Wood Care Centre
11	Learning Disability Network (LDN)		

ALTERNATIVE PROVISION			
1	British Study Centres - Hampstead	11	Speak Street - Cross Street Baptist Church
2	Circle	12	Speak Street - Edith Neville Primary School
3	International House London	13	Speak Street - Story Garden
4	Islington Centre for English	14	Speak Street - Wellcome Collection
5	Kaplan International English - London Convent Garden	15	St George International School of English
6	Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation (KMEWO)	16	St Giles College - Central
7	Latin American House	17	St Giles College - Highgate
8	LPPI	18	Stafford House
9	Oxford House College	19	TTI
10	Speak Street - Central Library	20	University College London

EMPLOYMENT SECTOR	
1	Barnsbury JCP
2	Finsbury Park JCP
3	Gospel Oak Job Hub
4	Ingeus
5	Kentish Town JCP
6	St Pancras and Somers Town Job Hub

ESTATES / HOUSING	
1	Chalcots Estate (Dorney TRA Hall)
2	Hyde Housing
3	Maiden Lane Community Centre
4	Mildmay Community Centre
5	Ringcross Community Centre
6	Sidings Community Centre
7	Southern Housing Group
8	Third Age Project (Regent's Park Estate)
9	Wendling TRA Hall

HOMELESS / SUPPORTED HOUSING	
1	Belmont Hostel
2	C4WS Homeless Project
3	Doorstep Homeless Families Project
4	Englands Lane Residence
5	One Housing
6	Solace

SCHOOLS / CHILDREN'S CENTRES / NURSERIES			
1	1a Children's Centre	20	Kingsgate Primary School
2	Agar Children's Centre	21	Little Angels Day Nursery
3	Archway Children's Centre	22	Minik Kardes Children's Centre
4	Beckford Primary School	23	Montem Primary School
5	Bemerton Children's Centre	24	Moreland Primary School & Children's Centre
6	Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School	25	New North Academy
7	Brecknock Primary School	26	Newington Green Primary School
8	Carlton Primary School	27	Our Lady's Primary School
9	Christopher Hatton Primary School	28	Pakeman Primary School
10	Copenhagen Primary School	29	Regents Park Children's Centre
11	Drayton Park Primary School	30	Rhyl Primary School
12	Edith Neville Primary School	31	Rotherfield Primary School
13	Gospel Oak Primary School	32	St Andrew's (Barnsbury) CE Primary School
14	Hanover Primary School	33	St John's Upper Holloway Primary School
15	Hargrave Primary School	34	St Michael's C of E Primary School
16	Harmood Children's Centre	35	St Peter's and St Paul's RC Primary School
17	Haverstock Secondary School	36	Swiss Cottage School
18	Hungerford School	37	Thornhill Primary
19	Kilburn Grange Children's Centre	38	Vittoria Primary School

COMMUNITY CENTRES			
1	Abbey Community Centre	16	Kentish Town Community Centre
2	British Somali Community Centre	17	Marchmont Community Centre
3	Camden Afghan Community Centre	18	Primrose Hill Community Association
4	Camden Chinese Community Centre	19	Queen's Crescent Community Centre
5	Castlehaven Community Centre	20	Somers Town Community Centre
6	Chadswell Healthy Living Centre	21	South Hampstead and Kilburn Community Partnership (SHELL)
7	Community Association for West Hampstead	22	South Library
8	Community Language Services	23	Surma Community Centre
9	Ethiopian Community Centre	24	Swiss Cottage Community Centre
10	Fitzrovia Community Centre	25	The Holy Cross Centre
11	HS2 Info Centre Camden	26	The Winch
12	IMECE Women's Centre	27	Time Bank
13	Islington Council	28	Training Link
14	Jannaty Women's Social Society	29	Training Link: Living Centre
15	Jean Stokes Community Centre	30	West Euston Partnership

OTHER NETWORK PARTNERS IN LONDON (not within map area)	
Alisar Prospects Training CIC	PDRYP
Central & Eastern European Homelessness Assistance Service (CEHAS)	Refugee Council
City & Hackney Centre for Mental Health	Renaisi
Hestia	Thames Reach
Migrant Help	West End Welcomes Refugees
OLive Open Learning Initiative (University of East London)	Xenia