



Afghan Community Response Survey

Fieldwork: 17th November– 1st December 2021

Wave 2



INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Afghan Community Response Survey

This report presents results from the second monthly questionnaire sent to a cohort of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations working directly with Afghan communities in London. The survey asks organisations that work in London a number of questions to understand the needs of Afghan arrivals in our city, including how needs, demand and organisational capacity are changing over time.

We aim to increase the size of the cohort and will continue to ask additional organisations to complete the survey, to help form a more complete picture.

The cohort was initially recruited using existing contacts held by the Greater London Authority (GLA), and ‘snowball’ sampling, i.e. organisations were asked to forward the invitation to participate to other VCSE organisations known to them. Organisations in the statutory sector were also asked to cascade the invitation to their local VCSE networks.

The second wave of the questionnaire was open between 17th November and 1st December 2021.

A total of 19 organisations responded to the survey, with 14 responding in full and 5 in part. Both full and partial responses have been included in the report. Eight out of the 19 organisations that completed the survey in November also completed the survey in October.

In the following sections, N indicates the number of responses received for each question. Due to the low sample size, figures have not been reported as percentages, though some rough fractions are used to aid ease of understanding in the text.

The information contained in these reports should be considered indicative only and may not be fully representative of all civil society organisations working with Afghan refugees in London. However, alongside other intelligence, we hope the information will be useful.

Results from the survey will be shared with responding organisations and with decision-makers supporting the pan-London emergency response.

SUMMARY

Overall:

- All London boroughs were represented in the cohort. Ten out of the 19 organisations worked across more than one borough and 3 worked across the whole of London. For this reason, it is not possible to draw conclusions regarding individual boroughs from this report as most organisations will be referring to their experiences of working in more than one borough or across the whole of London.
- Organisations said they were supporting just over 2,000 newly arrived Afghans in total*.
- Eleven out of 19 organisations provided integration advice/support. Nine organisations provided social integration support, eight provided interpreting support and eight provided education and training support.
- Ten out of 19 organisations surveyed had 10 full-time equivalent employees or fewer. Eight organisations had 11 to 50 full-time equivalent employees. One organisation reported over 50 full-time employees.
- Six organisations had over 50 volunteers and 5 organisations had 10 volunteers or fewer.
- Thirteen out of 19 organisations were managing to cope with demand for support and over the last four weeks or since the survey was last completed, 9 organisations said that they had seen about the same level of demand for support from Afghan arrivals.
- Eleven out of 19 organisations noted that Afghan families were in need of access to clothing and other essential items; access to education due to limited education provision and isolation/loneliness support.
- Eleven out of 19 organisations noted education provision as a support need with 9 of these organisations stating that limited education provision was an issue for adults, specifically in regard to ESOL provision (8 out of 9 organisations).
- Ten out of 19 organisations stated that lack of data and information about the needs of Afghan arrivals presented a challenge to their work. This was followed by lack of funding (9 organisations) capacity to meet demand (8 organisations) and access to specialist skills (7 organisations).

*As organisations working across the same borough may support the same individuals this figure may contain double counting

SUMMARY – SUPPORTING AFGHANS IN BRIDGING HOTELS

- Nine out of the 19 organisations supported Afghans in bridging hotels.
- Six out of the 9 organisations that supported Afghans in bridging hotels carried out activities for Afghans on-site.
- Organisations were more likely to provide support for interpreting (6 organisations), integration advice/support (6 organisations) and social integration (6 organisations).
- Five out of nine organisations were managing to cope with demand, with 4 of these organisations just about managing and 1 managing comfortably. Of the other half who were not coping, all stated that they were overwhelmed with demand (4 organisations). Over the last four weeks or since the survey was last completed, 4 organisations experienced lower demand and 3 experienced higher demand.
- Multiple areas of need for Afghan communities over the last four weeks or since the survey was last completed were identified by 7 organisations, most commonly reporting access to education (5 organisations), isolation/loneliness (5 organisations), language support and/or translation services (5 organisations) and mental health (5 organisations).
- In regard to challenges in the provision of support, all organisations selected multiple challenges over the past four weeks, specifically around lack of data and information about the needs of Afghan arrivals (7 organisations), lack of funding (6 organisations) and capacity to meet demand (6 organisations).

