



**AFRICAN
RAINBOW
FAMILY**
LGBTIQ EQUALITY



OUR IMPACT

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2024

Thank you to the ever-persistent strength of our service users (Siblings), the commitment of our staff & volunteers and the kindness of our supporters – 2024 has been a year of growth and joy.



Read through this report to learn more about the wins that African Rainbow Family has been a part of this year, as well as how your generosity has continued to make our work possible.

www.africanrainbowfamily.org

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Annual Impact Report for African Rainbow Family in 2024. Over the period of this year, 2024, we have supported hundreds of LGBTIQ+ people seeking asylum and refugees around the UK, as well as lead on a number of key achievements in UK and European asylum policies.

"I would like to extend a word of gratitude to each and every supporter of African Rainbow Family in 2024. In a year that was markedly hostile for people seeking asylum, our community has risen in solidarity and compassion on numerous occasions and our appreciation for that cannot be understated.



In reflection of our milestone 10 years of work, we hope to continue growing for another 10 years and into the foreseeable future".



Aderonke Apata
Founder and CEO





OUR STORY SO FAR

2014

Founding of African Rainbow Family by Aderonke Apata!

2015

Began offering moral and practical support, including buddy support for immigration reporting and evidence in court for LGBTIQ+ people seeking asylum

2016

Reviewed and contributed to the Home Office Asylum Screening and Routing Policy

2017

Submitted evidence to the UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Global LGBT Rights inquiry into the UK's stance on international breaches of LGBT rights

2018

Contributed to Lesbian Visibility Day in the European Parliament, Brussels, and reviewed European LGBTIQ+ asylum policy

2019

Registered as a charity (No. 1185902) and expanded to national network of 900 service users

2020

Expanded support services to offer free counselling, hot meals and weekly subsistence

2021

Briefed the House of Lords on the Nationality and Borders Bill concerning LGBTIQ asylum issues and other related matters

2022

Submitted an intervention to the European Court of Human Rights

Called on the United Nations to renew the mandate of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on SOGIE

2023

Briefed the United Nations Independent Expert on SOGI protection during his UK Country Visit, focusing on LGBTIQ people seeking asylum

Launched our 2023 Home Office Accommodation report

2024

Expanded the staff team to 11 staff!

Won the European Court of Human Rights judgment ruling that a gay man from Iran cannot be deported from Switzerland

Hosted our 10 year anniversary conference on 'Access to Justice'

Our 2025 GOALS

It is important for African Rainbow Family to look forward to where we would like to be in another 12 months' time.

Read our four main goals for 2025 below...

1

Achieve free public transport for people seeking asylum in key cities around the UK

Over the next 12 months, we want to make real lasting change for people seeking asylum in the UK.

One of our key campaigning goals is to establish increased free public transportation services for people seeking asylum around England and Wales, in line with the recent changes made in Scotland that have granted this mobility to those seeking asylum in the country!

2

Support more LGBTIQ+ people seeking asylum than ever before through their journey to freedom

With more people requesting to register with African Rainbow Family, and access support, than ever before - we hope to prioritise the registration of new siblings in 2025.

By using our new database system and expanded team to speed up the registration process, we look forward to welcoming lots of new Siblings in the new year.

3

Grow our fundraising portfolio, drawing support from our passionate community advocates

Although African Rainbow Family has been a registered charity since 2019, fundraising has only formed a very small part of our annual income.

In 2025, we are planning to launch a fundraising volunteer committee and build on our fundraising potential in this way!

4

Expand our physical reach to South Wales and the South West of England, by reopening a centre in Cardiff

With centres in London, Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham, we host hundreds of LGBTIQ+ people seeking asylum at our monthly meetings and other events year round.

In early 2025, we are hoping to officially reopen a centre in Cardiff to provide a physical ARF presence for the Siblings in that region



THE PEOPLE WE SUPPORT

We support hundreds of LGBTIQ+ people seeking asylum every year, see some more information on our Siblings below

44%

ARE GAY

28%

LESBIAN

24%

BISEXUAL

4%

OTHER

CHRISTIAN

44%

MUSLIM

19%

ATHIEST

2%

BUDDHIST

0.3%

HINDU

0.14%

PREFER NOT TO SAY

35%

these figures are trans-inclusive, with around 2% of our Siblings identifying as transgender



