

*‘We can give you food but  
you are not meant to be  
happy or equal to others’*

Children and families seeking  
protection in the UK

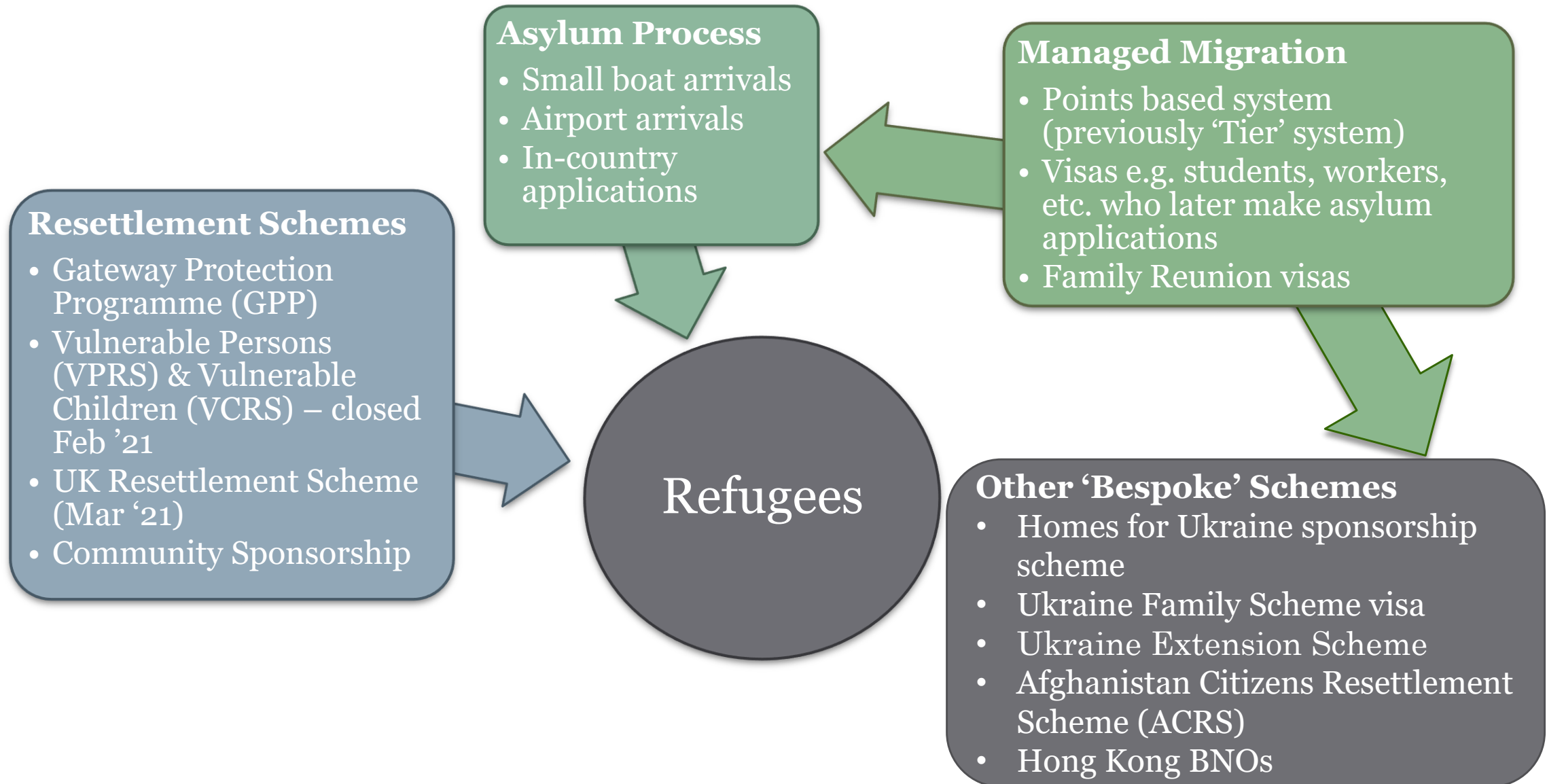
Ilona Pinter, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, LSE

