



# UKRAINE SITUATION

Multi-Sector Needs Assessment  
UNHCR Bulgaria

February 2023



Regional Refugee Response  
for the Ukraine Situation

Global Metrics Ltd.



# CONTENTS

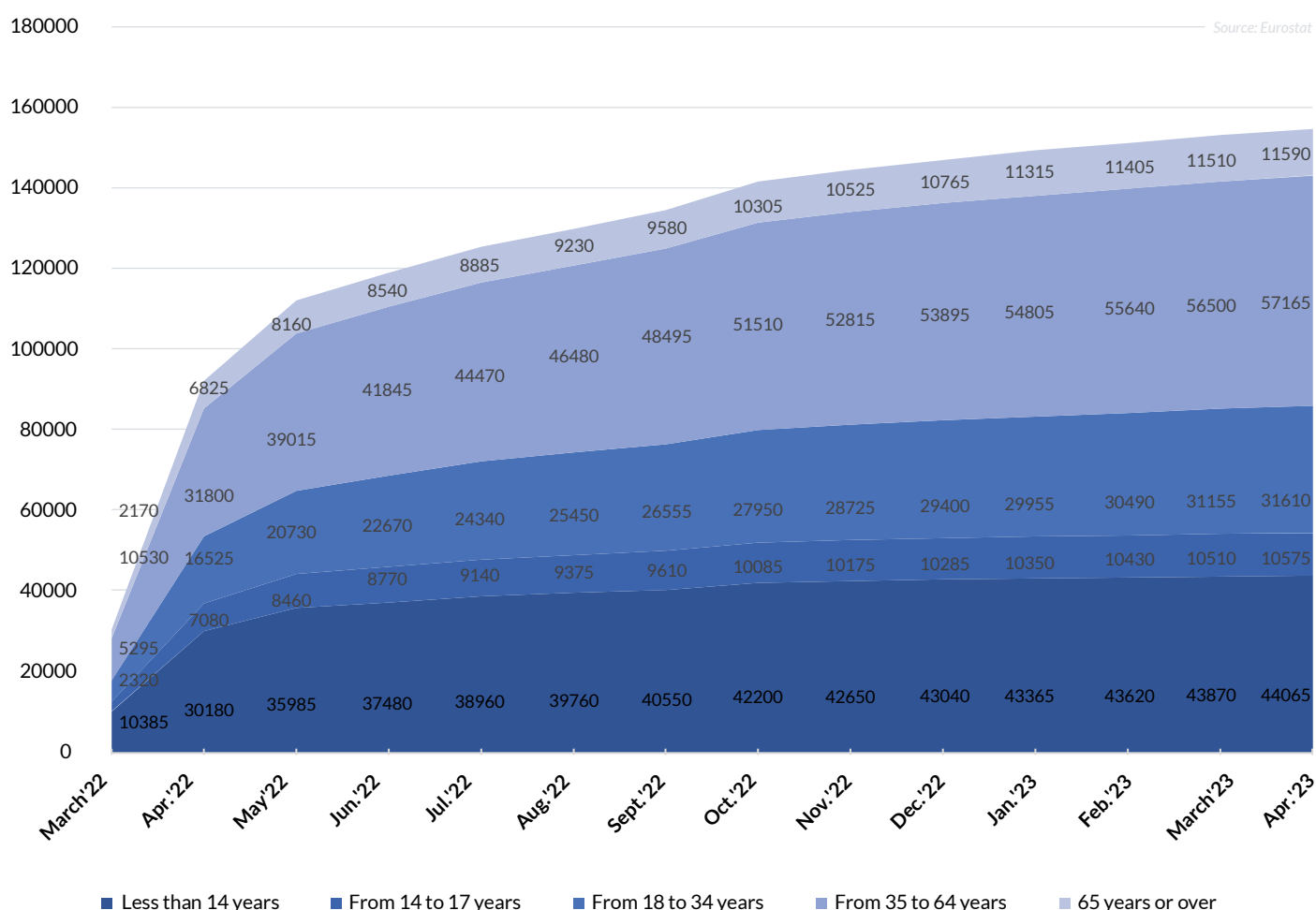
<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b>	3
<b>II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	4
<b>III. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND FAMILY COMPOSITION OF UKRAINIAN REFUGEES</b>	5
<b>IV. INFLUX AND EXPECTED DISPLACEMENT AND MOVEMENT PATTERNS</b>	7
1. Dynamics of Entry of Ukrainian Refugees Currently in Bulgaria and Regions of Origin	7
2. Expected Trends for Changes in the Number of Ukrainian Refugees in Bulgaria	9
3. Expected Internal and External Movement	10
Expected Internal Movement	10
Outlining the Trajectories of External Movement	10
<b>V. LIVELIHOODS AND INCLUSION</b>	11
1. Accommodation and Living Conditions	11
2. Educational Integration of Ukrainian children	14
Reasons for Non-enrolment of Children in the Bulgarian Education System	14
Necessary Support for Educational Integration	15
3. Employment and Inclusion	17
Educational Profile and Previous Field of Employment	17
Current Employment Status	19
Reasons for Labour Market Exclusion	21
4. Means of Subsistence	23
Sources of Income (per person)	23
Sources of Household Income	24
Major Difficulties in Meeting Basic Needs	26
Other Mechanisms for Optimizing Family Budgets	27
5. Financial and Humanitarian Aid	29
Financial Assistance	29
Humanitarian Aid	29
Urgent Needs	32
<b>VI. HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT, AND DISABILITY</b>	35
1. Health and Mental Care	35
Access to a General Practitioner	35
Access to Healthcare in Case of a Health Problem	37
Vaccination Status Against Smallpox among Children	39
Vaccination Against COVID-19	41
Awareness of the Possibilities of Vaccination Against COVID-19 for Ukrainian Citizens in Bulgaria	43
Mental Health and Mental Care	43
Various Physical Difficulties	45
Social Benefits for Persons with Disabilities	48
<b>VII. SAFETY AND SECURITY CONCERNS</b>	49
1. Security and Risk of Various Forms of Violence	49
2. Sexual Exploitation and Violence	50
<b>VIII. ACCESS TO INFORMATION &amp; ASSISTANCE</b>	51
1. Access to Public Services	51
2. Access to Information	52
3. Internet Access	55
<b>IX. SOCIAL COHESION</b>	55
Relations Between Refugees from Ukraine and Bulgarian Citizens	56
Relations Between Refugees from Ukraine and Bulgarian Institutions	60
Trust in Key Individuals and Institutions at the National and International Level	61

# I. INTRODUCTION

The war in Ukraine triggered the biggest and fastest growing refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War. More than 8 million people have been forced to flee the country. In response to this crisis, the Temporary Protection status established by Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001<sup>1</sup> was activated for the first time by Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022<sup>2</sup>. Among 8 million refugees, some 1.3 million Ukrainians transited through Bulgaria; nearly 160,000 refugees registered for Temporary Protection, and some 50,000 have remained in the country.<sup>3</sup> The figure below illustrates the cumulative number of persons granted temporary protection in Bulgaria by age group in the period between March 2022 and April 2023. Over one third of the refugee arrivals to Bulgaria have been children.

Figure 1. Number of persons benefiting from temporary protection at the end of each month by nationality, age, and gender - monthly data

## Beneficiaries of temporary protection at the end of the month by age



In line with the Regional Refugee Response Plan for the Ukraine Situation, the UNHCR, UN Refugee Agency, Representation in Bulgaria, together with other UN agencies and local partners, is assisting the Government to respond to the humanitarian needs of refugees.

The purpose of the Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) is to profile refugees with temporary protection status and identify their needs, intentions, and capacities. The survey was conducted by Global Metrics Ltd., with the collaboration of UNHCR. The study provides information on the demographic and social facts of refugees, as well as their accommodation, coping strategies, and experiences related to healthcare, social services, employment, and social cohesion. The report relies on two independent randomized and two typological samples and provides comparative figures and recommendations.

<sup>1</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0055&from=EN>

<sup>2</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022D0382&qid=1654262467878&from=en>

<sup>3</sup> <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted on behalf of the UNHCR Representation in Bulgaria. It is a quantitative survey that aims to cover randomly selected households of refugees from Ukraine who have sought temporary or international protection in Bulgaria to prepare an assessment of their needs in key public policy sectors: health care, employment, education, accommodation, and access to services. The survey includes questions that pertained both to the personal experience of respondents and to the experience of their households.

### The study was conducted using a stratified sample with four subsamples:

1. Refugees accommodated in hotels and state recreational facilities under the governmental accommodation programme;
2. Refugees who receive support through the Blue Dot hubs;
3. Refugees in private accommodation;
4. Refugees whose children are enrolled in the Bulgarian education system - schools and kindergartens.

The selection of respondents was randomized only in subsamples 1 and 2. Due to the lack of initial information on refugees who are privately accommodated and access to Ukrainian refugees whose children are enrolled in Bulgarian educational institutions, these sub-samples were carried out by snowball recruitment<sup>4</sup> and through allocating the interviewers in places where the subsample representatives are likely to be discovered.

It is possible that there is overlap between the respondents reached through different approaches - via their accommodation, via the Blue Dot hubs, through schools, and through the Ukrainian refugee community. To avoid duplication, the research team developed a procedure for pre-selection of respondents, by placing an additional question at the beginning of the questionnaire, which would indicate whether the person had already been interviewed as part of another sub-sample. For the purposes of the analysis, groups were additionally constructed, depending on the type of accommodation in which the refugees are residing in Bulgaria. There is an overlap between individuals in the subsamples. For example, individuals living in private accommodation could be recruited in the subsample of individuals using the services of Blue Dot hubs or through Ukrainian refugees recruited in schools. In such cases, for analytical purposes, they fall into both subsamples, but were only surveyed once.

### The total number of respondents who took part in the assessment was 1311 people over 18 years of age, distributed as follows:

Subsample	Number of respondents in the subsample
Refugees accommodated in the state accommodation programme	1005 persons
Refugees who receive support through the Blue Dot hubs;	153 persons
Refugees in private accommodation;	267 persons
Refugees whose children are enrolled in the Bulgarian education system schools and kindergartens	75 persons

The assessment was conducted face-to-face using tablets. The maximum stochastic error applicable to the studied population of persons accommodated in state or municipal recreational facilities and hotels under the governmental programme is  $\pm 2.959$  per cent. The study was carried out between 21 December 2022 and 18 January 2023.

<sup>5</sup> A participant recruitment technique in which respondents are asked to assist researchers in recruiting additional participants. This recruitment technique requires those who have already responded to the study to help the researchers identify other potential participants.

## The main modules of questions in the study are:



• **Demographic module:** The module collects information on the gender and age of the respondents, as well as general information on the composition of the household (if two or more people live in it). It also collects data on the district of origin in Ukraine, as well as their month of arrival in Bulgaria.



• **Questions related to family separation:** This module aims to collect information on whether there are Ukrainian children living in Bulgaria who, at the time of the assessment had been separated from both their parents and are being raised by other family members or other adults.



• **Accommodation module:** Aims to record the conditions in which refugees from Ukraine live at the time of the survey. The problems related to respondents' housing, and their feeling of security/insecurity of the accommodation.



• **Movement Intentions and Attitudes:** This block aims to explore the respondents' movement attitudes in the short-term future.



• **Access to Education:** This module aims to explore the reasons and attitudes that prevent Ukrainian children from accessing the Bulgarian education system.



• **Livelihoods:** Aims to measure the economic stability of households. On the one hand, this includes employment opportunities: education level, previous work experience, current employment status. On the other hand, it explores the refugees' sources of income – as the diversity of income streams guarantees levels of social security. The module allows recording the deprivations to which refugee households are subjected and their coping strategies in the situation of sudden impoverishment.



• **Healthcare:** The module measures the extent to which refugees from Ukraine have been able to gain access to healthcare services in Bulgaria.



• **Social Protection:** The focus of this module is related to the access to public services and awareness of Ukrainian citizens regarding public services availability in Bulgaria.



• **Social Cohesion:** The purpose of this module is to measure the sense of solidarity, trust and support between the community of refugees from Ukraine and the local Bulgarian communities.

Before conducting the research, the team of interviewers underwent a training in the principles of ethical and responsible research, guided by the scientific principle “Primum non Nocere”<sup>5</sup>. The security and rights of the people participating in the research are protected by an anonymization and data aggregation procedures. All requirements for working with data, according to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and the applicability of Art. 9, paragraph 2, item “j” for academic research, and the requirements of the ethical code of the Bulgarian Sociological Association and ESOMAR were met during all phases of the study.

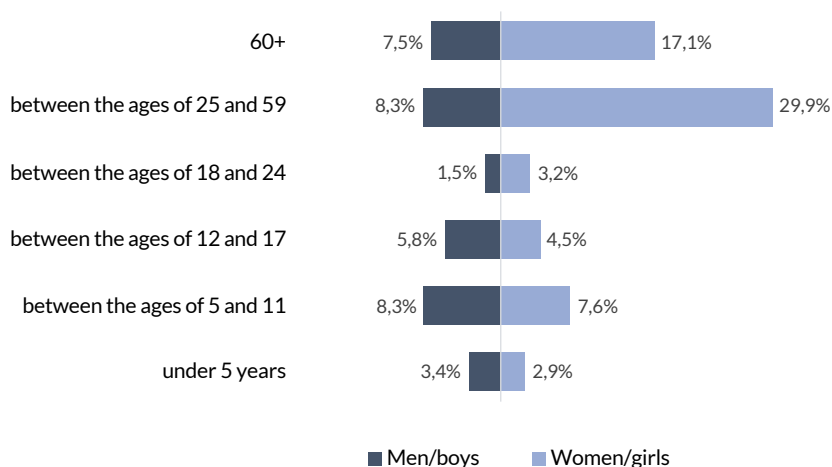
## III. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND FAMILY COMPOSITION UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

The gender-age structure of the Ukrainian community with temporary protection status in Bulgaria reveals that women (65.1 per cent) outnumber men (34.9 per cent). Children make up a significant share of the population at 32.6 per cent, with 26.3 per cent being preschool or primary school-aged children, totalling around 13,150 children. This highlights the systematic need to support local municipalities where refugees from Ukrainians are located, as most schools are financed through municipal budgets. The proportion of men aged 18 to 59 is significantly lower, likely due to mobilization efforts and associated travel restrictions. Pregnant and lactating women make up 2.47 per cent of the population.

<sup>5</sup> First, do no harm!

Figure 2. Population structure of Ukrainian refugees living in Bulgaria (percent of the total population)

### Structure of population of Ukrainian refugees living in Bulgaria (percent of total population)



Peter Laslett's classification of household composition<sup>6</sup>, reveals a diverse range of typological cases of households among Ukrainian refugees in Bulgaria, with an average household size of 2.53 people and 53 per cent of households having at least one child.

### Single women and single elders are more prevalent than other household compositions as of December 2022.<sup>7</sup>:

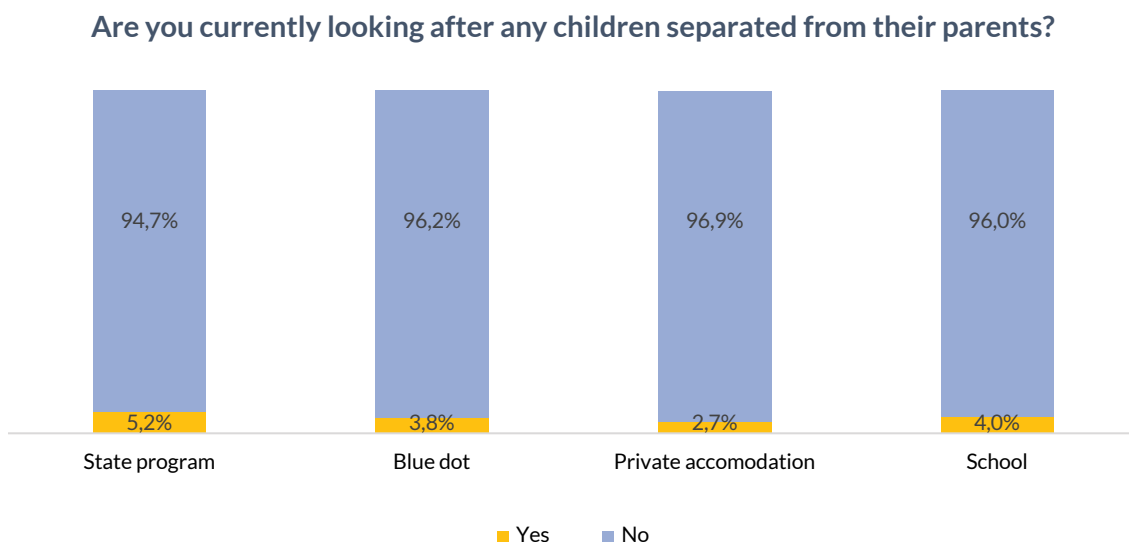
Single mothers	<i>(17.4 per cent single mothers with minors, 3.7 per cent single mothers with minors and adolescents and 7 per cent single mothers with adolescents)</i>	<b>28.1 per cent</b>
Single women without children		<b>21.7 per cent</b>
Single elders (over 60 years of age)		<b>15.8 per cent</b>
Nuclear family (mother, father, child, or children)		<b>12.2 per cent</b>
Middle-aged couple, without children		<b>10.2 per cent</b>
Elderly couple, without children		<b>7.7 per cent</b>
Extended families (parents, grandparents, and child/children)		<b>8.2 per cent</b>
Elders (60+) with children		<b>2.3 per cent</b>
Adults and middle-aged persons (without children)		<b>7.0 per cent</b>
More than one woman and child/children		<b>4.8 per cent</b>

The percentage of households with children currently separated from their parents ranges from 2.7-5.2 per cent. The percentage is highest in the Dobrich region and "Other" regions (9.6-9.7 per cent) and lowest in Varna (3.4 per cent) and Burgas (2.9 per cent). In Sofia, the share of these households is 7.9 per cent. Households with children separated from their parents usually consist of elders over 60 years of age who care for the children. About 8.1 per cent of those in the upper age quintile (67+) and around 7 per cent in the 50-59-year-olds and 60-69-year-olds experience this household situation. This household composition is more common among Ukrainians from Eastern Ukraine (6.1 per cent) and less common among refugees from southern Ukraine (2.9 per cent).

<sup>6</sup> Laslett, Peter. 1972. „Introduction: The History of the Family.“ pp. 159-204 in *Household and Family in Past Time*, edited by Peter Laslett and Richard Wall. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

<sup>7</sup> Some groups may overlap, which is why percentages sum to more than 100.

Figure 3. Distribution of answers to question: “Are you currently caring for a child/children who have been separated from their parents?” by subsamples

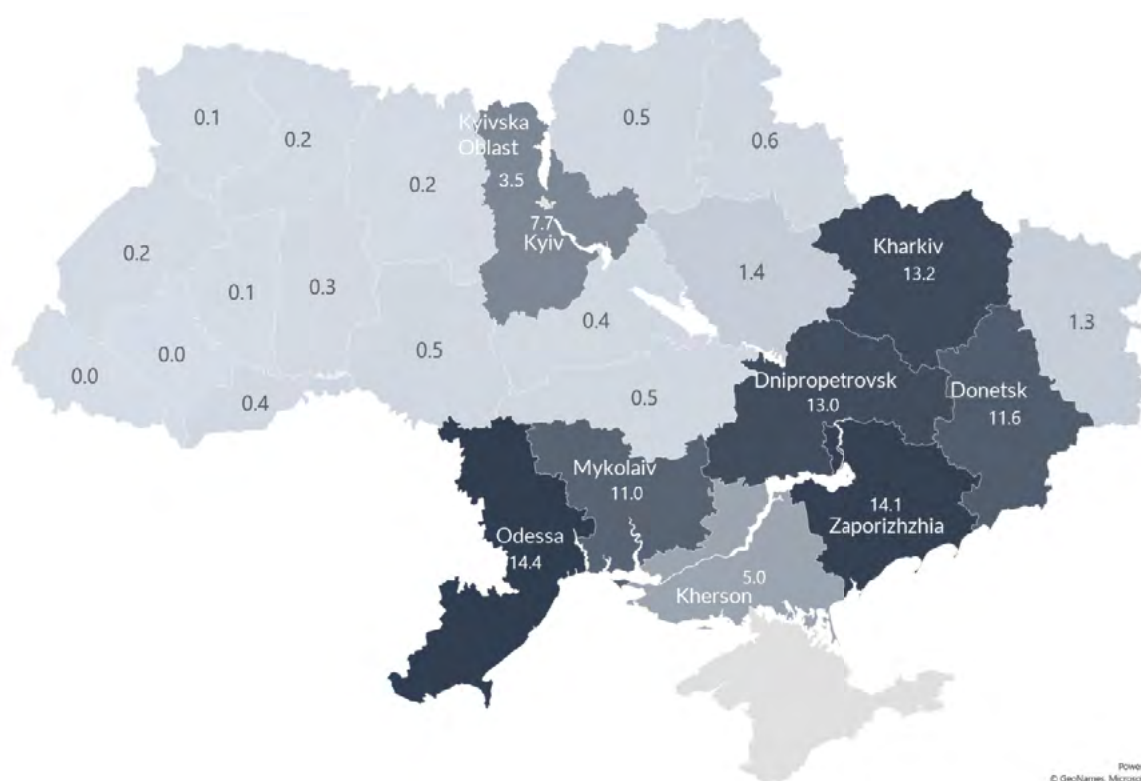


## IV. INFLUX AND EXPECTED DISPLACEMENT AND MOVEMENT PATTERNS

### 1. Dynamics of Entry of Ukrainian Refugees Currently in Bulgaria and Regions of Origin

Most Ukrainians in Bulgaria come from regions<sup>8</sup> that have been heavily affected by the war since the beginning of the invasion, and which are still on the front lines of the conflict (see map below). Many refugees coming to Bulgaria are also from the Odessa region due to socioeconomic ties to Bulgaria (e.g. including being of Bessarabian Bulgarian origin).

Figure 4. Map of Ukraine illustrating the share of Ukrainian refugees arriving in Bulgaria by region of origin in Ukraine



<sup>8</sup> The original term, used in the study is “oblast” from which the refugees originally travelled to Bulgaria. The term “oblast” is sometimes translated as region or province and is the main type of first-level administrative division of Ukraine. The country’s territory is divided into 28 oblasts.

The study outlines two main peaks of movement: March-April 2022 and October 2022. The data can be cross validated by the official statistics on decisions to grant temporary protection in Bulgaria (see the table below).