56%

**ARE
MALE**



35%

**ARE
FEMALE**



0.5%

**ARE
NON-
BINARY**



7%

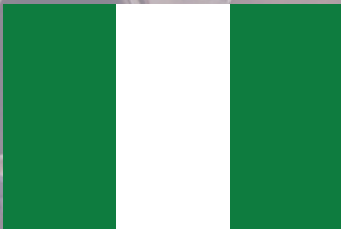
**PREFER
NOT
TO SAY**



THE PEOPLE WE SUPPORT

**IN 2024, WE
REGISTERED 263 NEW
SIBLINGS!**

**THE MAIN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN
OF OUR SIBLINGS USERS ARE:**



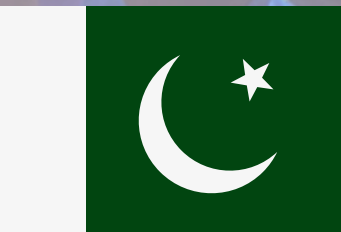
NIGERIA 33%



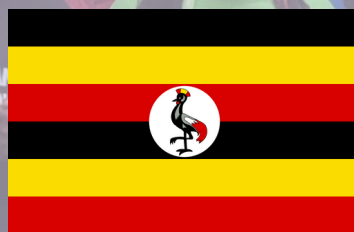
NAMIBIA 12%



CAMEROON 8%



PAKISTAN 8%



UGANDA 6%



IRAQ 4%



GHANA 4%



ALGERIA 2%



ETHIOPIA 2%



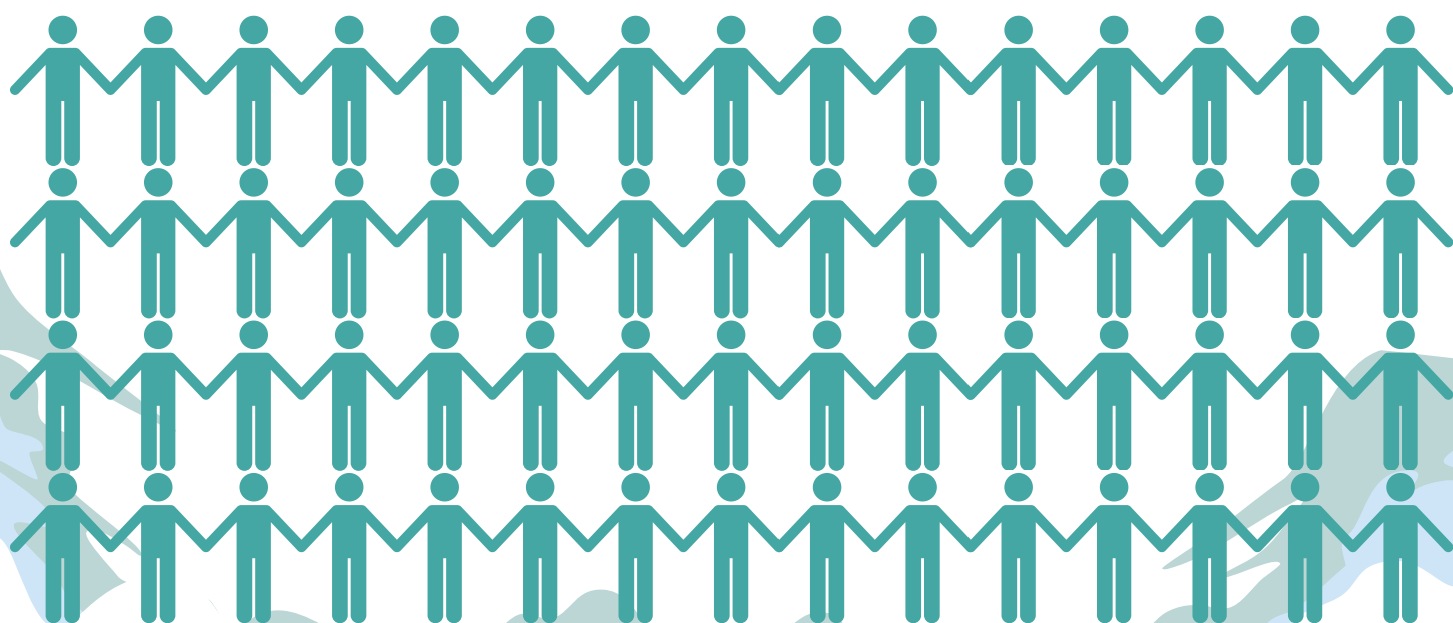
OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

A stylized sun with yellow rays and a yellow face is partially obscured by teal, wavy clouds. The sun is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the page.

60

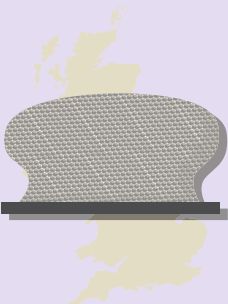
AFRICAN RAINBOW FAMILY SIBLINGS RECEIVED THEIR GRANT OF REFUGEE STATUS IN 2024

That is 60 lives forever changed for good!



MONTHLY MEETING ATTENDANCE IN 2024

Total Number of Attendees per centre (IN PERSON)



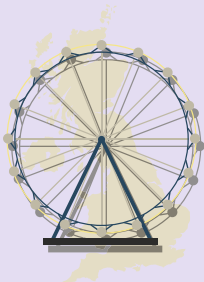
Birmingham
148



Manchester
389



Leeds
181



London
342

ONLINE MEETINGS

Total Number of Attendees at Asylum Process Presentation Series:
373

MEETING TOPICS:



Decisions
and
Appeals



New
Rwanda
Policy Q&A



Refusals
(Pros and
Cons)



Preparing
Photographic
Evidence



Substantive
Interviews

Total Number of Attendees at Integration Series:
347

MEETING TOPICS:



Voting
and
Voter's
Right



Travelling
and Travel
Documents



Health And
Accessing
Health
Services



Family
Reunion



CV and
Cover
Letter
Writing

ACCESS TO JUSTICE CONFERENCE

On the 22nd August we held our **10th Year Anniversary & 3rd Annual Conference** where we focussed on the inaccessible legal aid system, and discussed other areas of injustices in accessing mental and sexual health resources, including housing, racial justice and allyship.