NAFIS Conference 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022

# Definitions

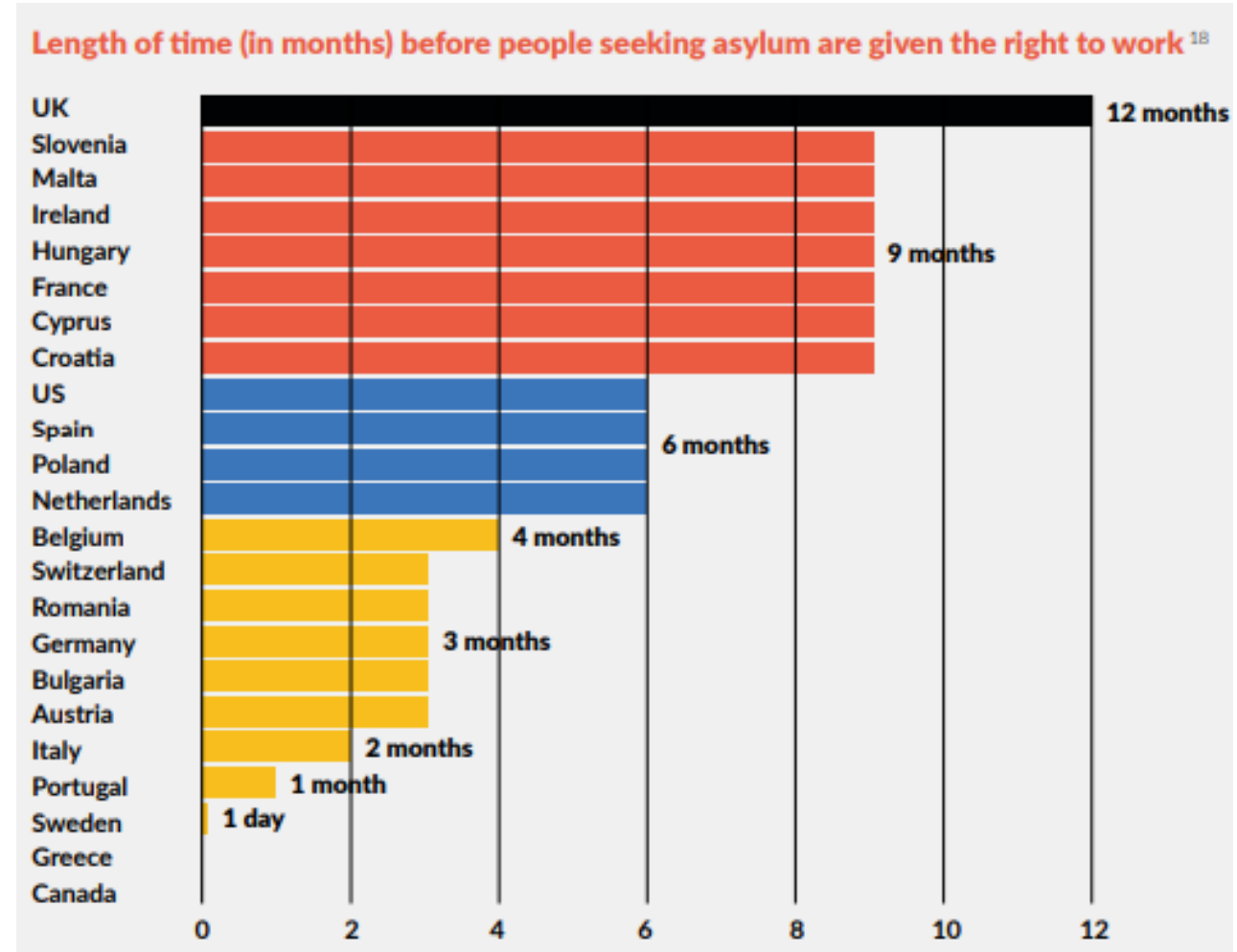
- **Asylum-seeker:** a person who is seeking protection in another country but whose application has not yet been concluded
- **Refugee:** a person who has been recognised as meeting the definition in the Refugee Convention of having a well-founded fear of persecution and who has been granted status as a refugee
- **Refugee resettlement:** this involves the selection and transfer of refugees from a country in which they have sought protection – usually somewhere with a large number of refugees – to a third country like the UK to be resettled
- **Subject to immigration control:** a person who requires permission to enter or remain in the UK and is subject to immigration rules and policies; applies to anyone who is not a British or Irish citizen
- **No recourse to public funds (NRPF):** having no access to most mainstream benefits i.e. because of a condition on visa or leave to remain or because status is unresolved/undocumented. Public funds are defined in guidance.

# UK Protection Routes



# Asylum Support in the UK

- Individuals and families seeking asylum in the UK have **‘no recourse to public funds’** >> excluded from mainstream benefits (e.g. CB, UC, HB, DLA, PIP etc.)
- Generally **not permitted to work** while their claim is being processed >> after 12 months but only in shortage occupations, only main applicants & not children
- To avoid destitution >> subsistence payments & furnished accommodation (with utilities provided) via Home Office to meet **‘essential living needs’** >> £5.84 p/d or £177.02 p/m



Source: Graph taken from pg 10 of Refugee Action (2018) Lift The Ban:  
Why people seeking asylum should have the right to work:  
<https://www.refugee-action.org.uk/lift-the-ban-report/>

# Children & families on Asylum Support

- Support system for '*able-bodied adults and their dependents*' (Home Office, 2021) – 'flat-rate' of support for adults and children alike
- Some extra payments for under 3s & pregnant women; education and NHS care provided; families eligible for Free School Meals & 15hrs nursery places for 2yos
- But lack of uprating in line with inflation over time and targeted cuts to support e.g. introduction of 'flat rate' in 2015 mean **children and families living well below poverty line**, esp those with a disability



# Children & families on Asylum Support

- Very limited data & research with/about children in this context or analysis/evaluation of policy impact
- Between 2012-21, **60,094 were children claiming with families** (>6,000 annually or 16%) and 25,073 were unaccompanied children (>2,500 annually or 7%)

## Asylum seekers crammed into rat-infested rooms

'Guest houses' provided by Home Office contractor unfit for habitation, say lawyers



## Double death in asylum seeker family reveals gap in state benefits

- Baby starved to death as mother lay unconscious
- Family received no benefits after asylum application approved



## Woman in 'extreme poverty' found dead next to crying baby in Glasgow

Mercy Baguma, an asylum seeker from Uganda, was left destitute after leave to remain expired



News > UK > UK Politics

## Asylum-seekers 'forced into prostitution' by support system failures

Homeless refugees left to fend for themselves as they wait for decision on their future, claims report

Charlotte Philby • Wednesday 30 January 2013 01:01 • Comments



# Summary of key findings from Home Office data

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Significant numbers of children living on Asylum Support each year - 16,879 (37%) at the end of 2020

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Children make up about one third of support recipients and adult family members another third

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Families with children concentrated in dispersal areas – top 3 are Glasgow, Birmingham and Liverpool