PROFILE OF SERVICE USERS

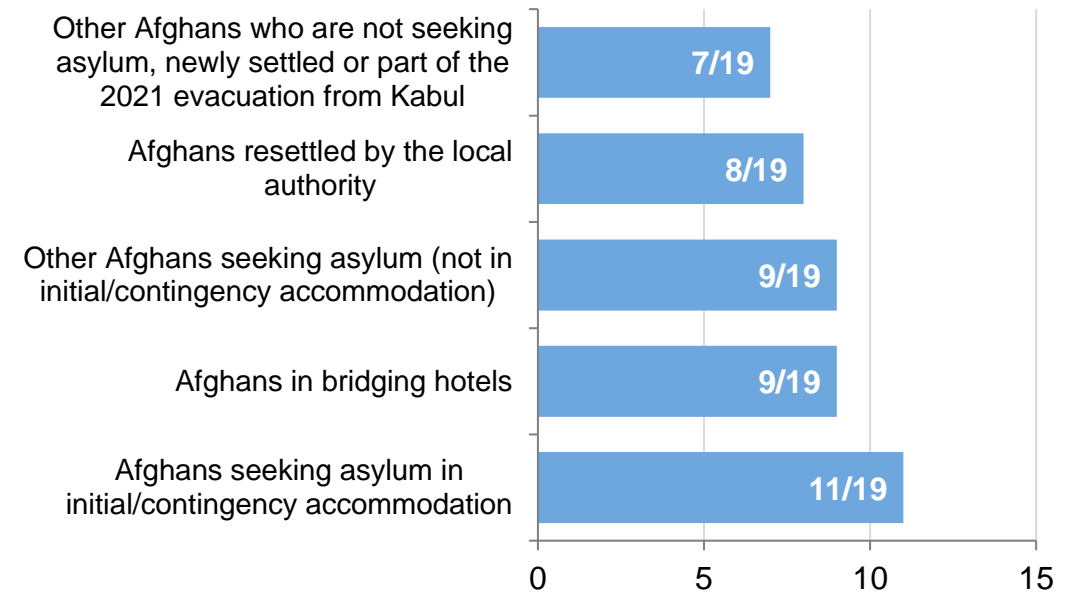
Overall:

- When asked which category of Afghans they were supporting, 14 out of 19 organisations selected more than one of the options presented to them. On average, organisations selected three categories of Afghans being supported.
- Eleven organisations supported Afghans seeking asylum in initial/contingency accommodation. This was followed by organisations that supported Afghans in bridging hotels (9 organisations) and Other Afghans seeking asylum that are not in initial/contingency accommodation (9 organisations).
- Of the organisations that support Afghans in initial/contingency accommodation and bridging hotels (13 organisations), 6 carried out activities for Afghans on-site.

Supporting Afghans in bridging hotels:

- Across the 9 organisations that supported Afghan families in bridging hotels, 1 supported Afghans in this area only. The other 8 organisations provided support across more than one of the options presented to them in the question. On average, respondents selected three options.
- Seven organisations supported Afghans in bridging hotels also supported Afghans in seeking asylum in initial/contingency accommodation and 5 also supported Afghans who were resettled by the local authority.

Which category of Afghans is your organisation supporting? Select all that apply - N=19



Base: all responding organisations (N=19).

Chart only shows responses selected by at least 5 organisations.

BENEFICIARIES/SERVICE USERS

Number of Afghans being supported:

- Organisations were asked how many people they were supporting from the Afghan community, how many of these people were newly resettled, seeking asylum or evacuees (new arrivals), and how many of these people had presented in the last four weeks.
- Eleven organisations provided usable data. Organisations said they were supporting just over 7,000 Afghans, and around one third of these people were new arrivals*. Of the total number of Afghans being supported (just over 7,000), a quarter had presented to the VCSE organisation in the last four weeks or since the survey was last completed.

