

Healthcare skills of asylum seekers and refugees in Northern Ireland

Law Centre NI and UNISON have worked together to determine the healthcare skills of asylum seekers and refugees in Northern Ireland.

In March 2022, we distributed a simple online survey to:

- Identify existing healthcare qualifications, skills and experiences.
- Establish the level of interest in healthcare-related employment within the asylum-seeking community.
- Identify barriers to employment within the refugee community.

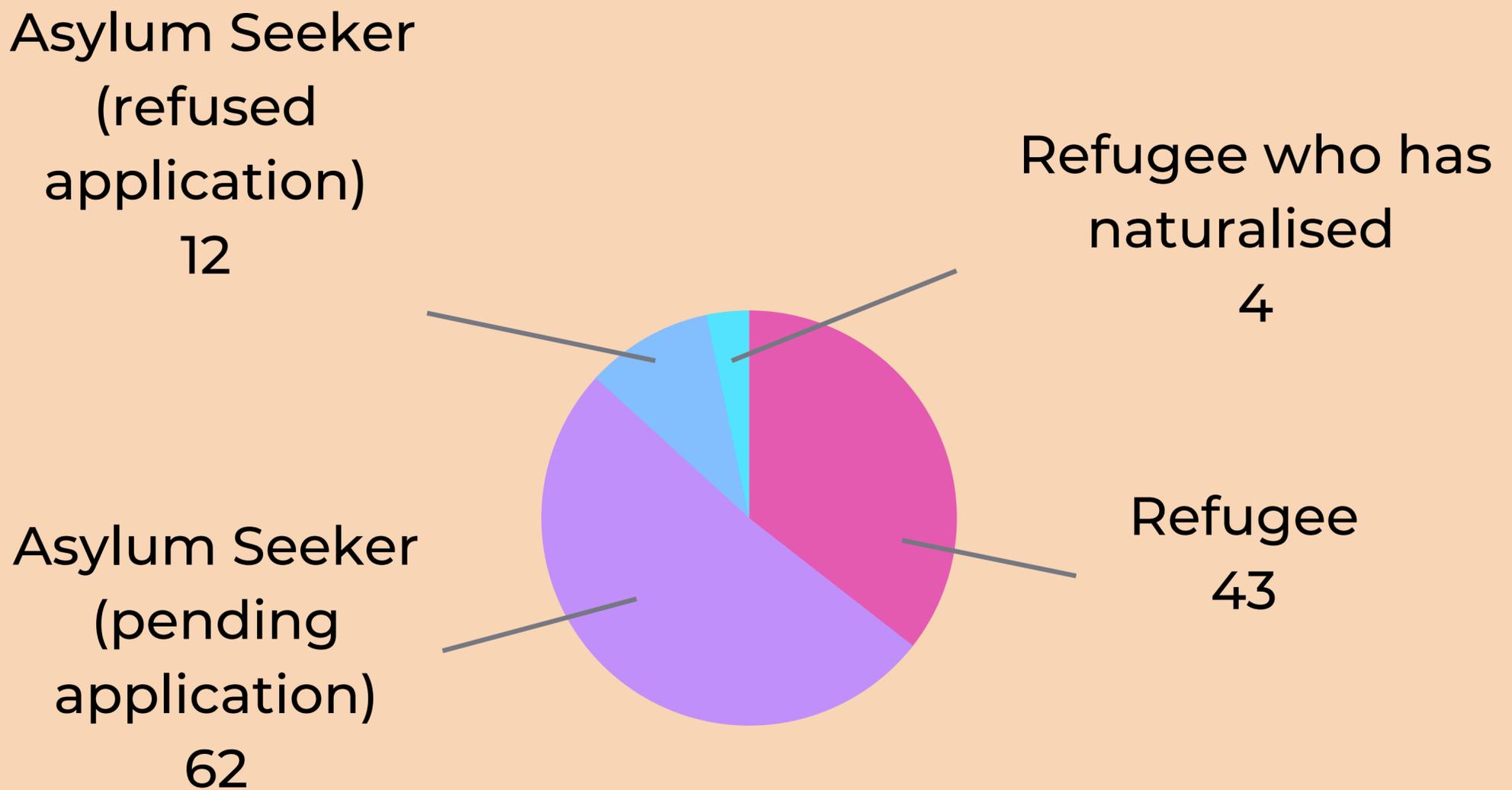
The survey attracted a total of 145 responses and the key findings are set out below.

While the survey primarily provides quantitative data, respondents were asked to comment on their interest in working (pg 5). Responses clearly demonstrate a keen desire to work. 86 respondents consented for their details to be stored to notify them about developments relating to access to work in the healthcare sector for refugees and asylum seekers.

Note that the survey was conducted in English and no translations were provided. This was to target people most likely to be considered as 'job ready' and also means that there are likely to be numerous qualified medical professionals whose skills and qualifications are not reflected in these findings.

