

REFUGEE RIGHTS EUROPE

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EXPLORING FURTHER DYNAMICS OF THE CALAIS CAMP



DATES OF RESEARCH

1 September – 9 October 2016

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RRE would like to thank Sarah Story and Rowan Farrell of the Refugee Info Bus for their invaluable support and fruitful partnership, and without whom this research would not have been possible. Many thanks also to any Refugee Info Bus volunteers who kindly supported our research over time.

Heartfelt thanks to PArt of Us and other supporters who enabled us to purchase the tablets required for the study through crowdfunding donations.

Special thanks to the Ashram Kitchen, the Unofficial Women and Children's Centre, Jungle Books, and other organisations, restaurants and individual volunteers who enabled further surveying by facilitating access to various social spaces within the camp.

Above all, we are most grateful to the camp residents who shared their time, insights and experiences thus making this research possible.



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INTRODUCTION

In recent months, the French and British governments have toughened their stance towards the informal refugee camp in Calais.

The British government, under the new leadership of Prime Minister Theresa May, is helping to pay for a concrete wall alongside the Calais camp aimed at reducing the flow of people travelling illegally into the UK. Meanwhile, French President François Hollande has pledged to demolish the informal settlement before the end of 2016, providing temporary accommodation for those wishing to claim asylum in France.

In light of these developments, it is particularly important that we fill information gaps that can give us a better insight into the issues faced by refugees and displaced people living in the camp. This report was therefore created with two aims in mind: (i) to inform public opinion and challenge popular misconceptions about

the camp's inhabitants using empirical evidence, and (ii) to equip policymakers with tools to better understand and resolve the ongoing humanitarian crisis at their borders.

This particular study took place over a six-week period, from early September until early October 2016, when seven independent researchers conducted a survey in the Calais camp. The survey touched on three broad areas: the current situation in the camp; what may happen to residents during evictions; and their future plans and aspirations. It aims to present a clear picture of life in the settlement, offering an evidence-based overview of the incredibly difficult choices faced by its inhabitants.



METHODOLOGY

Following on from Refugee Rights Europe's previous research reports focusing on camps in northern France (*The Long Wait, Unsafe Borderlands, The 'Other' Camp, Still Waiting and The Unknown Knowns*), this study aims to continue to fill data gaps relating to refugees and displaced people living in the informal settlement in Calais.

Based on an analysis of feedback received since the publication of our previous Calais reports, and in consultation with RRE Advisory Group members, an online survey was created using data collection software KoBoToolbox.

The survey consisted of 14 different questions, and was conducted using two touch-screen tablets, in seven of the most commonly-used languages in the camp (Arabic, Amharic, English, Farsi, Kurdish, Pashto and Tigrinya). Researchers adopted a 'snowball methodology', whereby camp residents were approached at random, or where potential respondents approached them to take the survey. Information and instruction sheets were provided in different languages, alongside a brief verbal introduction from researchers. This enabled the team to explain the background to the survey and highlight its anonymity, before gaining verbal consent.

The survey was deployed in different areas of the camp, enabling the researchers to capture a range of demographics. Emphasis was placed on surveying those gathered around the Refugee Info Bus – a popular place for camp residents to access WiFi services. However, surveys were also conducted in camp restaurants, the volunteer-run food distribution hub Ashram Kitchen and the unofficial women and children's centre. This approach enabled us to survey respondents with diverse social and economic networks and political views. The survey contained no questions of particularly sensitive nature, therefore minors (17 years of age and below) were included, but researchers required the consent of an adult to approach those who were under the age of 16, and all

researchers were observed RRE's Child Safeguarding Policy throughout the study.

The study was conducted over the course of six weeks (early September to early October 2016) by seven independent field researchers, each of whom travelled to Calais for a period of three to ten days. Researchers were hosted by RRE's partner organisation, the Refugee Info Bus, which had built up trust among the camp population over time and greatly facilitated RRE's access to survey respondents. Every researcher was required to sign a research participation agreement and each had received a full written brief of their role description, a code of conduct, child protection policy and terms of reference before commencing the survey. Each was also given a full induction to ensure they were informed and compliant with topics such as child protection, risks and security concerns.

The ever-changing demographic composition of the camp and the absence of official government or UNHCR figures made it difficult to ensure a fully representative research sample. Nonetheless, RRE sought to ensure the sample was roughly in line with the camp's demographic composition, using censuses conducted by Help Refugees and L'Auberge des Migrants. Based on the population size in September 2016, estimated at 10,188 people, the 429 surveys conducted by RRE represented a sample size of 4.2%. By the same token, RRE used the census information to try and ensure a relatively representative sample in terms of gender, broad age group (minors/adults), and country of origin.

*French President François Hollande
has pledged to demolish the informal
settlement before the end of 2016*



LIMITATIONS

The main limitation of the study relates to the 'snowball sampling' method used, which meant that it was not fully feasible for RRE to steer the composition of the sample.

According to Help Refugees' September census, the camp consisted of: 43% from Sudan, 33% Afghanistan, 7% Pakistan, 9% Eritrea, 3.5% Ethiopia and Oromia, 1% Iraq (and Kurdistan), 1% Syria and 2.5% other. However, our sample featured an under-representation of Sudanese respondents (26.87% in our study), and an over-representation of individuals from Eritrea (14.95%) and Ethiopia (6.31%).

Similarly, there was a significant over-representation of minors within the sample (30.3% compared to 11.6% of the total estimated population). These differences are likely to be a result of the demographics of the various groups utilising the Refugee Info Bus services, and frequenting public spaces such as cafes and food distribution points.

Language barriers were generally overcome due to the availability of the survey in multiple core languages of the camp population. However, certain language barriers were identified among women respondents, some of whom did not have a sufficient level of literacy allowing them to take the survey in writing. Some languages were not included in the survey translations (notably Urdu), which also may have led to an underrepresentation of certain demographic groups.

Lastly, as data collection for this survey relied exclusively on self-reporting – a widely-accepted research methodology within the social sciences – no claims have been verified.



SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

During research for this report, RRE surveyed 429 refugees and displaced people living in the Calais camp.

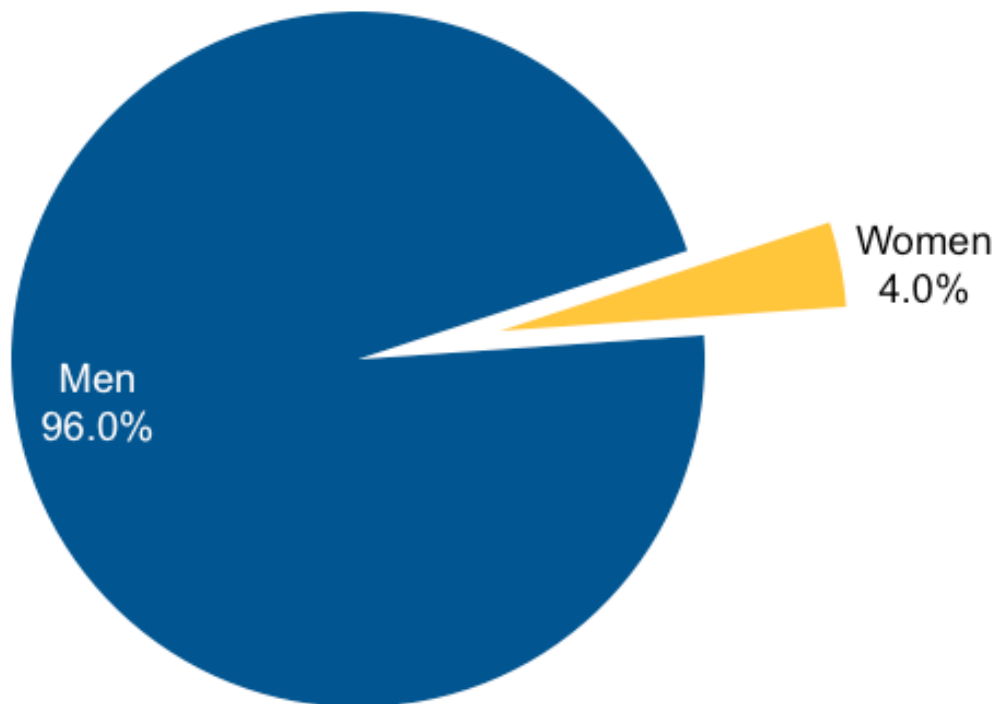
According to the September census by Help Refugees, this figure accounts for 4.2% of the camp's total residents. In this section, we outline the demographic composition of respondents.

The Calais camp is still heavily populated by men, and this group also made up some 96% of the sample. Women constituted just 4% of survey respondents.

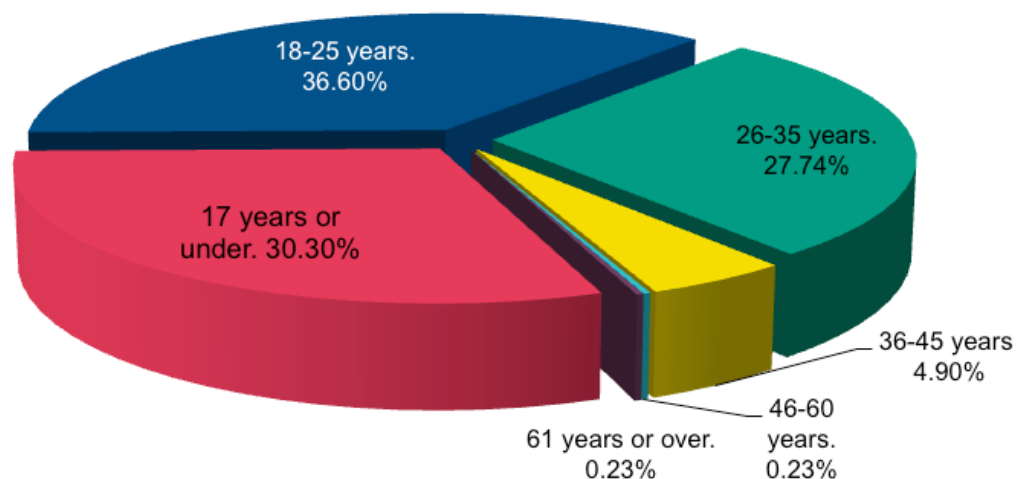
The sample reflects the young age profile of the camp's residents. The vast majority of respondents, some 66.9%, were 25 years or under. A total of 30.3% were aged 17 or under, and 36.6% were aged 18-25. Just 5.3% of respondents were 36 or older.