Family make-up

Overall:

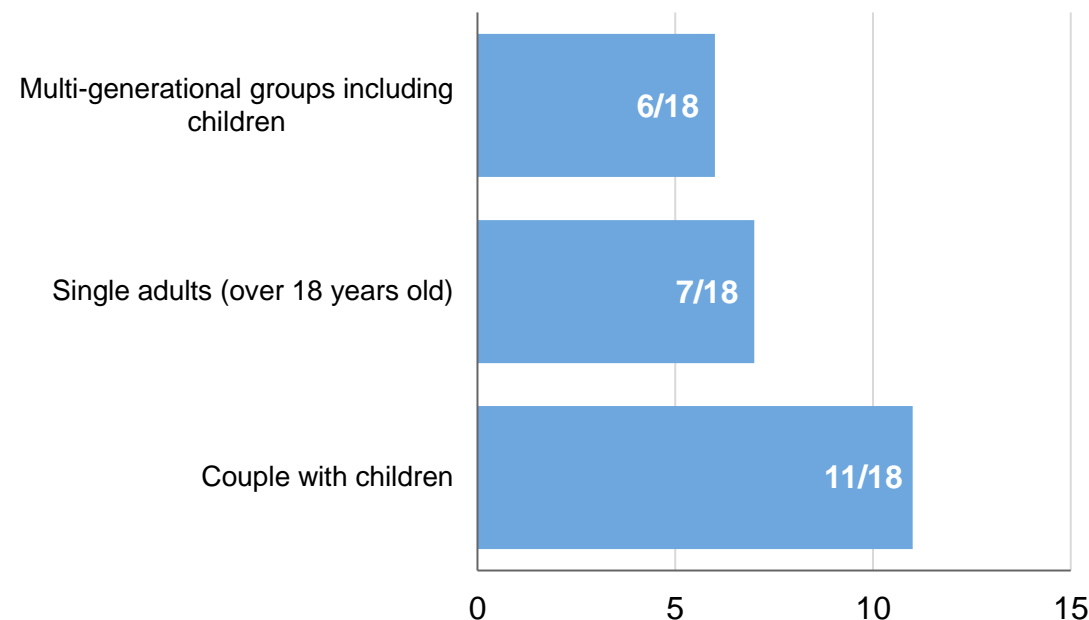
- Across the 16 organisations that were able to report family make-up 11 supported Afghan families made up of a couple with children. This was followed by 7 organisations that supported single adults over the age of 18 years and 6 organisations that supported a multi-generational group including children.

Supporting Afghans in bridging hotels:

- Of the 9 organisations that supported Afghans in bridging hotels, 5 supported a couple with children and 5 supported multi-generational groups including children.
- Organisations were less likely to have supported a lone parent with children (1 organisations), single adults (1 organisations) and unaccompanied children or young people (1 organisations).

*As organisations working across the same borough may support the same individuals this figure may contain double counting

What would you say is the make-up of the Afghan families that you are supporting? Select all that apply - N=18



Base: all responding organisations (N=18).

Chart only shows responses selected by at least 5 organisations.