Figure 5. Month and year of arrival of the Ukrainian refugees who are currently in Bulgaria

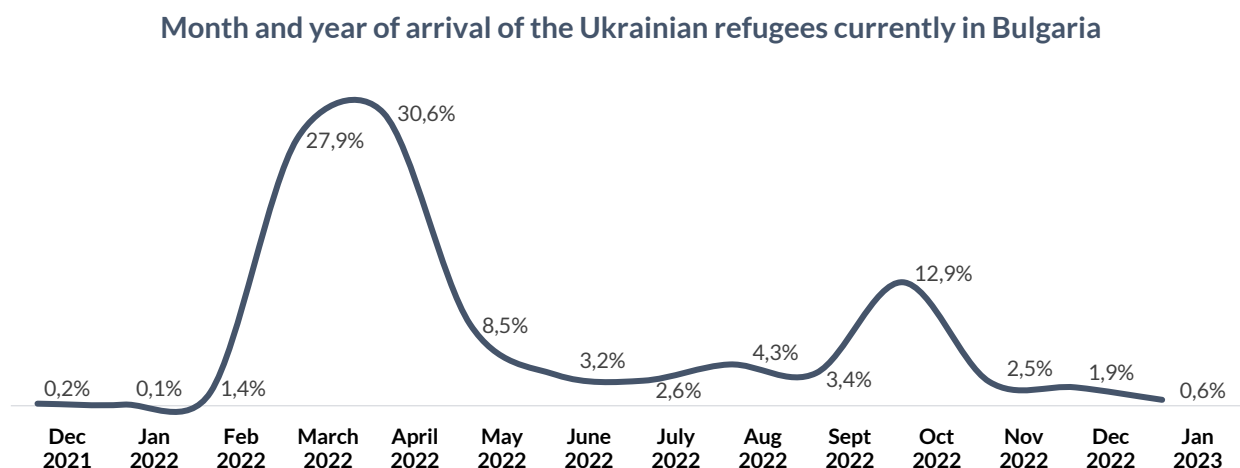


Table 2. Temporary protection decisions by nationality, age, and gender (monthly data)

	Apr 2022	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	Aug 2022	Sept 2022	Oct 2022	Nov 2022	Dec 2022
Adult females	43950	13515	4270	3810	2505	2505	4600	1520	1350
Adult males	17700	6435	2680	2685	1990	1990	2660	1315	1145
Children (females)	12280	3560	925	900	495	495	1065	280	255
Children (males)	12300	3635	875	955	535	535	1065	255	245

—Source: Eurostat (MIGR\_ASYTPFM)

The main factor for the dynamic of displacement seems to be the region of origin in Ukraine. The table below illustrates the period in which Ukrainian citizens from different regions arrived in Bulgaria. The biggest peak is in March and April 2022. However, about a third of people living in South-eastern Ukraine before 24 February 2022 arrived in October, i.e. when the fighting intensified there. About 43.5 per cent of refugees from Kyiv and Kyiv region came to Bulgaria immediately after the start of the war.

Table 3. Percentage of Ukrainian refugees from different regions by month of arrival in Bulgaria

	Feb 2022	Mar 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	Aug 2022	Sept 2022	Oct 2022	Nov 2022	Dec 2022	Jan 2023
South-east Ukraine	0.3%	12.9%	33.7%	6.2%	2.1%	2.1%	4.1%	1.8%	32.8%	1.5%	1.8%	0.6%
Eastern Ukraine	1.2%	30.5%	37.5%	6.1%	3.7%	2.6%	3.7%	5.2%	5.8%	2.3%	1.2%	-
Southern Ukraine	1.8%	33.5%	27.4%	13.2%	4.2%	2.9%	5.0%	1.8%	3.7%	1.6%	3.2%	1.3%
Kyiv/Kyiv Region	3.6%	43.5%	18.8%	8.0%	-	2.2%	3.6%	5.8%	6.5%	6.5%	1.4%	-
Other regions	-	25.5%	17.0%	8.5%	8.5%	4.3%	6.4%	6.4%	14.9%	6.4%	-	-

The following displays data from the current Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) in Bulgaria, illustrates the main flow of Ukrainian refugees based on their region of origin during the different periods. The data confirms an influx of refugees from the South-eastern part of Ukraine, as 56 per cent of Ukrainians came from this region during October and later months. The table also shows no significant difference in the total share of refugees coming from Eastern, Southern and South-eastern Ukraine.



Those from Western and North-western Ukraine likely chose other destinations in their search for international protection, as they have the lowest share among those seeking refuge in Bulgaria.

Table 4. Percentage of Ukrainian refugees by month of arrival in Bulgaria from different regions

	South-east Ukraine	Eastern Ukraine	Southern Ukraine	Kyiv/Kyiv Region	Other regions <sup>9</sup>
February - March 2022	12.3%	30.1%	36.6%	17.8%	3.3%
April - June 2022	27.0%	30.9%	32.1%	7.0%	3.0%
July - September 2022	21.1%	31.3%	28.9%	12.5%	6.3%
October 2022 and later	55.8%	14.3%	16.5%	8.9%	4.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27.2%</b>	<b>27.7%</b>	<b>30.3%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>

Different regions in Bulgaria shelter varying proportions of Ukrainian refugees (see table below for top hosting regions), depending on their arrival in the country. About 15.4 per cent of refugees in Burgas and 21.6 per cent of refugees in Dobrich arrived in October. Additionally, a slightly higher share of Ukrainians in Sofia arrived for the first time in November. This highlights the need for special attention from local authorities, as newly arrived refugees are more vulnerable and require additional care and services to integrate effectively.

Table 5. Percentage of Ukrainian refugees in different administrative regions in Bulgaria, depending on the month of their initial arrival in the country

	Feb 2022	Mar 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	Aug 2022	Sept 2022	Oct 2022	Nov 2022	Dec 2022	Jan 2023
<b>Burgas</b>	1.0%	28.1%	31.2%	9.4%	3.6%	1.3%	3.7%	3.3%	15.4%	1.8%	0.9%	-
<b>Dobrich</b>	0.6%	16.0%	36.4%	4.9%	2.5%	5.6%	3.1%	6.2%	21.6%	1.2%	1.9%	-
<b>Sofia-City</b>	5.4%	26.8%	21.4%	8.9%	3.6%	3.6%	7.1%	1.8%	3.6%	8.9%	5.4%	3.6%
<b>Varna</b>	1.1%	31.8%	30.3%	7.5%	2.2%	2.6%	6.0%	3.0%	6.4%	3.4%	3.4%	1.9%
<b>Other regions</b>	3.1%	36.1%	22.7%	11.3%	4.1%	5.2%	4.1%	1.0%	5.2%	3.1%	3.1%	-

Over 75 per cent of Ukrainians with temporary protection in Bulgaria, speak Russian as their main language at home, while just over a fifth speak Ukrainian as their mother tongue.

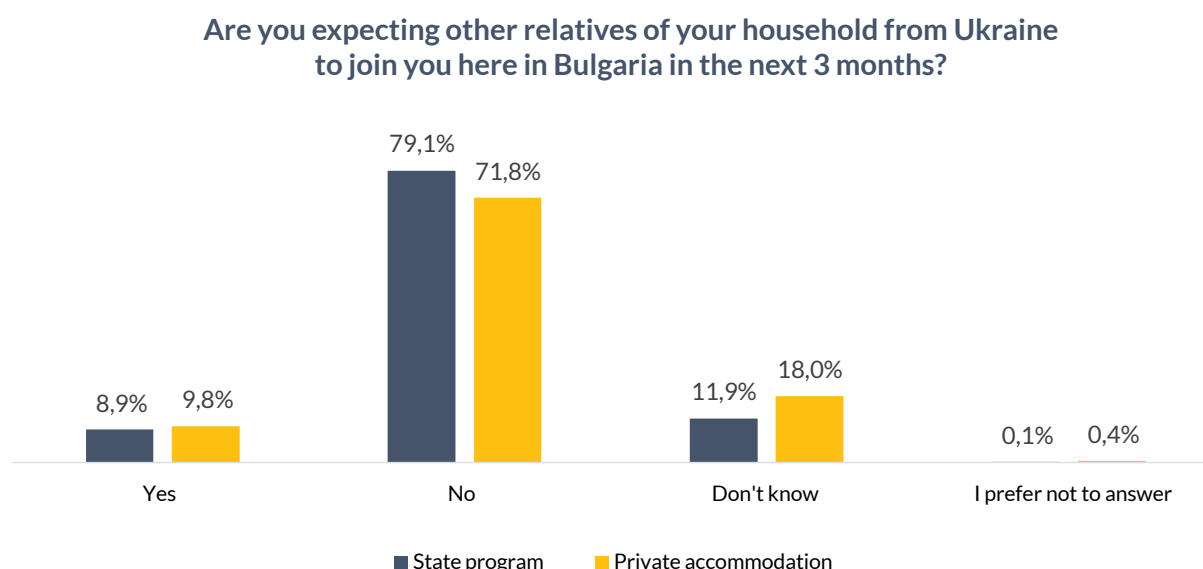
The difference in language is mainly due to the region of origin. Ukrainian is spoken mostly by refugees from Central, Western, and North-Western Ukraine (54 per cent) and the Kyiv region (42.2 per cent). Russian is predominantly spoken by those who lived in the Southern (84.4 per cent), Eastern, and South-eastern parts of the country (about 80 per cent). The highest proportion of refugees speaking Ukrainian is in Sofia and "Other" regions (28-29 per cent), while Russian spoken by the largest proportion of refugees in the Dobrich region (82 per cent).

## 2. Expected Trends for Changes in the Number of Ukrainian Refugees in Bulgaria

Some 10 per cent of Ukrainian households expected other relatives to come to Bulgaria in the next three months and about 3.6 per cent of Ukrainian refugees in Bulgaria planned to leave the country, either by returning to Ukraine or by moving to another country. It is possible that the share of those intending to leave is overestimated and they would remain in Bulgaria, leading to more newcomers. Nevertheless, it is important to note that these assumptions did not account for potential changes in the country's policies to support Ukrainian refugees, which could affect the decisions and behaviour of refugees from Ukrainian in Bulgaria.

<sup>9</sup> "Other" regions is an umbrella category that includes respondents from Central, Western, and North-western Ukraine.

Figure 6. Distribution of answers to question: "Are you expecting other relatives of your household from Ukraine to join you here in Bulgaria in the next 3 months?" by type of accommodation



### 3. Expected Internal and External Movement

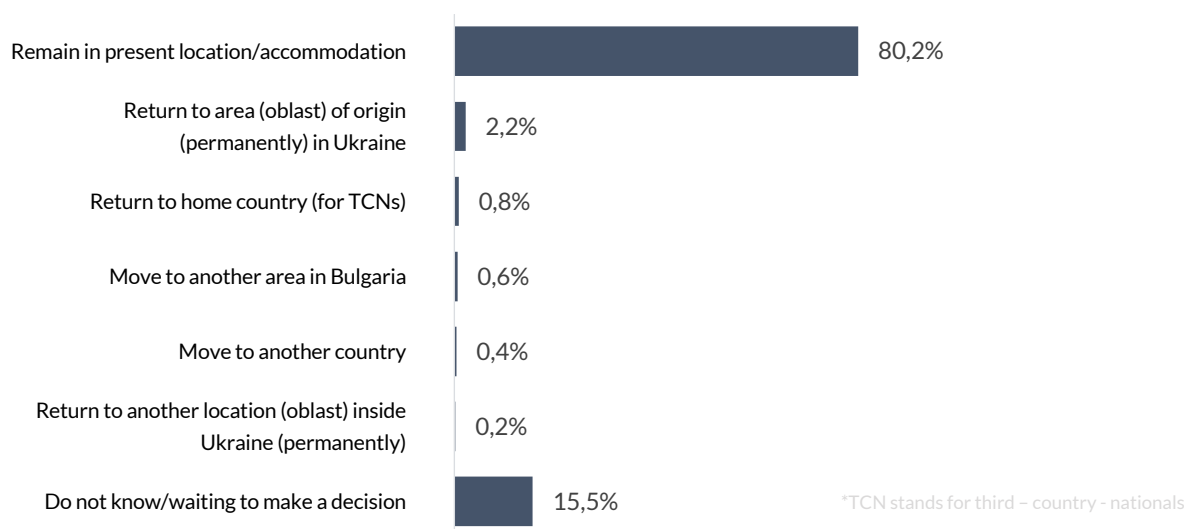
#### Expected Internal Movement

Most respondents intended to remain in their current location/accommodation with higher percentage in Dobrich (91.2 per cent), than Sofia - city (69.5 per cent). Sofia had a higher percentage of those planning to return to Ukraine (6.8 per cent), particularly among youth households and 18- to 24-year-olds (5.6 per cent). Those uncertain about future movement plans were highest among refugees from Central, Western, and North-western Ukraine (24 per cent). The lowest percentage of those planning to stay in Bulgaria was from these regions (74 per cent).

#### Outlining the Trajectories of External Movement

Figure 7. Distribution of responses to the question: "What are your households' current movement intentions in the next 3 months?"

#### What are your households' current movement intentions in the next 3 months?



The absolute number of individuals in the sample planning to move to another region of Bulgaria, to another country, or to return to Ukraine is so small that any further analysis of their motives would be speculative. For the purposes of public policy planning and for illustrative purposes, the table below shows the main and additional reasons for the decision to move. Although the table is based on quantitative survey data, it should be considered as a qualitative typology.

Table 6. Qualitative typology of the reasons for the decision to move across the four subsamples of respondents.

	Main reasons	Additional reasons
State programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement of the situation in Ukraine</li> <li>• A family member or friend in another country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of job opportunities in Bulgaria</li> <li>• A family member or friend in another country</li> <li>• Because of the compensations and support available</li> </ul>
Blue Dot Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement of the situation in Ukraine</li> <li>• A family member or friend in another country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement of the situation in Ukraine</li> <li>• Because of job opportunities</li> </ul>
Private accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement of the situation in Ukraine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because of job opportunities</li> <li>• A family member or friend in another country</li> </ul>
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because of job opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A family member or friend in another country</li> </ul>

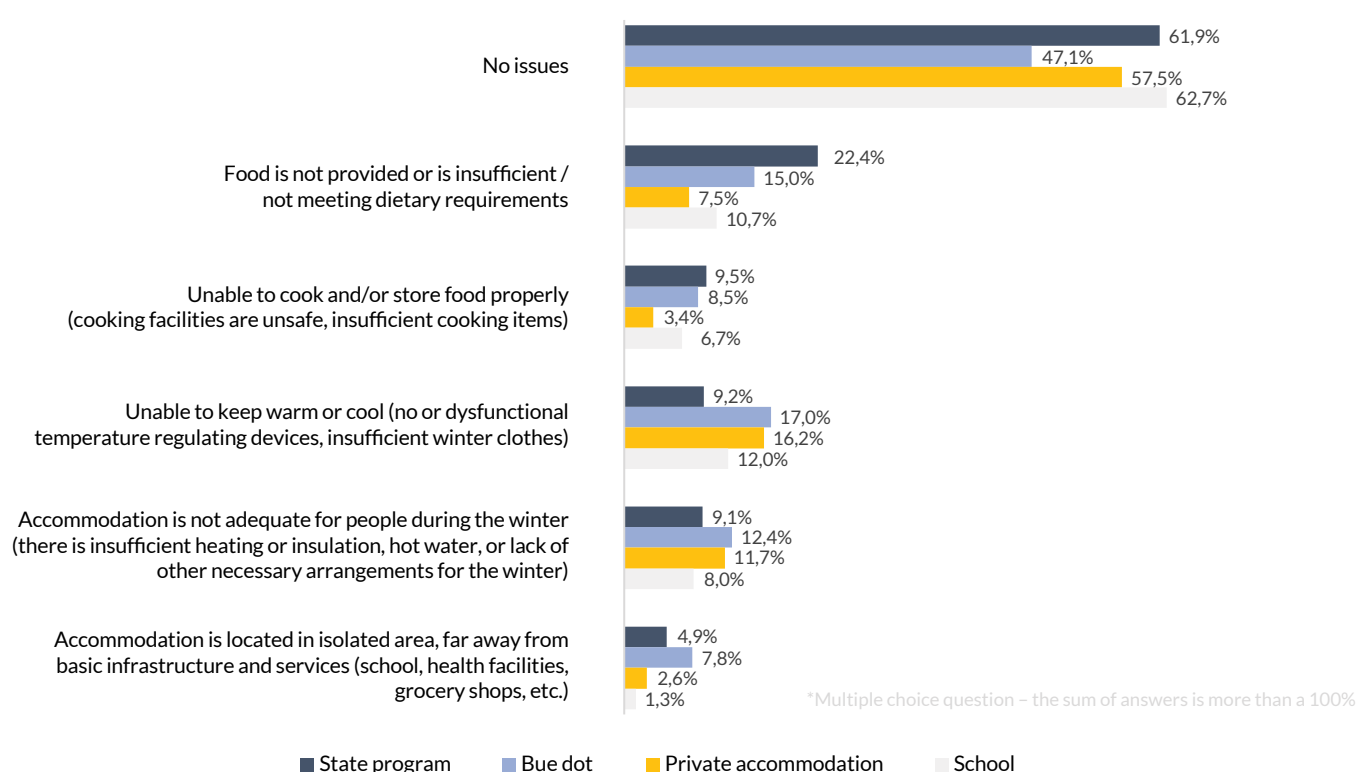
## V. LIVELIHOODS AND INCLUSION

### 1. Accommodation and Living Conditions

The study found varying levels of accommodation problems for Ukrainian refugees, depending on their housing situation and how they were recruited for the survey. Those enrolled in Bulgarian schools/kindergartens, and benefiting from the state accommodation program, reported fewer problems than those recruited through the Blue Dot hubs, who tend to be the most vulnerable. Complaints against the state program were generally low, with most concerns focused on the food quality/quantity. Problems reported by Blue Dot beneficiaries and those staying in private accommodation mostly related to winter, including heating and space issues.

Figure 8 shows the distribution of top 6 responses to accommodation issues by subsamples.

#### What issues, if any, are you facing in terms of living conditions in your accommodation? (Top 6 answers accumulated more than 5%)

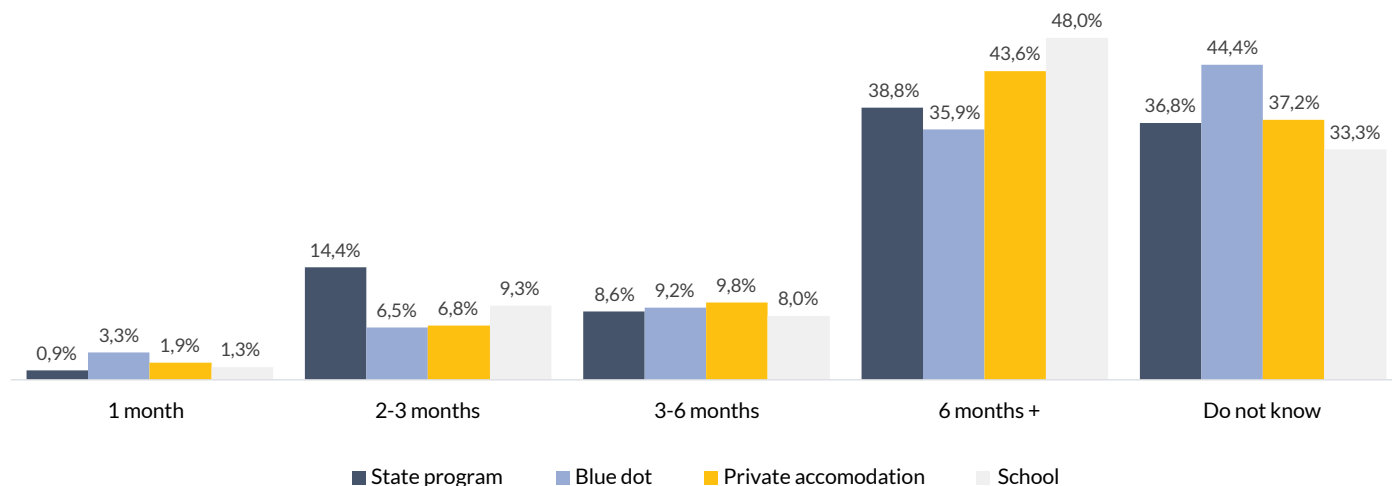


The four different subsamples have different attitudes about the expected length of their stay in the current accommodation. Those in private accommodation and those with children enrolled in Bulgarian schools/kindergartens, expect to

stay in their current accommodation to a greater degree. Uncertainty about the length of stay is highest among users of the Blue Dot hubs. The largest proportion of persons who expect to stay in their current accommodation for six or more months are in the region of Dobrich (62.6 per cent), and the two youngest age groups: 18-24-year-olds (52.8 per cent) and 25-29-year-olds (53.8 per cent), especially in single-member households of young people (58.3 per cent). Uncertainty about the length of possible stay in the current accommodation is highest among those living in the Varna region (55.4 per cent), and people over 67 years old (45.1 per cent).

**Figure 9. Distribution of responses to the question: “How long do you believe you can stay in this accommodation if you need to?” by subsamples**

### How long do you believe you can stay in this accommodation if you need to?



Few respondents across all subsamples reported feeling forced to leave their current housing, which is a positive finding<sup>10</sup>. There was no notable difference based on any of the socio-demographic characteristics.

**Table 7. Percentage of Ukrainian refugees who feel forced to leave their current accommodation**

	State programme	Blue dot	Private accommodation	School
<b>Yes</b>	1.1%	2.0%	1.1%	1.3%
<b>No</b>	92.3%	91.5%	91.4%	88.0%
<b>I do not know</b>	5.0%	3.3%	3.8%	5.3%
<b>I prefer not to answer</b>	1.5%	3.3%	3.8%	5.3%

Most refugees in the state programme do not pay rent (98.4%). Among them only 1.6% pay extra money for their stay.

For those privately accommodated, almost 62 per cent of them pay rent over BGN 300<sup>11</sup>, with 41 per cent paying over BGN 500<sup>12</sup> per month and nearly 10 per cent paying over BGN 900<sup>13</sup> per month. Among those privately housed, 29.3 per cent have no monthly rent costs. The percentage of those with no rent costs among other refugee groups ranges from 47 per cent (Blue Dot hubs users) to 98.4 per cent (state program recipients). Over 50 per cent of the refugees using Blue Dot Hubs and those with children enrolled in Bulgarian kindergartens/schools pay rent.

Blue Dot centre users have a higher share of people paying rent between BGN 701 and 900 (14.4 per cent) compared to those with children enrolled in Bulgarian schools (6.7 per cent).

<sup>10</sup> Methodological note: Much of the field research was conducted in December 2022, and with the state programme scheduled to end in March 2023, these numbers are likely to change.

