

Ukrainian Community in the UK Survey

July 2023

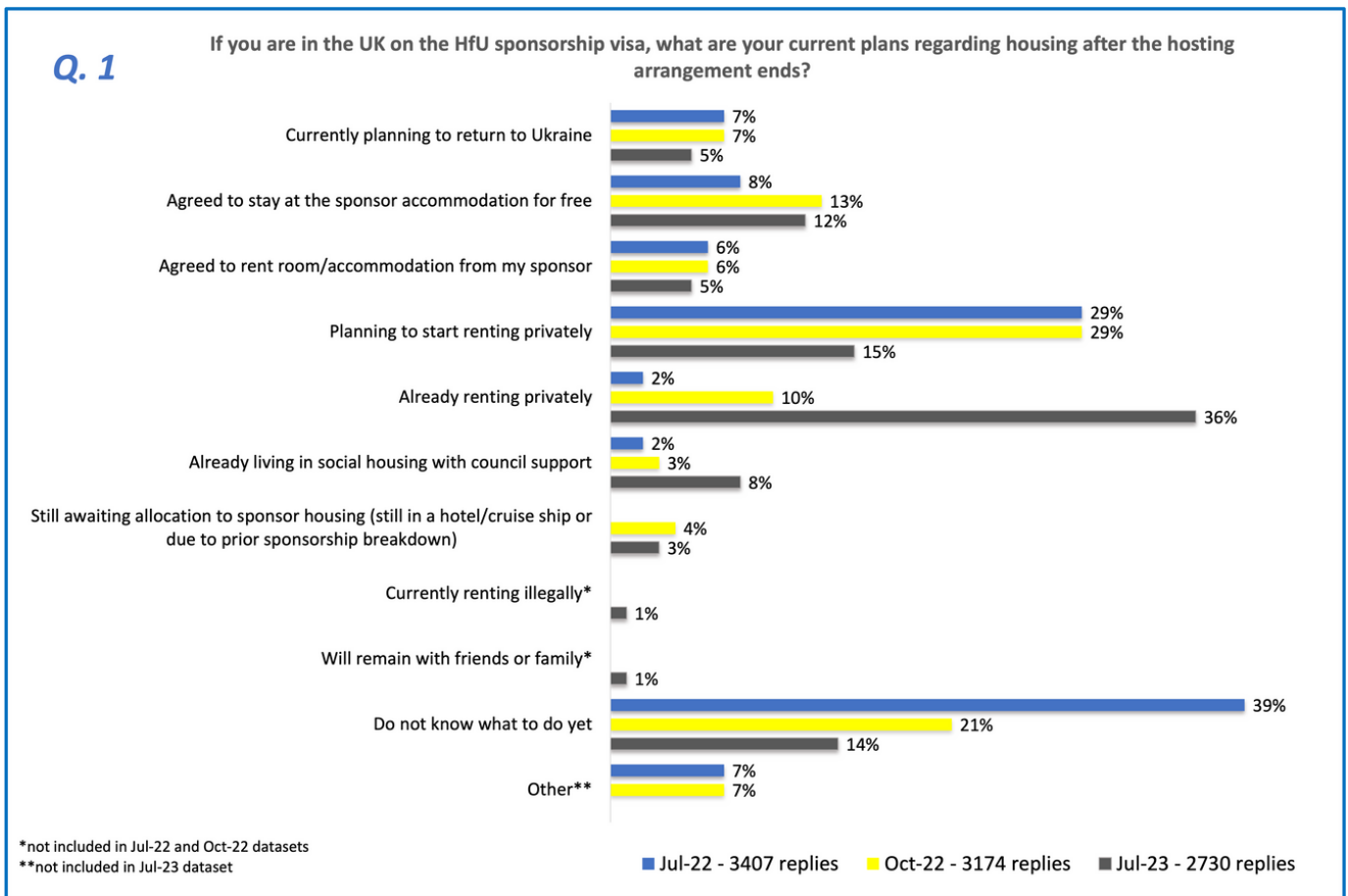


Introduction



This is the third survey in our Opora Community Survey series. The polls for this survey ran on the main Opora community Telegram channel in mid-July 2023, which at that time numbered ~20.5k Ukrainians in the UK. Polls for the previous two surveys ran in the same channel in mid-July and mid-October 2022.