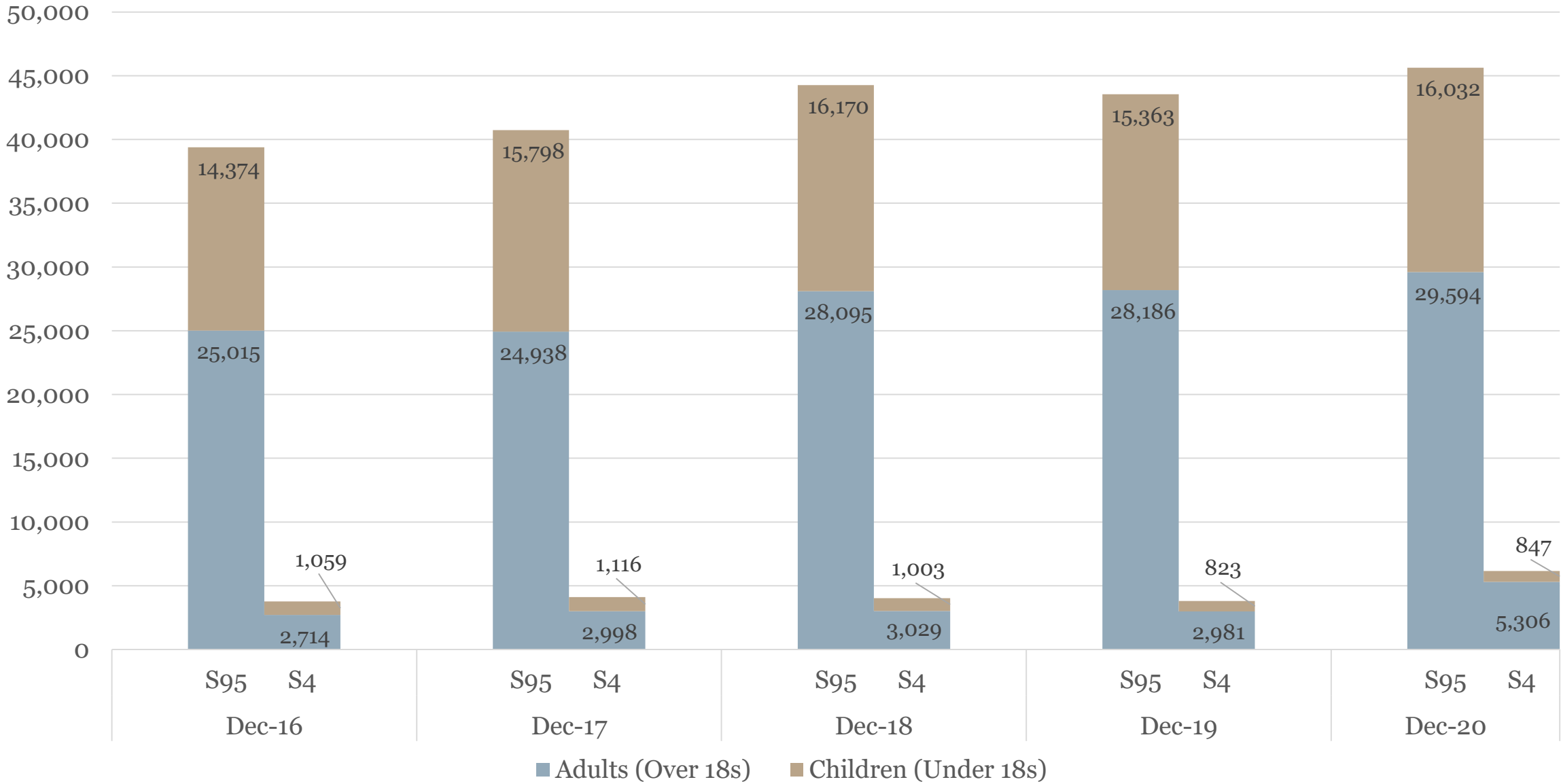
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Age breakdowns of children on Asylum Support show 40% are under 5s, 41% are of primary school age and 22% secondary school age (though children on s4 tend to be younger)

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Most families are spending several years on Asylum Support: 83% of families with children on S95 support in Dec 2020 were on AS for over 1 year and 19% for over 5 years

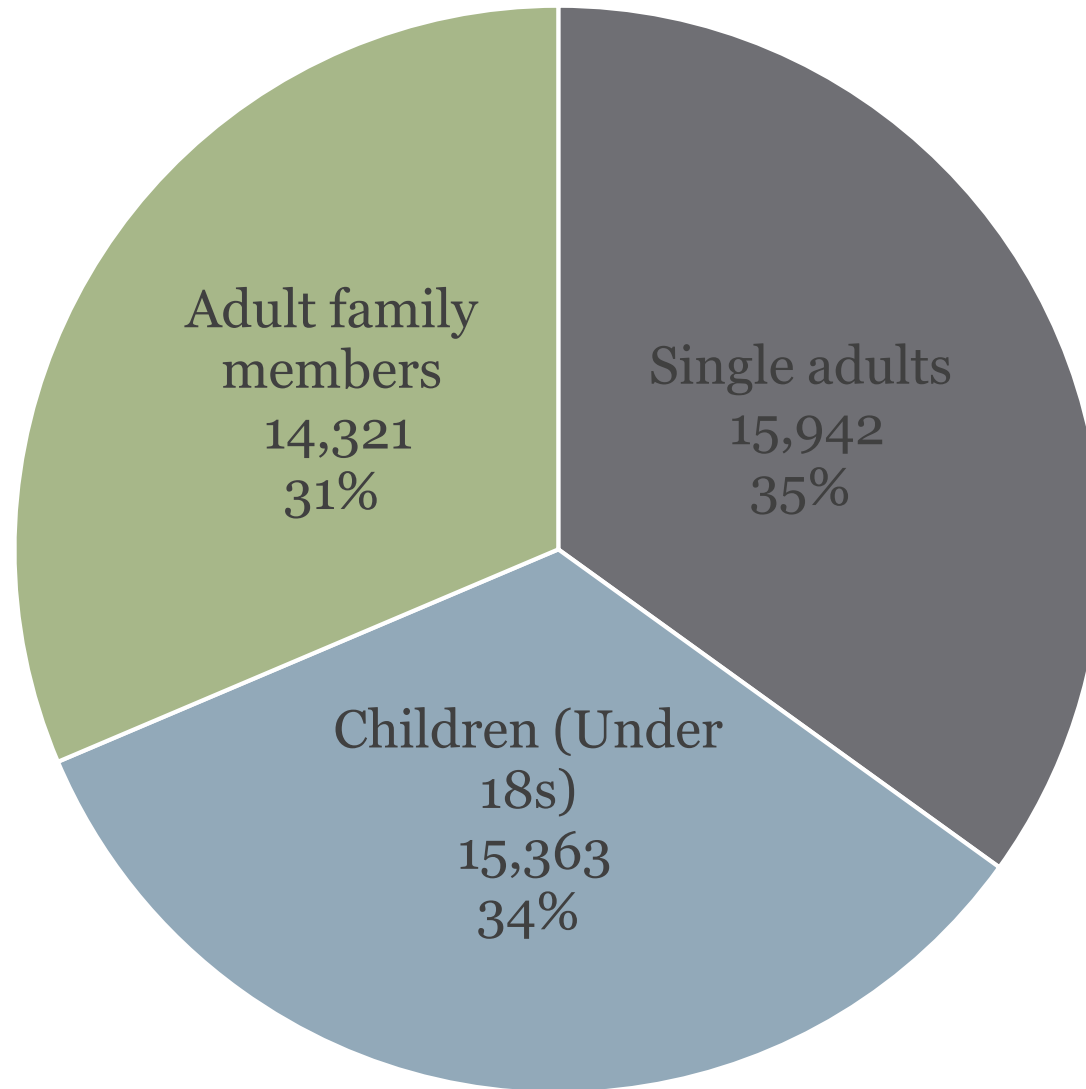
# Numbers of children and adults receiving Asylum Support at the end of each year



