

An introduction to Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network

November 2018

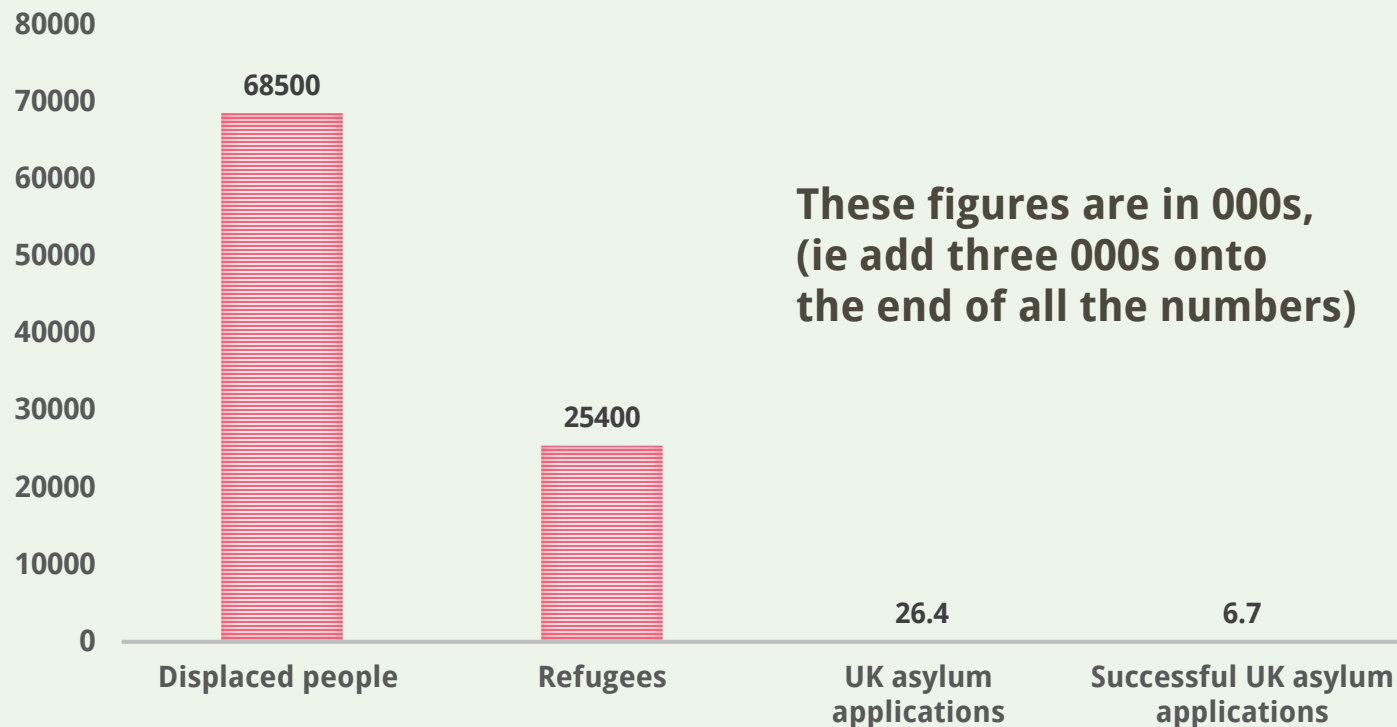
Who is a refugee?

A refugee is as a person who has fled ... due to a **well-founded fear of persecution** for reasons of

- race
- religion
- nationality
- membership of a particular social group
- or political opinion

Article 1, The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

How many people are we talking about?