Interestingly, respondents from Afghanistan and Eritrea had the youngest age profile. In total, 37.24% of Afghan respondents and 62.5% of Eritrean's surveyed were aged 17 or under - compared to just 15.65% of those from Sudan.

SEXES ALL RESPONDENTS



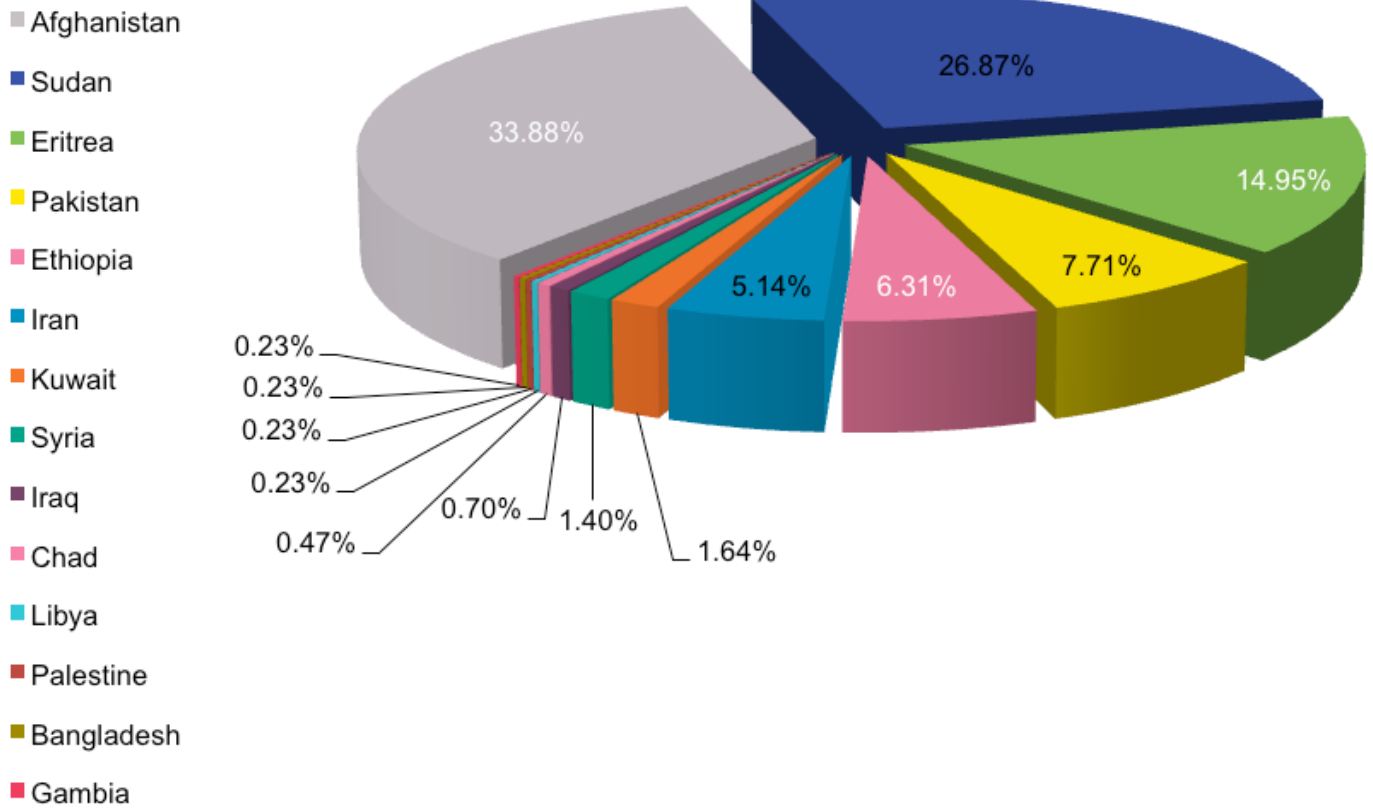
AGE ALL RESPONDENTS





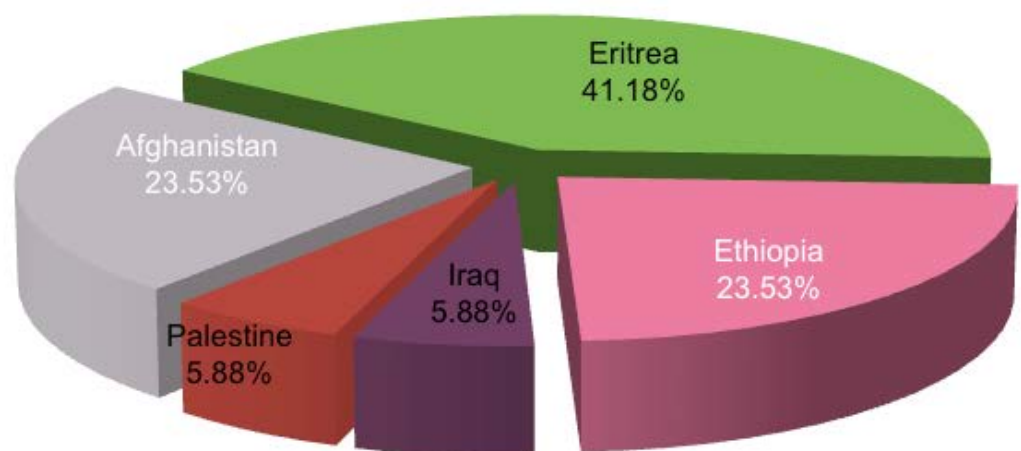
The majority of camp residents were unlikely to leave the area even if the camp were to be evicted.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN ALL RESPONDENTS

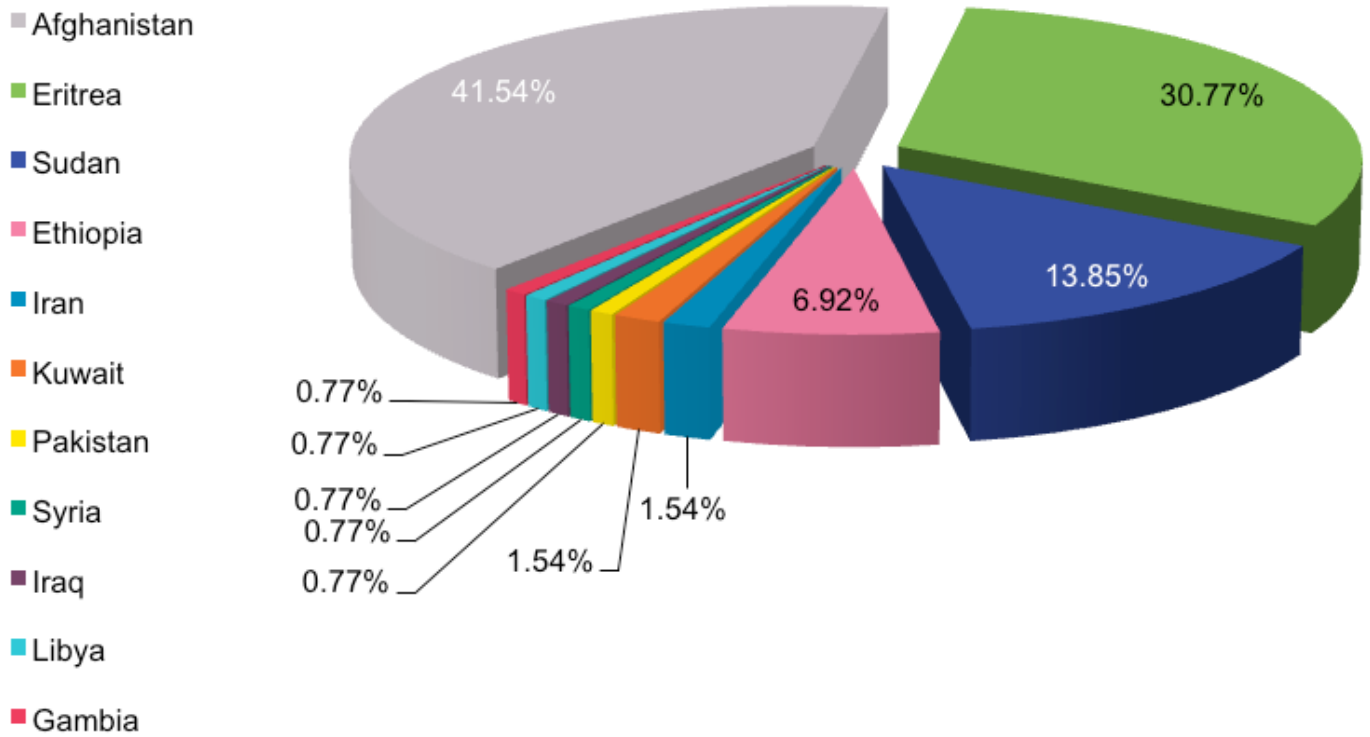


Citizens of Afghanistan and Sudan make up more than half of the survey's respondents - 60.75%. The majority of women respondents (41.18%) were from Eritrea, followed by 23.53% from both Ethiopia and Afghanistan.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN WOMEN ONLY



COUNTRY OF ORIGIN MINORS ONLY



***"I want to settle
down with my family,
wife and child"***



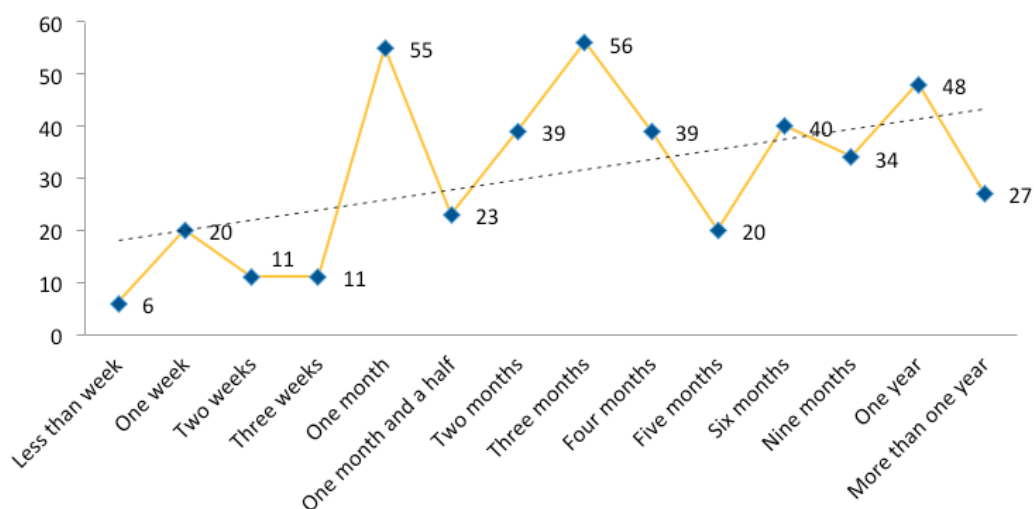
PART 1 : CURRENT SITUATION IN THE CAMP

TIME SPENT IN THE CAMP

Many have spent long periods of time living in the Calais camp's unhealthy and unsafe environment.