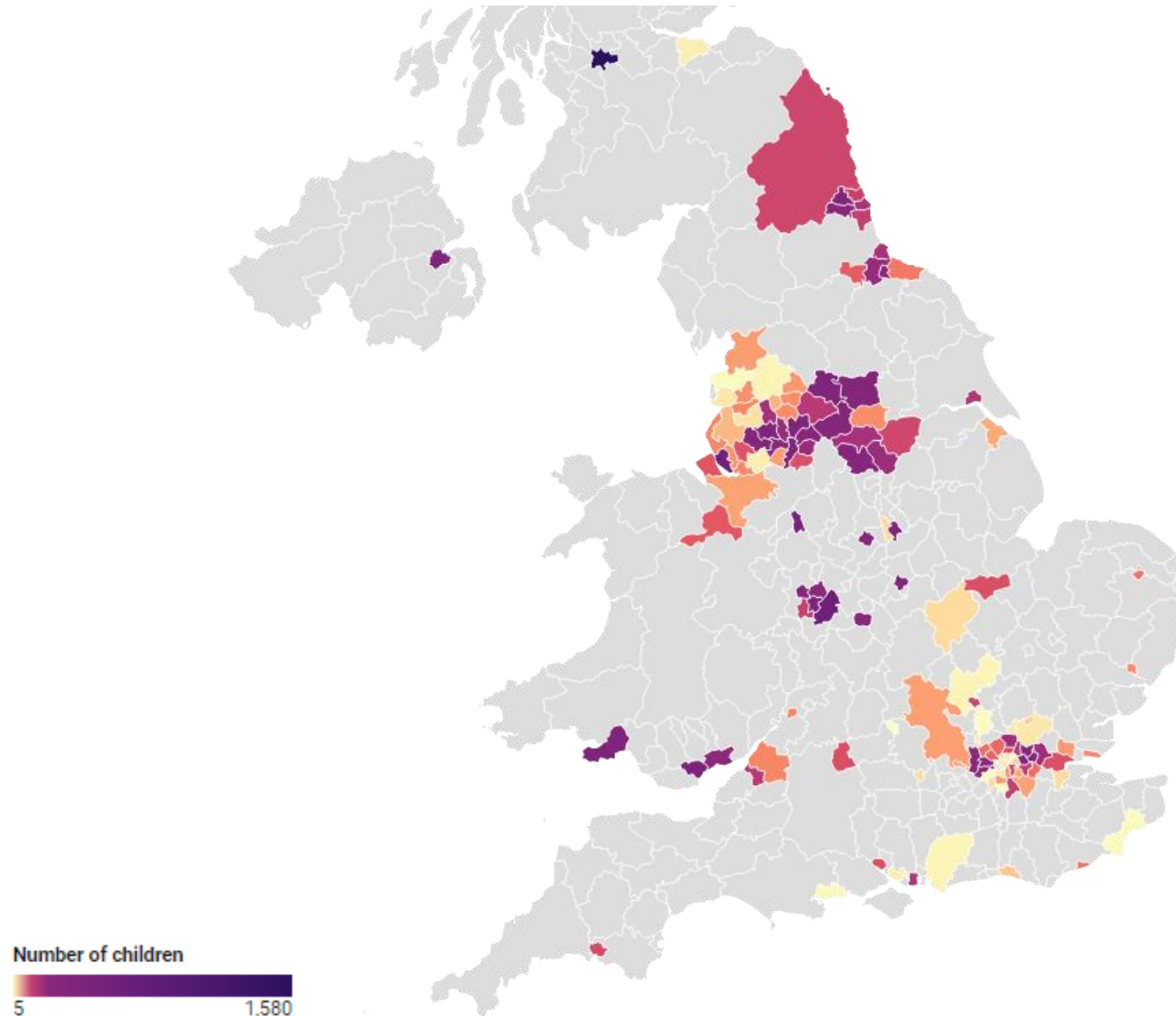
Source: Home Office data provided through FOI response