Overall numbers

Responses are from the following immigration categories:



66 people stated they were a qualified health professional, with practice experience of:

0-2 years
x 19

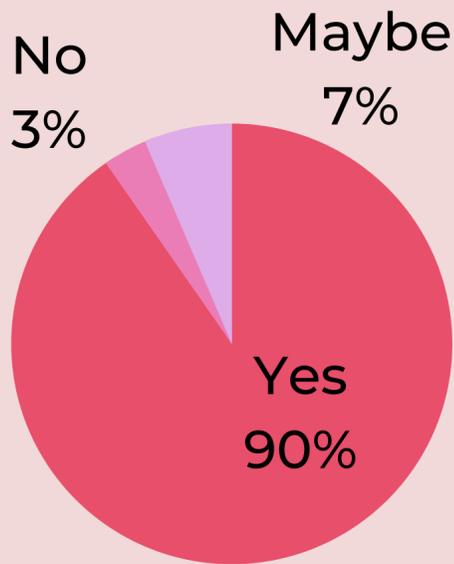
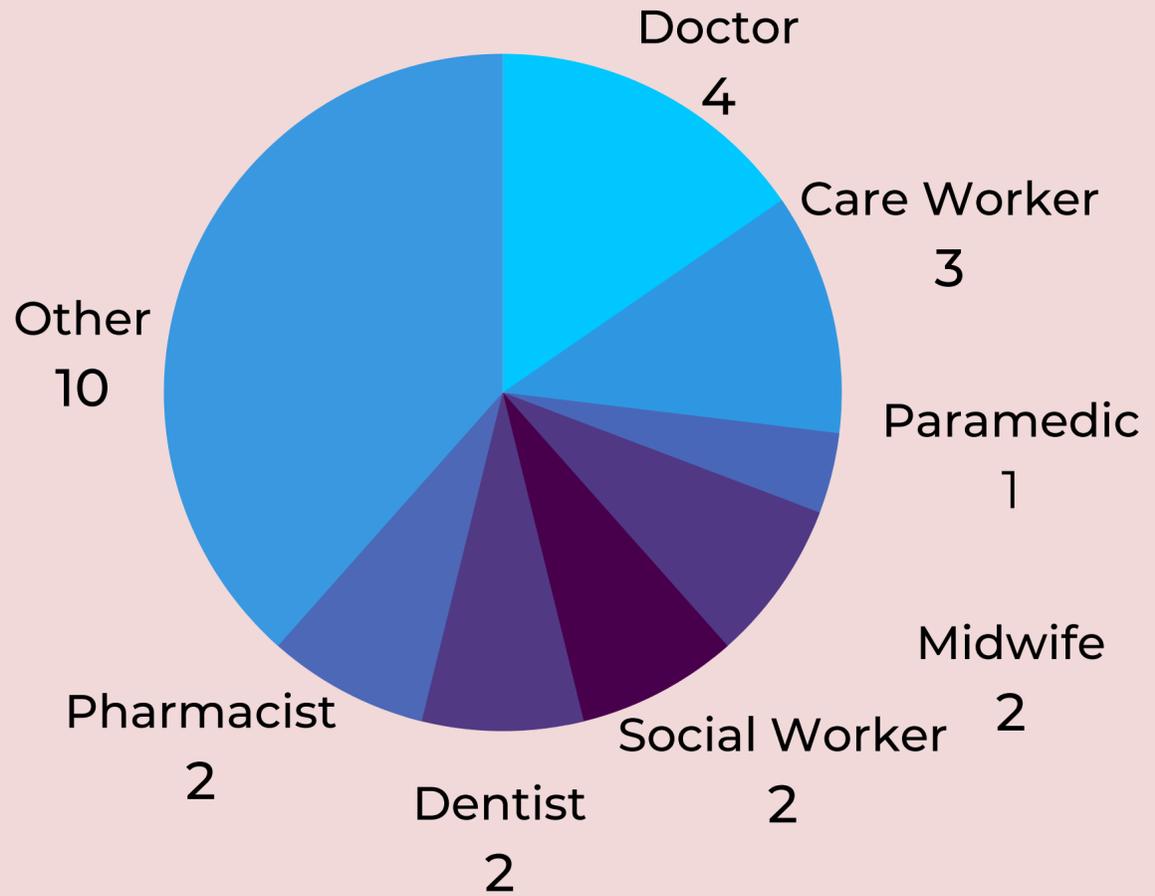
2-5 years
x 16