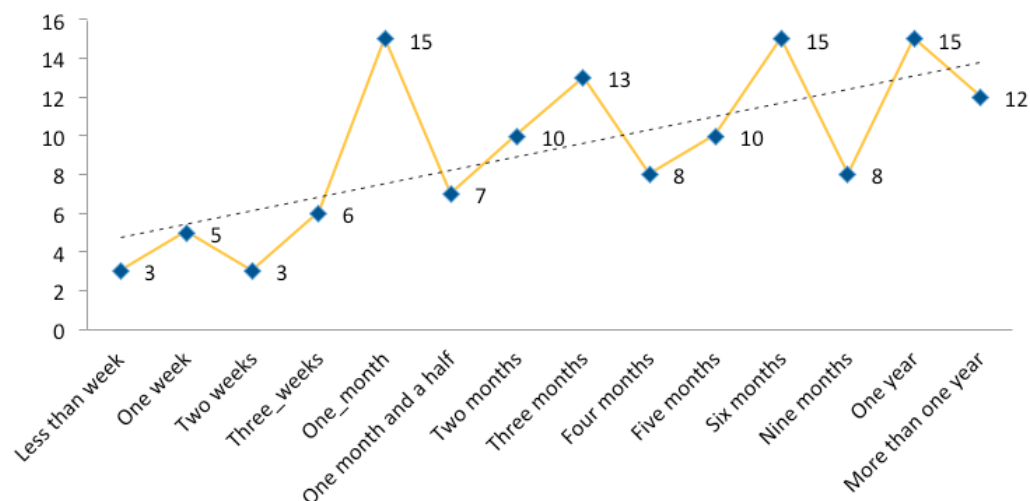
RRE's latest findings demonstrate that 17.48% of respondents had been in the camp for one year or more. Some 37.33% of these long-term residents were from Afghanistan.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN THE CAMP? ALL RESPONDENTS



It is also particularly concerning to find that 20.77% of children have lived in the camp for at least one year.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN THE CAMP? MINORS ONLY



FACILITIES IN THE CAMP

The poor living conditions faced by residents in the informal camp in Calais were highlighted in previous RRE's research findings (specifically in the February 2016 study, *The Long Wait*¹).

In this new survey, residents were asked what they felt more was needed of in the camp.

The largest proportion of respondents, 39.16%, said

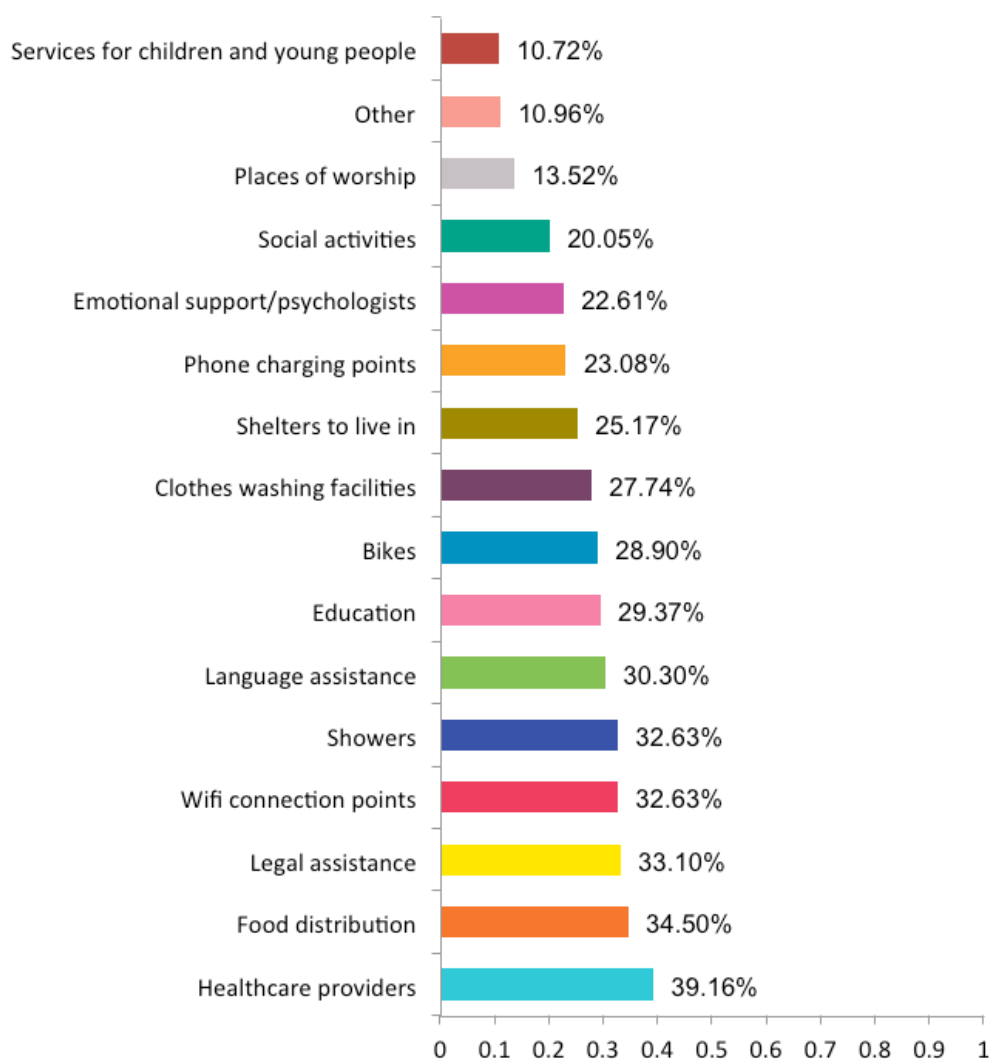
they needed more healthcare providers. Moreover, food distribution, sanitary services (specifically showers and clothes washing facilities), WiFi connection points, legal assistance, language assistance, education and bikes were also flagged as lacking in the camp. Interestingly, a significant number of respondents who chose the 'other' category answered that they don't need anything because they "*just want to go to the UK*".

These insights reiterate three major issues. Firstly, the unsanitary and unsafe conditions

that continue to exist within the Calais camp. Secondly, the huge importance and value placed on technology and ability to connect to the internet. And finally, the desire for more information - including education and learning opportunities - among refugees and displaced people in the Calais camp.

Similar trends were shown across demographics (age, gender, country of origin) including the desire for services that people tend to associate with younger users, such as the need for WiFi connection facilities and bikes.

WHAT DO YOU THINK THERE NEEDS TO BE MORE OF IN THE CAMP? ALL RESPONDENTS



¹ http://refugeerights.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/RRE_TheLongWait.pdf

***"I came through Italy and now in France
I recognised that UK may be the best
country which respects and preserves
the human rights of refugees."***





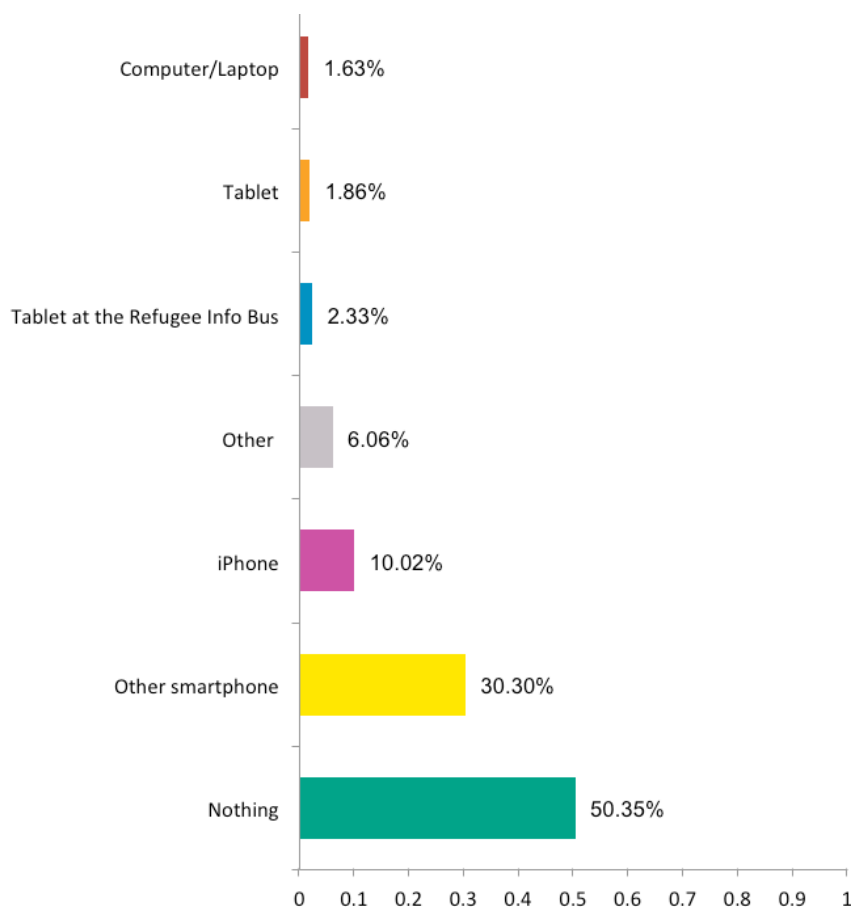
TECHNOLOGY

The use of technology by refugees and displaced people has attracted considerable interest from individuals and charitable organisations - often with the aim of identifying ways to help these communities on their journeys through Europe. RRE asked two questions to help shed light on this issue: *'What technology do you use in the camp?'* and *'How do you connect to the internet in the camp?'*