# Composition of Section 95 asylum support recipients at the end of December 2020

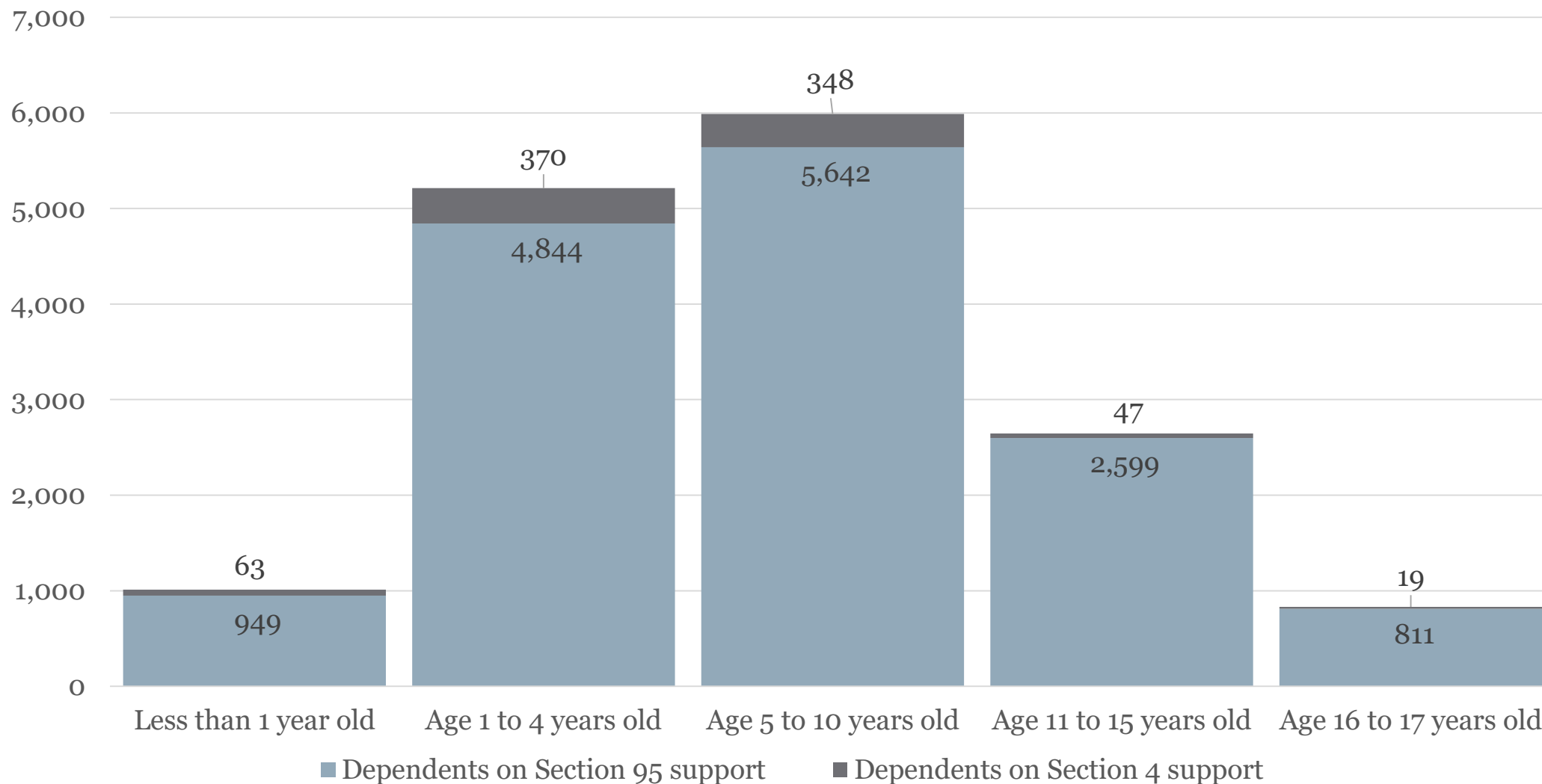


# Children receiving Section 4 and Section 95 at the end of 2020 – by local authority

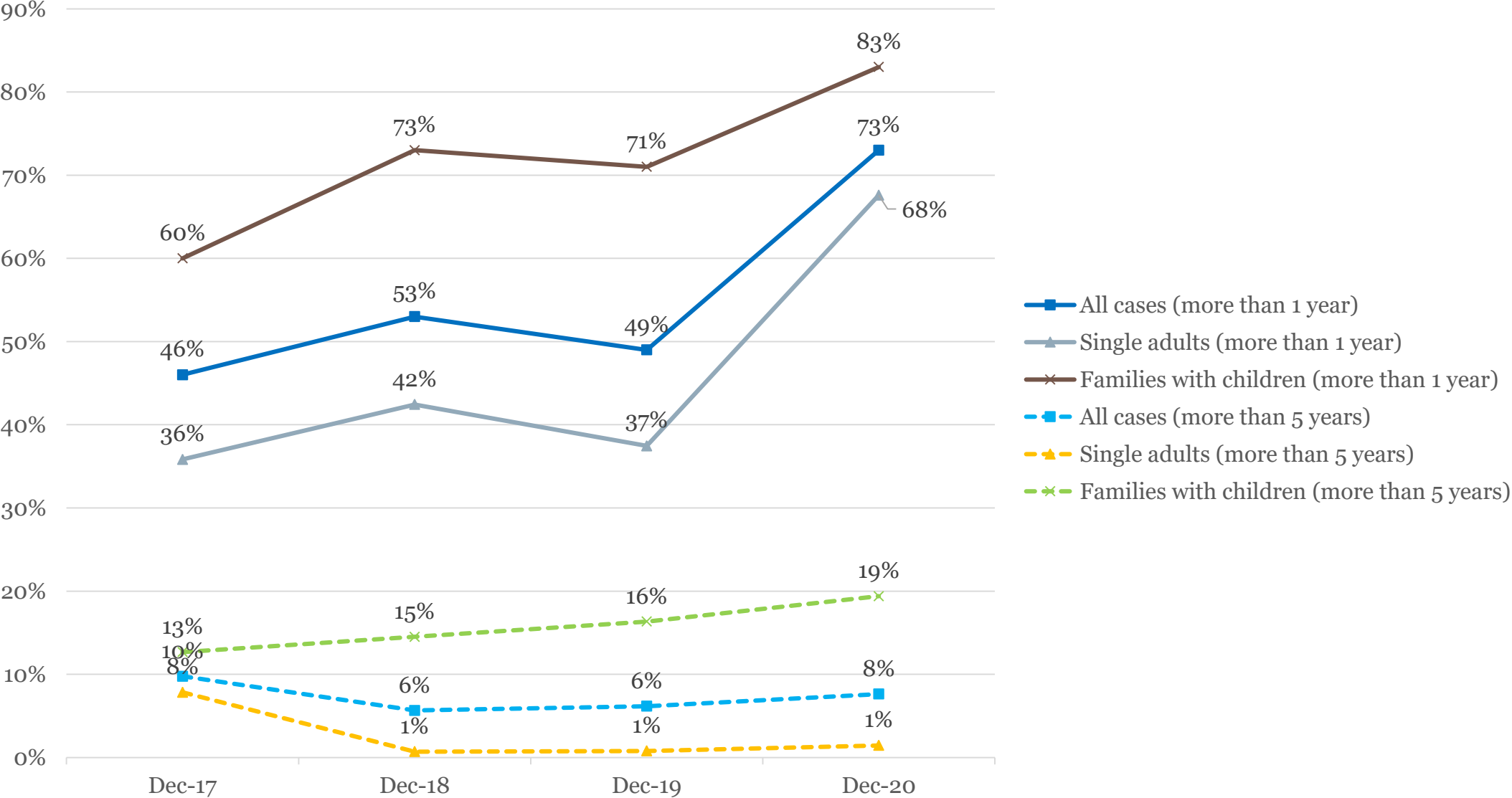


Local Authority	Children
Glasgow City	1580
Birmingham	579
Liverpool	563
Cardiff	413
Sandwell	387
Stoke-on-Trent	379
Rochdale	372
Manchester	370
Bradford	361
Bolton	359
Belfast	358
Swansea	351
Newham	340
Newcastle upon Tyne	329
Leicester	314
Nottingham	314
Barking and Dagenham	297
Wigan	297
Wolverhampton	292
Leeds	279