DEMAND FOR SUPPORT

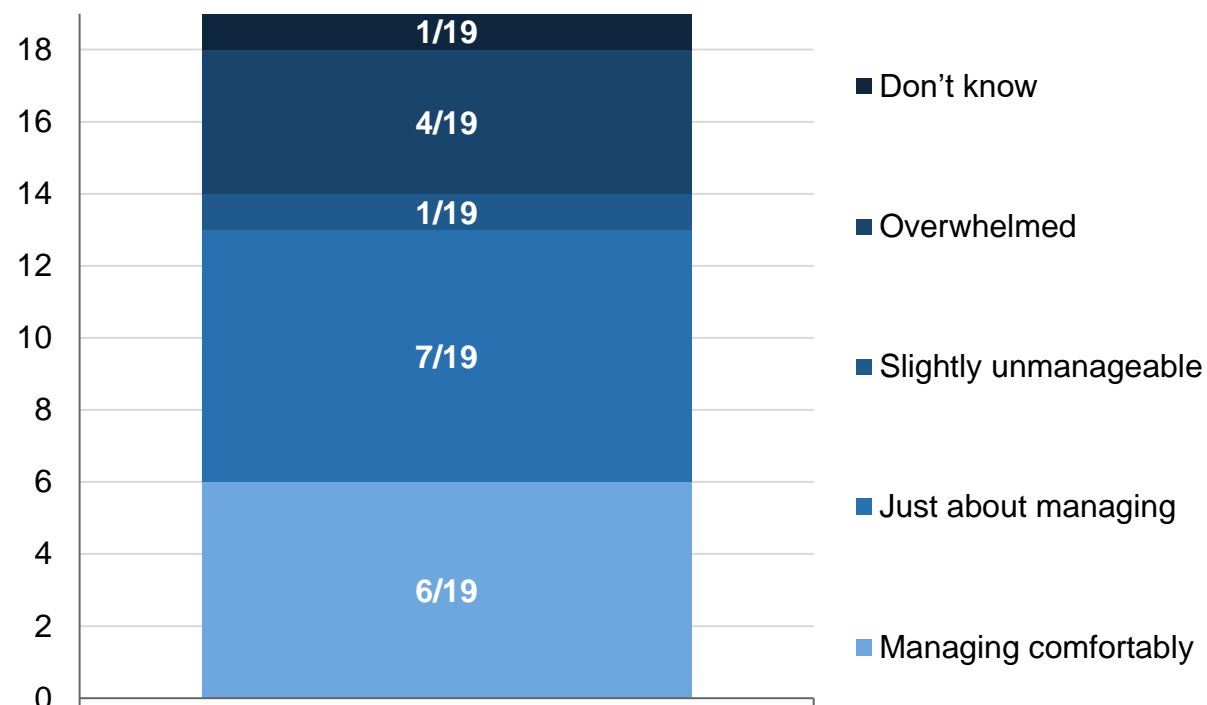
Overall:

- Across the 19 organisations surveyed, the majority (13 organisations) were managing to cope with demand. Seven were just about managing and 6 were coping comfortably. Five organisations were not coping with demand, with 4 stating that the demand they were receiving was overwhelming and 1 stating that demand was slightly unmanageable. One organisation did not know.
- Over the last four weeks or since last survey completion, 9 organisations said that they had seen about the same level of demand for support from Afghan arrivals.

Supporting Afghans in bridging hotels:

- Across the organisations responding to this question that supported Afghans in bridging hotels (9 organisations), just over half were managing to cope with demand (5 out of 9 organisations) with 4 just about managing and 1 managing comfortably. Of the other half who were not coping, all stated that they were overwhelmed with demand (4 out of 9 organisations).
- Over the last four weeks or since last survey completion, 4 organisations have experienced lower demand, with 3 experiencing slightly lower demand and 1 much lower demand. This was followed by 3 organisations that experienced much higher demand, with no organisation reporting slightly higher demand over the last four weeks or since they last completed the survey.

Currently, are you, or are you not, managing to cope with the demand for support from Afghan arrivals? - N=19



Base: all responding organisations (N=19)