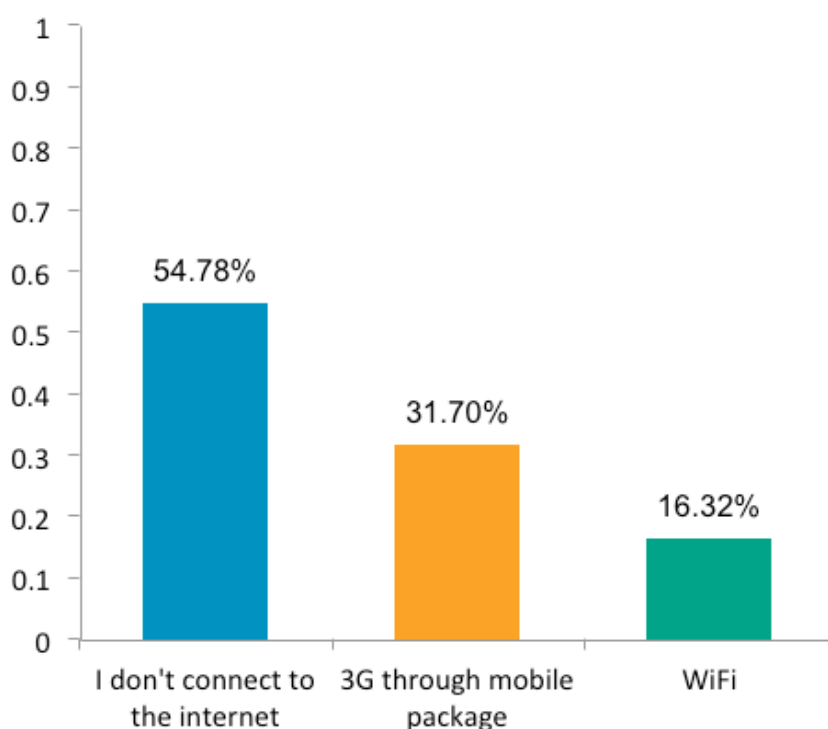
Perhaps surprisingly, 50.35% of respondents said they don't use any technology in the camp at all. However, almost a third - 30.3% - have access to an iPhone or other smartphone. Many others reported using a simple Nokia mobile phone that doesn't have access to the internet.

Similarly, 54.78% said they don't connect to the internet in the camp. 31.7% connect through 3G using a mobile data package, while just 16.32% use WiFi.

WHAT TECHNOLOGY DO YOU USE IN THE CAMP? ALL RESPONDENTS

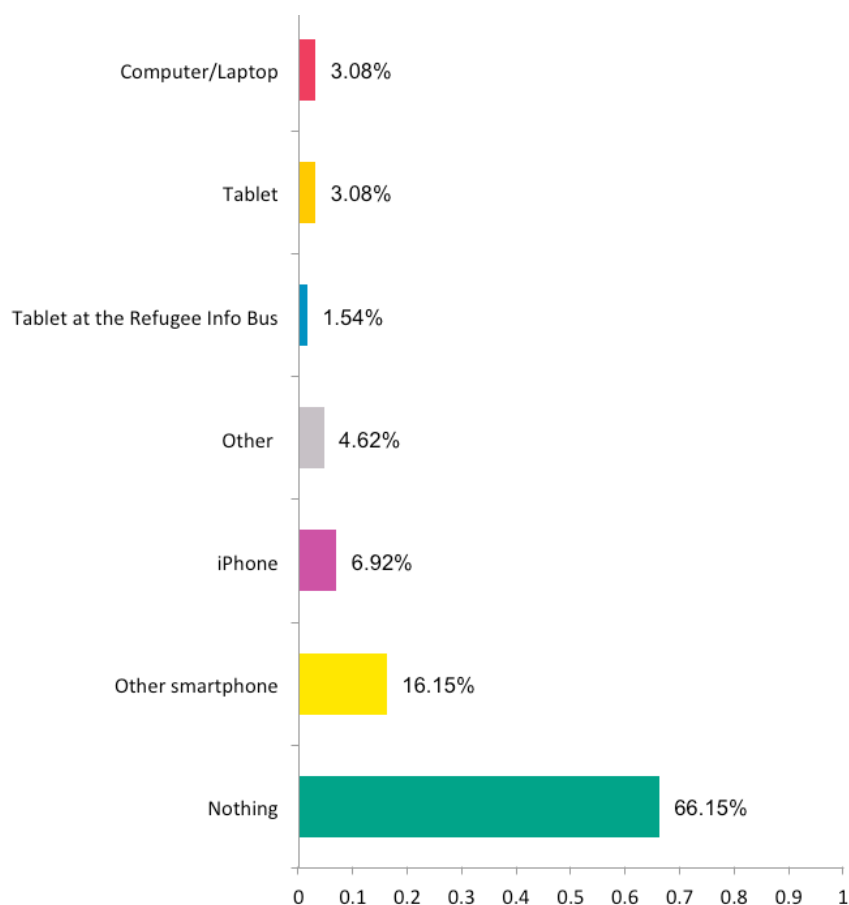


HOW DO YOU CONNECT TO THE INTERNET IN THE CAMP? ALL RESPONDENTS



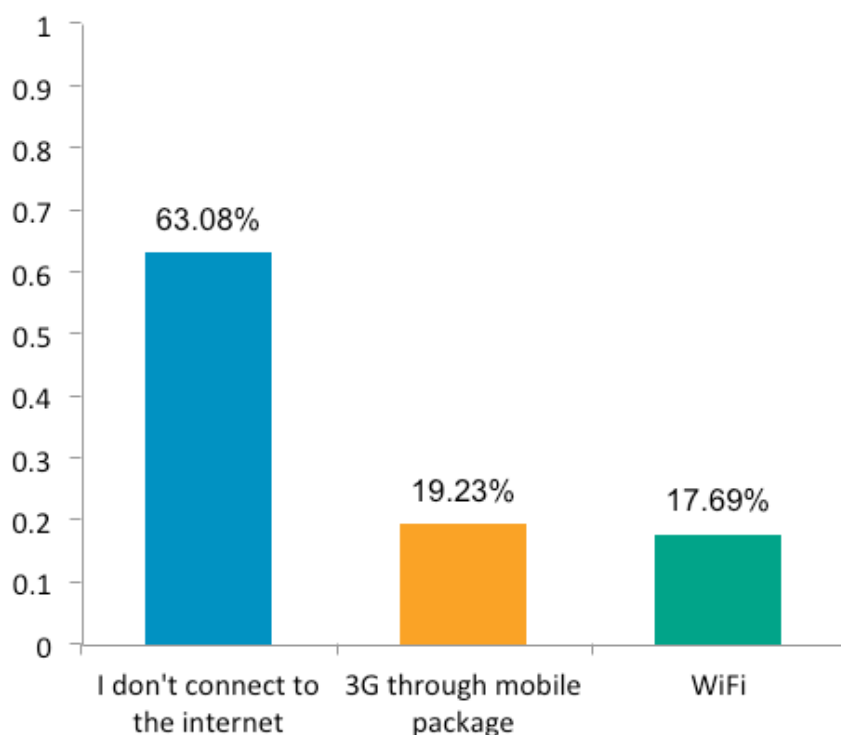
It may be assumed that minors use more technology than adults in the camp, but the survey found quite the opposite. Some 66.15% of children said they do not use any technology in the camp, while fewer minors use smartphones than their adult peers.

WHAT TECHNOLOGY DO YOU USE IN THE CAMP? MINORS ONLY



Some 63.08% of children do not connect to the internet, while 19.23% connect through a mobile package, and 17.69% use WiFi.

HOW DO YOU CONNECT TO THE INTERNET IN THE CAMP? MINORS ONLY



PART 2: THE FUTURE OF THE CAMP

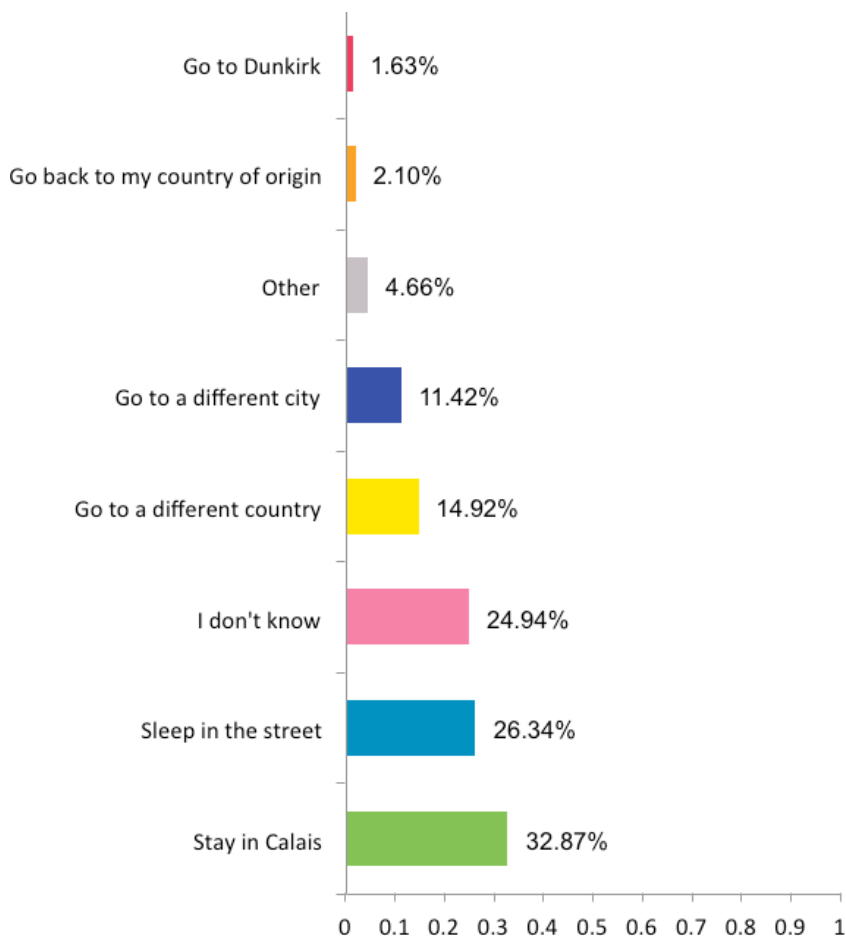
The survey also explored two key issues relating to the future of the camp: the camp residents' preliminary plans

should the settlement be evicted, and responses to Britain's vote to leave the European Union.