## Number of dependent children (under 18s) in receipt of Asylum Support at the end of December 2020 by age group

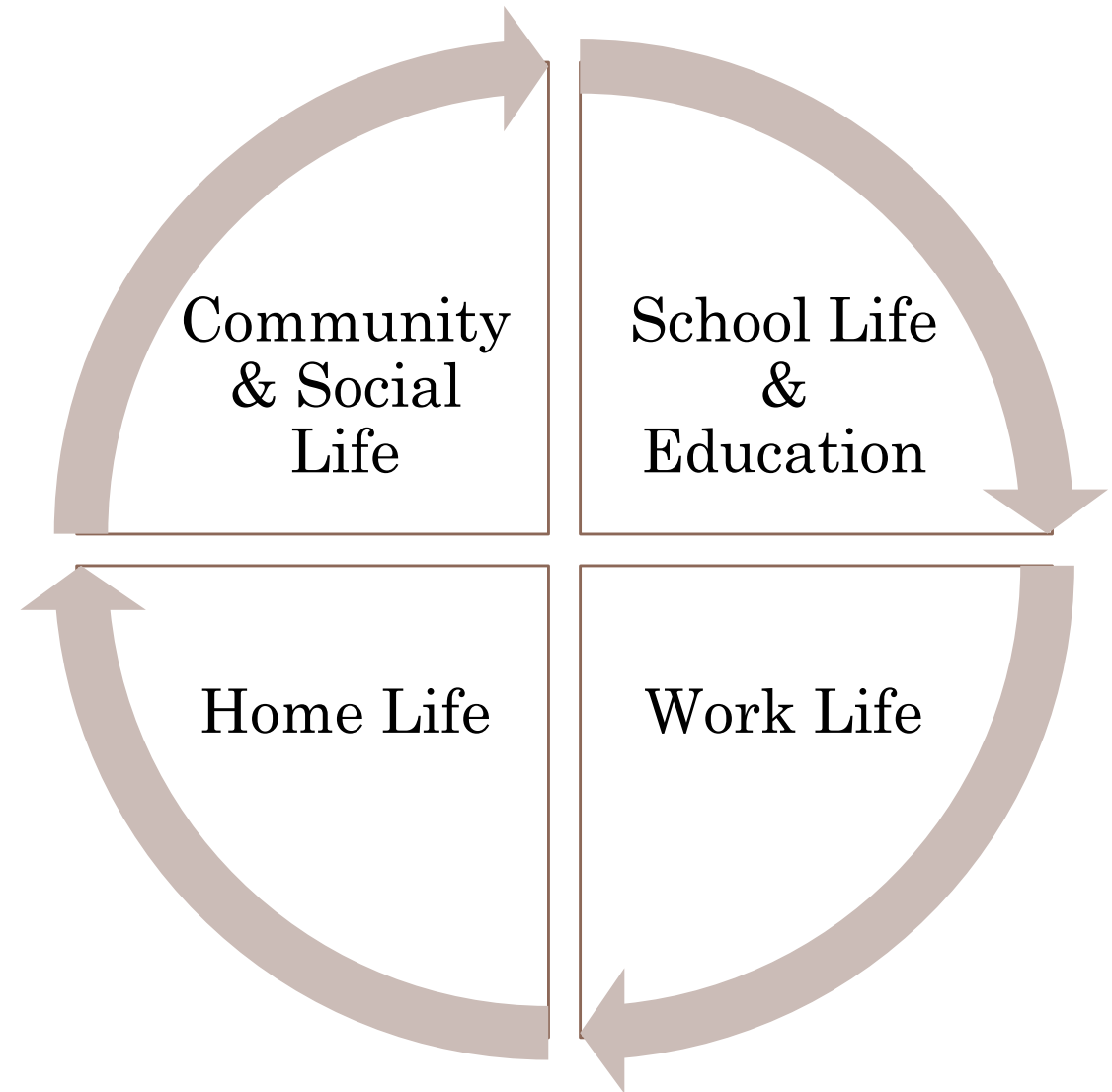


# Proportion of cases in receipt of Section 95 support at the end of each calendar year who have been on support for more than one year and more than five years, by case type



# Emerging themes from families

- **Research:** Emerging findings from longitudinal interviews over 1 year with 26 families – total 66 interviews including 21 with children/young people and 45 with parents/carers
- **Similar experiences to peers on low income with some unique challenges:** poverty permeates various domains of children's lives e.g. home, school and social life.
- **Top priorities:** buying healthy food, education-related costs (e.g. data for internet, transport and uniforms); communication with families & information access. Social activities and toys are largely inaccessible except if free or donated.



# Some key challenges

- **Problem of ‘take up’ and accessibility:** Lack of awareness of rights and entitlements & support for self-advocacy
- **Language barriers:** lack of translated support materials or interpreting services; reliance on children in some cases
- **Cashless support:** those in initial accommodation/hotels & Section 4 support
- **Access to bank accounts:** affects access to Wifi/TV, online purchases or borrowing
- **Hostility of surroundings:** asylum process & experiences of racism, abuse within/outside of asylum system



# Case study – Stella\*

Stella (15) came to the UK with her family from Iran. Her family lived in hotel accommodation for 5 months without cash support. She was placed in a school in the last month and she and her brother were provided with uniforms by a charity. They were then moved to dispersed accommodation and had to change schools. Their place was 5 miles away from Stella's school and she had to take two buses to get to school. She didn't have internet on her phone so was worried about getting lost in her new environment and not being able to call her mum.

The school initially said they would help with providing some items of school uniform and that they would reimburse her for transport but this hadn't happened at the time of our first interview when she'd been at the school for two months. Her parents had to spend £140 - 20% of their family's monthly budget - to buy uniforms. She said she might need to move schools again as they couldn't afford the transport costs.

She was on Free School Meals but could only get a slice of pizza and a small drink for the money she was given. She was told by one of the teachers that '*the Home Office doesn't pay us enough to give you more*'.