Source: UNHCR, 2018; Home Office, 2018

The top 3 countries for refugees make up 57% of the global total



Syria
6.3 million

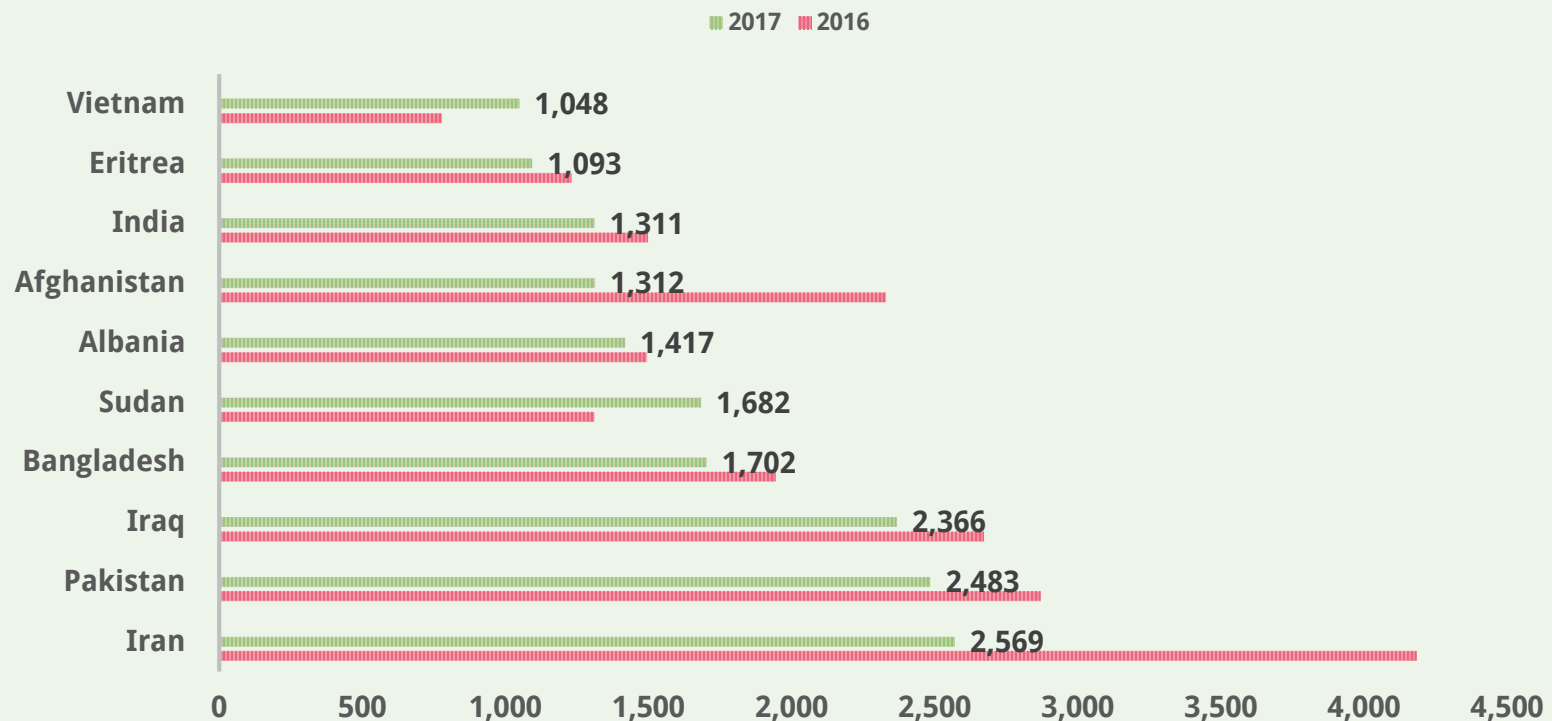


Afghanistan
2.6 million



South Sudan
2.4 million

UK Asylum claims by country: top 10

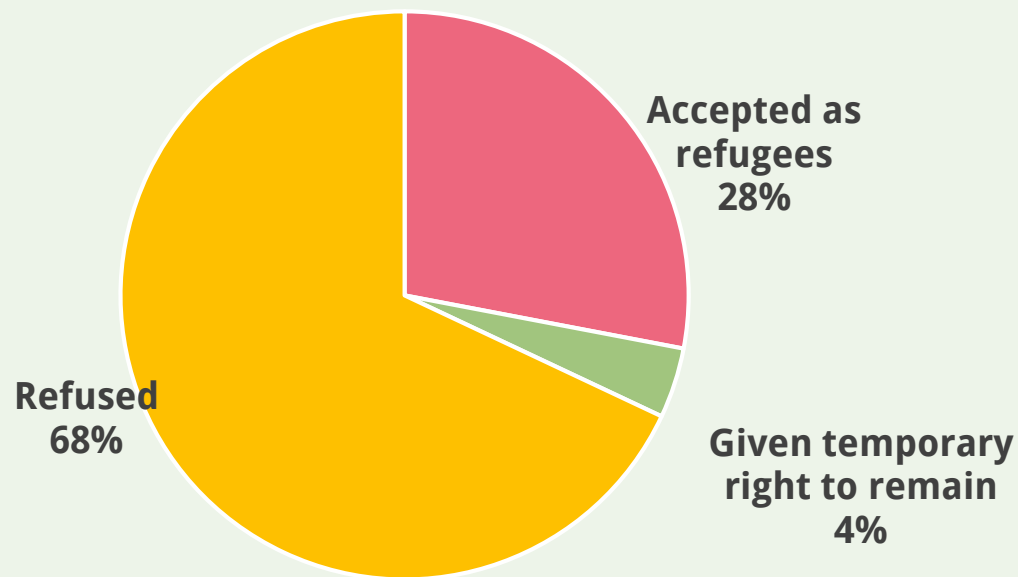


Source: Home Office, 2018

How are asylum seekers, refugees (& EU Migrants) different?

	Asylum seeker	Refugee	EU migrants
UK Govt have accepted their right to stay in UK	x	✓	✓
Permission to Work	x	✓	✓
Access to mainstream welfare systems	x	✓	✓
Permissions to travel abroad	x	✓	✓
Choose where to live	x	✓	✓
Ability to use NHS for free	✓ / ?	✓	✓ / ?
<i>Nb: There are some exceptions to this picture, but this is the simplified version</i>			

Who ends up staying?



About a third (35 percent) of appeals are successful

Source: Home Office, 2018

Where do people end up?

- At the end of 2017 about 42,500 destitute asylum seekers were supported by the UK Govt
- North West is largest dispersal area where 1 in 4 asylum seekers are placed, pending decisions
- In May 2017, Leeds had 850 asylum seekers

Source: Home Office, 2018

Who are LASSN & what do we do?

- We started in 2001
- 7 part time members of staff
- 271 volunteers
- All our work is about
 - Supporting
 - Empowering
 - Integrating



Our work is based on the power of relationships

We help ordinary people to do amazing things by

- Opening their homes
- Sharing a meal
- Spending time with someone
- Listening
- Having conversations
- Sharing stories and experiences