We were delighted to welcome Key Speakers such as Councillor Bev Craig, Baroness Elizabeth Barker, Jacqueline McKenzie, Dr. S. Chelvan and many more.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the thought-provoking discussions held during the workshops covering the barriers in accessing legal aid for trans and non-binary people; immigration detention; and navigating a hostile environment and supporting our mental health.

**Key Words from our Reflection
and Thoughts Towards the
Future**

Inspiring

Unity

Queer Joy

Elimination of fear

Access to Legal Aid

No Detention Centres



ACCESS TO JUSTICE REPORT

As part of our Access to Justice conference and wider campaign, we are advocating for the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum in the UK to access legal support. The legal aid system is inarguably failing members of the queer community who are within the asylum system, with 57.3% of LGBT+ people seeking asylum having no solicitor or caseworker. As part of this work, we are due to release the Access to Justice report in early 2025.

Please **[click here](#)** to view the campaign page on our website for updates and to watch our short film!

PRIDE SEASON!

5

WAYS WE SUPPORTED OUR SIBLINGS OVER PRIDE SEASON IN 2024:



We supported LGBTIQ+ people seeking asylum to attend Pride, a total of **414** Siblings



For **68** of those people, this was their first time attending Pride



We provided hot food at all of our Pride picnics, feeding over **500** people



We supported **143** people with transport costs to get to Prides



100% of those that attended felt that the Prides were an inclusive space

“Seeing people around makes me comfortable and I’m not alone in the world”

“Makes me feel at home, that is the only place I see myself happy”

“I had so much fun. Dancing at the parade ground was awesome”

MI v SWITZERLAND



INTERVENTION: CASE OUTCOME

The European Court of Human Rights judgment ruling that a gay man from Iran cannot be deported from Switzerland

On 12 November 2024, the European Court of Human Rights ('ECtHR') published its judgment in the case of a gay man challenging deportation from Switzerland to Iran (M.I v Switzerland Application no.56390/21).

The ECtHR's judgment (unanimously) declared that the complaint under Article 3 of the Convention is admissible and that, in view of the domestic courts' failure to sufficiently assess the risk of ill-treatment for the applicant as a homosexual person in Iran, or whether State protection against ill-treatment from non-State actors was available in Iran, his return to Iran without a fresh assessment of those aspects of his case would breach Article 3 of the Convention.

The ECtHR granted African Rainbow Family alongside our partner, Stonewall permission to intervene in this case, M.I v Switzerland Application no. 56390/21.

We instructed Dr. S. Chelvan, Head of Immigration and Public Law at 33 Bedford Row, leading Heydee Dijkstal, Head of International Law and Jacqueline McKenzie, Legal Partner at Leigh Day. Our full Written Submission of 21 October 2022, alongside that of our partner intervener – Stonewall – can be found on our website.

We, African Rainbow Family (ARF), the leading UK expert by experience grassroots charity campaigning and advocating for racial justice and the human rights of LGBTIQ+ refugees and people seeking asylum of African heritage and the Global Majority, are delighted with the outcome of the MI v Switzerland judgment ruling. As Court-granted Interveners in this case, we feel that a sense of justice has been met within the given decision – not only in the context of this specific case, but as a precedent that all 46 Council of Europe Member States must adhere to this outcome when determining protection claims from gay, lesbian, and bisexual applicants seeking sanctuary going forward.

OUR ASKS FOR THIS NEW GOVERNMENT
IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE RWANDA GENOCIDE

SAFETY OF RWANDA BILL DELAYED BY THE HOUSE OF LORDS. IS FAR FROM SECURED

PETITION NOW!
THE DEPORTATION OF PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM

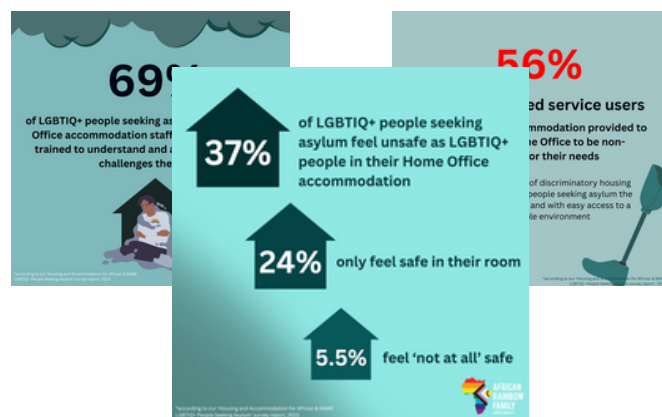
NO PRIDE IN DEPORTATION
SIGN OUR PETITION NOW!

AFRICAN RAINBOW FAMILY

UNREPORTED!