# Help overcoming challenges

- Proactively provide translated materials and interpreting services
- Provide detailed rights and entitlements support including commissioned services (e.g. to facilitate access to FSMs, transport, early years provision, HC2 certificates, uniform and Wifi support)
- Signposting to family case work, befriending, advocacy and legal advice
- Children-specific provision including free social activities, summer and holiday provision
- Support to access Wifi & alternative formats
- Signposting to mental health and counselling support

# Sources of information and support

- Right to Remain toolkit: <https://righttoremain.org.uk/toolkit/> - in various languages and videos: <https://righttoremain.org.uk/toolkit/videos/> - what to expect at screening & substantive interviews, what various decisions mean etc.
- Refugee Council Infoline – freephone England-wide signposting service: <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/services/infoline/>
- British Red Cross services: <https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-as-a-refugee#Emergency>
- Coram Children’s Legal Centre Migrant Children’s Project: <https://www.childrenslegalcentre.com/get-legal-advice/immigration-asylum-nationality/advice-line/>
- Asylum Support Appeals Project second-tier Advice Line on support issues: [020 3716 0283](tel:02037160283) and <https://www.asaproject.org/resources>
- Child Poverty Action Group second-tier helpline for refugee welfare entitlements: <https://cpag.org.uk/welfare-rights/advice-service>
- Independent Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children Support Service (IUSS) – Refugee Council: <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/services/childrens-advice/>
- NRPF Network: <https://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/>
- Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships: <https://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/regional-network>

# Thank you!

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# Warwickshire Family Information Service

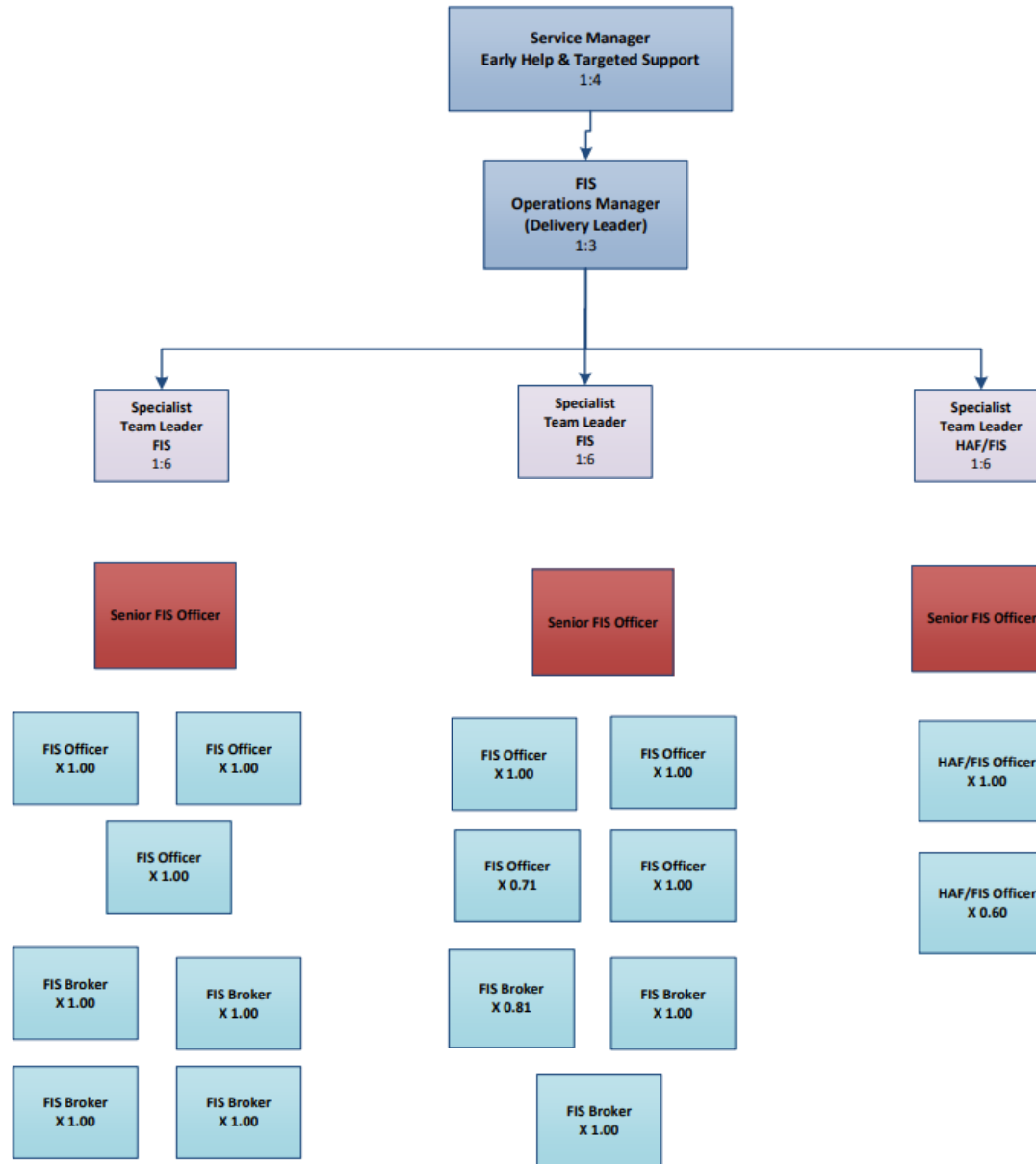
supporting refugee families

Jo Rolls

FIS Operational Manager

# Warwickshir

- 22.12 FTE





# Warwickshire FIS

Information

Webpages [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fis](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fis)

Social media twitter & facebook

Electronic newsletter

## Helpline

9am to 5pm Monday to Friday

## Brokerage

Face to face support. Remove barriers to enable families to access the service they need