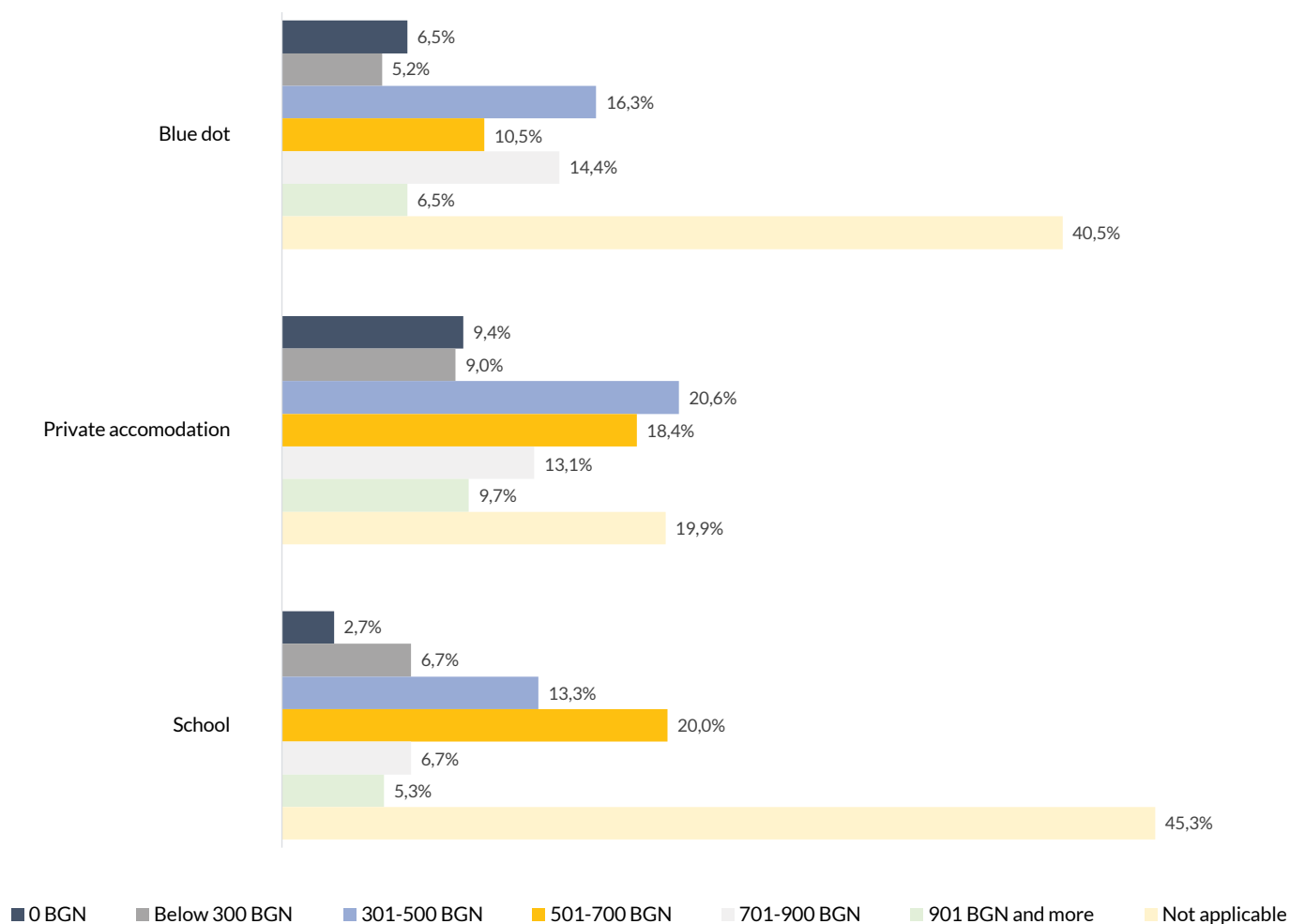
<sup>11</sup> About 153 Euro

<sup>12</sup> About 256 Euro

<sup>13</sup> About 460 Euro

**Figure 10. Distribution of answers to the question: "How much do you spend on rent per month on average (in BGN)?" by subsamples**

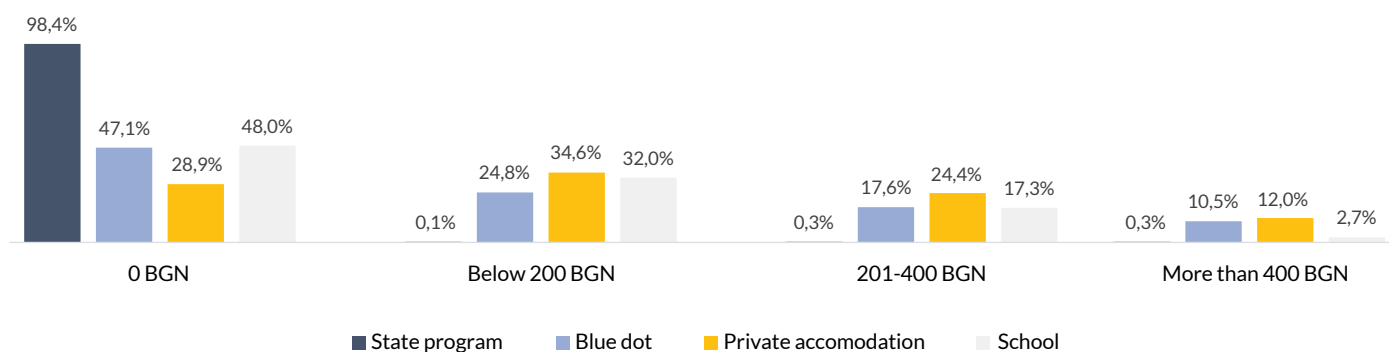
**On average, how much do you spend on rent per month (in BGN)?**



Rent costs per person in the household are similar for privately accommodated refugees and Blue Dot service users. However, state-program accommodated refugees have significantly lower costs, with around 98 per cent having no rent costs and the remaining paying varying amounts.

**Figure 11. Distribution of answers to the question: "On average, how much do you spend on rent (per person) per month (in BGN)?" by subsamples**

**On average, how much do you spend on rent (per person) per month (in BGN)?**



State accommodated refugees spend an average of BGN 189 per person per month on basic services, while privately accommodated refugees spend nearly BGN 360.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> About 184 Euro

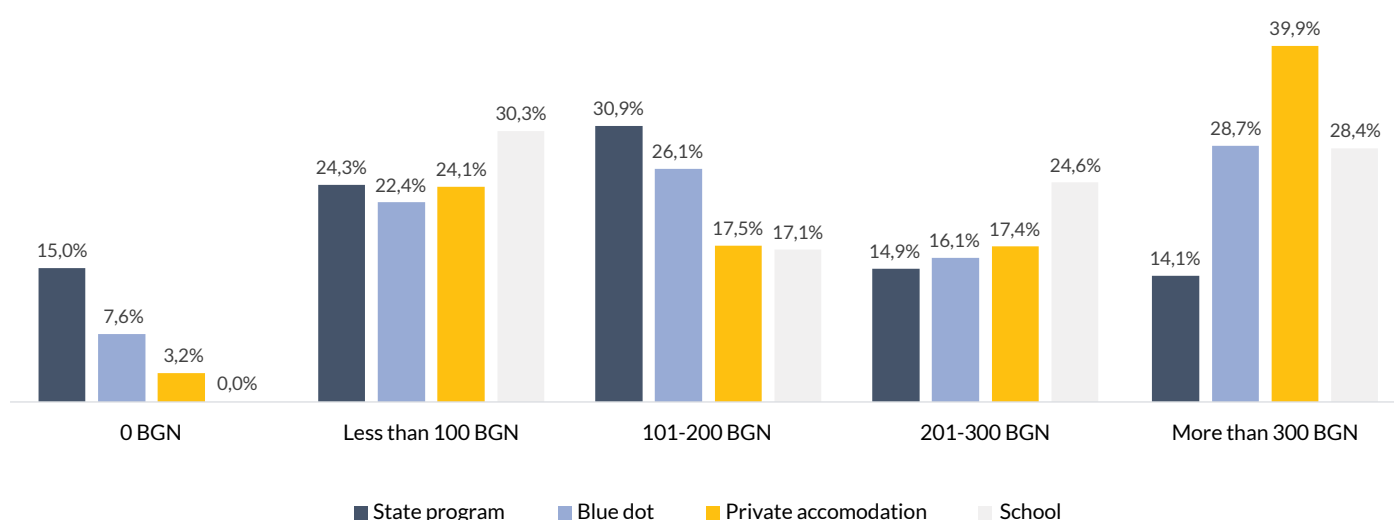
Table 8. Average expenditure for basic services per month (per person) in BGN by subsamples

Average expenditure for basic services per month (per person) in BGN.	
State programme	189.02
Blue Dot centres	255.70
Private accommodation	358.95
School	248.63

State-provided housing not only has lower monthly rent costs but also lower costs for basic services, providing peace of mind for refugees and allowing them to support themselves with much lower income levels than other groups. This highlights the success of the state programme in supporting the most vulnerable refugees in Bulgaria. The chart below illustrates that publicly accommodated refugees spend less on basic services compared to those in private housing. Nearly 40 per cent of privately accommodated households spend over BGN 300/month on basic services.

Figure 12. Distribution on answers to question: “On average, how much do you spend on basic services (per person) per month (in BGN)?” by subsamples

On average, how much do you spend on basic services (per person) per month (in BGN)?



## 2. Educational Integration of Ukrainian children

The Bulgarian State Agency for Refugees (SAR) reports that nearly 34 per cent of Ukrainian refugees in Bulgaria are children under 18 years old.

The current study found a slightly lower percentage of 32 per cent of persons under 18 in the surveyed households, indicating that approximately 16,000 Ukrainian children with temporary protection resided in the country during the research period. Of the children between the ages of 5 and 17, around 17 per cent are enrolled in Bulgarian schools and kindergartens.<sup>15</sup>

### Reasons for Non-enrolment of Children in the Bulgarian Education System

Some 80 per cent of Ukrainian refugee children who are not enrolled in Bulgarian schools or kindergartens are still attending online education in Ukraine, according to the study. Language barrier is the next most common reason for non-enrolment, cited in 23 per cent of cases.

<sup>15</sup> Data based on information provided by the Ministry of Education of Republic of Bulgaria for children seeking or granted protection, enrolled in the education system for the period January-December 2022.

Reasons for children not attending kindergarten or school in Bulgaria include online education in Ukraine (80 per cent), language barriers (23 per cent), lack of vacant slots in schools (7.7 per cent), lack of schools located at an accessible distance (6.3 per cent), insufficient financial resources (5.2 per cent), lack of teaching materials (4 per cent), and non-existent or expensive transport (3.8 per cent).

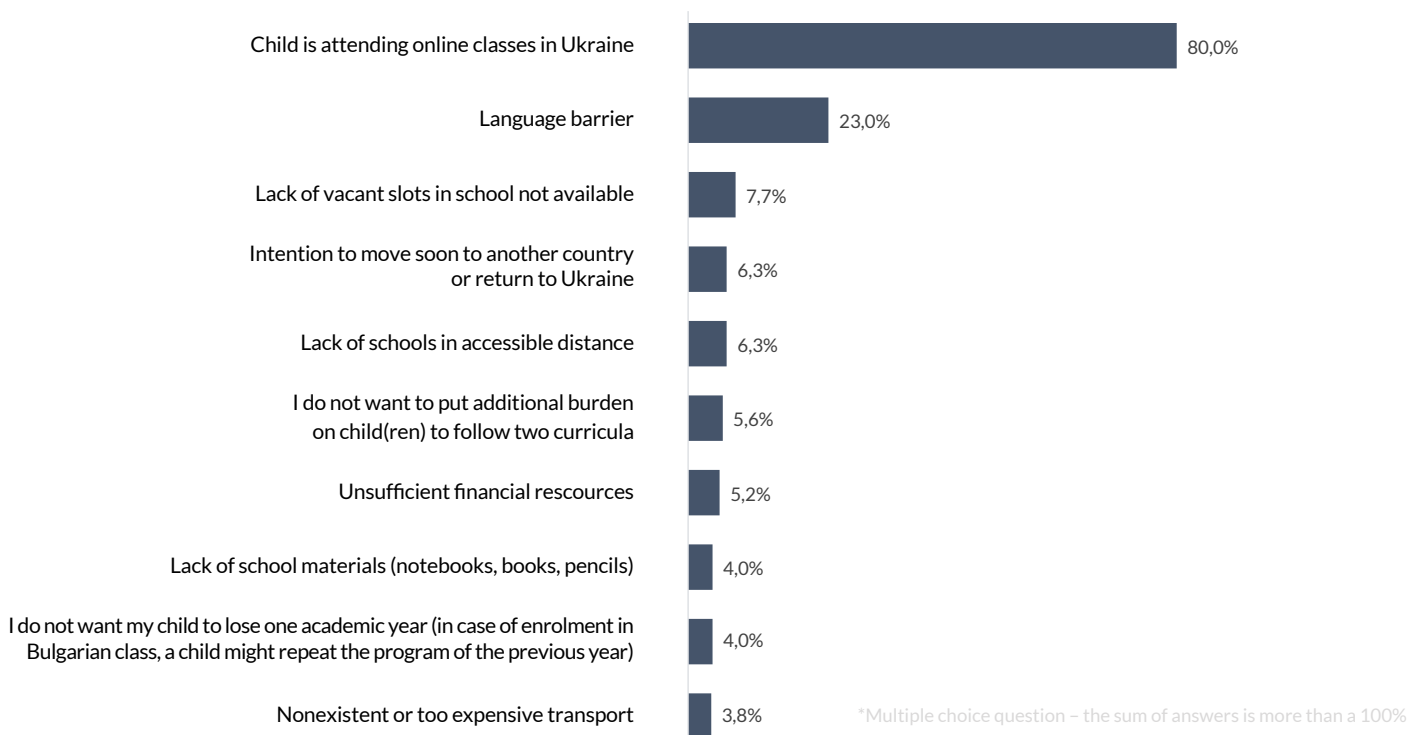
Other reasons include lack of information on education arrangements, 6.3 per cent of children are not enrolled due Possible future move onward or return to Ukraine.

Reluctance to enrol children in both Ukrainian and Bulgarian educational systems is at 5.6 per cent, while 4 per cent of parents expressed concerns about their child losing a whole year of education.<sup>16</sup>

Parents have also mentioned other reasons for not enrolling their children in Bulgarian schools/kindergartens, including challenges in submitting the application form (e.g., lack of vaccination, certificate of completed education, etc.) - 3.3 per cent, lack of internet (2.3 per cent), lack of appropriate clothing and shoes (1.9 per cent). And waiting period for a response to their application (under 2 per cent).

**Figure 13. Distribution of the top 10 reasons for not enrolling your child in a kindergarten/school in Bulgaria**

### Top 10 reasons for not enrolling your child in a kindergarten/school in Bulgaria?



### Necessary Support for Educational Integration

Children and adolescents participating in both Ukrainian and Bulgarian educational activities would require Bulgarian language lessons (53.1 per cent), school supplies (41.7 per cent), laptops/tablets (38.4 per cent), and internet connection (25.1 per cent). Refugees recruited through Bulgarian educational institutions highly prioritize the need for Bulgarian language lessons (80.8 per cent), followed by school supplies/equipment (52.1 per cent) and a laptop/tablet (45.2 per cent). This group has the lowest percentage of non-enrolment in Bulgarian schools and their assessment is likely based on personal experience with the education system.

The main types of support that would help children attend regular educational activities, both in Bulgaria and Ukraine for

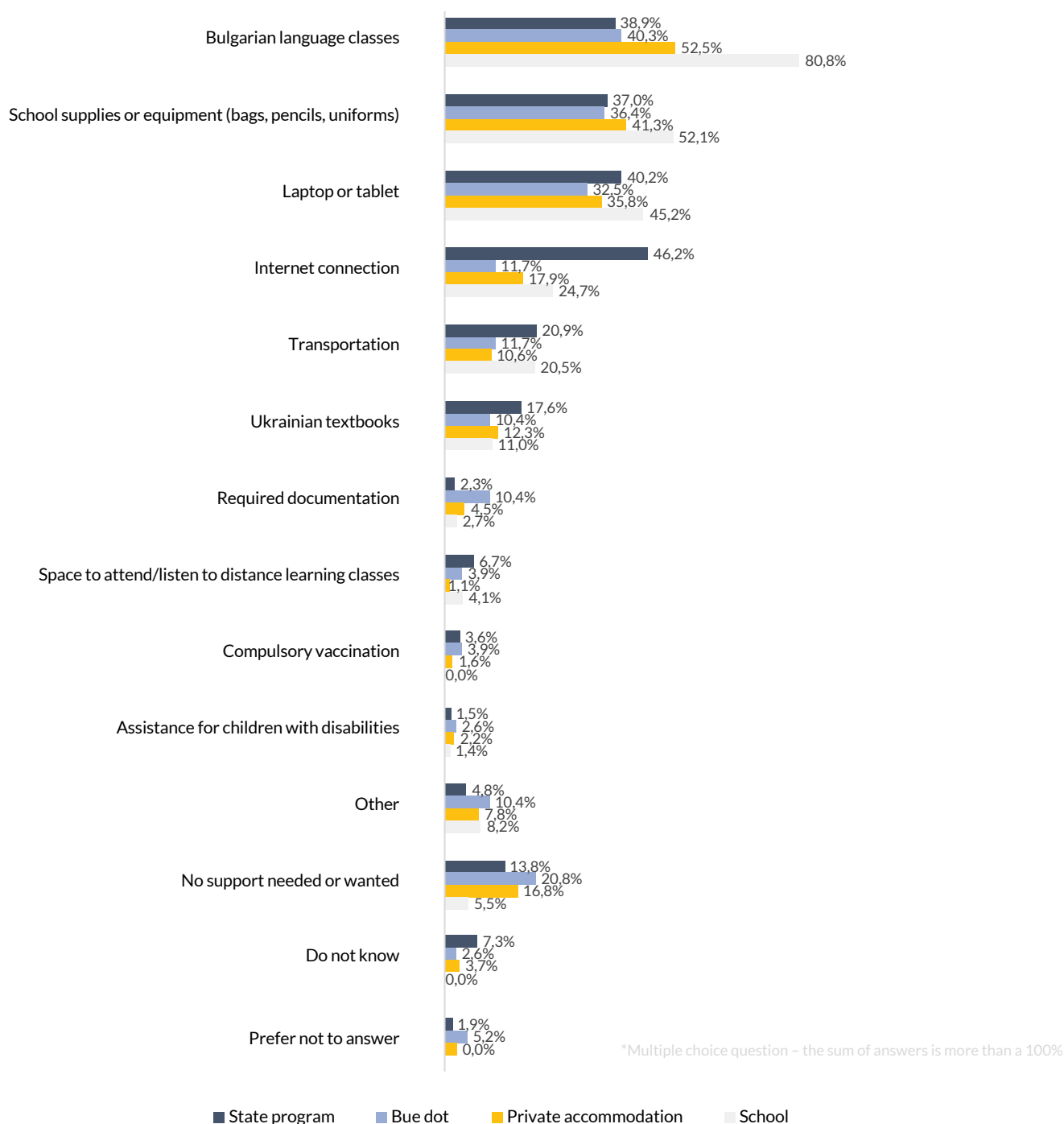
<sup>16</sup> When enrolling a child in the Bulgarian education system, it is possible that the child does not continue in the grade in which it is intended to according to the Ukrainian education system, because there may be a discrepancy in terms of the material taught in different subjects between Bulgarian and Ukrainian educational systems.

publicly accommodated refugee households are internet connection (46.2 per cent), laptop/tablet (40.2 per cent), Bulgarian language lessons (38.9 per cent), and school supplies or equipment (37 per cent). Privately accommodated refugees recognize the need for support mainly through Bulgarian language lessons (52.5 per cent), school supplies (41.3 per cent), laptop/tablet (35.8 per cent). Blue dot centre users need the same kind of support.

Bulgaria offers additional Bulgarian language training for Ukrainian refugee children within preschool and school education. After applying to a kindergarten or school, children can access these lessons, as well as other types of support like psychological aid and personal development activities.

**Figure 14. Distribution of responses to question: "If available, what type of support would help your child with attending school or participating in regular learning activities (for both Bulgarian and Ukrainian online education)?" by subsamples**

**If available, what type of support would help your child with attending school or participating in regular learning activities (for both Bulgarian and Ukrainian online education)?**

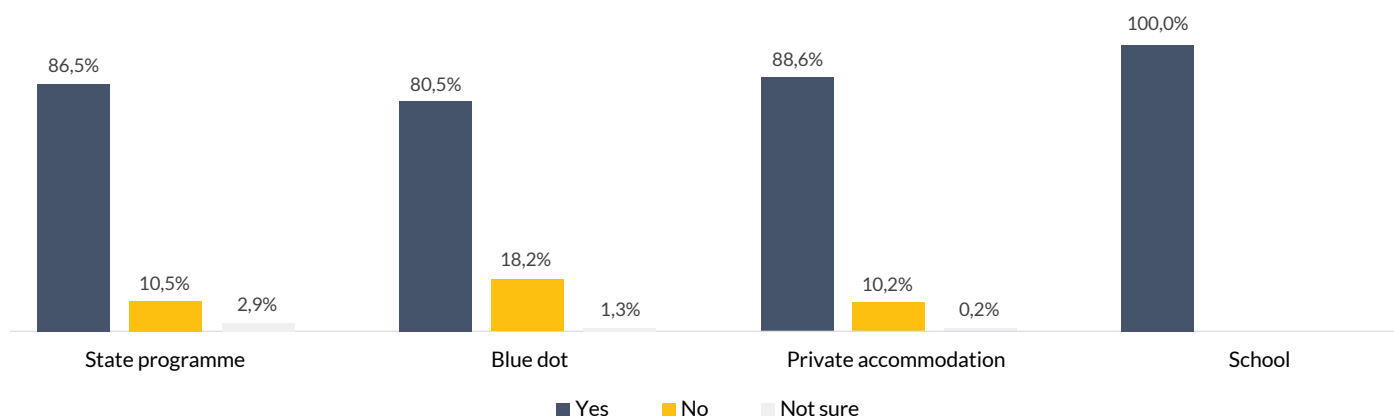


On average, 87 per cent of the surveyed know that refugee children can access kindergarten/school in Bulgaria for free, with the lowest awareness being among Blue Dot centre users at 80.5 per cent.



**Figure 15. Distribution of answers to the question: “Are you aware that in Bulgaria refugee children holding temporary protection status can access kindergarten, primary and secondary school free of charge?” by subsamples**

### Are you aware that in Bulgaria refugee children holding temporary protection status can access kindergarten, primary and secondary school free of charge?