NAFF ACCOMMODATION



This campaign arose as a result of the inadequate accommodation that is provided to LGBTIQ+ people seeking asylum by the Home Office. It came coupled with an extensive report that two members of staff (including the Refugee Communication and Campaigns Officer) have written and published on the topic.

MORE THAN 'SIMPLY GAY'



This campaign, although short-lived due to the expulsion of Ms. Braverman from her role as Home Secretary, was successfully enacted in the aftermath of a speech made by Ms. Braverman in Washington DC, where she stated that ‘being gay or a woman’ was not enough to justify claiming asylum. Our Refugee Communication and Campaigns Officer launched the campaign online along with an open letter to Ms Braverman. **1**

CAMPAIGNING NO PRIDE IN DEPORTATION

In June 2024, after months of campaigning by organisations around the UK, including African Rainbow Family, the Rwanda Act was rescinded. While we celebrated the positive news that the Rwanda Scheme has been scrapped, we are very conscious that there is more work to be done in this important stand against the cruel act of deporting people seeking asylum anywhere!



OUR ASKS FOR THIS NEW GOVERNMENT IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE RWANDA SCHEME

 End Deportation for Good End the harmful practice of deporting people seeking asylum from the UK, seeking more humane alternatives that focus on protection as opposed to persecution.	 Remember that LGBTIQ+ Rights are Universal Remember that LGBTIQ+ rights apply to all people, not just UK citizens. By deporting LGBTIQ+ people from the UK, a dangerous message is sent out that LGBTIQ+ rights are not universal and are not worthy of protection.	 Embrace Potential Embrace the innovation and skills that people seeking asylum can offer. People seeking asylum have their own histories and a lifetime of skill building, every deported individual represents lost potential for our society.
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NO PRIDE IN DEPORTATION

SIGN OUR PETITION NOW!

15

OUR RIOT RESPONSE

In early August 2024, the UK faced horrific far-right and anti-immigration riots across the nation. The violent groups were specifically targeting the hotel accommodation of people seeking asylum and as such, putting many of our service users at risk of harm.

In a matter of hours, we developed our Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) as a means of relocating any service user that may be located in a targeted accommodation, allowing us to support several people to safe housing.



RIOT UPDATE

In terms of practical next steps, this is an ongoing situation and we will be sharing more updates and consulting with relevant teams.

VOLUNTEER SAFETY

There is no expectation of you to travel to the office or other locations if you feel unsafe to do so. Please inform a member of the staff team if you have concerns for your safety.

SIBLINGS SAFETY

Guidance has already been sent out through our WhatsApp groups, including signposting documents for siblings. We will provide further updates if we receive new intel, especially in relation to siblings living in asylum hotels.

YOUR WELLBEING

Protecting your own wellbeing is of the utmost importance throughout all of this, so please do speak to a member of staff if you need additional support or flexibility.

RIOT SUPPORT



Sadly, a group of far-right rioters have been attacking Home Office accommodation in recent days. If you feel unsafe and you have a trusted friend that you can stay with, we would recommend that you stay with them.

Try not to worry, police and UK government are working to stop these riots!

If you are struggling with your mental health, please let one of our staff team know so that we can offer support ❤️

If you feel unsafe in your accommodation or are at risk of harm, please:

- 1. Contact the police on 999**
- 2. Contact the ARF Emergency Line on 07917 690954**



African Rainbow Family
@AfricanRainbow1

We are heartbroken to see such horrific and violent anti-immigration riots around the UK.

People seeking asylum have escaped extreme persecution and violence, only to now be facing it again in the very place they have come to seek sanctuary 💜

🗣️ Humanity over borders always!

RAINBOW CONNECTION MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

We were able to facilitate 32 mentorship connections between our service users and the LGBT Network Staff at Jacobs



African Rainbow Family: The Rainbow Connection Programme

Would you like to support while seeking asylum?

Jacobs UK are offering 1-1 support to African Rainbow Family members on their journey while seeking asylum. You will be matched with an employee from Jacobs who you can chat to and get support from.

Why should I join?

Having a connection can help you...

- Build your confidence
- Prepare you for seeking a job
- Build a strong CV
- Give support in preparing for interviews
- Improve your communication skills
- Make connections to help your career
- Investigate study or work opportunities
- Build your network
- Improve knowledge of your chosen field



What does the programme include?

- You will have 1-1 sessions with your connection which will be held once a month - these can be on the phone, via zoom or possibly in-person
- Your connection can support you with meeting people, searching for volunteer roles, supporting you getting your work permit and more
- We will organise social gatherings for you to meet other people on the programme and host group discussions
- We may hold group workshops to cover bigger topics such as writing a CV



AWARDS

We were nominated for several awards in 2024 and are very pleased to have won some notable recognitions during the year.

AFRICAN RAINBOW FAMILY WAS
SHORTLISTED
FOR THE KING'S AWARD FOR
VOLUNTARY SERVICE IN 2024!

WHILE IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT
OUR SPECTACULAR VOLUNTEERS
WERE NOT AWARDED IN THE END,
WE ARE GRATEFUL TO BE NOMINATED
AND IT IS AN HONOUR TO HAVE
REACHED THE SHORTLIST



WE WON!