SUPPORT NEEDS

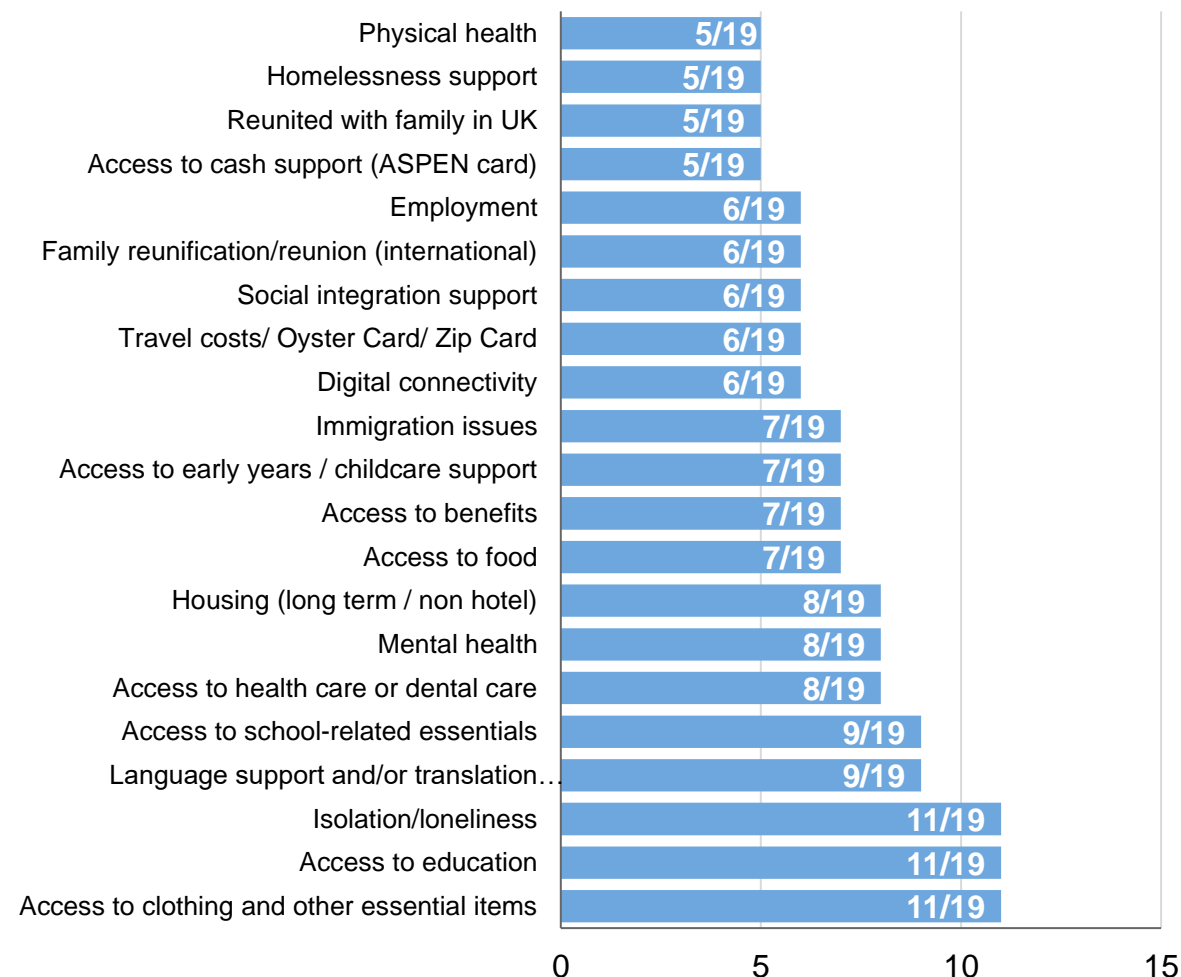
Overall:

- Fifteen out of 19 organisations selected multiple areas of need for Afghan communities over the last four weeks or since they last completed the survey. This is similar to findings from last month's survey. On average, organisations selected 12 areas of need.
- Over half of the organisations noted that Afghan families were in need of access to clothing and other essential items (11 out of 19 organisations); access to education due to limited education provision (11 out of 19 organisations) and isolation/loneliness support (11 out of 19 organisations).

Supporting Afghans in bridging hotels:

- Across the 9 organisations that supported Afghans in bridging hotels, 7 selected multiple areas of need for Afghan communities over the last four weeks or since they last completed the survey. On average, organisations selected twelve areas of need.
- The top areas of need were access to education due to limited education provision as a support need, isolation/loneliness, language support and/or translations services and mental health as areas of need (selected by 5 organisations each).
- The next top areas of need were access to food as an area of need over the last four weeks or since they last completed the survey along with access to clothing and other essential items, access to school-related essentials, travel costs and access to early years/childcare support (selected by 4 organisations each).

Thinking of the period since you last completed this survey, or the last 4 weeks if you are completing the survey for the first time, what have been the areas of need for the Afghans you are supporting?
Select all that apply - N=19



Base: all responding organisations (N=19)

Chart only shows responses selected by at least 5 organisations.