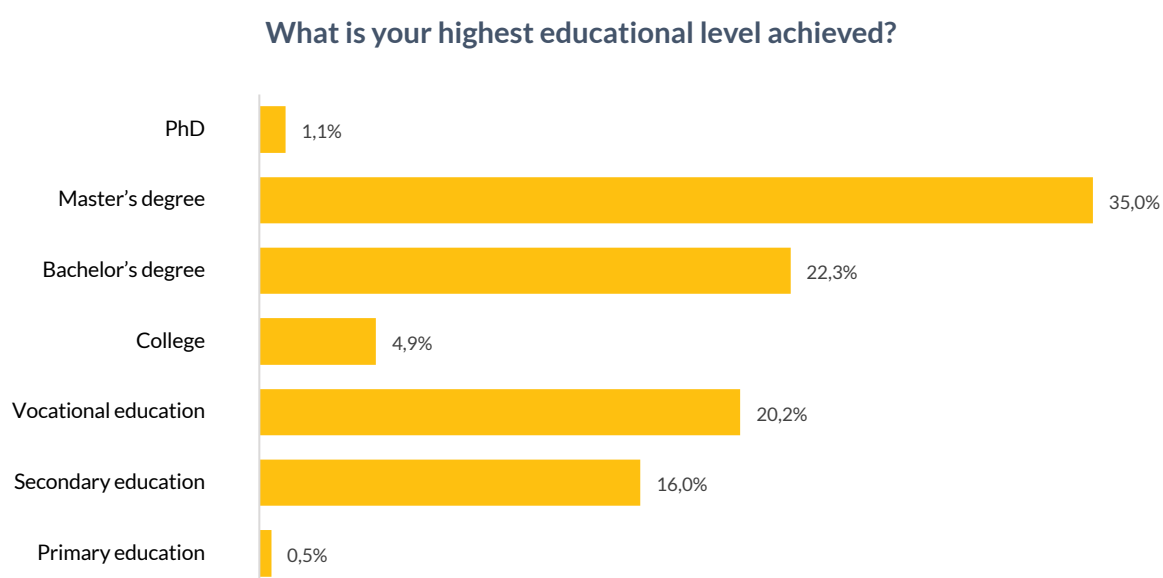
More active communication is needed between state institutions and the refugee community to raise awareness among interested refugee groups for enrolling their children in educational institutions.<sup>17</sup>

## 3. Employment and Inclusion

### Educational Profile and Previous Field of Employment

According to World Bank data on the educational profile of Ukrainians as of 2010, 40 per cent of the population over 25 years of age have completed higher education.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, educational profile of Ukrainian refugees in Bulgaria is high, with 22.3 per cent having a bachelor’s degree and 35 per cent having a master’s degree, compared to 40 per cent of the general population of Ukraine who completed higher education.

**Figure 16. Distribution of responses to the question: “What is your highest educational level achieved?”**



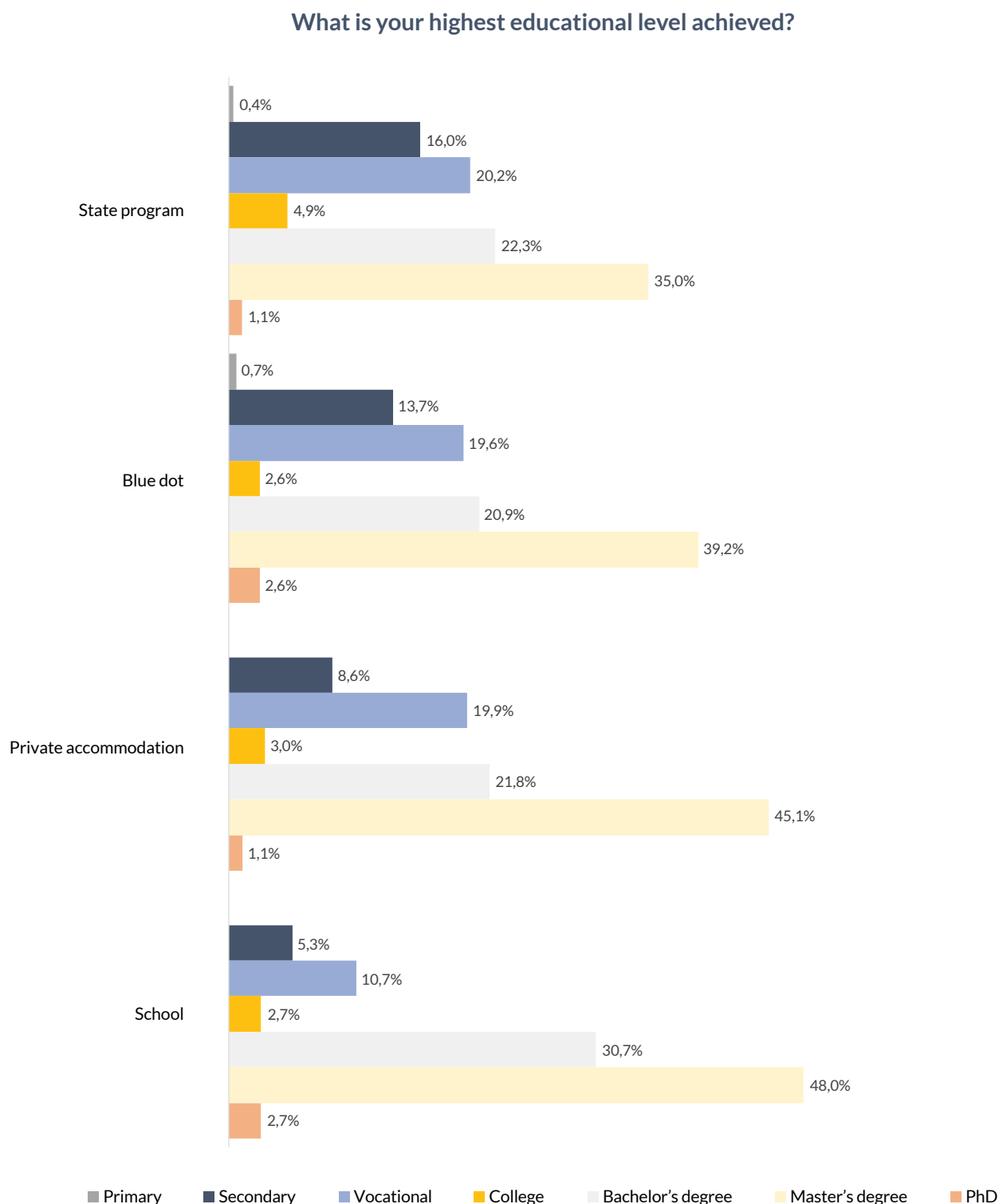
<sup>17</sup> Based on Ministry of Education’s Ordinance N3 from 06.03.2017, any child seeking temporary protection in the country should be able to access the education system free of charge. After filing an application and based on the location of the child’s residency, the head of the relevant regional administration of education should appoint a school or kindergarten that is located as close as possible to the child within 7 days of the application filing. Lack of vacant slots in schools should not be a reason for non-enrolment of children. However, if the school or kindergarten is located farther than 15 minutes walking distance, the transportation needs can be addressed by providing state or municipal transportation for children living out of the 15 minutes walking distance parameter.

<sup>18</sup> Gresham, James & Ambasz, Diego & Parandekar, Suhas & Moreno, Juan & Autores, Varios. (2019). Review-of-the-Education-Sector-in-Ukraine-Moving-toward-Effectiveness-Equity-and-Efficiency-RESUME3. 10.13140/RG.2.2.24484.83841.

The educational profile of refugees in the four subsamples varies despite generally having a higher tertiary educational attainment level than the general population of Ukraine.

Refugees whose children attend Bulgarian schools have the highest share of people with tertiary education - 81 per cent are higher education institution graduates. Those residing in private accommodation also have a significantly higher share of tertiary education graduates (68 per cent). The share of university graduates is lower among those using Blue Dot services and among those accommodated through the state programme (63 per cent and 58 per cent, respectively), but still higher than the average for the general Ukrainian population. These specifics are important factors in the different social status found in the four subsamples.

Figure 17. Distribution of answers the question: "What is your highest educational level achieved?" by subsamples



Most refugees from Ukraine who arrived in Bulgaria have professional experience in education (12.7 per cent), finance and insurance (12 per cent), scientific and technical activities (10.2 per cent), and healthcare (9 per cent).

Figure 18. Distribution of responses to question: “In which sector(s) do you have work experience or training?”



Highly qualified refugees face challenges entering the labour market in Bulgaria due to language barriers and the structure of the country’s economy. The labour market has a structural shortage of individuals with secondary education and a surplus of those with higher education.<sup>19</sup>

Approximately 76 per cent of adult refugees in Bulgaria are between 18 and 64 years old, which amounts to roughly 25,000 potential workers. For successful integration into the labour market, Ukrainian refugees require efficient language courses and relevant retraining for regulated professions and specific sectors. Currently, refugees lack a clear strategy for integration, primarily due to the uncertainty surrounding the duration of the war and their desire to work in fields where they have experience and qualifications.

Without knowledge of labour force demands, suitable sectors, and retraining pathways, it is difficult for them to make informed decisions about retraining.

### **Current Employment Status**

Most refugees in Bulgaria are not currently practicing their profession, with unemployment rates ranging from 49.2 per cent to 56.1 per cent among the different subsamples. The percentage of pensioners ranges from 2.7 per cent to 29.2 per cent.

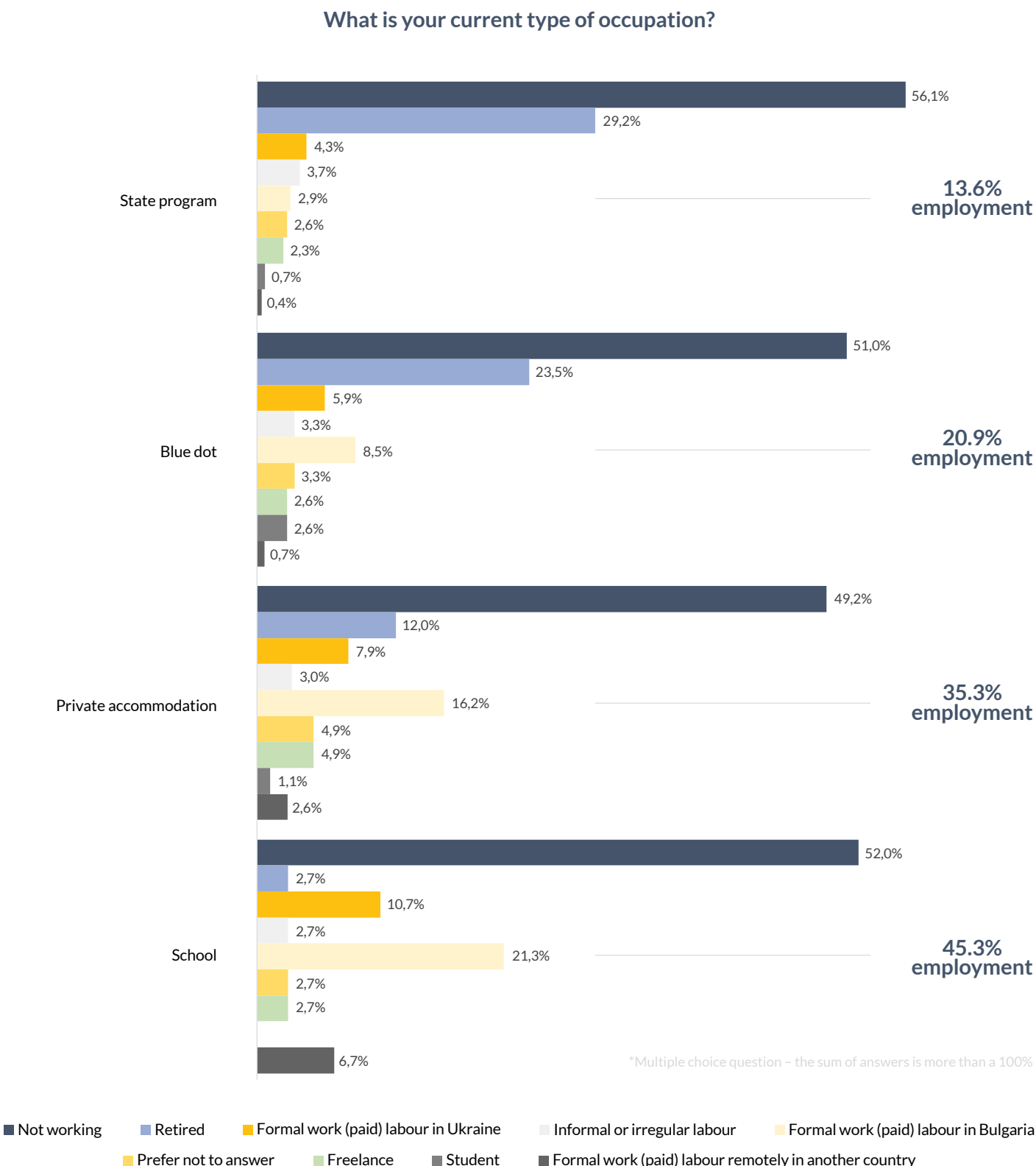
The number of students is low, varying between 0.7 per cent and 2.6 per cent. Compared to Bulgaria’s student population of approximately 3.5 per cent, Ukrainian students may have opted to seek refuge in other countries or remain in Ukraine. Privately accommodated respondents and Blue Dot Hubs users have higher employment rates than state accommodation recipients, who have a smaller percentage of employed individuals. Unemployed refugees may need to seek alternative housing options. Refugees employed in Bulgaria make up the largest share of employed respondents. The subsample reached through schools in the country has the highest percentage of employment (21.3 per cent), followed by privately accommodated respondents (16.2 per cent). The percentage of those formally employed in Bulgaria was 8.5 per cent

<sup>19</sup> MLSP (2019) - Medium and long-term forecasts for the development of the labour market in Bulgaria, p.16 - <https://www.mlsp.government.bg/uploads/1/lmforecasts-analysis2-bg1.pdf>

among the respondents contacted through the Blue Dot centres and only 2.9 per cent of state accommodated refugees. The share of respondents employed in Ukraine varies between 4.3 per cent and 10.7 per cent among the different subsamples. Privately accommodated refugees and those reached through schools in the country have the highest share of employment in Ukraine (7.9 per cent and 10.7 per cent, respectively), while the lowest share is among state accommodated refugees (4.3 per cent). Between 0.4 per cent and 6.7 per cent of respondents from all subsamples are employed in a country other than Bulgaria and Ukraine.

Between 2.7 per cent and 3.7 per cent of Ukrainian refugees are working informally or irregularly, while between 2.3 per cent and 4.9 per cent choose not to discuss their employment status. Between 2.6 per cent and 4.9 per cent of respondents in the four subsamples are self-employed.

Figure 19. Distribution of responses to the question: “What is your current type of occupation?” by subsamples



Ukrainian refugees have occupations in hospitality (13.9 per cent), education (12.9 per cent), finance and insurance activities (9.8 per cent), and administrative and support service activities (7.2 per cent). Only 2.6 per cent work in medicine and health services<sup>20</sup>.

Ukrainian refugees in Bulgaria are mostly seeking employment in sectors that match their previous work experience and/or education. About 22 per cent of those from the technology sector are currently working in similar activities. In sectors such as hospitality, administrative activities, education, and real estate, about 15 per cent are working in the same field as their previous experience. Employees in education, energy, finance, and insurance activities, scientific and technical activities and administration and support activities mostly work remotely for Ukraine, while those employed in hospitality, wholesale and retail trade are employed mostly in Bulgaria.

In the education sector and administration and support services, a small share of employees works as freelancers, and those in the technology sector mostly work remotely or as freelancers/on a project basis. Over 85 per cent of those employed in other economic sectors have previous experience within the same field. Hospitality is a sector that attracts Ukrainian refugees who have worked in other occupations, with about 40 per cent of those working in the sector having previous experience in other economic sectors.

### ***Reasons for Labour Market Exclusion***

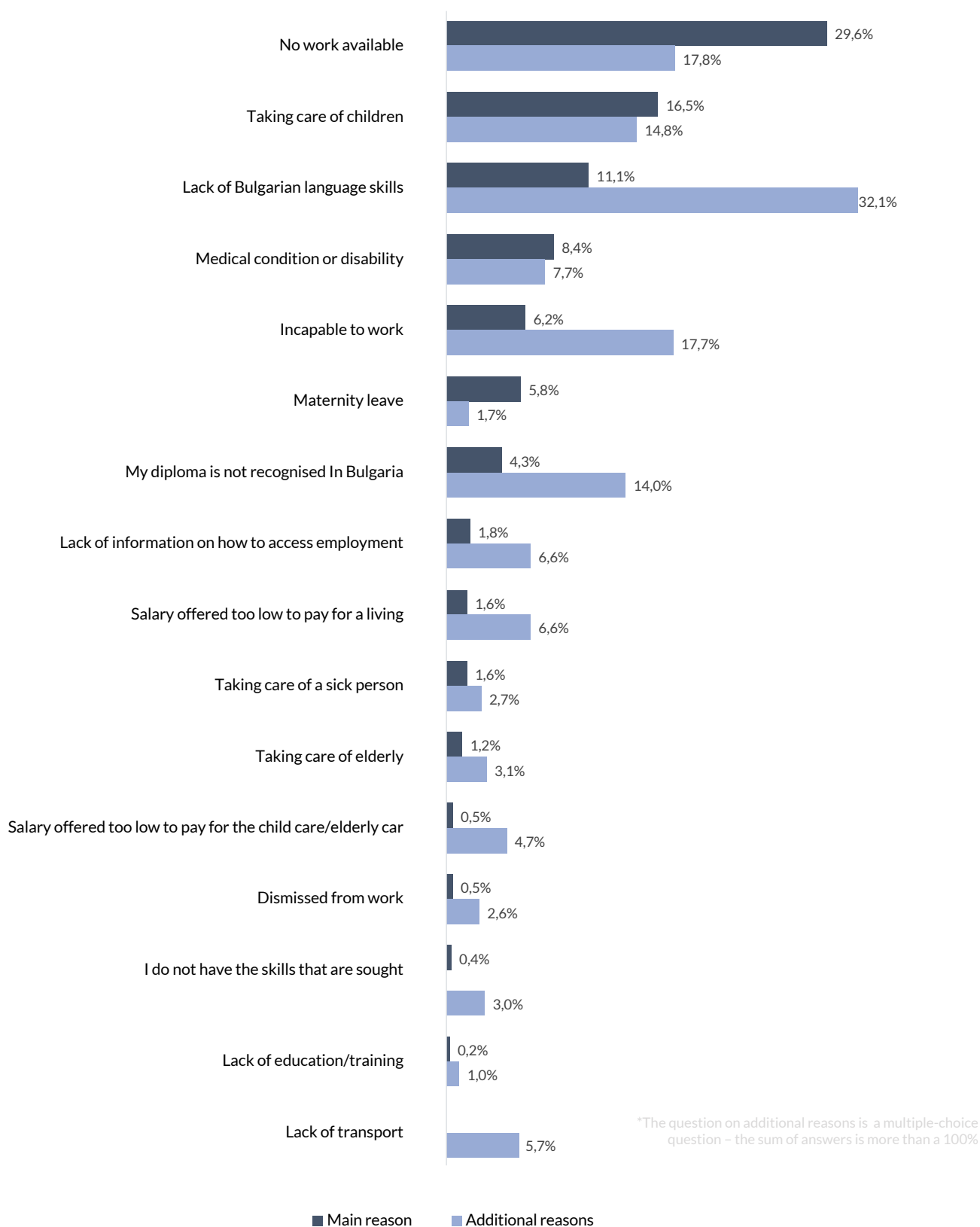
Ukrainian refugees face several challenges accessing the labour market. Lack of suitable work corresponding to their education or professional experience (30 per cent), taking care of children (16.6 per cent), and lack of Bulgarian language skills (11.1 per cent) were the main reasons cited by the largest share of respondents. Medical conditions and inability to work were reported by 8.4 per cent and 6.2 per cent of refugees, respectively, as barriers to entering the labour market.



<sup>20</sup> As a share of occupations of all employed Ukrainian refugees.

Figure 20. Comparison between main and additional reasons why Ukrainian refugees are currently not in employment

### Comparison between main and additional reasons why Ukrainian refugees are currently not in employment

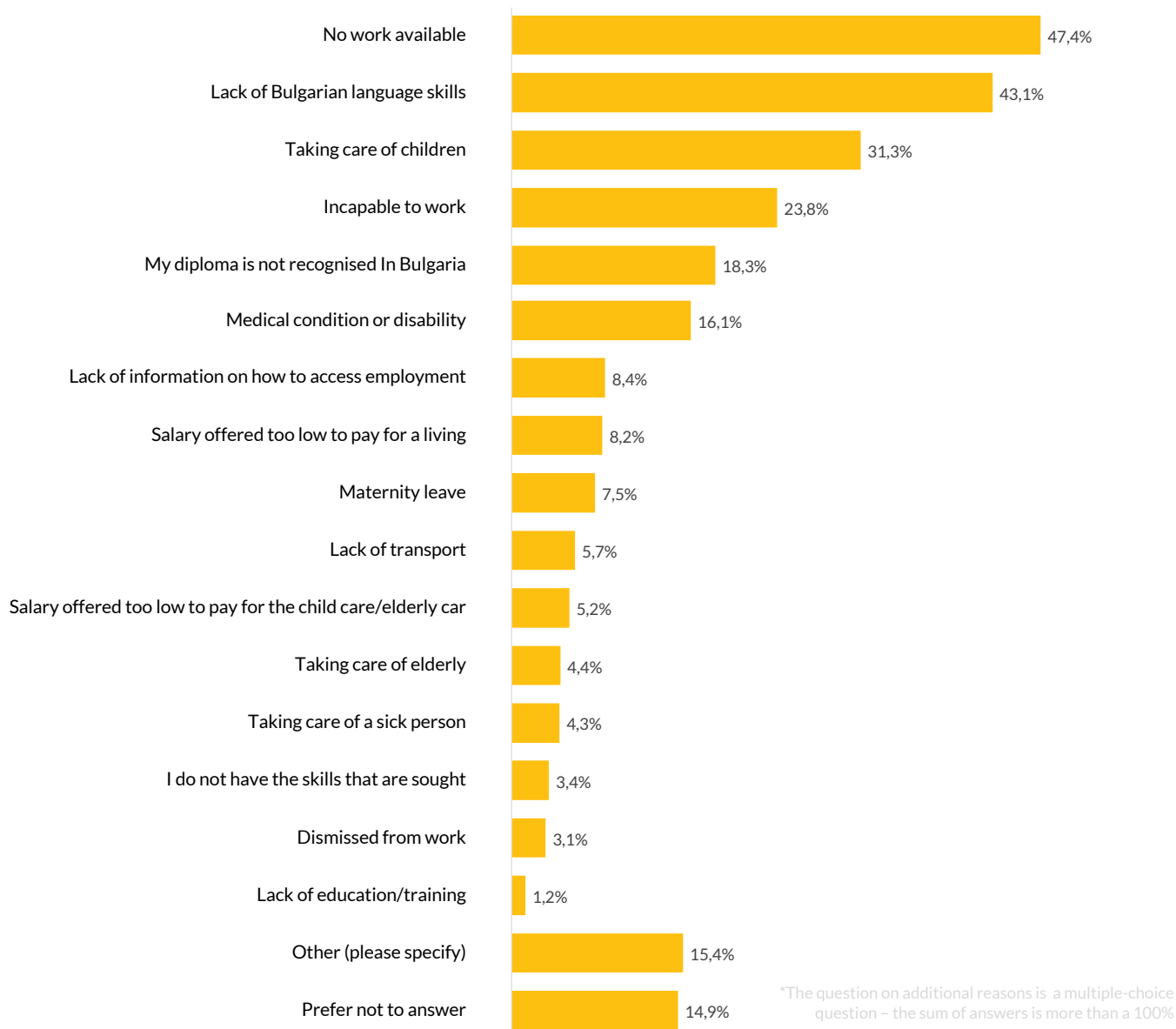


Among additional reasons for unemployment, the language barrier is reported by 32.1 per cent of unemployed Ukrainian citizens. The lack of work opportunities, as well as incapability to work, are reasons given by almost 18 per cent of unemployed Ukrainian refugees. People who consider themselves incapable to work are most often pensioners, but there are also some refugees in working age that fall into that category. The need to take care of children (14.8 per cent) and an educational diploma not recognized in Bulgaria (14 per cent) are the next most frequently mentioned additional reasons

for not entering the labour market<sup>21</sup> related to practice their profession, or the need to care for children. Refugees' main reasons for unemployment are lack of work (47.4 per cent) and lack of Bulgarian language skills (43.1 per cent). Incapability to work (due to structural deficit of specialists with secondary rather tertiary education<sup>22</sup>), regulatory requirements and childcare are also mentioned as additional reasons for non-employment.