**THE
'BUZZING TO
BE QUEER'
AWARD**

**AT MANCHESTER
PRIDE 2024**



**MANCHESTER
PRIDE**

'Buzzin to be Queer' Award

This award goes to the float that best represents the spirit of unity by showcasing diverse identities, cultures, and backgrounds within the LGBTQ+ community, platforming themselves as well as others. This award celebrates the collective efforts in creating a vibrant, inclusive, and progressive atmosphere, akin to the harmonious workings of a hive.

Our 'Buzzin to be Queer' Award goes to the fantastic parade participants at [African Rainbow Family!](#)

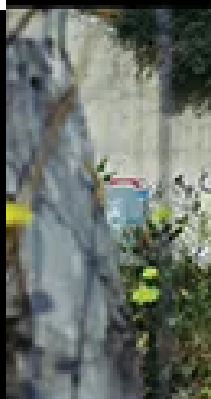
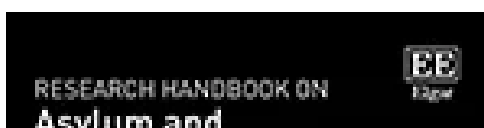


PUBLICATIONS

The chapter titled "Intersections of gender, sexuality and 'race' in queer asylum claims," authored by Nina Held and our CEO and Founder, Aderonke Apata, was recently published in the Research Handbook on Asylum and Refugee Policy. This chapter examines how gender, sexuality, and race intersect in the context of asylum claims made by queer individuals.

It delves into the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ people seeking asylum, highlighting the compounded discrimination they encounter due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, and racial or ethnic backgrounds. The authors utilize fieldwork data from the SOGICA project (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Claims of Asylum) to provide empirical insights into these complexities.

Held, N. and Apata, A., 'Intersections of gender, sexuality and "race" in queer asylum claims', in Jane Freedman and Glenda Santana de Andrade (eds.), Research Handbook on Asylum and Refugee Policy, Elgar, pp. 239–250 (Chapter 15)



Research Handbook on Asylum and Refugee Policy

Elgar Handbooks in Migration

Edited by Jane Freedman  and
Glenda Santana de Andrade 

Providing a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary analysis of key issues in the field, this topical Research Handbook explores asylum and migration policy in a global context. Chapters consider national, regional and international responses to refugees and forced migration, examining the evolution of asylum and refugee policies and why gaps remain in protection.

Keywords: Migration; Refugees; Asylum; Borders; Gender and Asylum; Postcolonial Migration Studies; Intersectionality and Migration; Asylum Policies; 1951 Refugee Convention; UNHCR

 Restricted access



THE DIFFERENCE WE MADE

Using data from our Annual
Impact Survey, Dec 2024

in
2024

We carried out an online survey between Wednesday 27th November and Wednesday 4th December 2024 with our Siblings. This was to capture their feedback on how they felt their experience with African Rainbow Family had been throughout 2024.

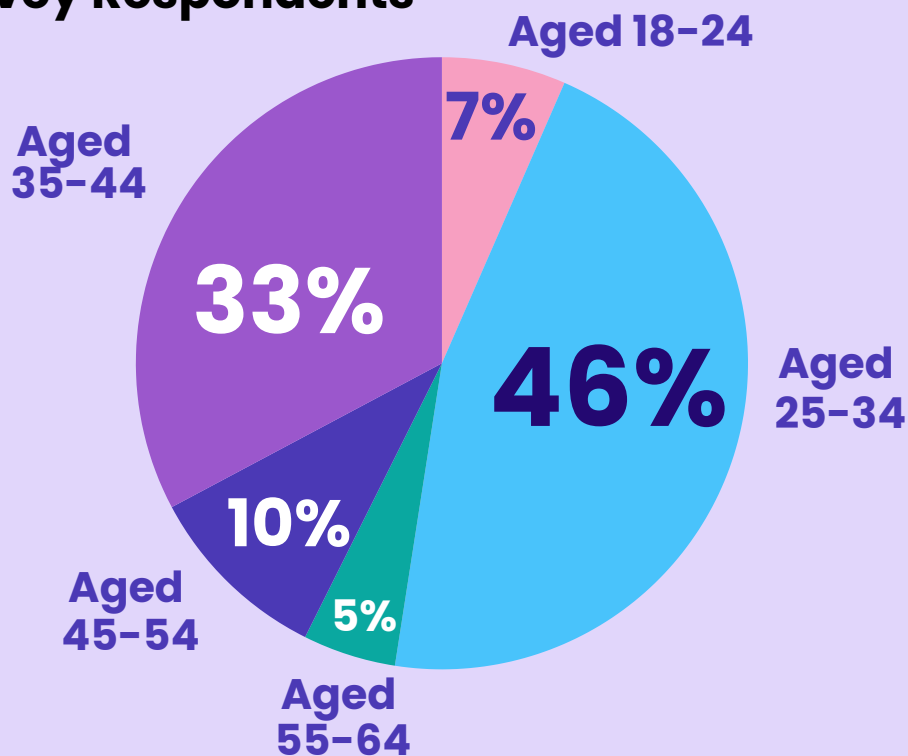
WHO RESPONDED?