EDUCATION PROVISION

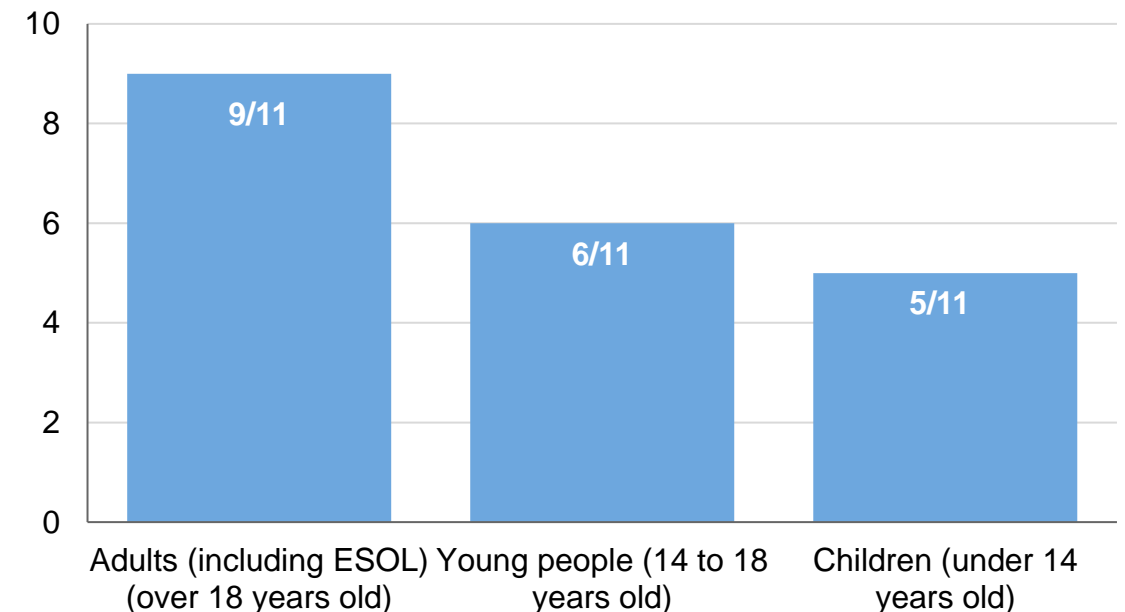
Overall:

- Of the 11 organisations that cited limited education provision as an issue in the last four weeks or since the survey was last completed, 5 identified that it was an issue for more than one group presented in the question.
- Nine organisations stated that limited education provision was an issue for adults. Eight of these organisations stated that this was in relation to ESOL and 5 stated it was in relation to basic skills provision.
- Six organisations stated that limited education provision was an issue for young people and 5 stated it was an issue for children.

Supporting Afghans in bridging hotels:

- Across the organisations that supported Afghans in bridging hotels (5 organisations), all stated that it was an issue for adults. All of these organisations stated that this issue was related to ESOL and 4 stated it was related to access to basic skills.
- Almost all organisations (4 out of 5 organisations) stated that education provision was an issue for children and 3 organisations stated that it was an issue for young people.

You stated that limited education provision was an issue, was this for children, young people or for adults (including ESOL)? Select all that apply - N=11



Base: organisations that selected education provision as an issue in the last four weeks or since the survey was last completed (N=11).