Figure 21. Summary of main and additional reasons why Ukrainian refugees are currently not in employment (Sum of shares)

### Summary of main and additional reasons why Ukrainian refugees are currently not in employment (Sum of shares)



## 4. Means of Subsistence

### Sources of Income (per person)

Ukrainian refugees can be divided into three incomes groups. State accommodated refugees have lower integration in education and economic participation both in Bulgaria and Ukraine and are economically vulnerable. Most of this subsample received income from humanitarian aid and social assistance from both Bulgaria and Ukraine in the last 30 days. They have

<sup>21</sup> To practice their profession in Bulgaria, some specialists, e.g., medical specialists, lawyers, and other professionals from Ukraine must pass additional exams. The practice of professions in these fields is a state regulated activity, regulated by the Higher Education Act and the Vocational Education and Training Act. The practice of these professions is determined by legal, statutory, or administrative regulations, which require for the possession of a certain professional qualification, legal capacity, or membership in a state-recognized professional organization.

<sup>22</sup> MTSP (2019) - Medium and long-term forecasts for the development of the labour market in Bulgaria: labour demand factors, employment trends, regional and educational imbalances (2008 - 2032), p.93

a lower percentage of income from employment in Bulgaria or Ukraine due to their low employment rate, as described in the previous section. State accommodated refugees have low education and economic integration in Bulgaria and Ukraine and are economically vulnerable. Most of this group received income from humanitarian aid and social assistance from both countries in the last 30 days. Their income from employment in Bulgaria or Ukraine is lower due to their low employment rate, as described earlier Blue Dot Hubs respondents form the third group, with medium levels of tertiary education and economic activity in Bulgaria and Ukraine. This group has higher economic activity compared to the first group of vulnerable, less integrated refugees accommodated in state or municipal recreational facilities and hotels under the governmental accommodation program.

**Table 9. Distribution of answers to the question: “Have you personally received income from the following sources over the last 30 days (or since arrival in case arrival to Bulgaria was less than 30 days ago)?” by subsamples**

	State program	Blue dot	Private accommodation	School
Humanitarian assistance/charitable donations (including vouchers)	60,4%	45,1%	42,1%	46,7%
Bulgarian government social benefits or assistance	16,3%	22,9%	15,4%	9,3%
Ukrainian government social benefits or assistance	16,1%	15,7%	10,9%	9,3%
Remittances	15,4%	19,0%	18,0%	14,7%
I have not received any income/ My family has not received any income	14,3%	14,4%	15,4%	22,7%
Support from family and friends (not including remittances)	5,6%	10,5%	11,3%	8,0%
Salaried work in Ukraine (remotely)	4,8%	6,5%	10,2%	12,0%
Salaried work in Bulgaria	3,3%	10,5%	16,9%	22,7%
Casual or daily labour	0,4%		1,1%	
Income from own business or commerce in Ukraine	0,4%	0,7%	1,9%	1,3%
Income from own business or commerce in Bulgaria	0,2%			
Other	5,9%	3,9%	3,0%	1,3%

\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%

## Sources of Household Income

Employed refugees with children in Bulgarian schools/kindergartens or who rent housing on the open market have a higher share of households receiving labour income from employment in Bulgaria and Ukraine compared to the other groups. Additionally, they have a lower share of social assistance recipients from Bulgaria and Ukraine. Among the four groups, households of respondents of the Blue Dot Hubs have higher proportions of social assistance recipients from Ukraine and Bulgaria, with a lower proportion of those who received humanitarian assistance in the last 30 days.

Their economic activity is lower than households with private accommodation and those with children enrolled in Bulgarian educational institutions. This group also has a larger share of households receiving support from family and friends. In contrast, those accommodated through the governmental programme have the lowest share of households with earned income and the highest share of those who received humanitarian assistance in the past 30 days. They have a low proportion of those who received support from family and friends and received remittances, making them the most vulnerable group economically.



**Table 10. Distribution of answers to question:**  
**“In addition, has your household received income from the following sources over the last 30 days**  
**(or since arrival in case arrival to Bulgaria was less than 30 days ago)?” by subsamples**

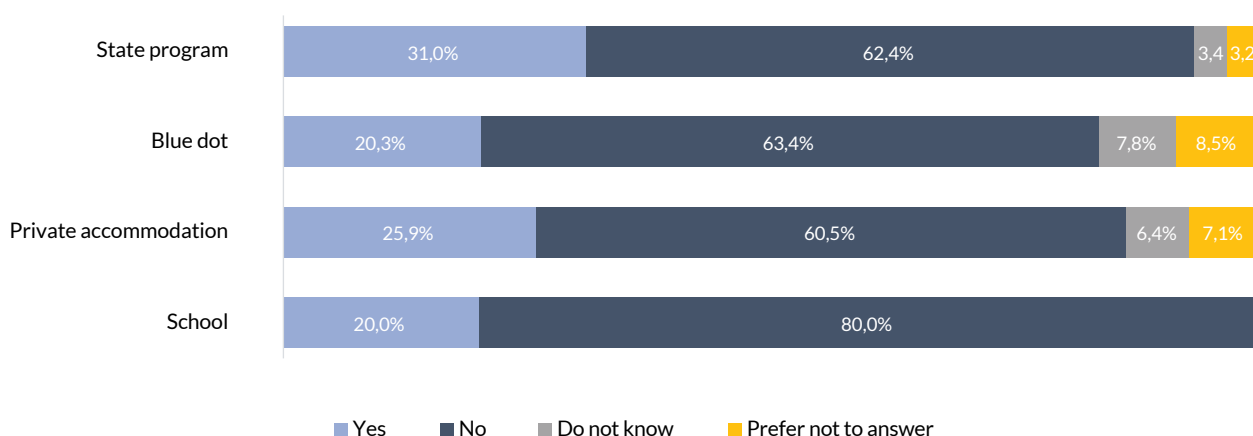
	State program	Blue dot	Private accommodation	School
Humanitarian assistance/charitable donations (including vouchers)	53,5%	41,8%	44,4%	52,0%
I have not received any income/ My family has not received any income	21,4%	23,5%	19,9%	16,0%
Bulgarian government social benefits or assistance	12,9%	17,0%	10,5%	4,0%
Ukrainian government social benefits or assistance	12,3%	15,7%	10,5%	4,0%
Remittances	11,3%	13,7%	14,3%	16,0%
Support from family and friends (not including remittances)	6,5%	11,8%	9,4%	5,3%
Salaried work in Ukraine (remotely)	2,9%	3,9%	7,9%	12,0%
Salaried work in Bulgaria	2,1%	6,5%	16,5%	22,7%
Income from own business or commerce in Ukraine	0,3%	0,7%	1,9%	1,3%
Casual or daily labour	0,2%	0,0%	0,8%	0,0%
Income from own business or commerce in Bulgaria	0,0%	0,7%	0,8%	1,3%
Other	4,1%	5,9%	3,4%	1,3%

\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%

Some 80 per cent of respondents with children studying in Bulgarian schools reported difficulty meeting basic needs in the 30 days prior to the survey, compared to just over 60 per cent in the other subsamples. This may be due to higher costs associated with their children’s education, such as school supplies, clothing, transportation, and meals. One third of households receiving accommodation under the governmental programme can meet their basic needs, compared to a quarter of refugees who rent housing on the open market. Despite primarily relying on social and humanitarian assistance as sources of income, those in the governmental programme do not have to pay rent, which gives them a slight advantage in meeting their basic needs.

**Figure 22. Distribution of answers to question:**  
**Did you have enough money to meet your basic needs over the last 30 days?’ by subsamples**

### Did you have enough money to meet your basic needs over the last 30 days?



## Major Difficulties in Meeting Basic Needs

All refugee groups had difficulty meeting their basic needs, including food and non-food items. State accommodated refugees had difficulty paying for food, non-food items, health care, communications, and transportation. Blue Dot centre service recipients also had difficulty obtaining food, non-food items, and accessing health care. They also had a higher proportion of unmet education costs and rent costs compared to refugees referred through the government program. Refugees in private accommodation struggled to cover expenses for food, basic necessities, health, and education, as well as utilities and rent. Ukrainian refugees interviewed through the schools also had difficulty covering their food costs in the past 30 days and had trouble paying utilities and rent. Despite being more integrated into the country's education system and more economically active than refugees in state accommodation, this group is still economically vulnerable.

In groups where more refugees are employed in Bulgaria or Ukraine (private housing and those recruited through schools), there is still a high percentage of households struggling to pay rent and utilities. However, this rate is lower for refugees housed under the state accommodation programme, indicating its effectiveness in providing support. In summary, there are differences in the expenses that the four subsamples struggled to meet in the last 30 days due to their social status. Food was a common issue, but rent and communal services were also problematic for those in private accommodation and parents of children attending school in Bulgaria. Non-food items and healthcare were more difficult for those in the government programme and those using Blue Dot centres, likely due to a higher proportion of pensioners and people with disabilities or chronic illnesses. Education-related expenses are a challenge for those with children studying in Bulgarian schools and Blue Dot centres users, even though education in the country is free. State programme recipients face communication and transportation challenges due to the distance between their accommodations and major cities with more public services.

**Table 11. Distribution of answers to question:**  
**"Which of the following expenditures have you been unable to obtain over the last 30 days**  
**(or since arrival in case arrival to Bulgaria was less than 30 days ago)?" by subsamples**

	State program	Blue dot	Private accommodation	School
Food items	67,2%	70,1%	63,4%	58,3%
Essential non-food items	51,8%	53,6%	46,0%	58,3%
Health care (incl. service fees, medication etc)	50,9%	62,9%	44,7%	33,3%
Communications (phone airtime, internet costs, etc.)	30,2%	13,4%	14,3%	16,7%
Transportation	28,5%	13,4%	11,8%	11,7%
Education (books, equipment, stationary, etc.)	12,5%	23,7%	19,3%	25,0%
Utilities (electricity or gas connections, etc.)	5,6%	9,3%	28,0%	45,0%
Rent	4,2%	21,6%	36,0%	35,0%
Other frequent expenditures	4,8%	3,1%	4,3%	1,7%

\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%

The main reasons why those accommodated in state or municipal recreational facilities and hotels under the governmental programme struggled to meet their basic needs were primarily due to language barriers, inadequate humanitarian assistance, and being unable to work due to age or caring for children. The inability to cover their costs among refugees utilizing the Blue Dot Hubs was also attributed to the language barrier, health problems, insufficient humanitarian assistance, and childcare responsibilities. Among this group, 18.6 per cent of respondents additionally reported a lack of

suitable job opportunities as a hindrance.

Refugees who were housed privately also faced difficulties in meeting their basic needs in the last 30 days. While the proportion of those who were unable to work due to age or health reasons was lower than in the other two groups, they still encountered various obstacles such as insufficient language skills in Bulgarian, lack of job opportunities, insufficient humanitarian assistance, and the need to care for children.

Ukrainian refugees with children enrolled in Bulgarian schools faced significant financial challenges due to the lack of suitable work opportunities and language barriers. In addition, insufficient humanitarian assistance and the need to care for children prevented them from meeting their financial needs.

**Table 12. Distribution of responses to the question: “What were the main challenges in obtaining enough money to meet your household’s basic needs over the last 30 days?” by subsamples**

	State program	Blue dot	Private accommodation	School
Language barriers	38,9%	35,1%	41,6%	50,0%
Humanitarian assistance provided was not enough	20,6%	17,5%	23,6%	25,0%
Unable to work due to age	19,8%	26,8%	14,3%	5,0%
Childcare needs	18,6%	13,4%	21,1%	18,3%
Unable to work due to health problems	15,7%	26,8%	14,3%	5,0%
Social assistance provided was not enough (subsistence allowance)	14,1%	10,3%	13,0%	13,3%
Lack of employment offers in line with profile	12,0%	18,6%	26,7%	60,0%
Do not know	9,9%	4,1%	6,8%	3,3%
Lack of knowledge of labor market	9,3%	4,1%	13,7%	26,7%
Salary or wages too low	7,7%	8,2%	8,7%	8,3%
Skills recognition issues	6,1%	8,2%	8,1%	13,3%
Prefer not to answer	5,9%	6,2%	3,1%	
Cannot access humanitarian assistance	5,0%	8,2%	6,8%	6,7%
Other	3,5%	10,3%	5,6%	5,0%

\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%

### Other Mechanisms for Optimizing Family Budgets

Most refugees across all subgroups used their savings to manage their expenses when they were unable to afford basic food and non-food items. Blue Dot centre beneficiaries and those in private housing relied on this strategy the most. The proportion of refugees in state and municipal recreational facilities and hotels who used their savings was lower than in the other groups, possibly due to having their basic needs met under the governmental programme. Among respondents whose children study in Bulgarian schools, the majority limited their non-food spending, such as on education, health-care, and clothing, or used their savings to cover expenses. However, 56.7 per cent of this group did not use any budget-restricting strategies.

**Table 13. Distribution of responses to question: “During the past 30 days, did anyone in your household or community have to engage in any of the following behaviours due to lack of food or lack of money to buy food or meet other basic needs?” by subsample**

	State program	Blue dot	Private accommodation	School
Spent savings	32,5%	56,7%	47,8%	23,3%
Reduced essential non-food expenditures (education, health, clother, etc.)	11,7%	24,7%	24,2%	28,3%
Borrowed money to buy food	6,6%	6,2%	3,1%	3,3%
Selling household goods/jewelry	1,4%	2,1%	2,5%	
Depended on food rations and/or support form neighbours and relatives	1,3%	2,1%	1,9%	1,7%
Sold productive assets or means o transport (computer, car, etc)	0,6%	2,1%	1,9%	
Selling/sharing/exchanging humanitarian assistance	0,6%	1,0%	0,6%	
Accepting high risk/illegal jobs	0,3%			
Sold house/land in Ukraine	0,3%			
Withdrew children from school	0,2%			
Adults working long hours (>40 hours per week) or in hazardous conditions	0,2%	1,0%	0,6%	
Do not know	5,0%	4,1%	5,0%	1,7%
Other	0,6%	7,2%	3,7%	
Prefer not to answer	23,0%	10,3%	9,3%	5,0%
None of the above	31,8%	20,6%	28,6%	56,7%

\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%

The main strategies used by refugees to cope with food costs were buying less preferred foods, preparing food at home, and reducing the amount of food consumed. Respondents recruited through schools had the highest proportion of individuals who did not use any of these strategies in the 7 days before the survey.

**Table 14. Distribution of responses to question: “During the last 7 days, have you/your household engaged in one of the following strategies to cope with a lack of food or money to buy food?” by subsamples**

	State program	Blue dot	Private accommodation	School
Relied on less preferred, less expensive food	61,9%	61,9%	50,9%	33,3%
Relied more on home-cooked meals	35,4%	56,7%	55,9%	35,0%
Reduced in the quantity of food normally eaten per day	30,7%	42,3%	29,8%	15,0%
Reduced in the quantities consumed by adults/mothers of young children	8,3%	3,1%	5,6%	
Borrowed food or relied on help from friends or relatives	8,2%	6,2%	3,7%	1,7%
Prefer not to answer	5,1%	5,2%	3,1%	
Do not know	2,9%		3,7%	1,7%
Other	0,8%	3,1%	1,9%	
None of the above	15,5%	19,6%	26,7%	56,7%

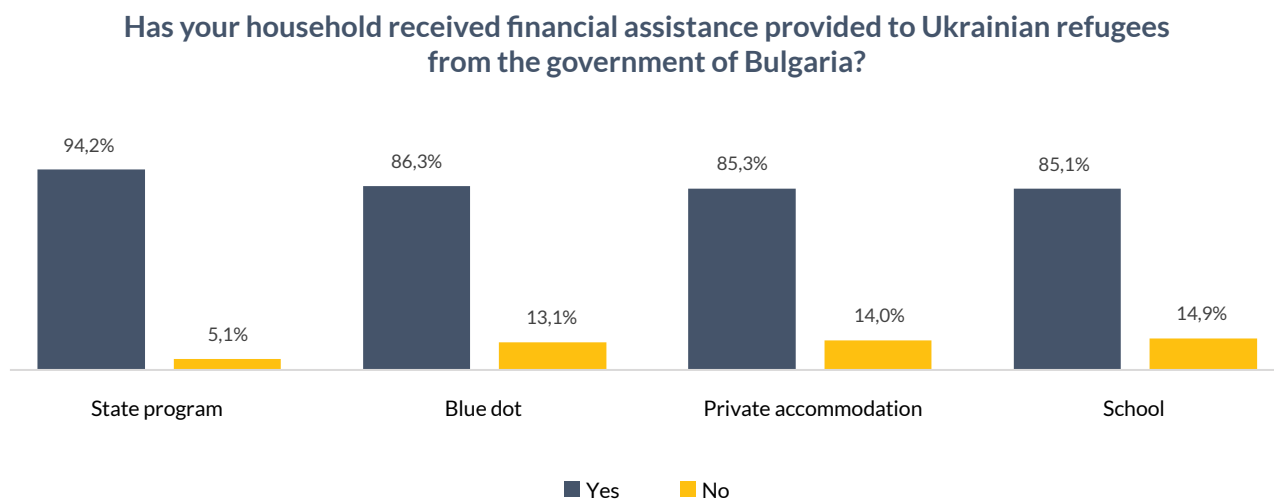
\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%

## 5. Financial and Humanitarian Aid

### Financial Assistance

Most Ukrainian refugees have received financial and humanitarian assistance from the Bulgarian government. Most of the households in the survey have received financial assistance.

Figure 23. Distribution of answers to question: "Has your household received financial assistance provided to Ukrainian refugees from the government of Bulgaria?" by subsamples



Those under the governmental program were most likely to receive financial assistance (94.2 per cent), followed by Blue Dot centre beneficiaries (86.3 per cent). The proportion of those who did not receive financial support was higher for refugees in private housing and parents of children studying in Bulgaria, at around 14 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively.

Among parents of children studying in Bulgaria, nearly half (47 per cent) did not receive humanitarian aid in the last 30 days. Similarly, a high proportion of privately accommodated refugees (38.1 per cent) did not receive this type of aid. Those housed under the governmental programme (71.8 per cent) and those who used services from Blue Dot centres (70.6 per cent) were more likely to receive humanitarian aid than the other two subgroups.

### Humanitarian Aid

Almost all refugees who received humanitarian aid also received financial assistance. Among those who received financial assistance (94.6 per cent), 70 per cent also received humanitarian aid.

Figure 24. Distribution of answers to question: "Has your household received any humanitarian aid in the past 30 days?" by subsamples.