In total we had

61

responses

Age of Survey Respondents



Sexual Orientation of Survey Respondents:

11

Lesbian

29

Bisexual

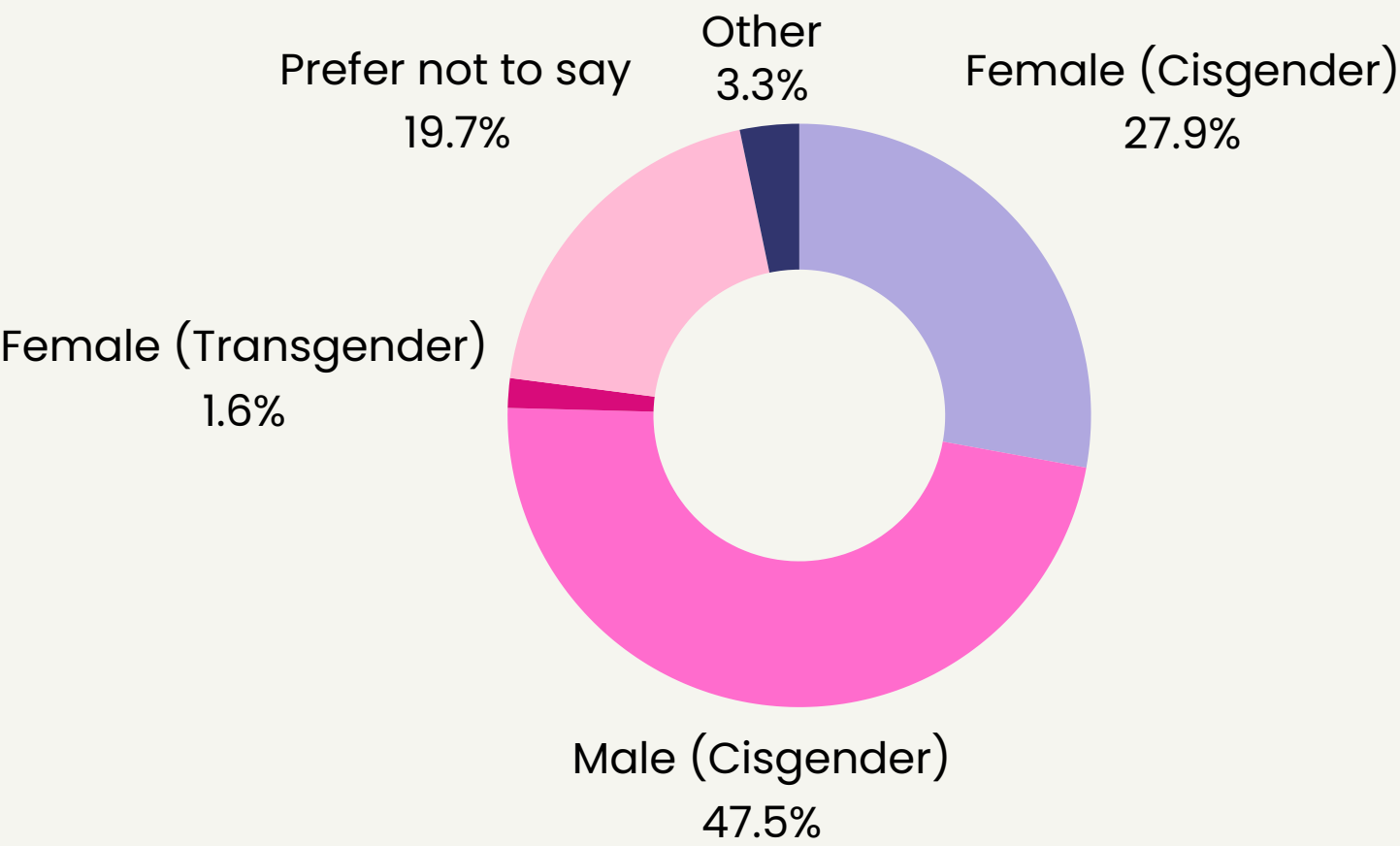
20

Gay

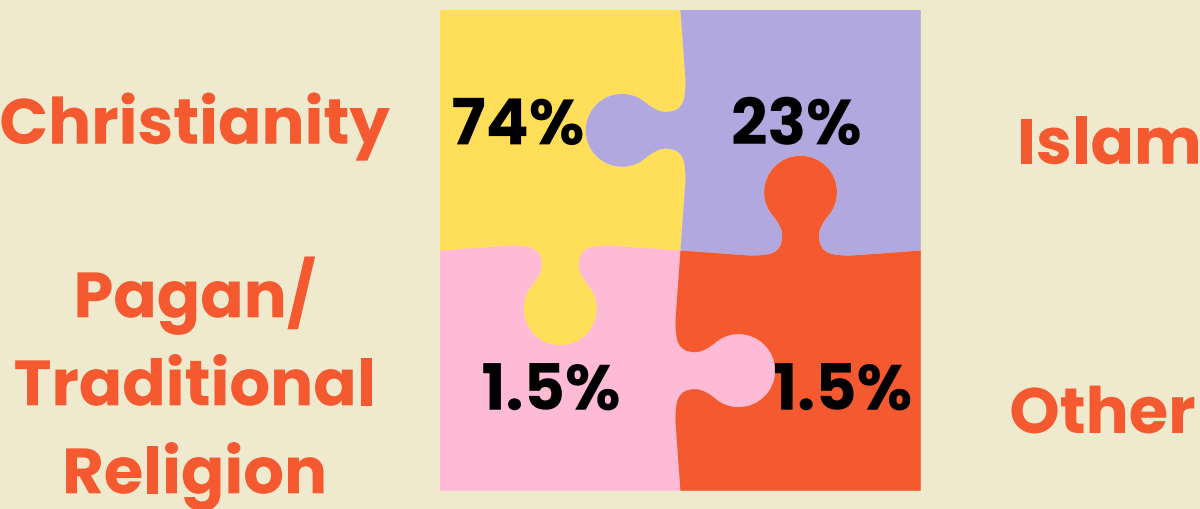
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Other

Gender Identity of Survey Respondents