CHALLENGES IN THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT

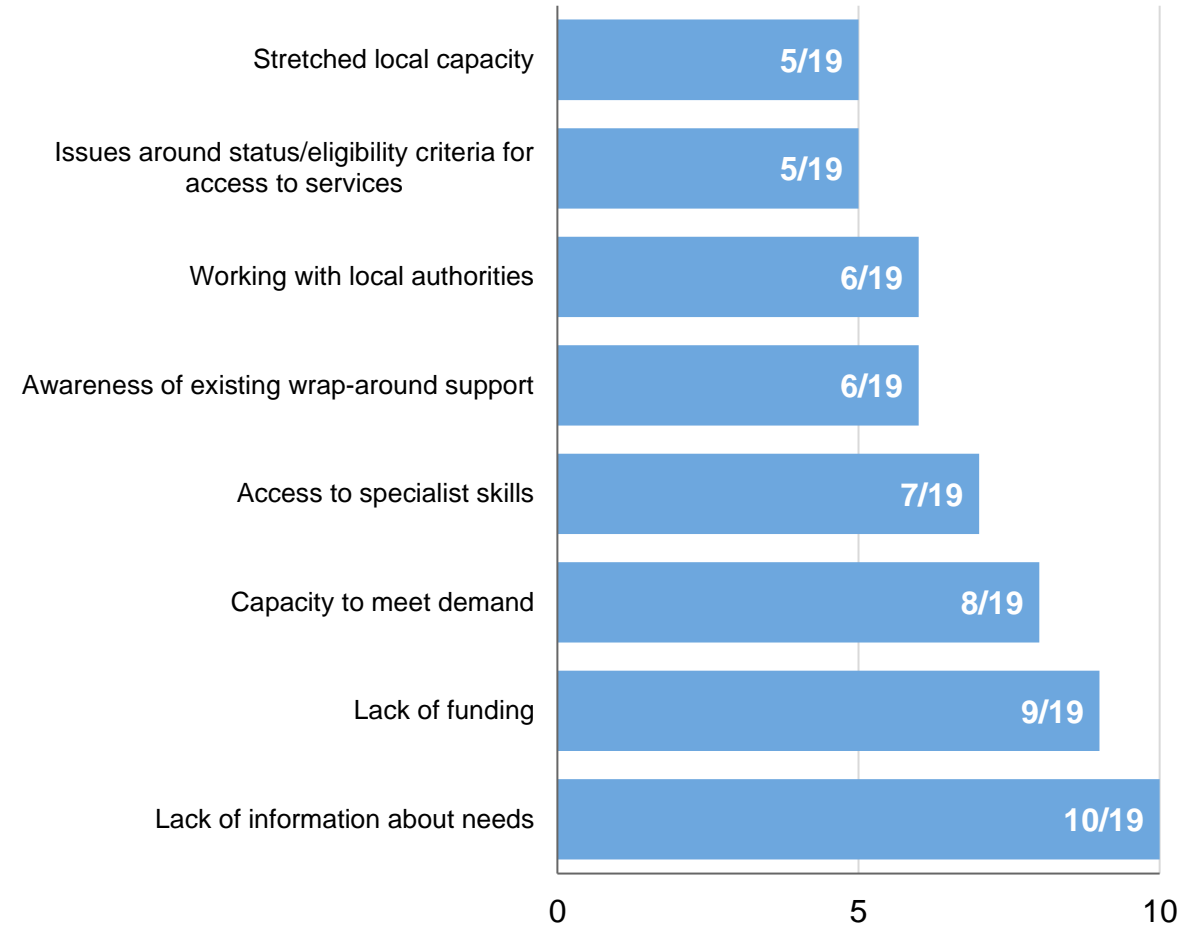
Overall:

- Across the 19 organisations surveyed, 15 selected multiple challenges being faced by their organisation. On average, organisations highlighted 4 challenges from the options presented.
- Ten organisations stated that lack of data and information about the needs of Afghan arrivals presented a challenge. This was followed by lack of funding (9 organisations), capacity to meet demand (8 organisations) and access to specialist skills (7 organisations).

Supporting Afghans in bridging hotels:

- Across the 9 organisations that supported Afghans in bridging hotels, all selected multiple challenges over the past four weeks. On average, organisations selected 4 types of challenges.
- Seven organisations stated that lack of data and information about the needs of Afghan arrivals presented a challenge. This was followed by lack of funding (6 organisations) and capacity to meet demand (6 organisations).

In the period since you last completed this survey, or the last 4 weeks if you are completing the survey for the first time what challenges has your organisation faced in supporting Afghan arrivals? Select all that apply - N=19



Base: all responding organisations (N=19).

Chart only shows responses selected by at least 5 organisations.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Challenges in the provision of support:

- Organisations were offered the opportunity to make additional comments regarding challenges in the provision of support. Ten out of the 19 organisations surveyed took the opportunity to do this.
- Organisations stated that data and information about the needs of Afghans in hotels was a challenge, alongside organising and distributing donations in hotels and keeping up with demand.
- Capacity issues and difficulty keeping up with demand due to lack of funding were identified as challenges. In some cases, there was recognition that support from local authorities was hindered due to the time taken to recover costs from central government.


Growing issues and needs not being met:

- Seven organisations made additional comments regarding growing issues and those whose needs had not been met.
- In regard to needs not being met, one organisation noted that asylum families (families seeking asylum) who are not from Afghanistan were not receiving the same level of support even though needs were similar.
- Lack of capacity and funding amidst an increase in demand for support from Afghan asylum seekers (people seeking asylum) and those from other countries were noted as growing issues.
- Tensions around access to support in hotels was also noted as a growing issue, with one organisation stating that some families were informed about the arrival of donations in comparison to others who were not. This caused some refugees to use their universal credit to access items such as clothing.
- Another growing issue highlighted was the lack of clarity around who is responsible for supporting safe sleeping of children in hotels. This had resulted in a civil society organisation utilising their own resources to provide support where it may be the responsibility of others, such as the local authority.