Our volunteers get back as much as they give



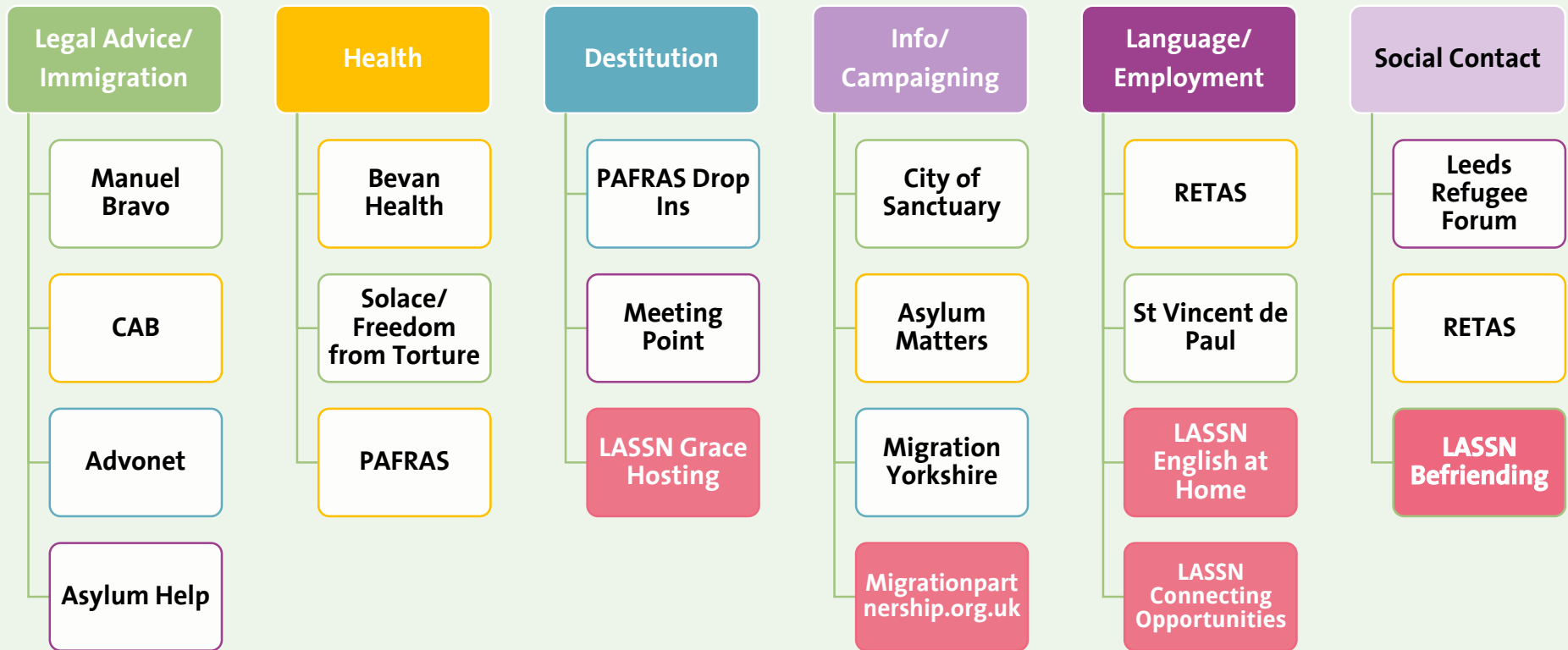
In 2017/18 LASSN supported 260 people

- To learn English in their own homes
 - **121 different people**
- To meet people through our Befriending scheme
 - **29 different people**
- To find somewhere to stay through Grace Hosting
 - **4,991 nights stayed by 70 different people**

Information and Awareness

- We trained **132 new volunteers**
- We reached more than **38,000 people via social media**
- We shared all our policies, procedures and **developed how-to guides** for groups wanting to set up LASSN-like services
- helpinleeds.com our online directory of services was used **12,000 times**
- migrationpartnership.org.uk **published 400 news stories & reached 16,500 users**
- We launched a website for new refugees called **transitionguide.org.uk**
- We produced a short film about English at Home which we now use to train volunteers

Where does LASSN fit in Leeds?



Some recent changes that are on our mind

- Although the ‘Hostile Environment’ has been rebranded the “compliant environment” none of the rules about access to health, banking, housing or work have changed
- Asylum and refugee support is not spread equitably across the UK
- NHS registration remains a problem for some groups (especially destitute asylum seekers)
- A two-tier system of refugee support has emerged with greater support for refugees arriving as part of Government programmes
- Limiting refugee status to 5 years increases uncertainty

Current Healthcare Entitlements of Refugees and People Seeking Asylum

	Refugees	Asylum Seekers in receipt of S95/S4	Refused Asylum Seekers (not on support)
Primary Healthcare	Free	Free	Free
Secondary Healthcare	Free	Free	Charged
Emergency Healthcare	Free	Free	Free
Maternity Care	Free	Free	Charged
Community Healthcare	Free	Free	Charged

Things you can do to help?

- Understand more about the reality of refugees and people seeking asylum - and share this with people you know
- Tell other people about the work we do
- Volunteer – there's a list of opportunities at helpinleeds.com
- Support us financially – donations make up 20 percent of our income
- Support our friends eg PAFRAS/St Vincents with donations to their food bank/clothing store
- Assist us to lobby for change at a local level
 - Make contact with City of Sanctuary
 - Lobby for change through your local councillors & MPs

Q&A

Jon Beech

jon@lassn.org.uk

07845 298 047

lassn.org.uk

@lassnleeds

facebook.com/lassnleeds