Religion of Survey Respondents

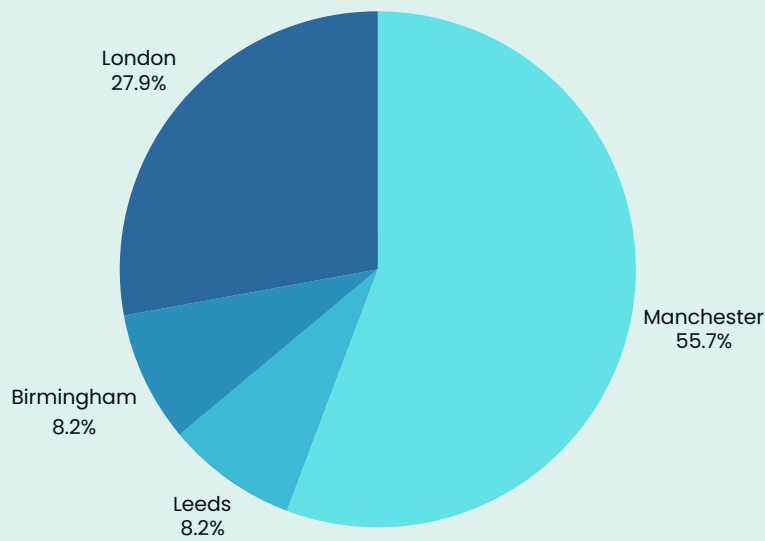


We support LGBTIQ+ people seeking asylum throughout all stages of the asylum process

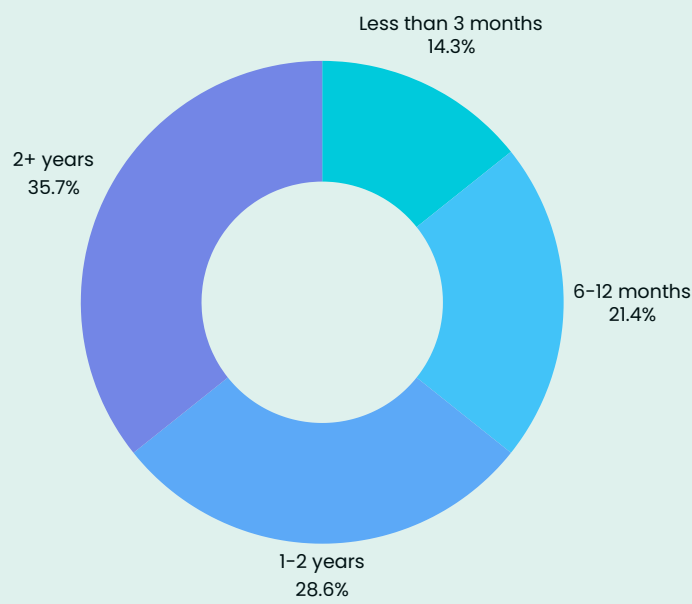
Of those who responded:

- 82% are still seeking asylum
- 10% have been granted refugee status
- 5% have not yet sought asylum