We also know that there are recognised tensions around access ...so some families will know when donations come in first and others won't... It isn't right that one refugee has messaged us to say that they have resorted to using their universal credit now to get access to clothing"

...there is no clarity on who should be responsible for arrangements around safe sleeping for children at the hotels. We believe London Councils has requested such clarity. Currently if items such as Moses baskets and cots are requested civil society provide them.

getting the donations to site, no funding available to help with the volunteer expenses, petrol, congestion charges - transportation and being left to just get on and do



Outreach with female volunteers who speak the language [is needed]

Clearer info on family reunion and future resettlement schemes as Afghans are worried about their family members back home

Establish long term funding to support charities who are doing this work

We have been unable to assist more Afghan clients due to our lack of capacity. The numbers would have been much higher otherwise; but we had to close for new referrals.

...getting the correct information of what is needed when we did get to the bridging hotels it was difficult to get through the red tape - people needed support and help - talking to someone and knowing who they could talk too was important

We are regularly asked to provide buggies, strollers for under 5s - as we rely entirely on donations from the community we sometimes struggle to keep up with this demand.

New Afghans don't know about their Immigration Status in the UK, (They just have UK Residence permit, Leave To Remain, they don't know if they are refugee or not). They been told that their status will be in the letter or in the Biometric card (Residence permit). Unfortunately, the status is not there.

We are often asked to provide essentials for under 5s at the hotels without enough detail (ages, room numbers, sizes of clothes) . If clear needs assessments have been made, this will enable us to provide accurate sizes of clothes and our delivery process can be quick and trouble free to get the items to the families directly at the hotels.

We have offered housing accommodation to the local authority but are told that they are waiting to receive funding from Central Government before taking in refugees

Charities in the area are expected, as well as the local authority, to manage the influx without further funding and thus no increased capacity.

Things have improved considerably in the last four weeks, but only insofar as settling into a routine of long-term hotel accommodation. We have also had some success with cost recovery from the local authority, though we understand they are still struggling with their own cost recovery from the Home Office.

RESOURCES FOR RESPONDENTS

- How voluntary, community and faith groups can welcome refugees to their neighbourhood through the [Community Sponsorship Scheme](#).
- Register your offer to [help refugees](#) coming to the UK.
- Find a volunteer or be a volunteer- [Team London](#).
- Find out what other support is available for Afghans in your area and/or list your offer/request on [London Plus](#).
- Offer an affordable property to a refugee family via a [Community Sponsorship Group](#) or the [Government's Housing Portal](#).
- For a temporary period [TFL](#) will be accepting Border Force ID cards as an alternative form of evidence for Zip Oyster Card application for Afghan arrivals.
- Afghanistan resettlement and entitlements: [policy statement](#)
- [Guidance](#) on the eligibility of Afghan nationals, including people on the standard asylum route, to the Adult Education Budget, including ESOL.
- Join the GLA's ESOL newsletter for information on AEB and other course vacancies, funding and resources: esolcoordinators@london.gov.uk
- [Find \(AEB\) adult education providers near me](#)
- The [Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership](#) (VCSEP) operates a [national support service](#) for VCS orgs, through which they can request various forms of support from the partnership if it's not available through local councils for voluntary service, local resilience forums and local authority hubs. The support on offer includes transportation and delivery, PPE, funding advice, specialist training, guidance or volunteering capacity
- [The Afghan Evacuees Emergency Grants Programme](#) aims to support Christian churches and charities helping to tackle the ongoing Afghanistan evacuee crisis. Funding will help cover costs associated with resettlement in the UK during a time when the economic and resource effects of the pandemic are still being felt.

NEXT STEPS

- The next wave of the [Afghan Community Response Survey](#) will be issued to organisations in January 2022.
- The scope of the January survey will be changed to focus on organisations supporting Afghans in bridging hotels but expanded to include all organisations providing this support, including non-VCSE and faith sector organisations.

Contact details:

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