5-10 years
x 14

10-20 years
x 13

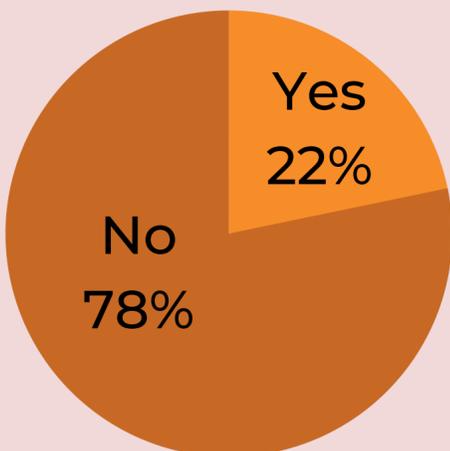
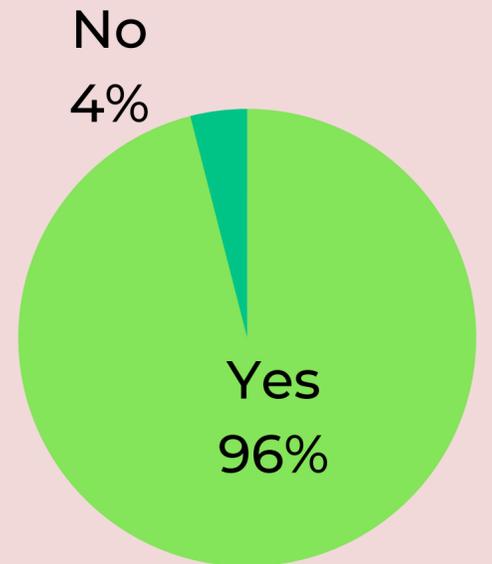
Asylum seeker responses

What is your profession?



If training was provided would you be interested in working as a nursing auxiliary or care assistant?

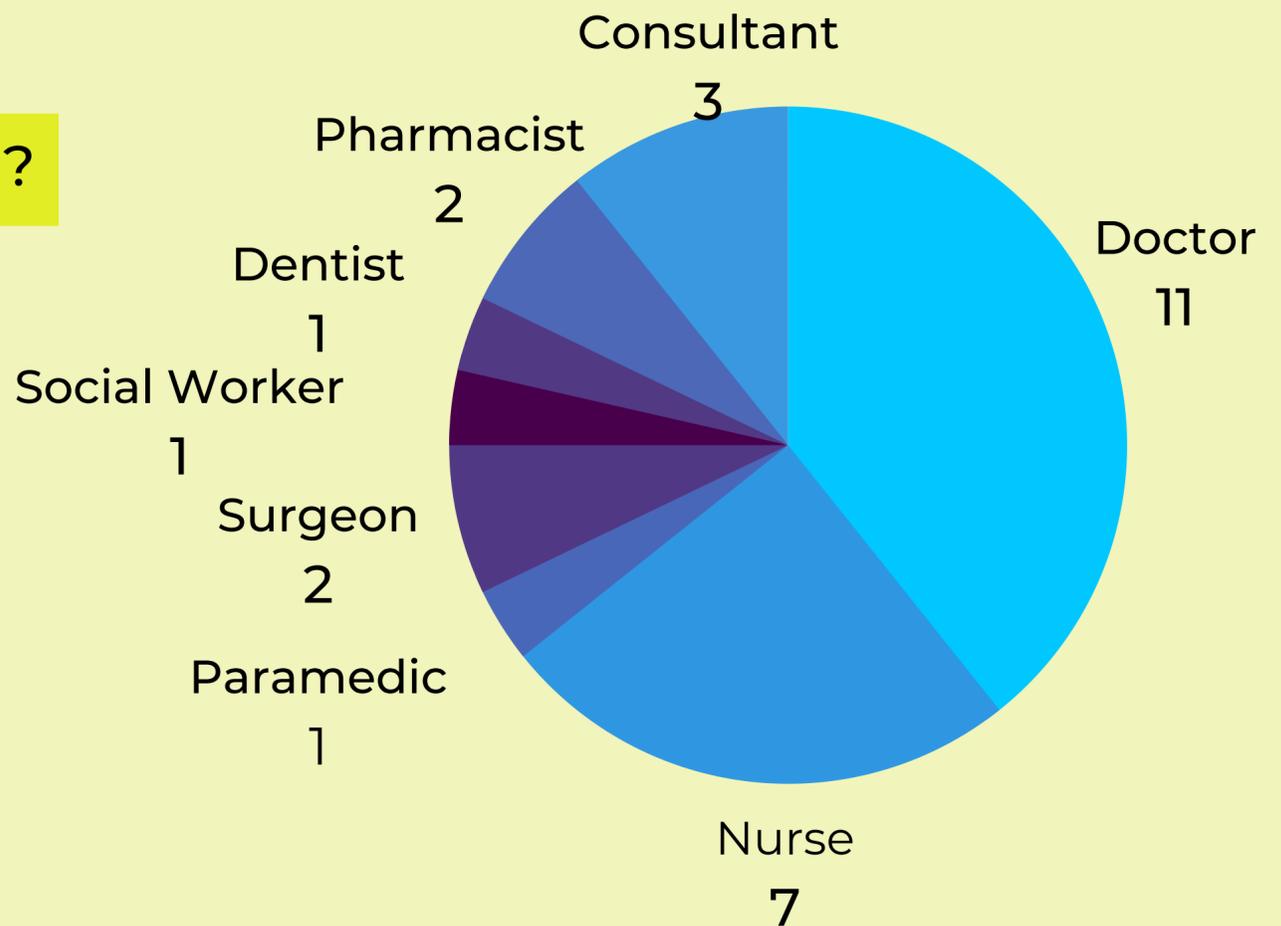
If it was possible (and does not breach your immigration conditions), would you want to work in healthcare?