EVICCTIONS

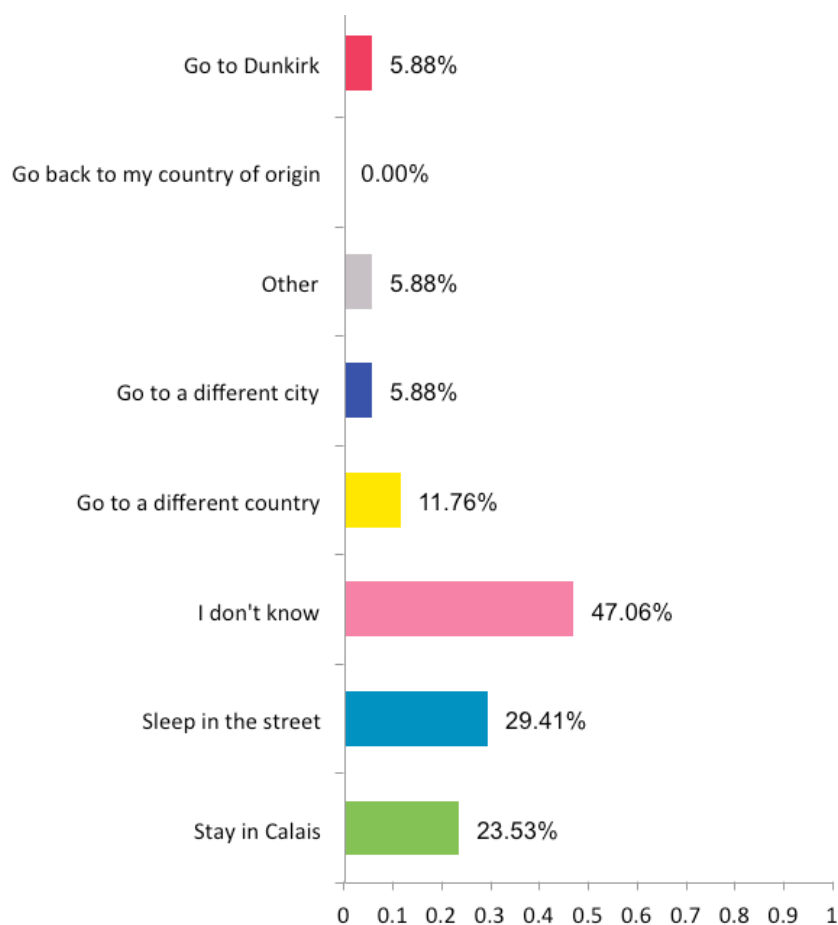
While collecting data for this report, it emerged that the entire Calais camp was likely to be evicted by the end of 2016. With this in mind, it is alarming that 59.21% of respondents said they would either remain in Calais or sleep on the streets if the camp disappeared. Only 26.34% said they would go to a different city or country, while 2.1% said they would return to their country of origin.

WHERE WOULD YOU GO IF THE CAMP DISAPPEARS? ALL RESPONDENTS



The majority of women - 47.06% - said they didn't know what they would do if they were evicted, while a total of 52.94% reported that they would stay in Calais or sleep in the street

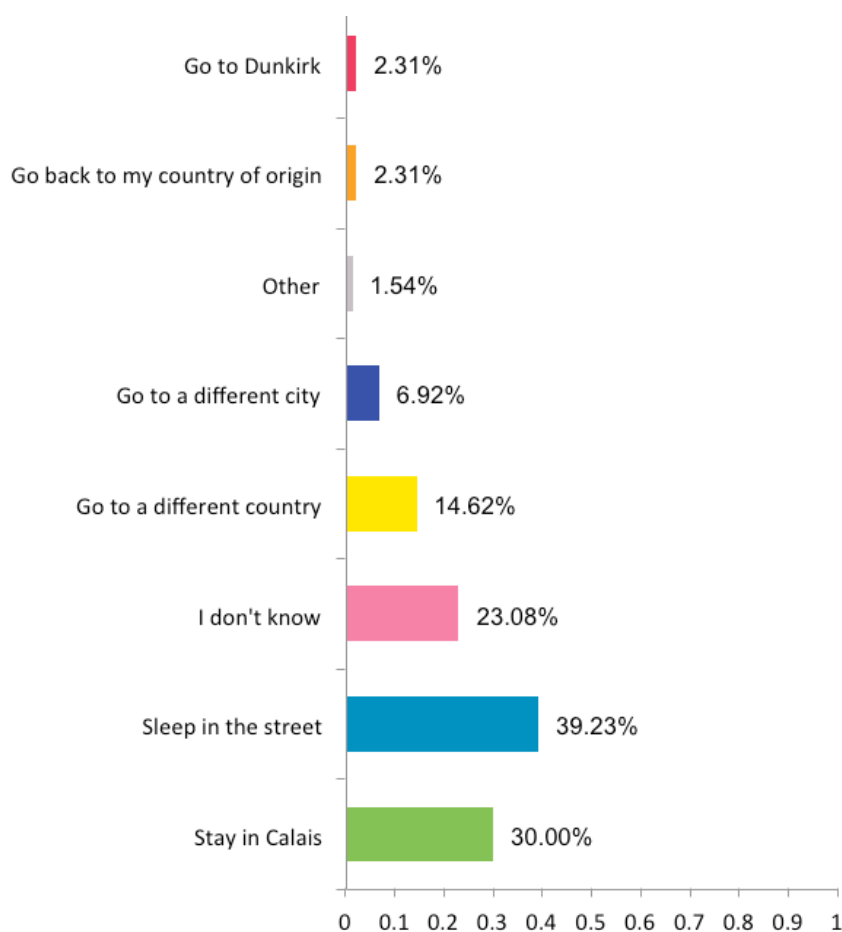
WHERE WOULD YOU GO IF THE CAMP DISAPPEARS? WOMEN ONLY



This issue is particularly acute among minors. Some 69.23% said they would stay in Calais or sleep in the street if the camp disappeared, compared to just 21.54% who said they would go to a different country or city.

Just 4.66% of total respondents selected the 'other' option. Many in this category stressed that they will continue trying to reach the UK, alongside answers including *"I will follow other people"* and *"I will call my parents and ask where I should go"*.

WHERE WOULD YOU GO IF THE CAMP DISAPPEARS? MINORS ONLY



THERE IS A BIG WISH IN MY
HEART

THAT I TAKE ONE CUP TEA IN
LONDON

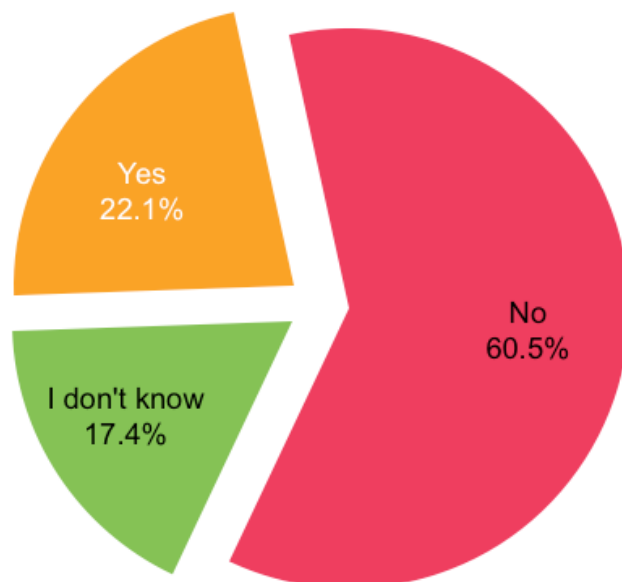
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FRENCH ACCOMMODATION CENTRES

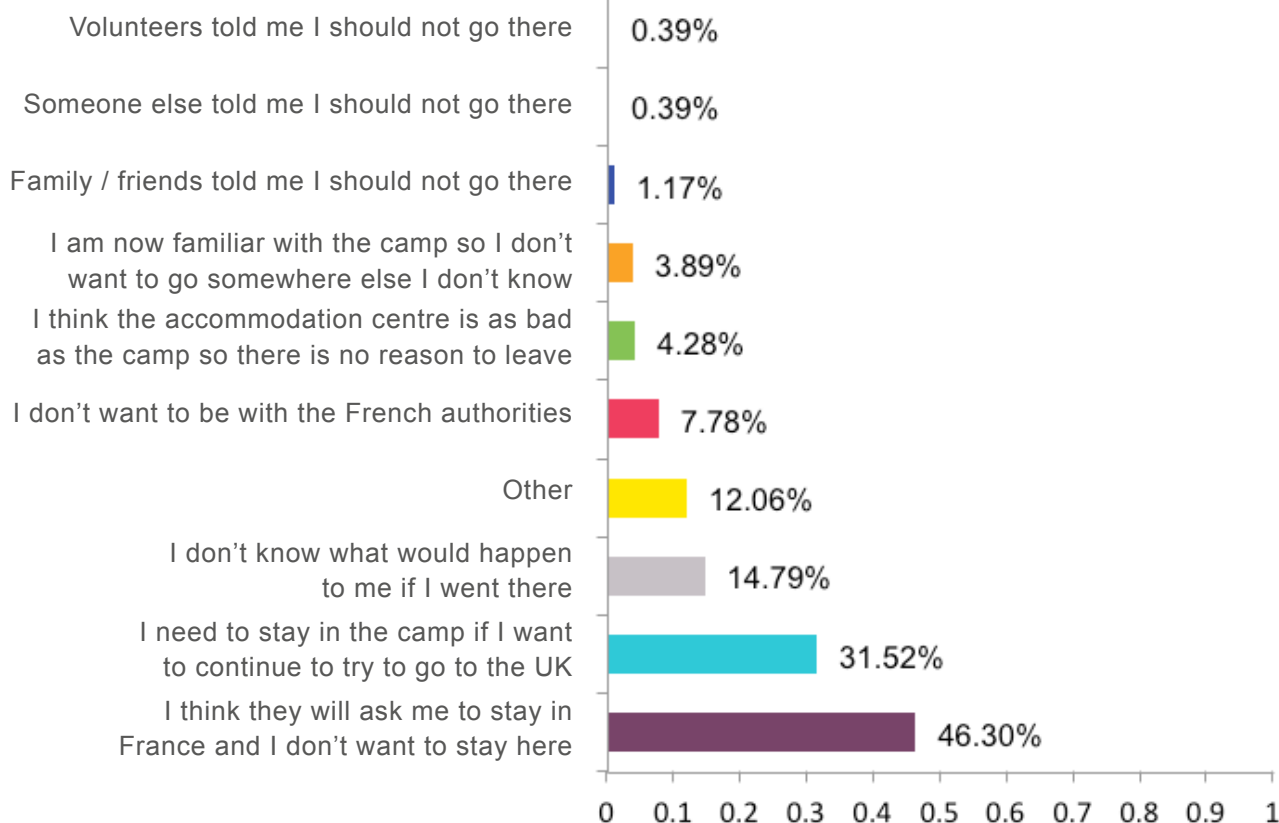
We surveyed camp residents' attitude towards French accommodation centres as an alternative to residing in the camp. The majority, some 60.05% of respondents, said they do not want to stay in a French accommodation centre. Almost half - 46.3% - of people in this category are reluctant to do so because

they believe they'll be asked to stay in France, and want to live elsewhere. Some 31.52% said they need to stay in the camp if they want to keep trying to reach the UK. Meanwhile, 14.79% don't want to go to the centres because they do not understand what would happen to them there.