## Outreach

Delivered by helpline team across the county

## Tackling Social Inequalities team

# Homes for Ukraine

- Helpline
- Welfare visits
- Information
- Data
- Payments
- Webinars

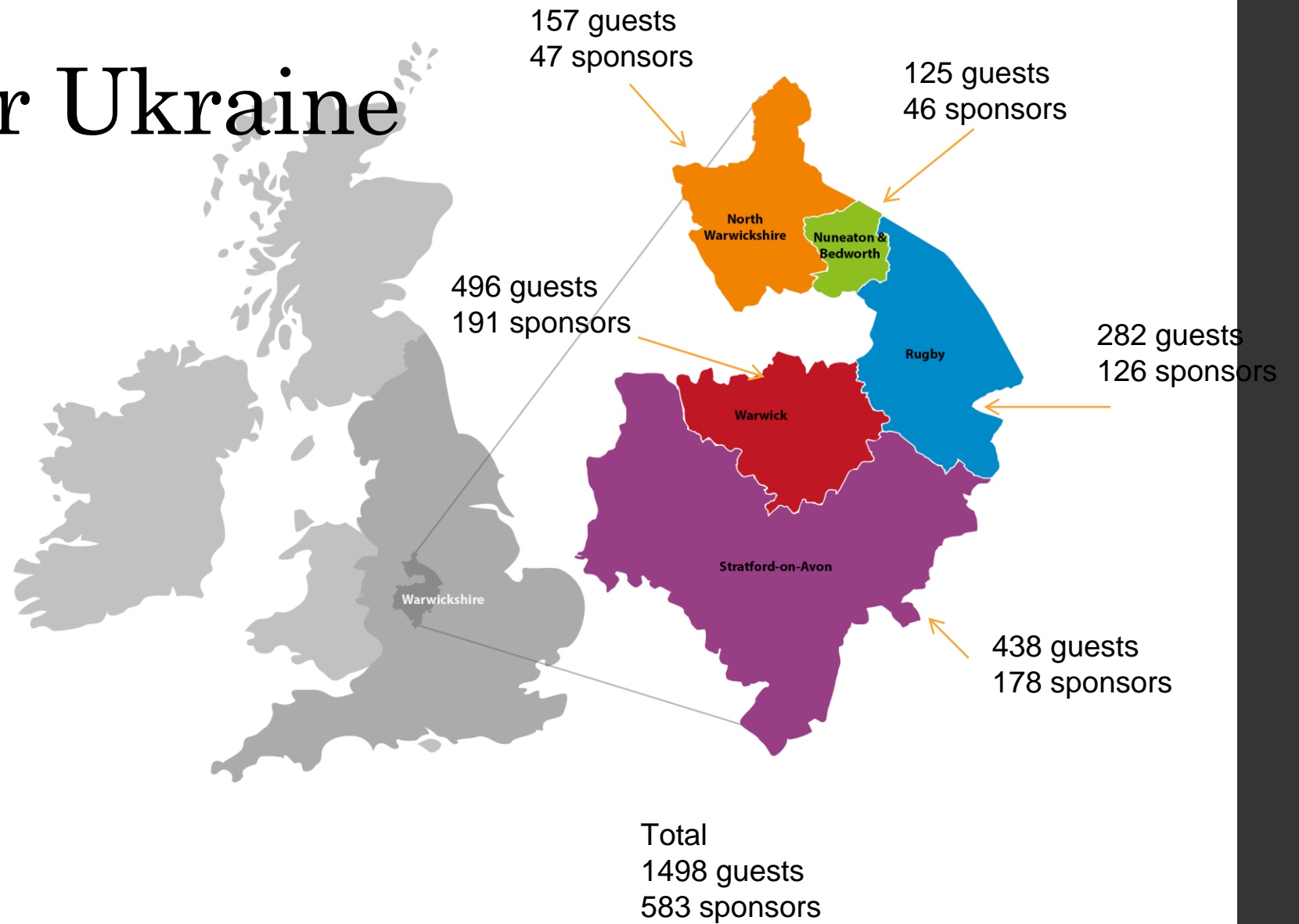
## Checks

- House exists
- Accommodation check
- Guests have arrived
- DBS initiated
- Welfare check

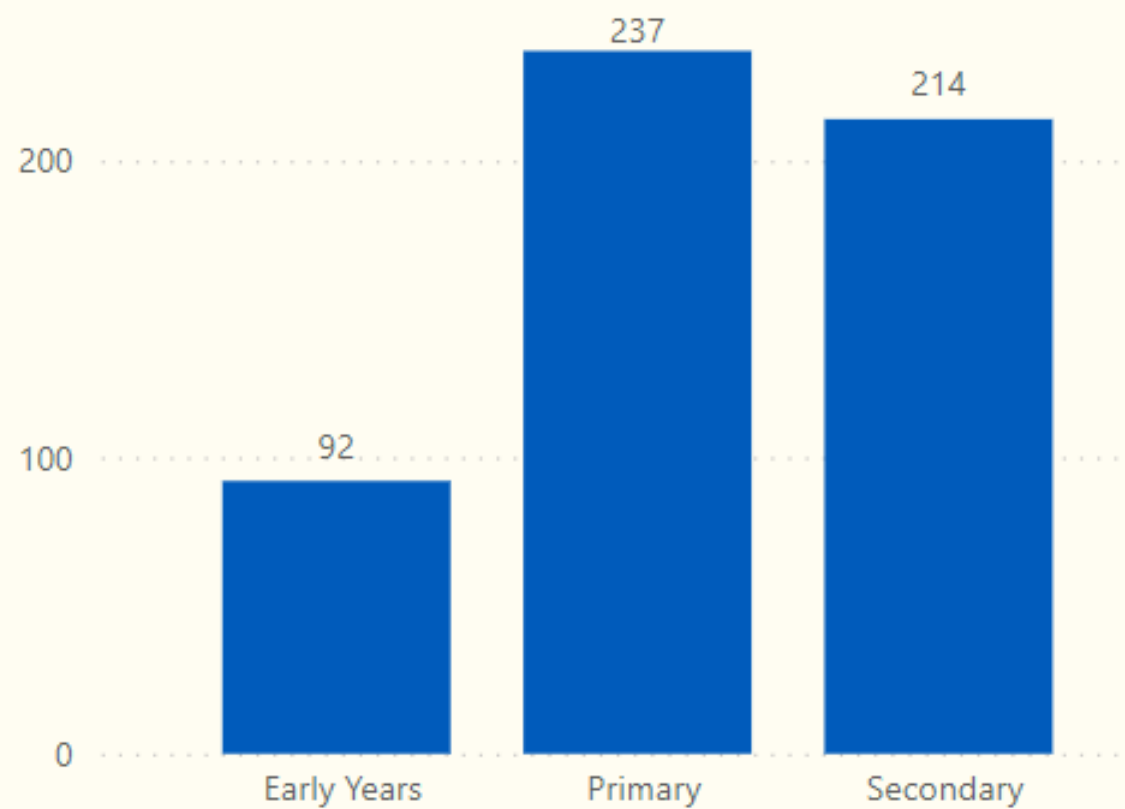
# Asylum Hotel

- Safeguarding link
- Visits/coordination
- Education
- Early years
- HAF
- Charity support

# Homes for Ukraine



School Phase (estimated)



# Challenges

- Two layer authority – County Council and 4 Districts & Boroughs
- Pace
- DLUHC Data
- Payments
- DBS
- Different schemes
- Community cohesion
- Education/admissions
- Language
- Communication
- Transport
- Welfare checks
- Rematching



CHILDREN  
& FAMILY  
SUPPORT

# Thank you for listening

Any questions ?