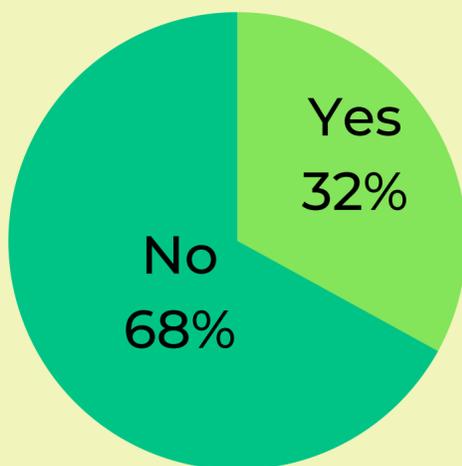
Are you currently enrolled in a course to study IELTS, TOEFL or OET English exams?

Refugee responses

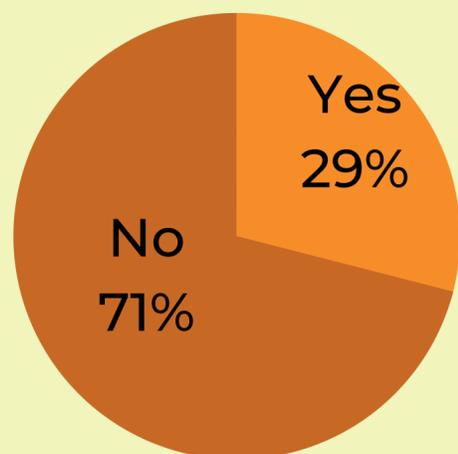
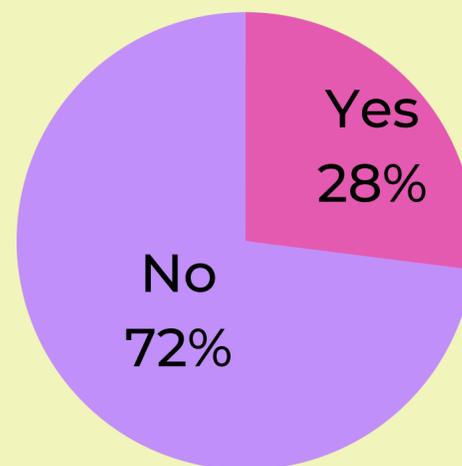
What is your profession?



Are you currently employed?

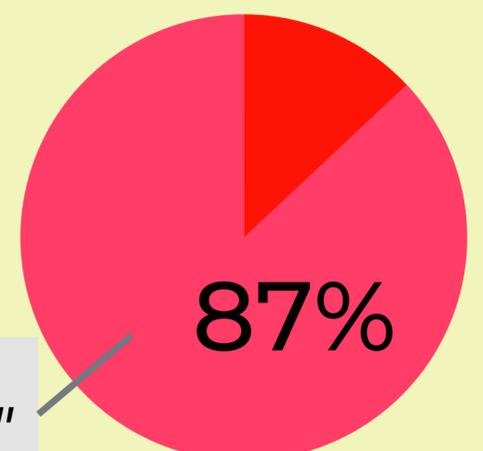


Are you employed according to your qualifications?



Are you currently enrolled in a course to study IELTS, TOEFL or OET English exams?

What would help you to work in the sector you are qualified in?



"Help to get my qualifications recognised in NI"

"I strongly believe allowing asylum seekers to work in the healthcare sector will go a long way to help both the asylum seekers and the UK government... I have been unemployed for almost five years now and it's causing me serious psychological effects."

"It would be a great honour to serve joyfully in the healthcare sector."

"I am ready to work as an Orthopaedic Surgeon in NI."

"I would like to continue my professional career here even if I work as a volunteer."

"I hope you will provide us with free language courses especially OET."

"I would like to work as a nurse. I really miss my nursing profession."

"It would be great if we were allowed to work while waiting our outcome so we can contribute to society and ease the burden on food banks especially now when more and more locals will be needing help from food banks as the cost of living rises."

"I think this is a great opportunity for asylum seekers to contribute to overcoming this deficit in the care service."