DO YOU WANT TO STAY IN A FRENCH ACCOMMODATION CENTRE? ALL RESPONDENTS



IF NO, WHY? ALL RESPONDENTS



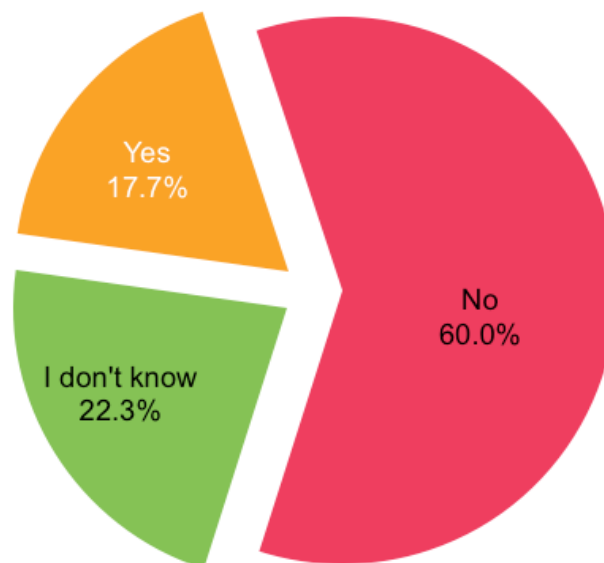
Interestingly, 7.78% worry about living in close proximity to the French authorities, suggesting that poor treatment may be deterring refugees and displaced people from applying for asylum in the country. This figure is particularly high among minors - 15.38% of whom don't want to stay with the French authorities.

A number of respondents told us they do not want to live in shared, cramped conditions, as have been reported at some accommodation centres.

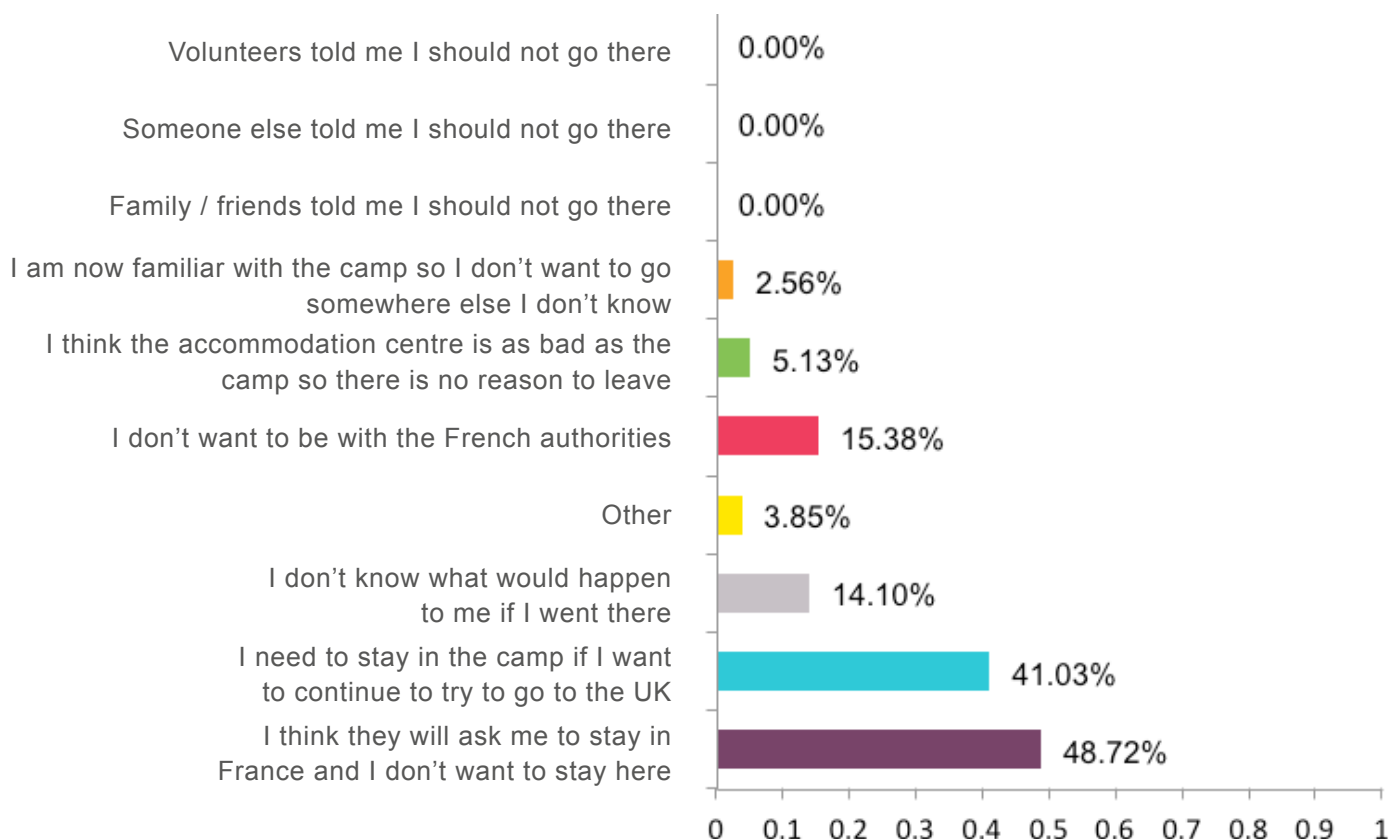
"There are 12 people inside and every person is doing their own thing," said one respondent, while others were more concerned about their restrictive rules: "I want to find a job but if I stay there I have to be there all the time".

Worryingly, some respondents had attempted to go to the French accommodation centres but been turned away. *"They don't have any more places," said one, while another explained, "I stayed there before, but after 48 hours my registration expired".*

DO YOU WANT TO STAY IN A FRENCH ACCOMMODATION CENTRE? MINORS ONLY



IF NO, WHY? MINORS ONLY



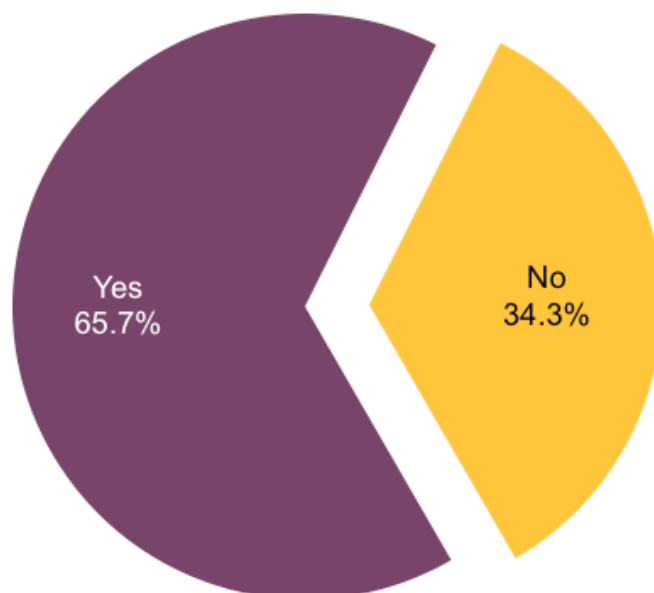
*"I will call my parents and
ask where I should go".*



THE IMPACT OF "BREXIT"

Finally, RRE asked residents of the Calais camp whether they were aware of Britain's vote to leave the European Union, enabling them to have a voice and opinion where they are often overlooked. Our findings show that the vast majority of refugees and displaced people in Calais are tuned into political developments, with some 65.7% being aware of the UK's decision to leave the EU.

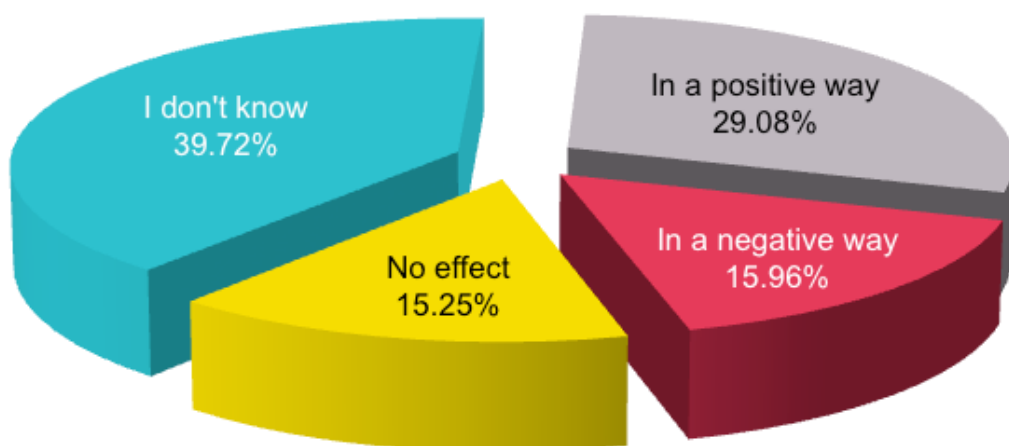
HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE UK'S VOTE TO LEAVE THE EUROPEAN UNION ("BREXIT")? ALL RESPONDENTS



Refugees and displaced people seeking to come to the UK could potentially be among those most affected by the referendum result. However, a large proportion of respondents who had heard of the referendum did not know how it would affect them (39.72%), while some believed it would affect them in a positive way (29.08%).