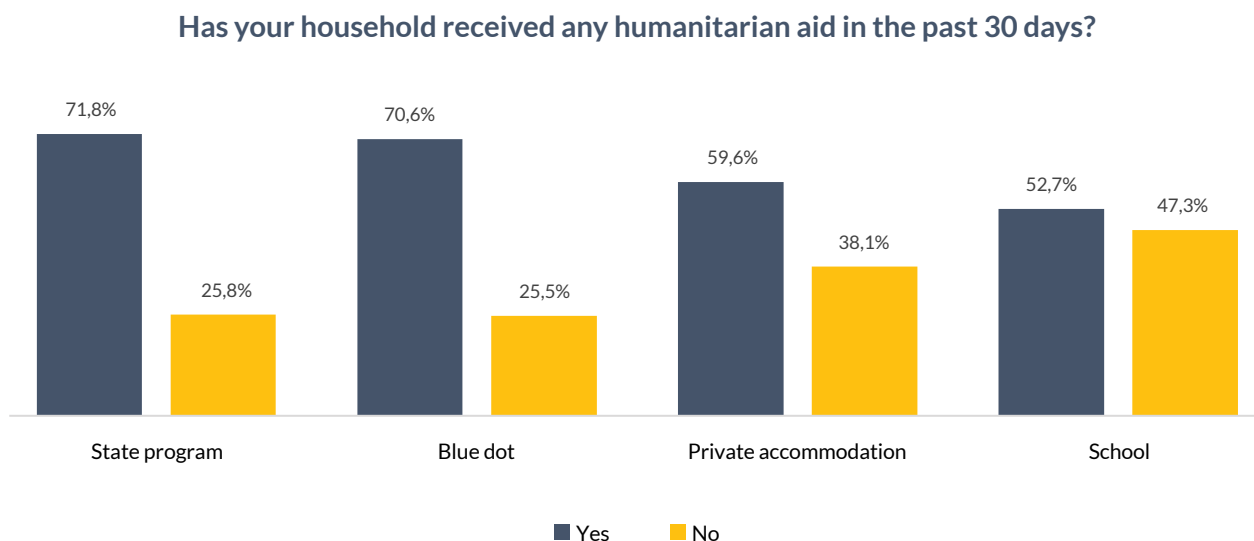


Table 15. Summary of the types of assistance received by subgroups

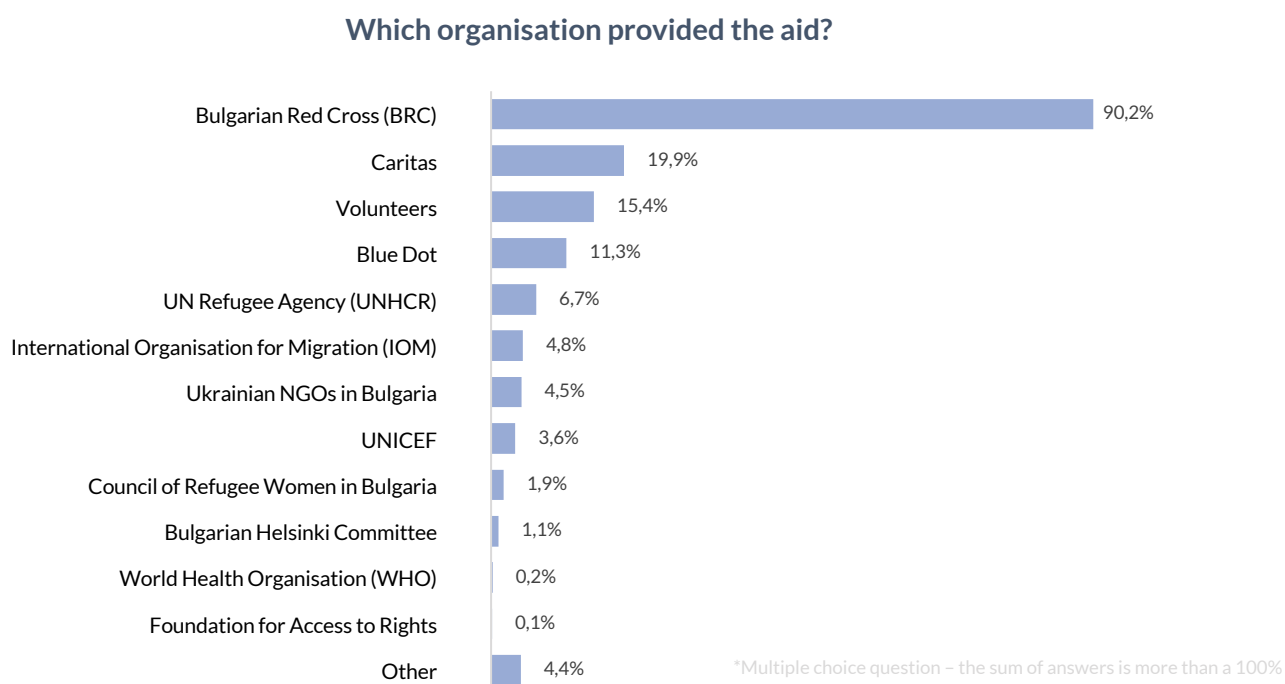
	State program	Blue dot	Private accommodation	School
Cash/Vouchers	83.8%	50.9%	65.8%	94.9%
Food	33.1%	50.0%	44.3%	23.1%
Accommodation	24.7%	4.6%	8.9%	2.6%
Sanitary and hygiene products	21.1%	18.5%	13.3%	7.7%
Clothing	12.3%	15.7%	10.8%	2.6%
Medicines	5.7%	7.4%	5.1%	
Health care	5.0%	5.6%	4.4%	2.6%
Baby goods	5.0%	5.6%	3.2%	
Winter clothing	4.9%	4.6%	3.2%	
Language courses	3.6%	6.5%	7.0%	7.7%
Communication (phone or internet access)	3.2%		0.6%	
Cooking materials	2.1%	0.9%		5.1%
Employment support	2.0%	0.9%		
Childcare/education support	1.4%	0.9%	1.3%	
Psychosocial support	1.3%	2.8%	0.6%	
Registration support/legal assistance	1.1%		0.6%	
Nutrition support for children under 2 years of age	0.8%	1.9%	1.3%	
Transport support	0.8%	3.7%	2.5%	
Information about available services	0.6%	1.9%	0.6%	
Tracking family members	0.1%			
I have not received help	0.1%			
Other	1.8%	7.4%	6.3%	2.6%

\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%



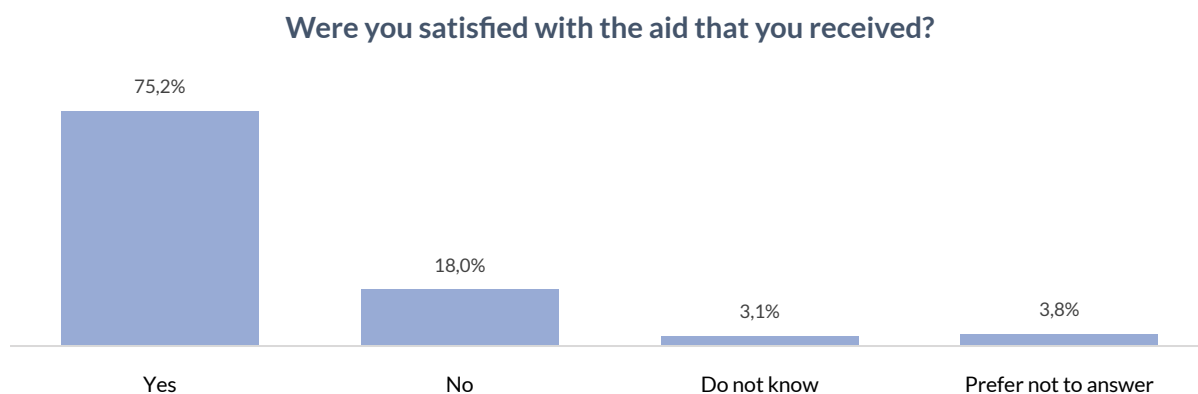
The most common forms of aid given to Ukrainian refugees were cash/vouchers and food, with over 50 per cent of those who used Blue Dot services receiving both. Sanitary and hygiene goods were also frequently provided, with those in the state programme and Blue Dot centres receiving them the most. Although parents of students enrolled in Bulgarian schools reported a lower need for food and sanitary supplies, around 23 per cent of them received food assistance. Almost 95 per cent of parents also reported receiving financial assistance.

Figure 25. Distribution of answers to question: “Which organization provided the aid?”



The Bulgarian Red Cross was the primary organization that provided assistance to respondents, with over 90 per cent receiving aid from them. Caritas, Blue Dot Hubs, and UNHCR were the other major organizations that provided support, along with volunteers (15.4 per cent). Other organizations that provided assistance included the International Organization for Migration (4.8 per cent), Ukrainian NGOs (4.5 per cent), and UNICEF (3.6 per cent).

Figure 26. Distribution of answers to question: “Were you satisfied with the aid that you received?”



Most interviewees were satisfied with the assistance they received (75.2 per cent). Only 18 per cent of respondents reported being dissatisfied, with many citing a lack of opportunity to provide feedback on poor service quality. Respondents over the age of 50 were more likely to report dissatisfaction.

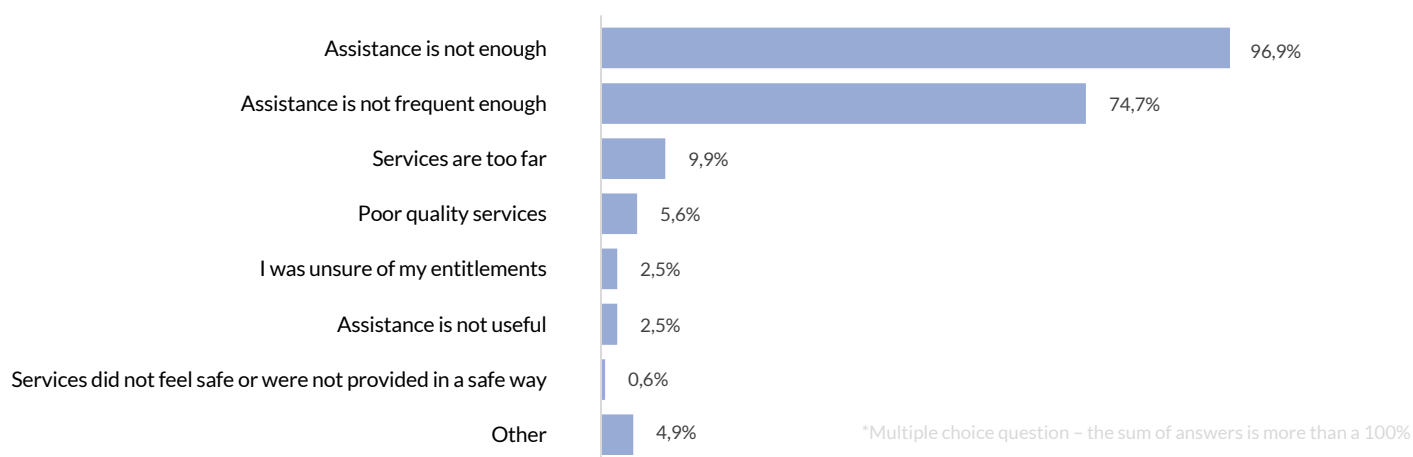
Unemployed Ukrainian refugees received support more often than employed refugees but were also more dissatisfied with the support they received. While only 4.3 per cent of employed refugees were unhappy with the support they received, almost 21 per cent of unemployed refugees expressed dissatisfaction.

Table 16. Distribution of answers to question: “Were you satisfied with the aid that you received?” by work status of the respondents

	Yes	No	I do not know	I prefer not to answer
Employed	87.9%	4.3%	3.5%	4.3%
Unemployed	72.6%	20.8%	3.1%	3.5%
No answer	81.0%	9.5%	-	3.5%

The main causes of refugees' dissatisfaction with the aid they received were the aid's inadequate quantity (96.9 per cent) and insufficient frequency of delivery (74.7 per cent).

Figure 27. Distribution of answers to question: "If not, why?"



A few interviewees mentioned problems with transportation to services and low service quality. Some (2.5 per cent) expressed uncertainty about their rights or felt that assistance was not useful. Among those who received cash, accommodation, and food, respondents who received cash/vouchers most often felt that support was infrequent and insufficient.

## Urgent Needs

Table 17. Distribution of answers to question: "What are your most urgent needs right now" - first urgent need

First urgent need	State program	Blue dot	Private accommodation	School
Cash/Vouchers	45.8%	41.8%	44.9%	70.3%
Health care	13.2%	17.6%	15.5%	12.2%
Medicines	10.1%	8.5%	3.4%	-
Food	7.8%	13.7%	7.5%	2.7%
Accommodation	7.1%	6.5%	9.4%	1.4%
Winter clothes	4.0%	1.3%	1.9%	-
Employment support	3.7%	2.0%	4.5%	2.7%
Language courses	1.1%	3.3%	4.2%	4.1%
Clothing	1.0%	1.3%	1.1%	-
Sanitary and hygiene products	1.0%	-	0.4%	-
Transport support	0.9%	-	0.4%	-
Communication (phone or internet access)	0.7%	0.7%	-	-
Childcare/education support	0.6%	-	1.1%	1.4%
Baby items	0.5%	-	-	-
Registration support/legal assistance	0.4%	-	0.8%	2.7%
Information about available services	0.4%	-	-	-
Nutrition support for children under 2 years of age	0.3%	-	-	-
Psychosocial support	0.1%	0.7%	0.8%	-
Others	0.3%	1.3%	1.9%	2.7%
No support needed	0.8%	1.3%	2.3%	-



Table 18. Distribution of answers to question: "What are your most urgent needs right now" - second urgent need

Second urgent need	State program	Blue dot	Private accommodation	School
Health care	20.1%	11.7%	12.5%	6.1%
Food	19.6%	29.7%	24.1%	28.8%
Medicines	18.6%	14.5%	10.3%	-
Cash/Vouchers	13.4%	19.3%	21.1%	16.7%
Winter clothing	4.8%	2.1%	1.7%	4.5%
Sanitary and hygiene products	4.0%	4.1%	2.2%	-
Accommodation	3.7%	2.8%	5.6%	1.5%
Employment support	3.4%	5.5%	9.9%	22.7%
Language courses	3.2%	0.7%	3.4%	13.6%
Clothing	2.7%	1.4%	0.4%	1.5%
Childcare/education support	1.5%	1.4%	2.2%	1.5%
Communication (phone or internet access)	1.5%	-	0.9%	1.5%
Baby items	1.0%	1.4%	0.4%	-
Transport support	0.8%	1.4%	0.4%	-
Nutrition support for children under 2 years of age	0.6%	-	0.9%	-
Registration support/legal assistance	0.3%	-	0.4%	1.5%
No support needed	0.3%	1.4%	2.2%	-
Psychosocial support	0.2%	-	-	-
Information about available services	0.2%	-	-	-
Others	0.1%	1.4%	1.3%	-
Cooking materials	-	1.4%	-	-



Table 19. Distribution of answers to question: “What are your most urgent needs right now” - third urgent need

Third urgent need	State program	Blue dot	Private accommodation	School
Cash/Vouchers	15.6%	9.1%	10.1%	6.3%
Food	14.4%	11.4%	13.3%	22.2%
Health care	12.2%	10.6%	11.5%	11.1%
Sanitary and hygiene products	11.4%	4.5%	8.3%	3.2%
Medicines	10.0%	10.6%	7.8%	4.8%
Winter clothing	7.8%	6.8%	4.6%	1.6%
Clothing	5.9%	1.5%	3.7%	1.6%
Language courses	4.8%	6.8%	9.6%	20.6%
Employment support	3.2%	6.8%	7.8%	11.1%
Accommodation	2.8%	2.3%	3.2%	7.9%
Communication (phone or internet access)	2.5%	1.5%	0.9%	-
Transport support	2.2%	1.5%	1.8%	-
Information about available services	1.5%	2.3%	1.4%	1.6%
Baby items	1.3%	1.5%	2.3%	-
No support needed	0.9%	1.5%	1.8%	-
Childcare/education support	0.8%	1.5%	0.9%	1.6%
Registration support / legal assistance	0.8%	-	0.5%	1.6%
Cooking materials	0.7%	3.0%	2.8%	-
Others	0.6%	14.4%	6.9%	3.2%
Psychosocial support	0.4%	0.8%	0.5%	1.6%
Nutrition support for children under 2 years of age	0.1%	1.5%	0.5%	-

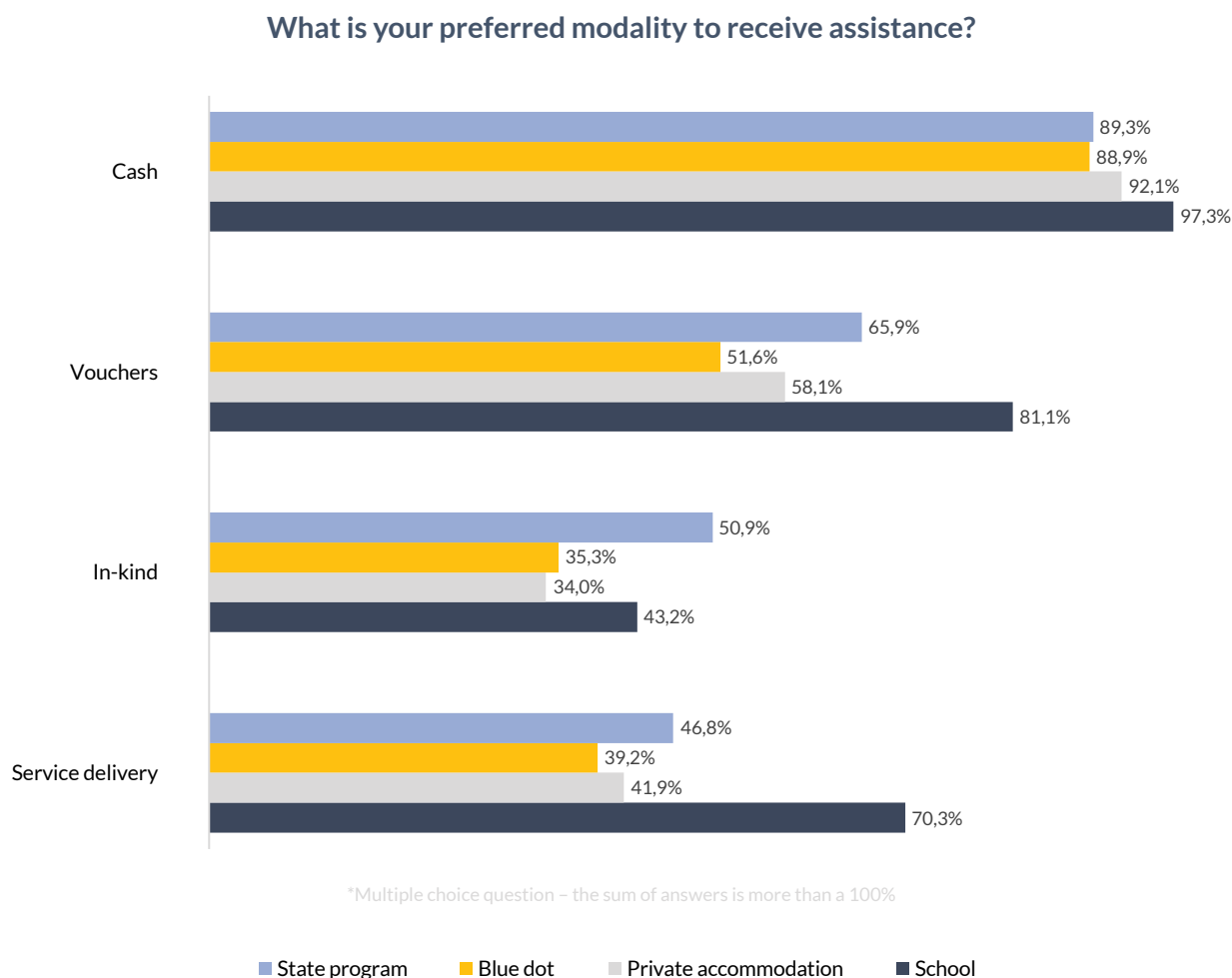
Table 20. Summary of the most frequently cited urgent needs by subsamples

	State program	Blue dot	Private accommodation	School
<b>First urgent need</b>	Cash/Vouchers (45.8%)	Cash/Vouchers (41.8%)	Cash/Vouchers (44.9%)	Cash/Vouchers (70.3%)
<b>Second urgent need</b>	Health services (20.1%) Food (19.6%) Medicines (18.6%)	Food (29.7%) Cash/Vouchers (19.3%)	Food (24.1%) Cash/Vouchers (21.1%)	Food (28.8%) Employment support (22.7%)
<b>Third urgent need</b>	Cash/Vouchers (15.6%) Food (14.4%)	Food (11.4%) Health services (10.6%) Medicines (10.6%)	Food (13.3%) Health services (11.5%) Cash/Vouchers (10.1%)	Food (22.2%) Language course (20.6%)

\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%

The most expressed need among Ukrainian refugees is for cash or vouchers, with all surveyed groups acknowledging this need. For some, financial assistance is also ranked as the second or third most urgent need. Refugees in the state accommodation programme and those who used Blue Dot services need health services and medication, but the latter group ranks it as less urgent than their needs for food and money. Unemployed refugees from Ukraine require emergency support, such as money, food, and health services, while employed refugees need help with clothing, baby items, language courses, and transportation. Two groups are formed: one requiring urgent household and health assistance, and the other needing support for further integration, particularly in learning Bulgarian.

Figure 28. Distribution of answers to question: "What is your preferred modality to receive assistance?" by subsamples



The preferred method of assistance for Ukrainian refugees is cash, although a significant proportion of respondents expressed a preference for vouchers with specified monetary amounts. These forms of assistance are easily convertible and allow refugees to address various unforeseen expenses. Parents of children studying in the country and those accommodated under the state programme show a higher preference for non-cash assistance compared to other groups. Refugees over the age of 50 also tend to prefer support in the form of goods or services. Unemployed respondents are more likely than employed individuals to prefer non-cash forms of support.

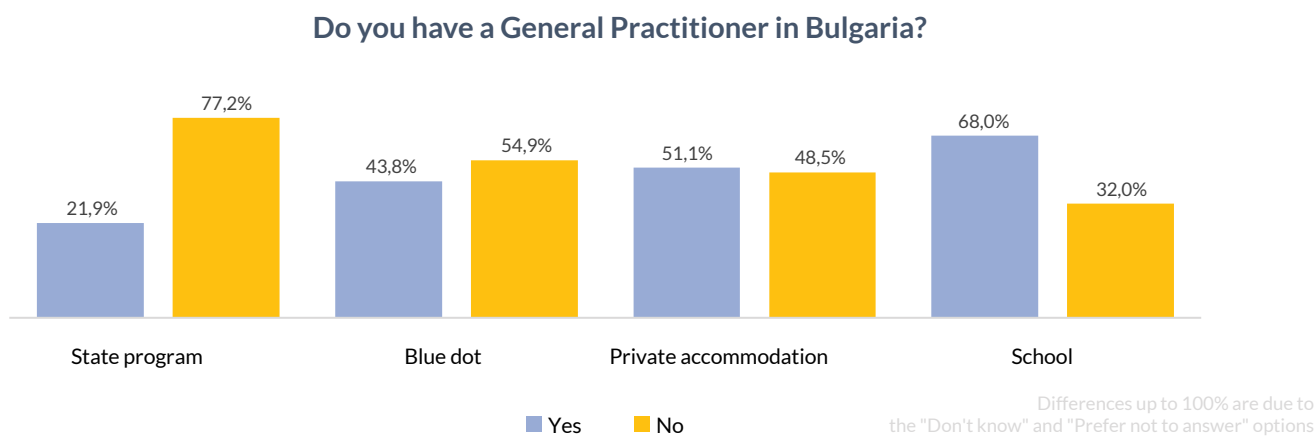
## VI. HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT, AND DISABILITY

### 1. Health and Mental Care

#### Access to a General Practitioner

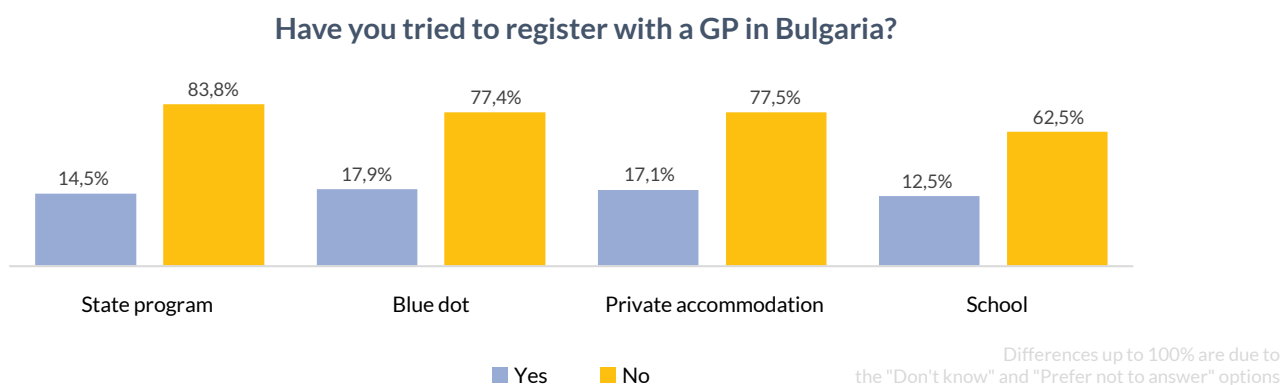
Ukrainian refugees whose children attend Bulgarian schools have the highest rate of general practitioner registrations in the country at 68 per cent. Among those accommodated in private housing, 51.1 per cent also have a registration with a general practitioner.