These surveys allow us to leverage our reach in the Ukrainian community in the UK to identify the barriers and choices our beneficiaries face in order to offer tailored and proactive advocacy and support. Whilst the key barriers of access to suitable housing, employment, childcare, and language learning have remained, in the current survey they have been eclipsed by the lack of clarity facing those on the Ukraine Visa Schemes once their three year visas begin to expire.



1.

The percentage of people actively planning to return to Ukraine in the short term remains low (5% in current survey). Q.1 considers planning for the immediate future, where return to Ukraine takes precedence over finding accommodation. In the medium term, only 7% of people are currently planning to leave the UK at the 3-year mark (Q. 3).

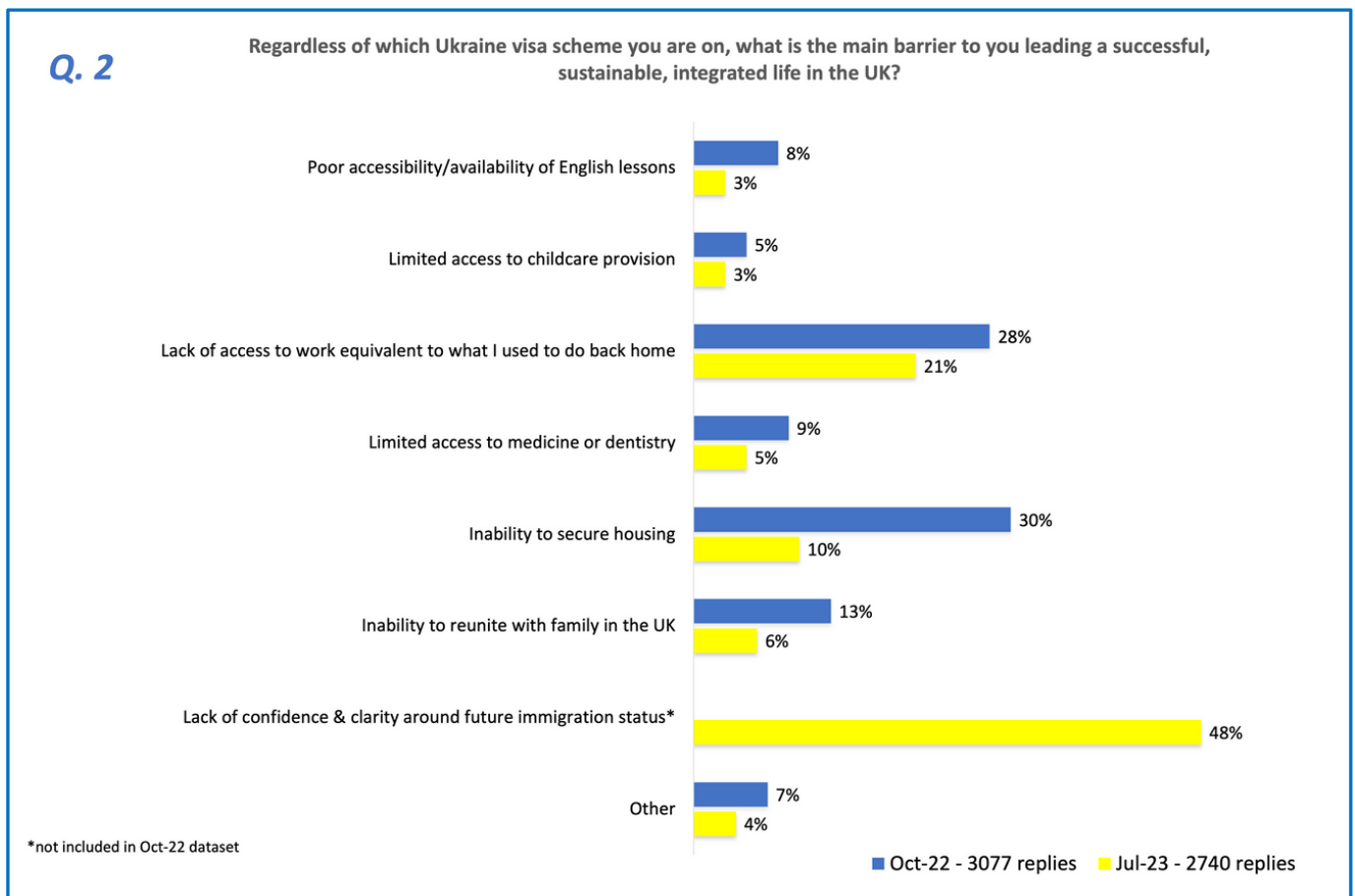
The numbers are considerably lower than the ONS survey results from July 2023*, where 28% of the adults surveyed said they intend return to Ukraine after it is safe to do so. With the war still currently ongoing, this number can be seen to represent longer-term aspirations.

*Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 7 July 2023, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Visa holders entering the UK under the Ukraine Humanitarian Schemes: 27 April to 15 May 2023](#)

2.

The percentage of people who are already renting privately has increased from 10% to 36% since our last survey in Oct 2022. An extra 15% are planning to start renting privately in the near future.

The above numbers can be placed alongside those that are continuing to stay in sponsor accommodation either for free (12%), or at a cost (5%), as well as those that have been placed in council supported accommodation (8%). Whilst these numbers are an improvement, around 1 in 3 still haven't found stable independent accommodation. This points to an ongoing need for housing information and support.



3.

Lack of clarity regarding future immigration status in the UK once the 3-year visas expire has emerged as the main barrier to people leading a successful, sustainable, and integrated life in the UK. 37% of people expect that the visa programme will be extended at the end of the 3 years.

There is a definite need for clear and proactive messaging from the UK government on what options could be available to people as they approach their three-year visa deadlines. Lack of clarity on this front hinders people's ability to plan in the present.

4.

A significant percentage of people (21%) list not being able to find work equivalent to what they used to do back in Ukraine as the main barrier to leading a successful life in the UK

This is a clear indication that more employment support catered to the Ukrainian cohort is necessary to ensure people are able to rebuild their lives in the UK successfully. For those that choose to return to Ukraine after it is safe to do so, appropriate level of employment during their stay in the UK will also increase the likelihood that they will be able to successfully reintegrate into the Ukrainian workforce.