Minors who had heard of the 'Brexit' vote were most optimistic about its potential impact. Some 32.35% suggested it would affect them in a positive way. However, this sentiment diminishes to 20.88% among the 26-35 age group.

IF YES, HOW DO YOU THINK THE UK'S VOTE TO LEAVE THE EU WILL AFFECT YOU? ALL RESPONDENTS

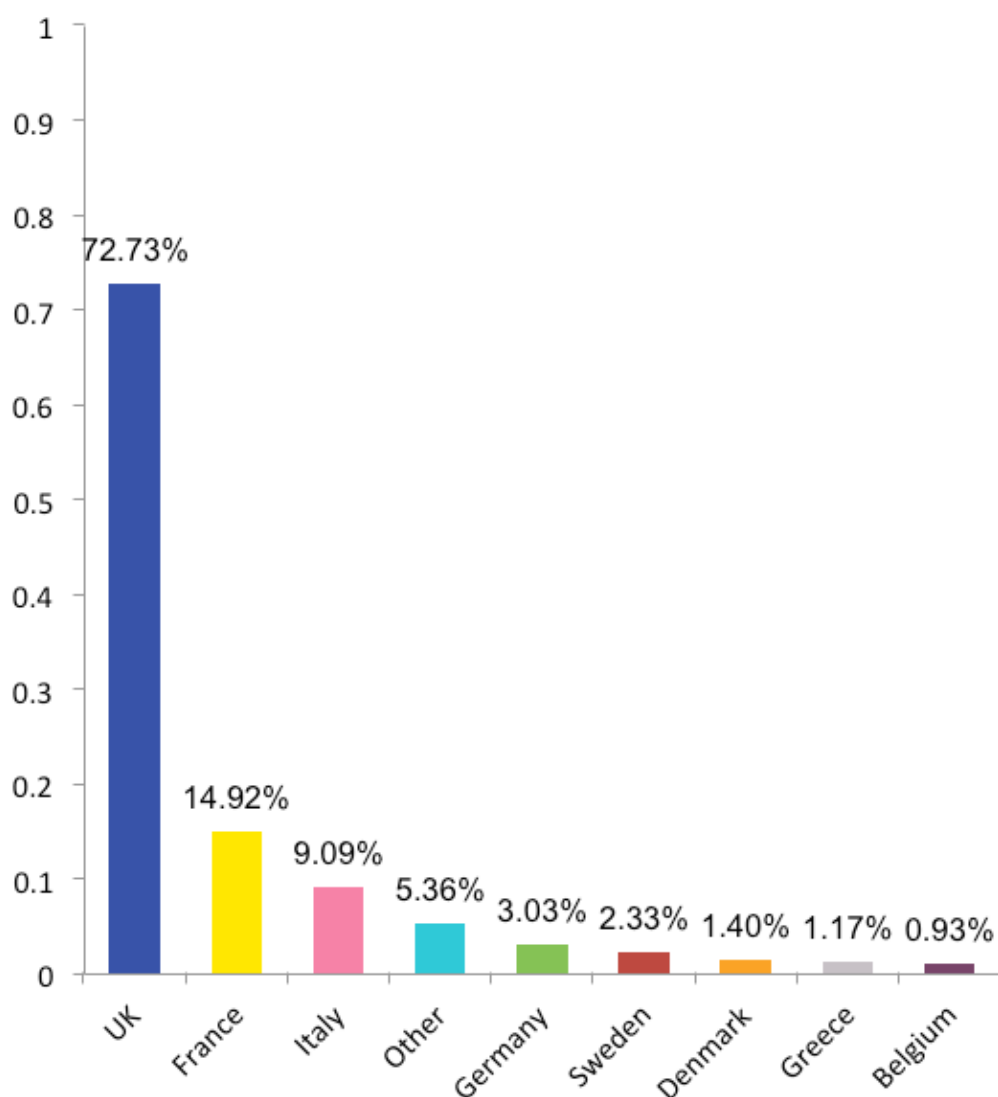


PART 3 : FUTURE AND ASPIRATIONS

CHOOSING A COUNTRY IN EUROPE

Perhaps unsurprisingly, 72.73% of residents in Calais think that the UK is the best country for them in Europe. However, this is by no means the only reason that people live in the camp. Another 14.92% believe France is the best country for them. Some 9.09% answered Italy, while Germany and Sweden also featured among respondents' top choices. Canada was also mentioned by a significant number of respondents.

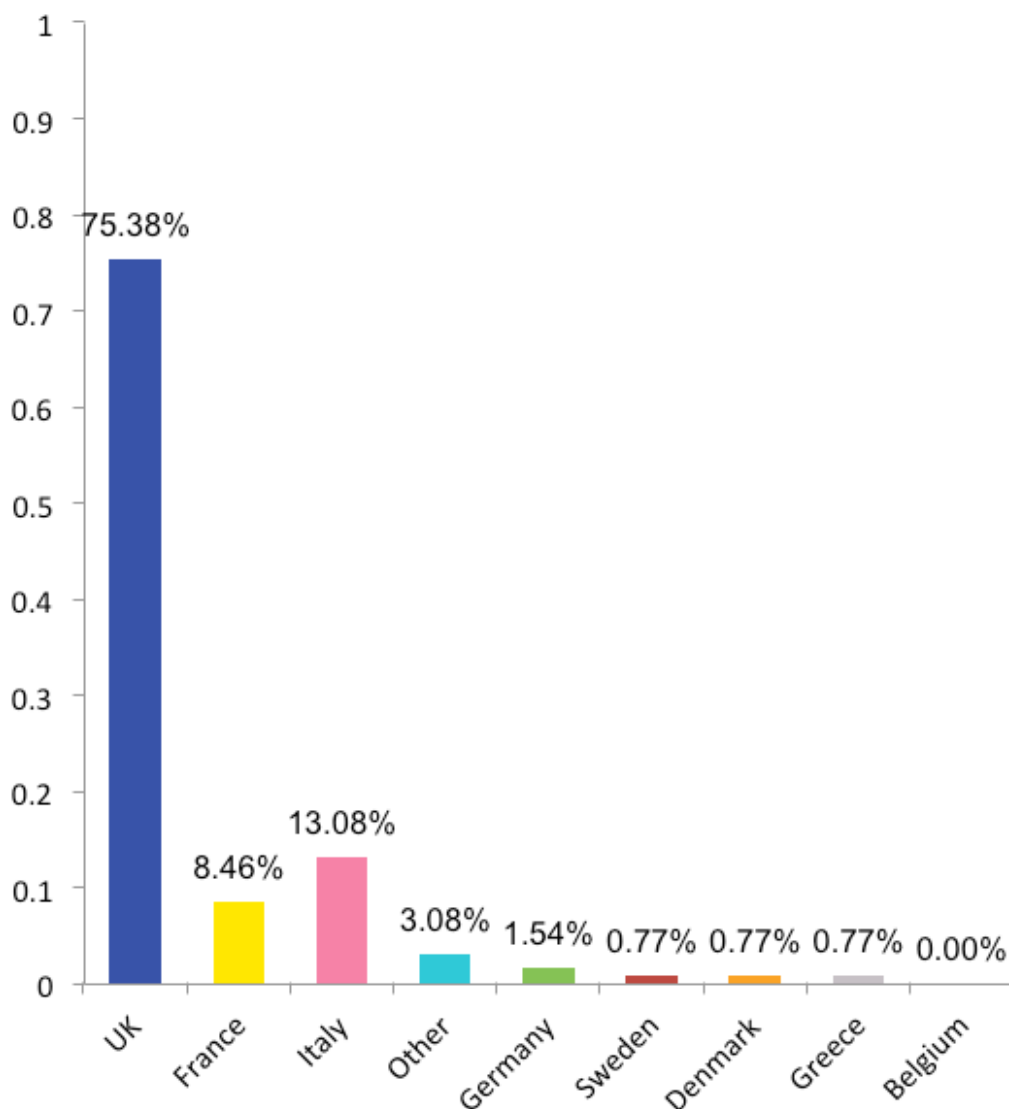
WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BEST COUNTRY IN EUROPE FOR YOU? ALL RESPONDENTS



The vast majority, 55.24% of respondents, told researchers they decided which country to go to before leaving home. Only 14.45% made the choice themselves during their journey across Europe. Some 5.13% decided while living in the Calais camp after receiving recommendations from peers, while just 1% said they had been influenced in their decision by volunteers.

Other reasons for choosing to travel to the UK include "I saw it on TV" and "I came through Italy and now in France I recognised that UK may be the best country which respects and preserves the human rights of refugees."