The respondents access support at each of our centres

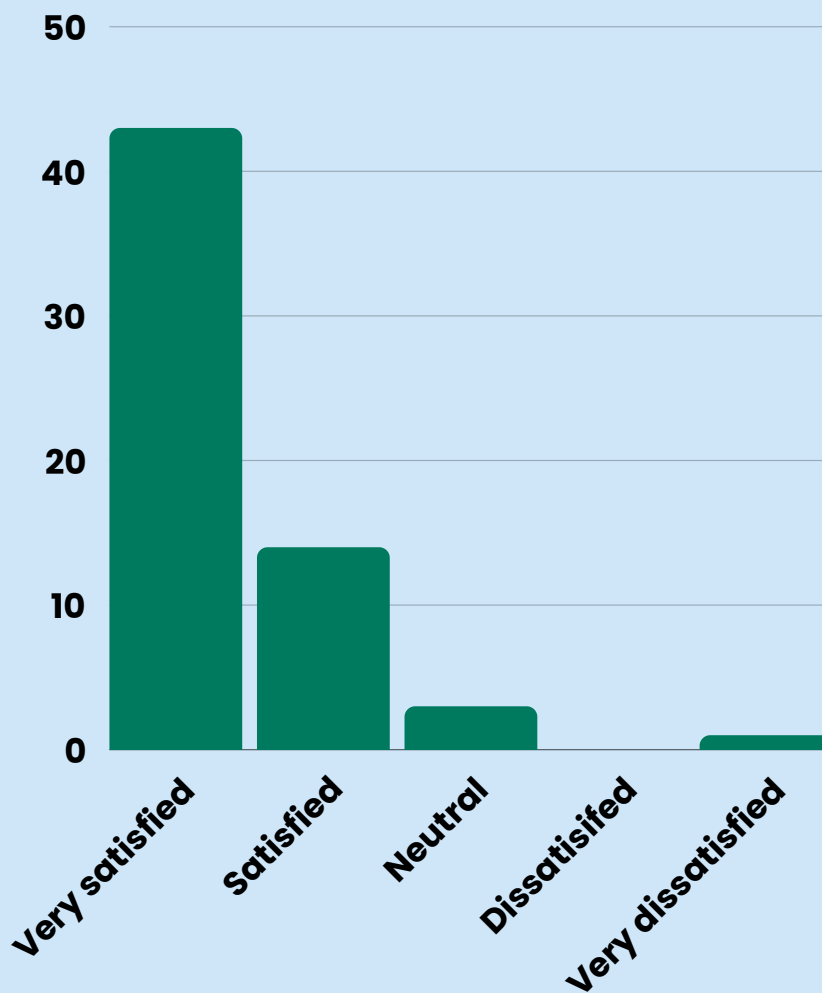


The respondents have been accessing support for





When asked how satisfied the respondents are with our services, they said:





When asked how being part of African Rainbow Family has impacted their asylum journey, they said:

I have not sought support for my asylum journey from African Rainbow Family

14.8%

It has not helped me at all

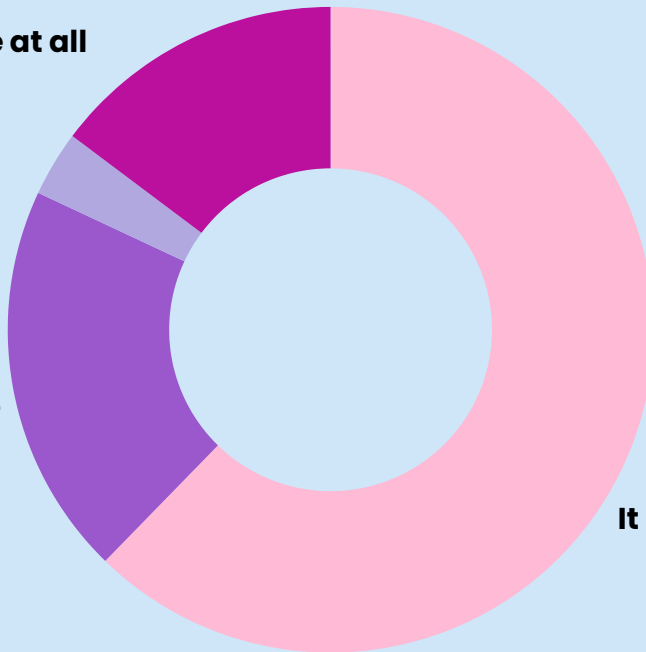
3.3%

It has somewhat helped me

19.7%

It has helped me significantly

62.3%



OUR IMPACT

COMMENTS FROM OUR SIBLINGS

"My heart is open, I can do everything I want in this country and my life is happy now."

"It has made me understand so many things that I was never told."

"It shows me that I am not alone and here are people who love me."

"I feel part of a lovely community that represents me."

"Made me feel proud of myself."



FEEDBACK FROM OUR PARTNERS



The charity's communication was the most highly rated of its aspects, with an average rating of 4.07 out of 5. This was backed up with 8 comments related to partners' positive experiences of the staff's friendliness, openness of approach, and can-do attitude.

The following quotes show the positive view that our partners have of ARF:

"ARF has always been engaging, and supportive, always a positive experience working with the team."

"Communication is prompt and projects feel like a true collaborative effort. Great team at ARF, everyone is friendly and helpful."

FEEDBACK FROM OUR PARTNERS



“I always receive a response and everyone gives best endeavours to help.”

“Consistent and attentive.”

“The team is friendly and responsive.”

“ARF has always been engaging, and supportive, always a positive experience working with the team.”

“Communication is prompt and projects feel like a true collaborative effort. Great team at ARF, everyone is friendly and helpful.”

“Clear and open communication, understanding our limitations, goals, intentions, welcomed us and have always been pleasant to work with.”

THANK YOU

TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS, ALLIES AND FRIENDS



We hope that this Annual Impact Report, 2024 has given our readers an insight into the goings-on of African Rainbow Family throughout 2024, if you would like to support us to continue our work, please consider donating via our website today.