Figure 29. Distribution of answers to question: "Do you have a General Practitioner in Bulgaria?" by subsamples



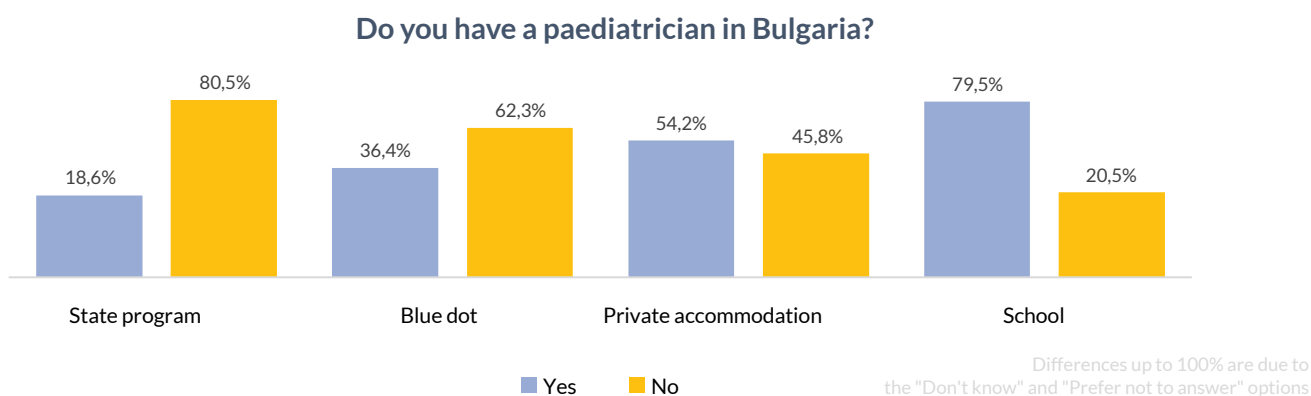
Among refugees using the services of the Blue Dot centre, just under half (43.8 per cent) are registered with a general practitioner in Bulgaria. The percentage is lower compared to privately housed refugees and parents of children attending Bulgarian schools. Those accommodated under the governmental programme were the least likely to have a registration, likely due to limited access to general practitioners in many resorts. Refugees with lower education and those between the ages of 18 and 24 were less likely to be registered. Similarly, those in small towns and resorts had lower registration rates.

Figure 30. Distribution of answers to question: "Have you tried to register with a GP in Bulgaria?" by subsamples



A significant share of the refugees from Ukraine in Bulgaria did not actually attempt to register with a general practitioner. Those who received support from Blue Dot centres (17.9 per cent) and those accommodated in private accommodation (17.1 per cent) more often tried to register with a general practitioner in Bulgaria, but the difference compared to the other groups is small. Refugees with children studying in Bulgarian schools, in addition to a general practitioner, are much more often registered with paediatricians on the territory of the country (79.5 per cent).

Figure 31. Distribution of answers to question: "Do you have a paediatrician in Bulgaria?" by subsamples

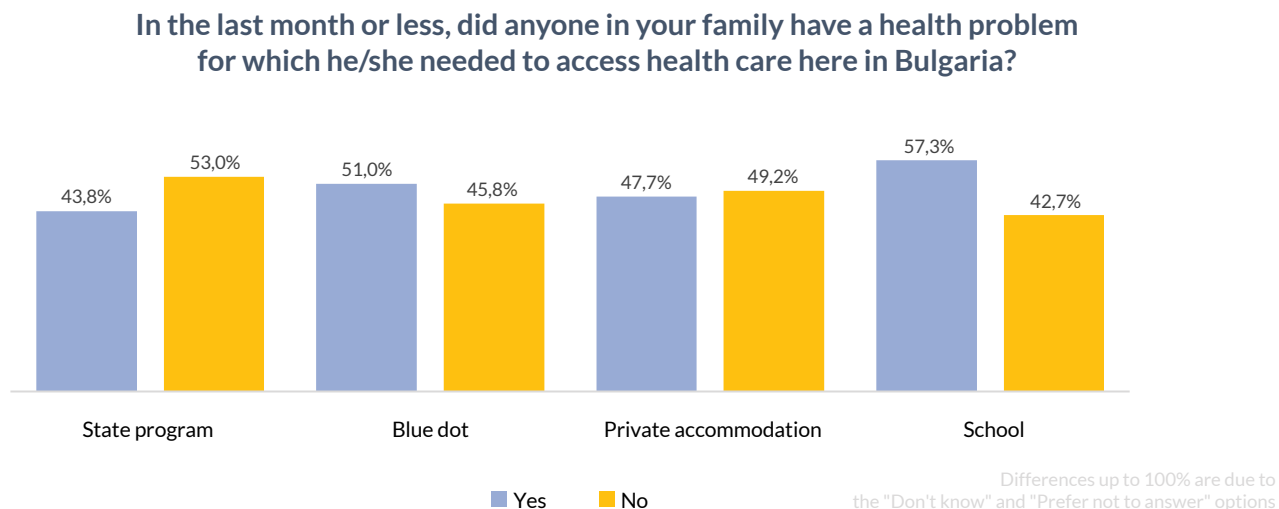


Among those staying in private homes 54.2 per cent use the services of a paediatrician. This percentage drops to 36.4 per cent for those using Blue Dot Hubs, and it is lowest among those accommodated through the state programme at 18.6 per cent.

## Access to Healthcare in Case of a Health Problem

In the last month before the survey, refugees from Ukraine residing on the territory of Bulgaria relatively often sought health care due to a health problem. About one in two reported that a family member had sought access to health services in the past month. This happened most often to respondents whose children attend Bulgarian schools (57.3 per cent).

Figure 32. Distribution of responses to question: "In the last month or less, did anyone in your family have a health problem for which he/she needed to access health care here in Bulgaria?" by subsamples



Among respondents using Blue Dot services, just over half (50.4 per cent) reported a family member accessing health care due to a health problem. This percentage drops to 47.7 per cent for those staying in private accommodation, and 43.8 per cent for those accommodated under the governmental programme. The most common reasons for seeking health care were preventive examinations and consultations. Older respondents were more likely to seek health care in Bulgaria. Those living in regional cities had a higher frequency of needing health care compared to those in non-regional city municipalities.

Table 21. Distribution of answers to question: "What health care/health services was needed?" by subsamples

What health care/health services was needed?	State program	Blue dot	Private accommodation	School
Preventive consultation/check-up	54.4%	50.0%	50.4%	32.6%
Consultation or drugs for chronic diseases (diabetes, etc.)	41.9%	30.8%	21.3%	14.0%
Dental services	36.7%	29.5%	33.9%	27.9%
Consultation or drugs for an acute illness (fever, cough, etc.)	36.2%	32.1%	41.7%	60.5%
Laboratory services	30.8%	21.8%	18.1%	7.0%
Trauma care (injuries, accidents, conflict-related wounds)	8.9%	9.0%	9.4%	14.0%
MHPSS services	4.6%	5.1%	2.4%	-
Elective, non-life-saving surgery	3.9%	6.4%	3.9%	-
Emergency, life-saving surgery	3.2%	-	0.8%	-
Vaccination services	2.7%	3.8%	5.5%	2.3%
Prenatal or postnatal services	0.2%	2.6%	1.6%	-
Safe Birth delivery Services	0.2%	2.6%	1.6%	-
Others	9.3%	29.5%	15.7%	4.7%
I do not know	0.7%	1.3%	-	-
I prefer not to answer	0.9%	1.3%	0.8%	-

\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%

Among Ukrainian refugees whose children study in Bulgaria, there is a higher proportion of relative(s) seeking help for acute diseases like fever, diarrhoea, cough, etc., compared to preventive consultations. This may be due to the common occurrence of viral diseases among children attending school in person. In the governmental programme subsample, there is a higher share of cases where relatives sought counselling or medication for chronic diseases (41.9 per cent), which is higher than the Blue Dot centres and private homes subsamples. Those accommodated under the state programme also reported a higher need for laboratory tests and dental services. Younger refugees reported a higher frequency of their family members needing laboratory and dental services, as well as consultations or medication for acute illnesses. In contrast, older refugees more often mentioned their family members requiring counselling or medication for chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension.

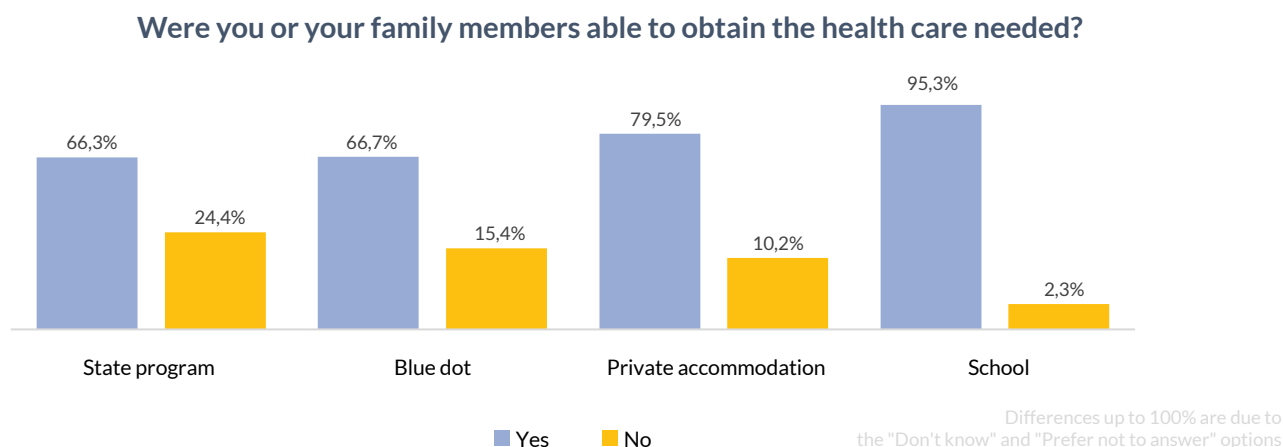
Table 22. Distribution of answers to question: "Where did you or your family members seek help?" by subsamples

Where did you or your family members seek help?	State program	Blue dot	Private accommodation	School
Public hospital	50.6%	48.7%	43.3%	27.9%
Pharmacy	49.4%	46.2%	38.6%	39.5%
General practitioner/primary health care facility	21.9%	24.4%	33.9%	60.5%
Private clinic	14.6%	19.2%	17.3%	14.0%
Private hospital	12.1%	6.4%	9.4%	9.3%
Private practice (Specialized medical professional)	11.2%	6.4%	10.2%	9.3%
Other	4.1%	16.7%	7.9%	4.7%
Do not know	3.6%	-	-	-
Prefer not to answer	3.4%	3.8%	0.8%	-

\*Multiple choice question - the sum of answers is more than a 100%

Respondents predominantly sought healthcare in public hospitals and pharmacies, except for parents whose children were studying in Bulgarian schools. This group had a higher preference for general practitioners or primary care facilities, likely due to their higher registration rates with GPs and paediatricians. Among those in private housing, the preference for general practitioners was 33.9 per cent, while it dropped to less than 25 per cent for those using Blue Dot centres or in the governmental programme. Similarly, among other subgroups, those in private housing had a higher tendency to seek help from general practitioners instead of pharmacies and public hospitals. Those utilizing Blue Dot centres often turned to private clinics, while those in the governmental programme sought help in private hospitals. Residents of regional cities are more likely to be registered with general practitioners in Bulgaria and seek their support for health issues. However, they also frequently utilize the services of public hospitals and pharmacies. Men tended to seek help in private and municipal hospitals more frequently, while women preferred private practices, private doctors, and pharmacies. However, both genders predominantly relied on public hospitals and pharmacies for their healthcare needs.

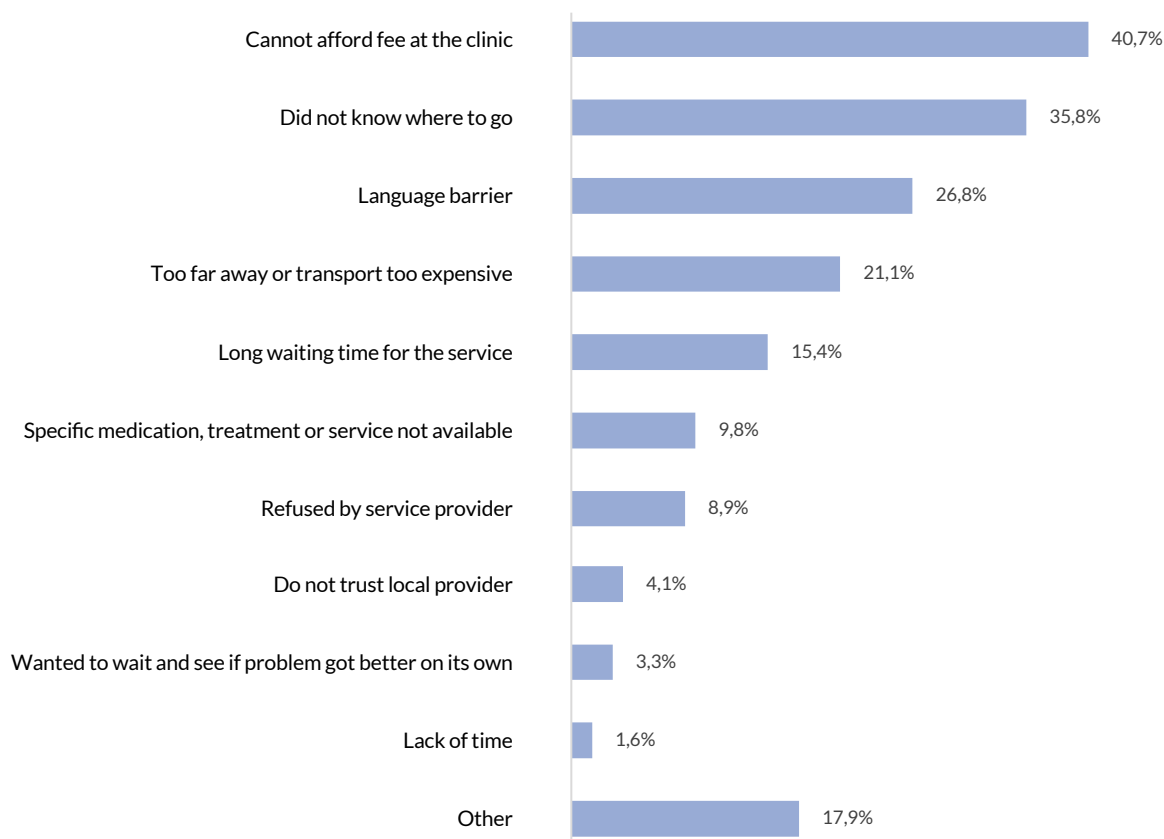
Figure 33. Distribution of answers to question: "Were you or your family members able to obtain the health care needed?" by subsamples



Among Ukrainian refugees, the majority reported receiving the necessary healthcare. However, those accommodated under the governmental programme had a higher percentage (24.4 per cent) of unmet health needs compared to other groups. Blue Dot centre users also experienced relatively frequent unmet healthcare needs (15.4 per cent), while those in private homes had a lower rate of unmet needs (10.2 per cent). Dissatisfaction with healthcare services was more pronounced among older respondents and those with lower education levels compared to other refugees.

**Figure 34. Distribution of answers to question: "If no, what was the main reason for not obtaining the health support/care?" by subsamples**

**If no, what was the main reason for not obtaining the health support/care?**



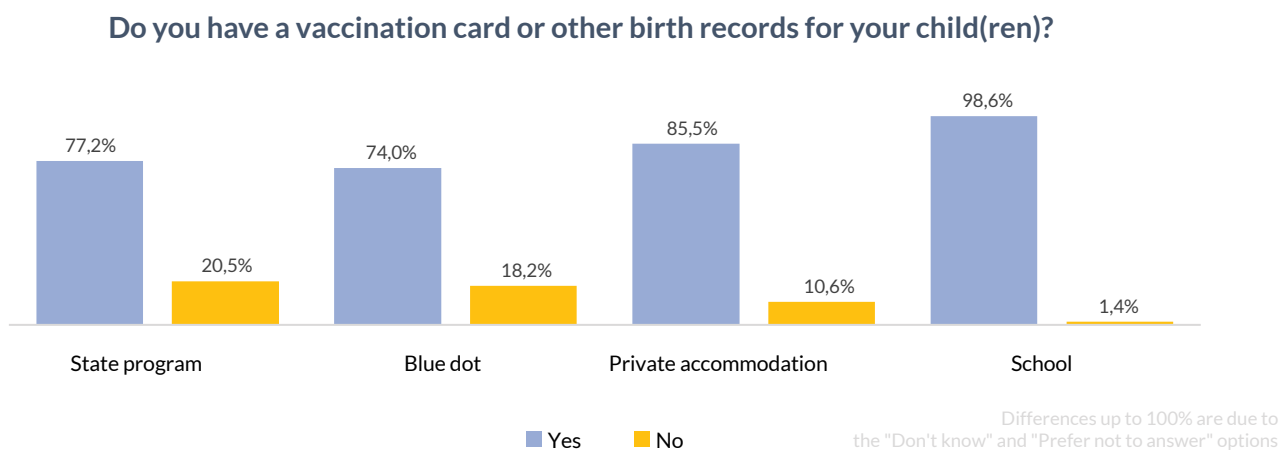
\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%

The main reasons reported by Ukrainian refugees for not receiving healthcare in Bulgaria were the inability to pay for hospital treatment (40.7 per cent) and not knowing where to seek healthcare (35.8 per cent). Language barriers (27 per cent) and distance to healthcare facilities (21.1 per cent) were also significant obstacles. A smaller percentage cited long waiting times (15.2 per cent), lack of sought-after medicines (9.8 per cent), or refusal by service providers (8.9 per cent) as reasons. Lack of trust in local healthcare providers (4.1 per cent) and lack of time (1.6 per cent) were reported less frequently. Only 3.3 per cent of respondents chose to wait for the problem to resolve on its own. Among Ukrainian refugees, the age groups most affected by the inability to afford clinic fees are those between 25-29 and 60-69 years old. For individuals aged 40-59, the main reason for not receiving healthcare was the lack of information on where to seek it. Men were more likely to forego healthcare due to various reasons, while women were more affected by a lack of time, likely due to their responsibilities towards children. Among Ukrainian refugees, those residing outside of regional cities were twice as likely to report not knowing where to seek health care. This issue was more prevalent among men and individuals aged 60-69. The 40-49 age group also faced challenges in knowing where to access healthcare services. Those who did not live in a regional city are about four times more likely to cite expensive transportation and a long journey to the service as a reason for not seeking health care.

**Vaccination Status Against Smallpox among Children**

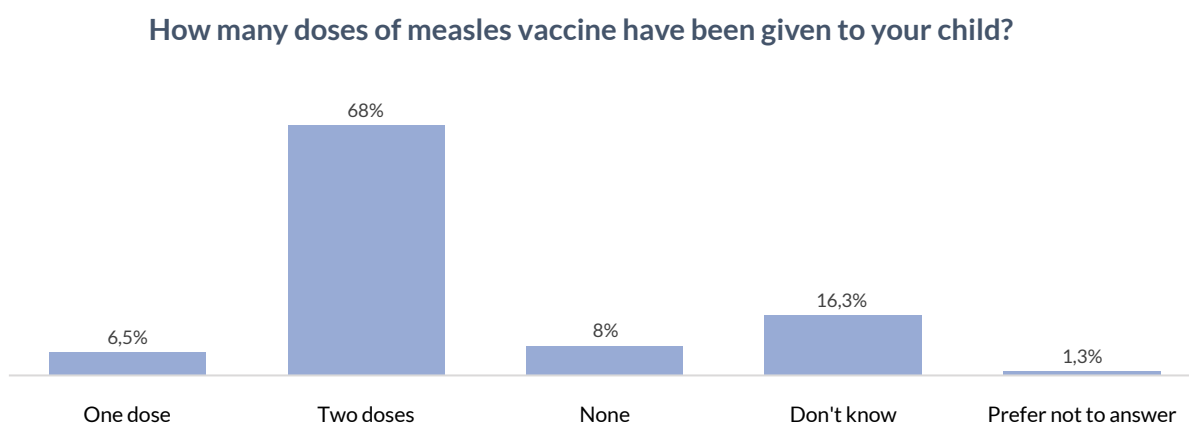
Most respondents have a vaccination card or other birth documents for their child. Parents of children who are already studying in Bulgarian schools more often than others have these documents (98.6 per cent), which is expected, given the requirement for full vaccination to enrol their children in a Bulgarian educational institution.

**Figure 35. Distribution of answers to question: "Do you have a vaccination card or other birth records for your child(ren)?" by subsamples**



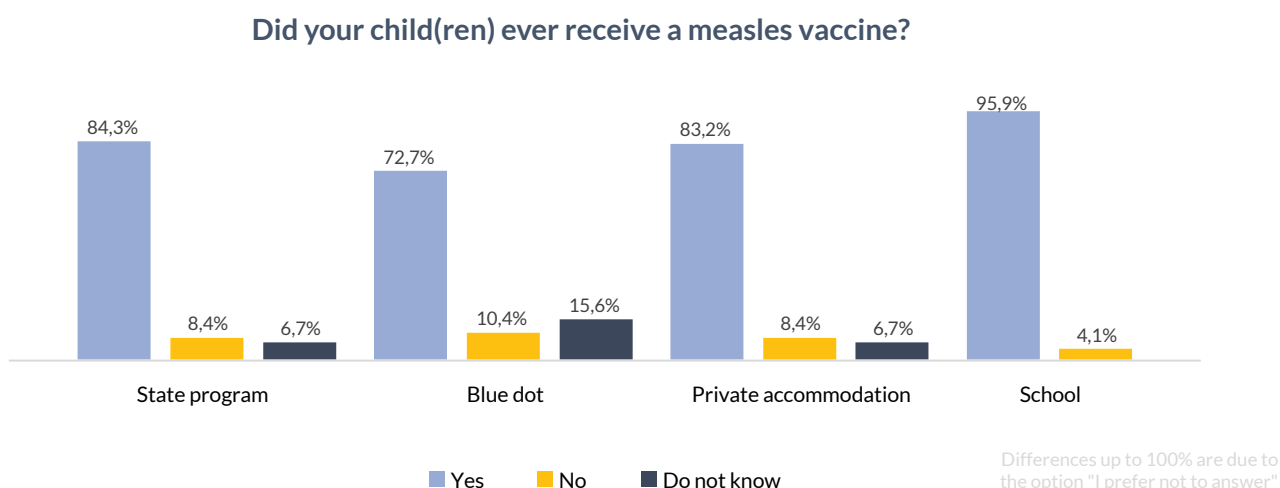
Over 85 per cent of those in private housing reported having the necessary documents. This percentage was slightly lower for those receiving support in Blue Dot centres (74 per cent) and those accommodated under the governmental programme (77 per cent). Higher-educated refugees and those living outside regional cities were more likely to have the required documents.