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BEST COUNTRY IN EUROPE FOR YOU? MINORS ONLY

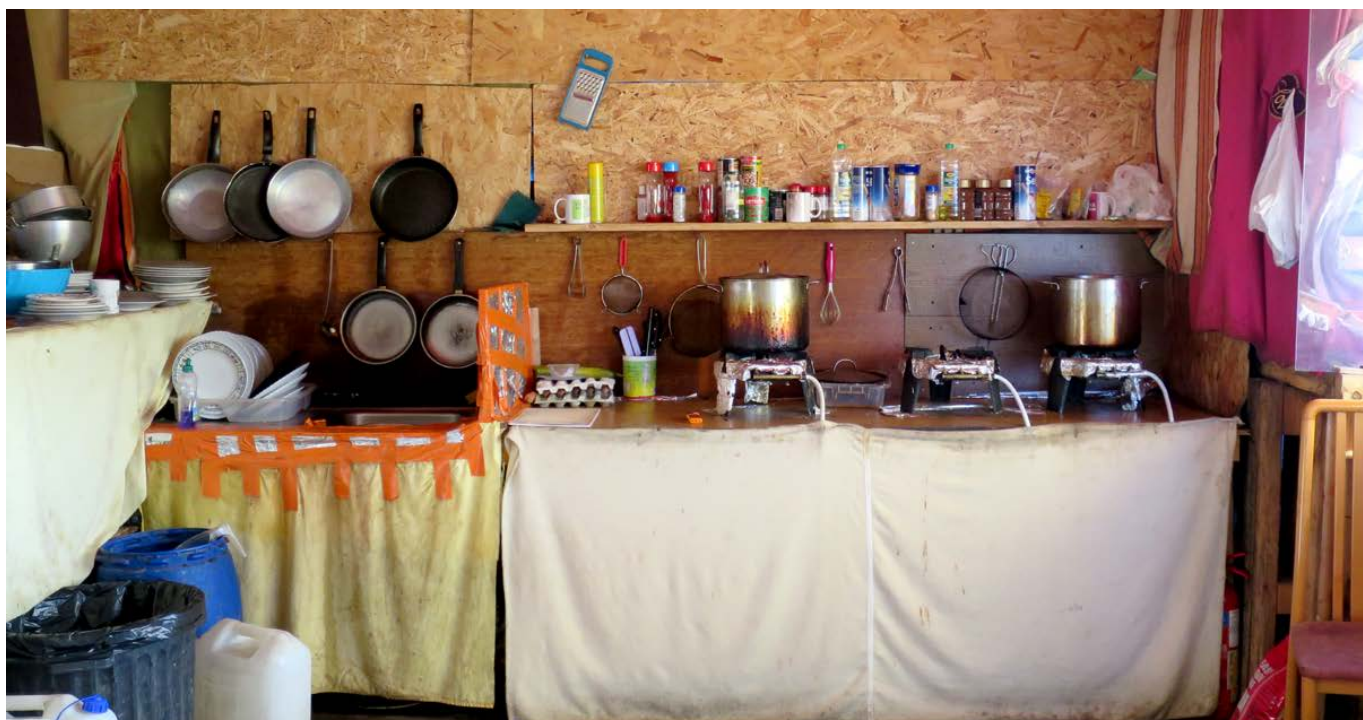
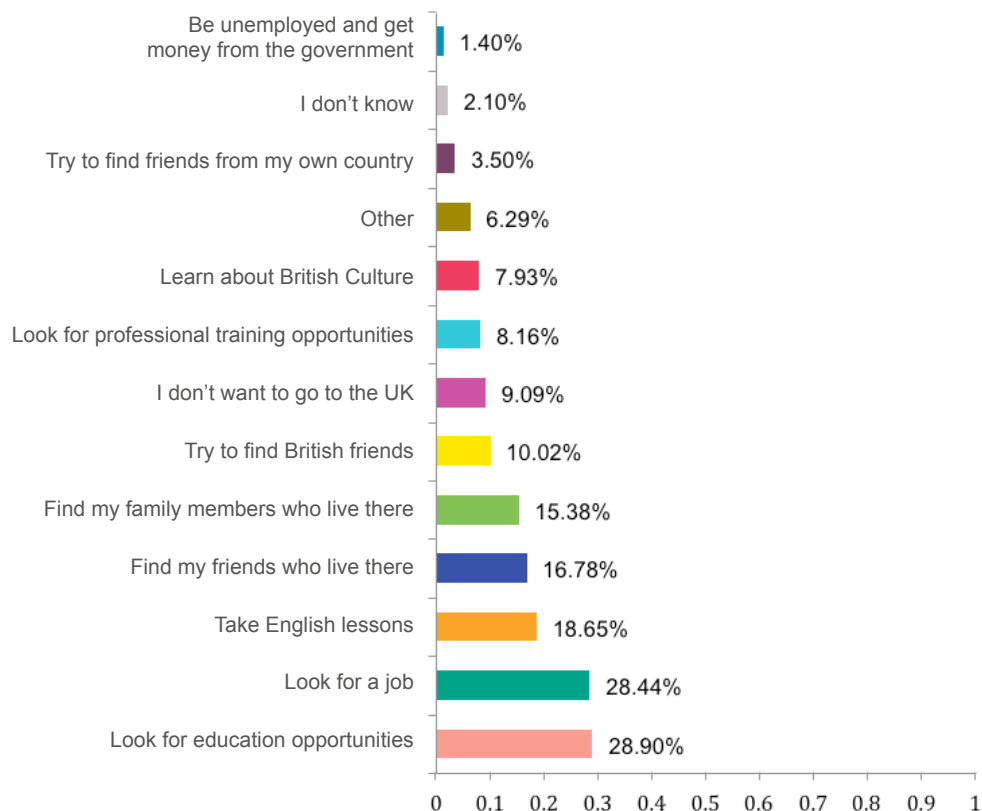


ACTIVITIES IN THE UK

When asked what they would do if/when they reach the UK, 28.44% and 28.9% respectively cited that they would like to look for a job or find education opportunities. English lessons are also high on the agenda, as is family reunion.

Despite claims from some media outlets and politicians, refugees and displaced people seek to integrate quickly into British society. Some 10.02% want to try to find British friends, as opposed to just 3.5% who told us they want to find friends from their own country. Moreover, just 1.4% said they want to be unemployed and get money from the government, disproving the theory that the camp's residents hope to claim UK benefits.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO IN THE UK? ALL RESPONDENTS

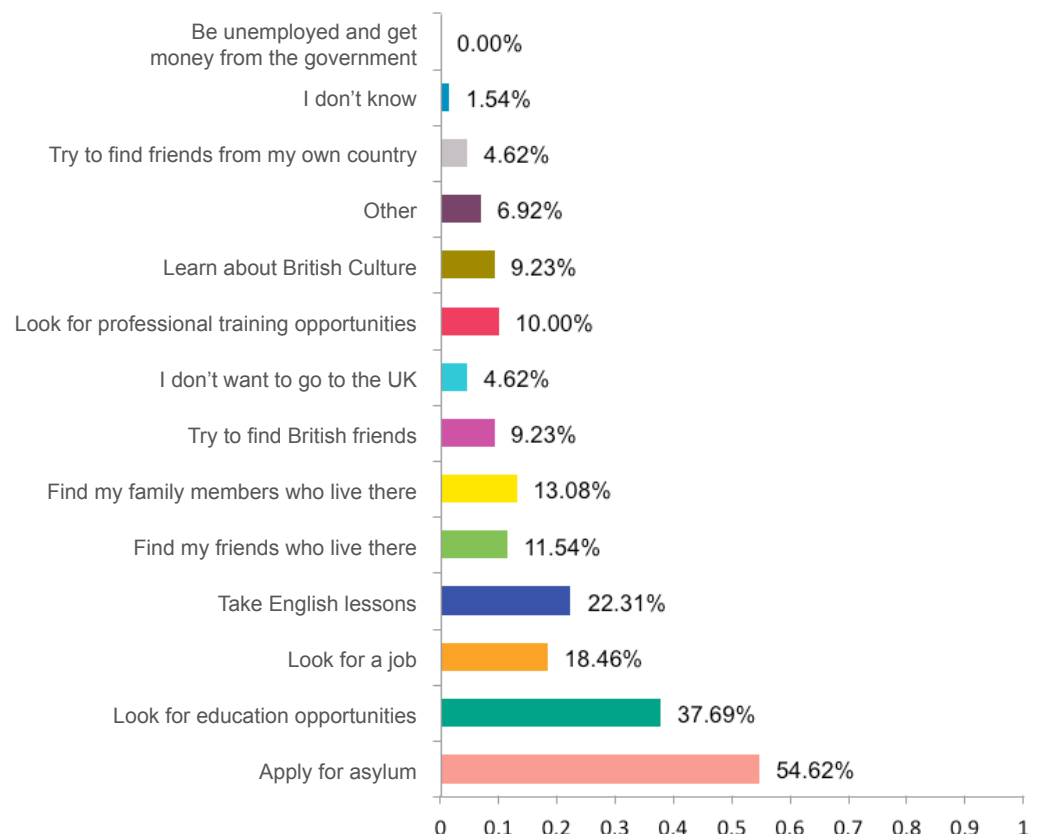




Interestingly, some 6.29% said they want to do 'other' things in the UK – the majority to find a way of living in safety and security. *"I want to have a normal life", "save my life", and "I want a normal life for freedom"* were just a handful of answers given. Another man stated, *"I want to settle down with my family, wife and child"*.

Among minors, 37.69% want to seek education opportunities and 22.31% want to take English lessons.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO IN THE UK? MINORS ONLY





"I just want to go to the UK"

CONCLUSION

The research findings highlight the complex dynamics at play in the Calais camp, where thousands of refugees and displaced people continue to live in squalid, inhumane conditions.

We hope that this first-hand data can help shed light on their aims and motivations, while challenging common misconceptions. Our research suggests the following conclusions:

1. Recent British and French state policies, including the decision to build a new concrete security wall near the camp and the planned demolition of the settlement, fail to address the underlying problems at hand. Many inhabitants have lived in the camp for one year or more - including roughly a fifth of all minors surveyed - despite its unhealthy environment, and a chronic absence of basic facilities and services. Rather than investing funds in a new wall, efforts ought to be aimed at understanding these dynamics and developing alternatives.
2. The majority of respondents said they would remain in the Calais area if the camp is evicted - potentially sleeping on the street. This suggests that demolishing the settlement without presenting a viable alternative would be detrimental both to its residents and to the surrounding local community. According to the research findings, a large number of refugees are reluctant to move into French accommodation centres - many because they want to keep trying to reach the UK, but others because they fear the unknown, they have heard bad things about the centres, or they don't want to live in close proximity to the French authorities.
3. The camp's residents are politically aware, and most have knowledge of the UK's vote to leave the European Union. However, the majority are unsure about how this decision is likely to affect them.
4. While the majority of residents wish to go to the UK, every individual has their own reasons for staying in the Calais camp. A relatively high proportion would like to remain in France, while others hope to live in Italy, Germany, Sweden or other countries in Europe and North America.
5. Refugees and displaced people in Calais are eager to contribute to the UK economy - either finding a job or seeking education opportunities. More hope to integrate by finding British friends rather than meeting people from their own country, while very few plan to claim unemployment benefits in the UK.

A lack of clarity around these key issues has contributed to a polarised and, at times, misguided debate surrounding the future of the Calais camp. We hope that our data can help to resolve this problem - challenging common preconceptions, and encouraging policy-makers to find a sustainable, long-term solution to the ongoing humanitarian crisis at their borders.