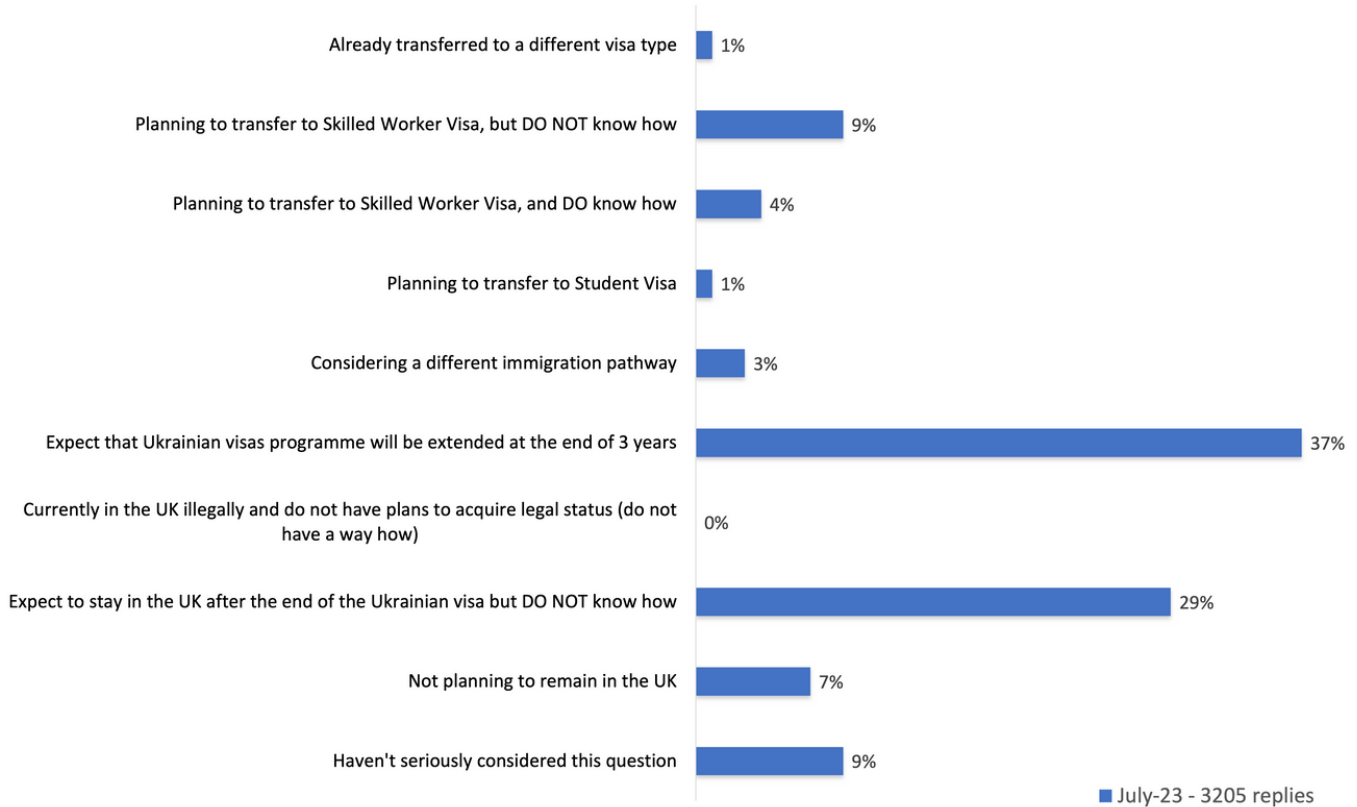
5.

29% of people expect to stay in the UK after their current visas expire, but do not know how they will achieve that. A further 9% are planning to transfer to the Skilled Worker Visa, but do not know how to achieve that.

These numbers clearly indicate that reliable immigration advice tailored specifically to the Ukrainian visa cohort will be essential in the run up to the expiration date of the 3-year visas.

Q. 3

Regardless of which Ukraine visa scheme you are on, if you want to stay in the UK after the 3-year visa term, what are your expectations regarding your future immigration status?



6.

Only 17% of people that entered the UK via the Ukraine Visa Schemes are currently on or are considering switching to other already available immigration pathways, such as Skilled Worker or Student Visas.

The majority of people currently in the UK on one of the Ukraine Visa Schemes are therefore relying on developments within these visa schemes to enable them to make choices about their life in the UK. This further reinforces the need for clarity around the future of the Ukraine Visa Schemes themselves.

Survey Methodology

- Three polls were posted on the main Opora Telegram channel (<https://t.me/oporauk>) in mid-July 2023.
- The telegram channel had ~20.5k subscribers at that point in time.
- No demographic data is available on respondents.
- The questions were posed in the Ukrainian language, then translated.
- All three polls were single answer.
- Number of responses per question:
 - Q1. - 2730 responses
 - Q2. - 2740 responses
 - Q3. - 3205 responses