**Figure 36. Distribution of answers to question: "How many doses of measles vaccine have been given to your child?" by subsamples**



Nearly 70 per cent of Ukrainian refugees with children in the country have administered two doses of the measles vaccine. About 6.5 per cent have given their children only one dose, while 8 per cent have not vaccinated their children against measles. A significant proportion of respondents (16.3 per cent) are unsure about the vaccination status of their children.

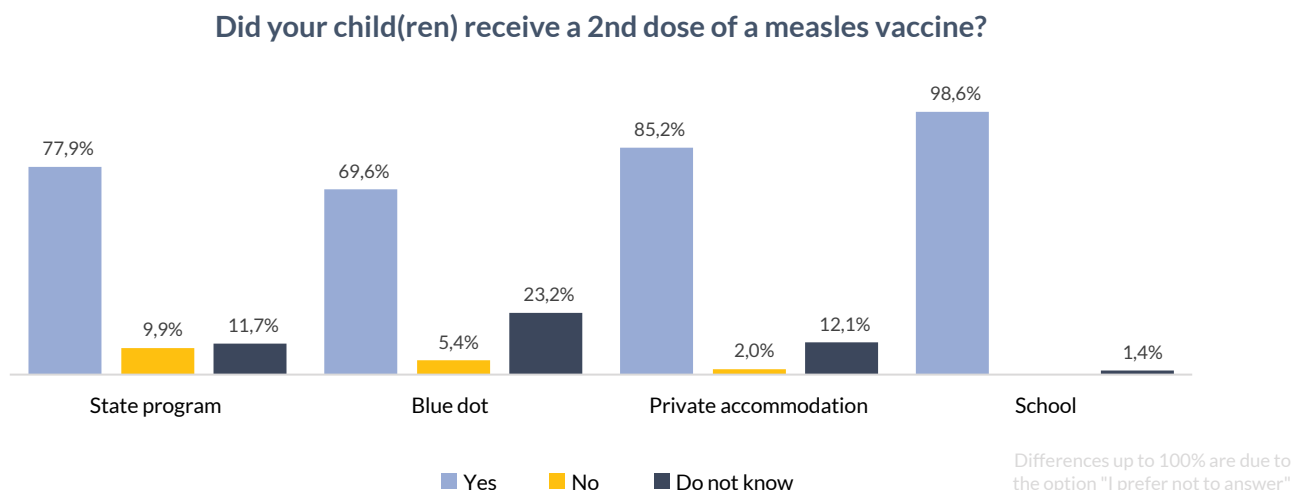
**Figure 37. Distribution of answers to question: "Did your child(ren) ever receive a measles vaccine?" by subsamples**





Most children studying in Bulgarian schools are vaccinated against measles, with nearly 96 per cent of parents confirming their children's vaccination. Among refugees accommodated under the governmental programme and those in private homes, the vaccination rate is around 84 per cent. Blue Dots users have a slightly lower vaccination rate, but still over 70 per cent. Some parents in this group are unsure about their child's vaccination status (15.6 per cent). It is worth noting that the lack of a second dose of the vaccine is primarily observed among parents of younger children, which aligns with the immunization schedule.

**Figure 38. Distribution of answers to question: "Did your child(ren) receive a 2nd dose of a measles vaccine?" by subsamples**



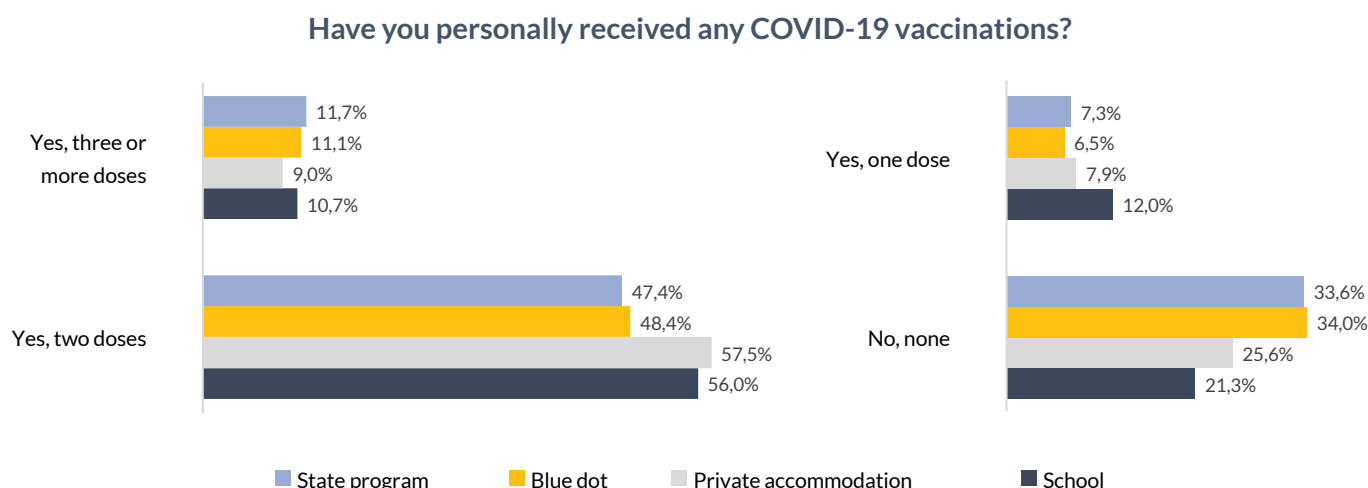
Among respondents whose children are attending Bulgarian schools, the majority (98.6 per cent) have given their children the second dose of the measles vaccine. However, a significant proportion of refugees surveyed are uncertain about their child's vaccination status. Among those accommodated in private homes, over 85 per cent have confirmed administering the second dose of the vaccine to their children. This percentage decreases to 77.9 per cent among those accommodated in state or municipal recreational centres and hotels under the governmental program.

Among respondents who use the services of Blue Dot hubs, the highest percentage (23.2 per cent) are uncertain about whether their child has received the second dose of the measles vaccine. Among this group, nearly 70 per cent confirmed that their child has received the second dose. The data also shows that parents with higher educational qualifications are more likely to administer measles vaccines to their children.

### Vaccination Against COVID-19

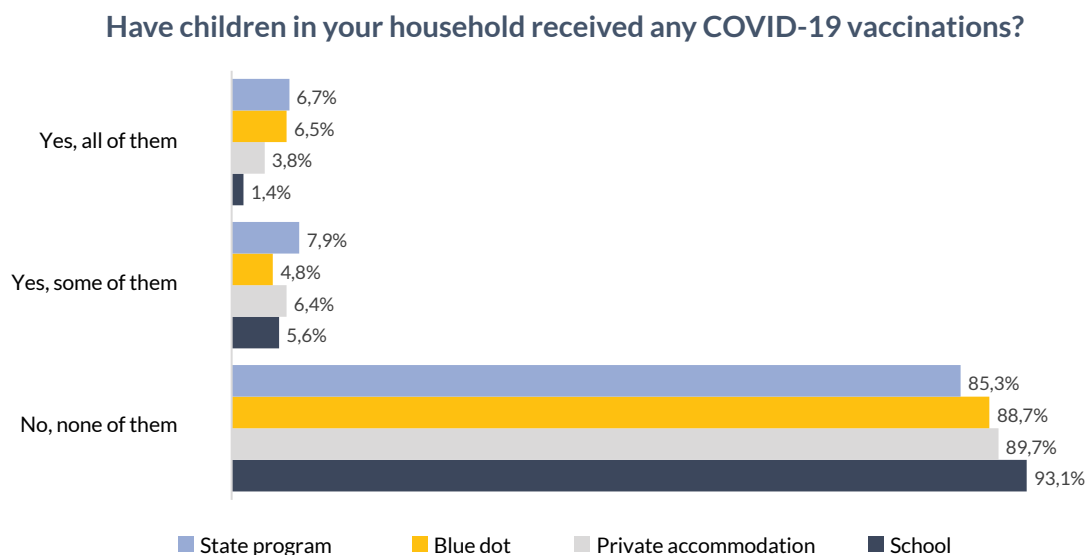
Most Ukrainian refugees in the country have received one or more vaccinations against COVID-19. In the most common case, those who received protection were given two doses of the vaccine.

**Figure 39. Distribution of answers to question: "Have you personally received any COVID-19 vaccinations?" by subsamples**



Those who received support from Blue Dot centres and those accommodated under state programme more often than others declared that they did not have a single vaccine against COVID-19. Among both groups, the share of unvaccinated is about one third. For comparison, the share of non-vaccinated among those accommodated in private accommodation is 25.6 per cent, and among the parents of children studying in Bulgarian schools - drops to 21.3 per cent. Individuals over 40 years of age and women received the highest number of vaccine doses, with the majority receiving three or more doses. However, there is a notable percentage of Ukrainian citizens who remain unvaccinated, particularly those over the age of 70 (40.8 per cent) and those between the ages of 50 and 59 (34.5 per cent). Additionally, there is relatively less interest in vaccines among citizens between the ages of 18 and 24.

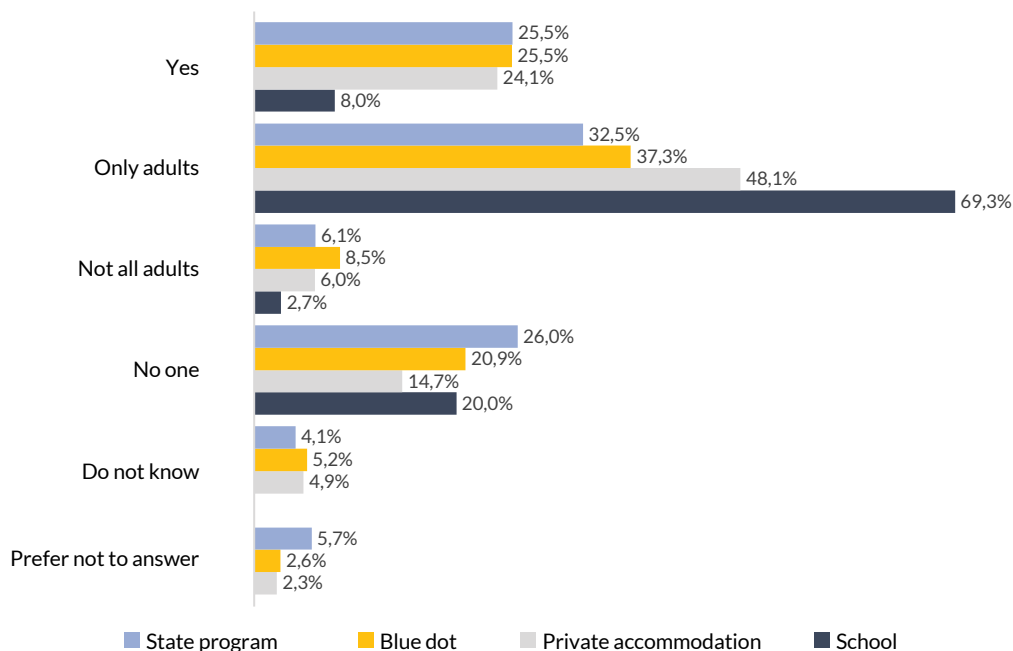
**Figure 40. Distribution of answers to question: "Have children in your household received any COVID-19 vaccinations?" by subsamples**



Most children in Ukrainian refugee families in Bulgaria have not received COVID-19 vaccinations, primarily because a significant proportion of them are under the age of 12. Among the four refugee groups studied, over 85 per cent of families have unvaccinated children. This percentage increases to 93.1 per cent among parents whose children attend school in the country. Although those accommodated in state or municipal recreational facilities and hotels have a higher vaccination rate for their children, the overall percentage of families with all or some children vaccinated remains low at 14.6 per cent.

**Figure 41. Distribution of answers to question: "Have other individuals in your household ever received any vaccinations against COVID-19?" by subsamples**

### Have other individuals in your household ever received any vaccinations against COVID-19?

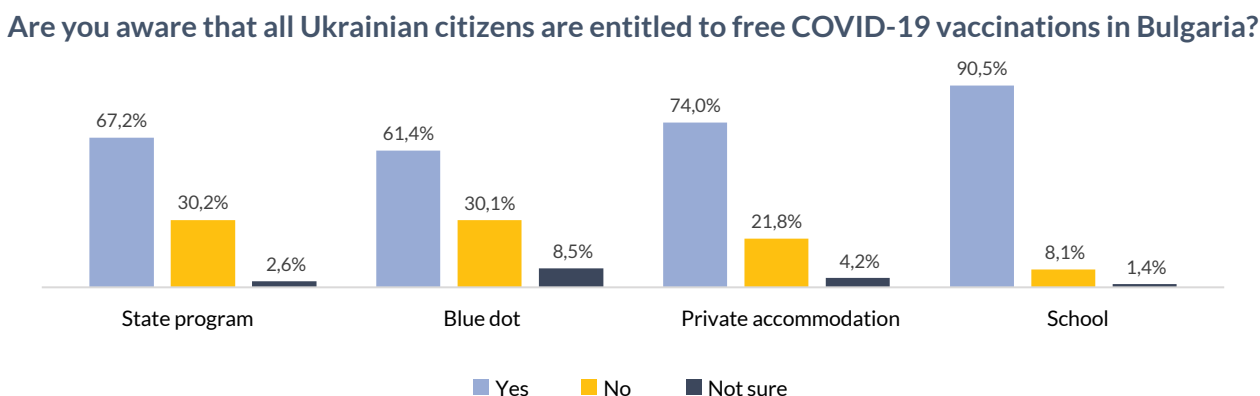


Most adults in the study are vaccinated. It rarely happens that only a portion of the household members has been vaccinated, but there are respondents in whose households not a single vaccinated adult or child has been vaccinated. These are most often the families of refugees accommodated under the governmental programme (26 per cent).

### Awareness of the Possibilities of Vaccination Against COVID-19 for Ukrainian Citizens in Bulgaria

Most Ukrainian refugees in the country have been informed of their right to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Among them, parents of children who already attend Bulgarian schools are the most well-informed, with a rate of 90.5 per cent.

Figure 42. Distribution of answers to question: "Are you aware that all Ukrainian citizens are entitled to free COVID-19 vaccinations in Bulgaria?" by subsamples

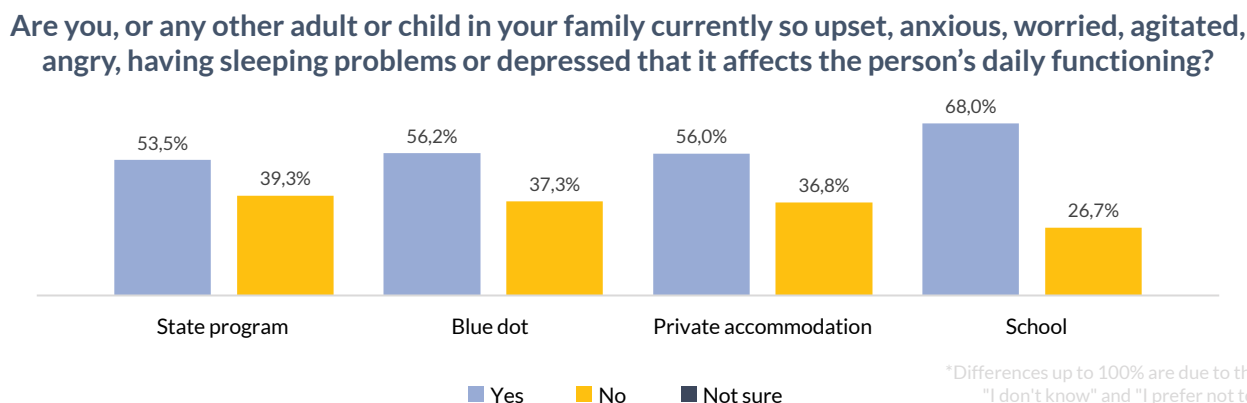


Among the different subgroups of Ukrainian refugees in Bulgaria, those housed in private homes have a relatively higher awareness of their right to receive free vaccines against COVID-19, with a rate of 74 per cent. The least informed group is those who received support in Blue Dot centres, with the highest percentage (8.5 per cent) being unsure if they know about the opportunity for free vaccination. The data also shows that respondents between the ages of 18 and 24, those over 60 years of age, and those living outside regional cities are more likely to be unaware of their right to a free COVID-19 vaccine.

### Mental Health and Mental Care

In more than half of the families of refugees from Ukraine in Bulgaria, there are high levels of stress, negatively affecting the daily functionality of at least one person in the family.

Figure 43. Distribution of responses to question: "Are you, or any other adult or child in your family currently so upset, anxious, worried, agitated, angry, having sleeping problems or depressed that it affects the person's daily functioning?" by subsamples

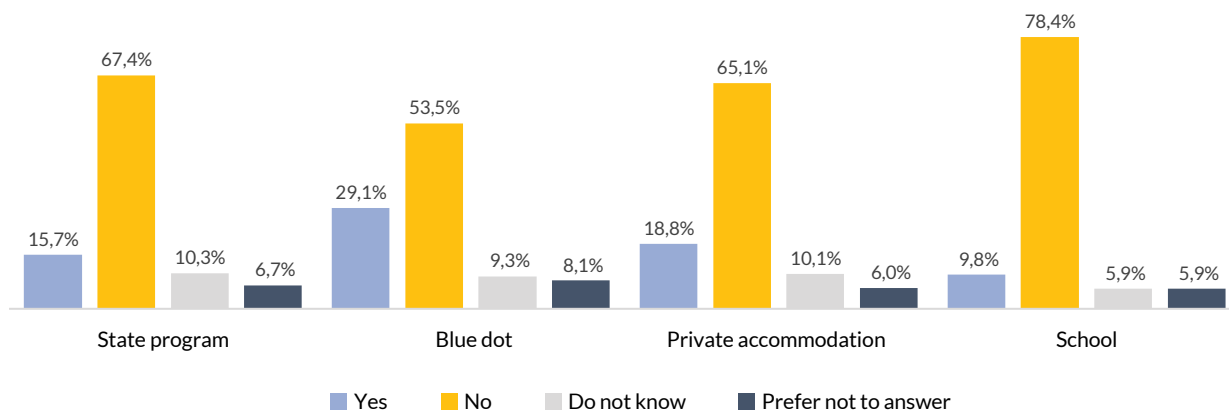


Parents of children who study in the country, report higher levels of anxiety and stress for themselves or their family members, with a rate of 68 per cent. However, anxiety and depression are also common among refugee families accommodated in private homes (56 per cent), those receiving support from Blue Dot centres (56.2 per cent), and those accommodated in state/municipal recreation centres and hotels under the governmental programme (53.5 per cent). Women appear to be more perceptive of emotional issues within their families, as they were more likely to report negative emotions impacting

their daily functioning for themselves or other adults in their household. Respondents over the age of 40 also reported such problems in their families more frequently.

**Figure 44. Distribution of answers to question:**  
**Were you or your family members with the above-mentioned symptoms able to obtain professional support for mental health and psychosocial issues when they felt they needed it?" by subsamples**

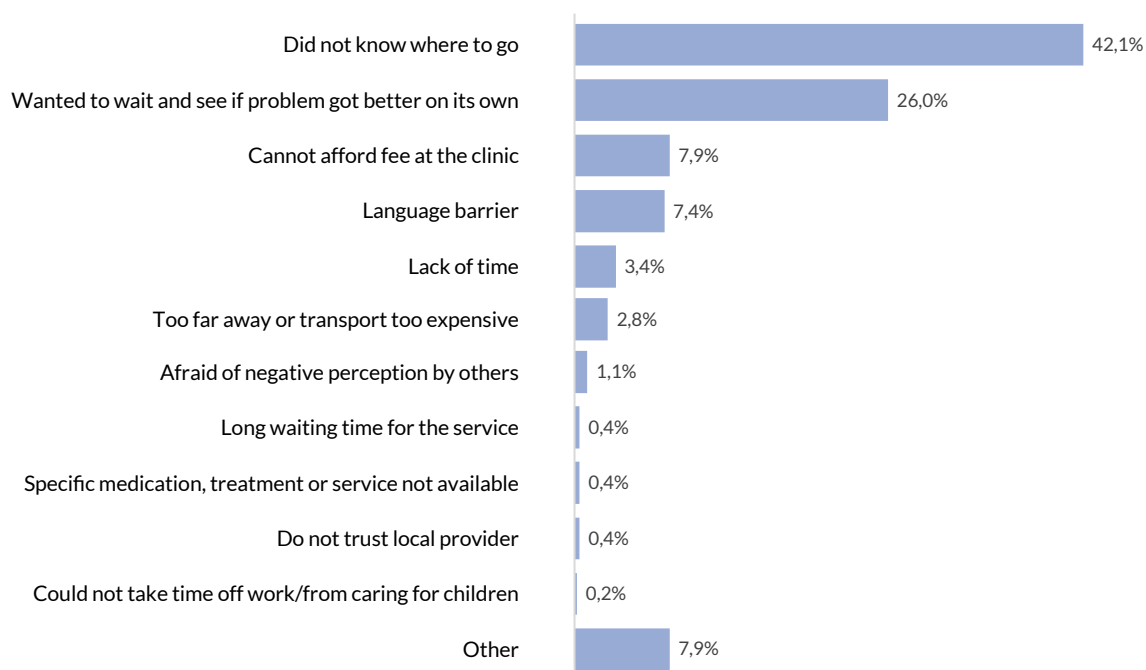
**Were you or your family members with the above-mentioned symptoms able to obtain professional support for mental health and psychosocial problems when you think you need it?**



Most refugees from Ukraine in Bulgaria have not received professional support for their psychological well-being. Among parents who have enrolled their children in Bulgarian schools, over 78 per cent did not receive the necessary support. This percentage is around 67 per cent for those accommodated under the state programme and 65.1 per cent for those in private homes. However, it is worth noting that the share of refugees in private homes who believe they have received psychological support is slightly higher at 18.8 per cent, compared to those under the state programme at 15.7 per cent. Users of the Blue Dot centres' services reported the highest percentage of receiving needed psychological help at 29.1 per cent, although it remains below one third of the subsample. Older respondents, specifically those between the ages of 50 and 59, were less likely to receive the help they sought for their emotional well-being. Refugees who do not live in regional cities were more successful in accessing support for their emotional state, as there are more professionals qualified to provide psychological assistance in larger cities. These findings highlight the better preparedness of municipalities in regional cities to meet the needs of refugees.

**Figure 45. Distribution of answers to question:**  
**"What was the main reason they were not able to access mental health or psychosocial support services?"**

**What was the main reason they were not able to access mental health or psychosocial support services?**

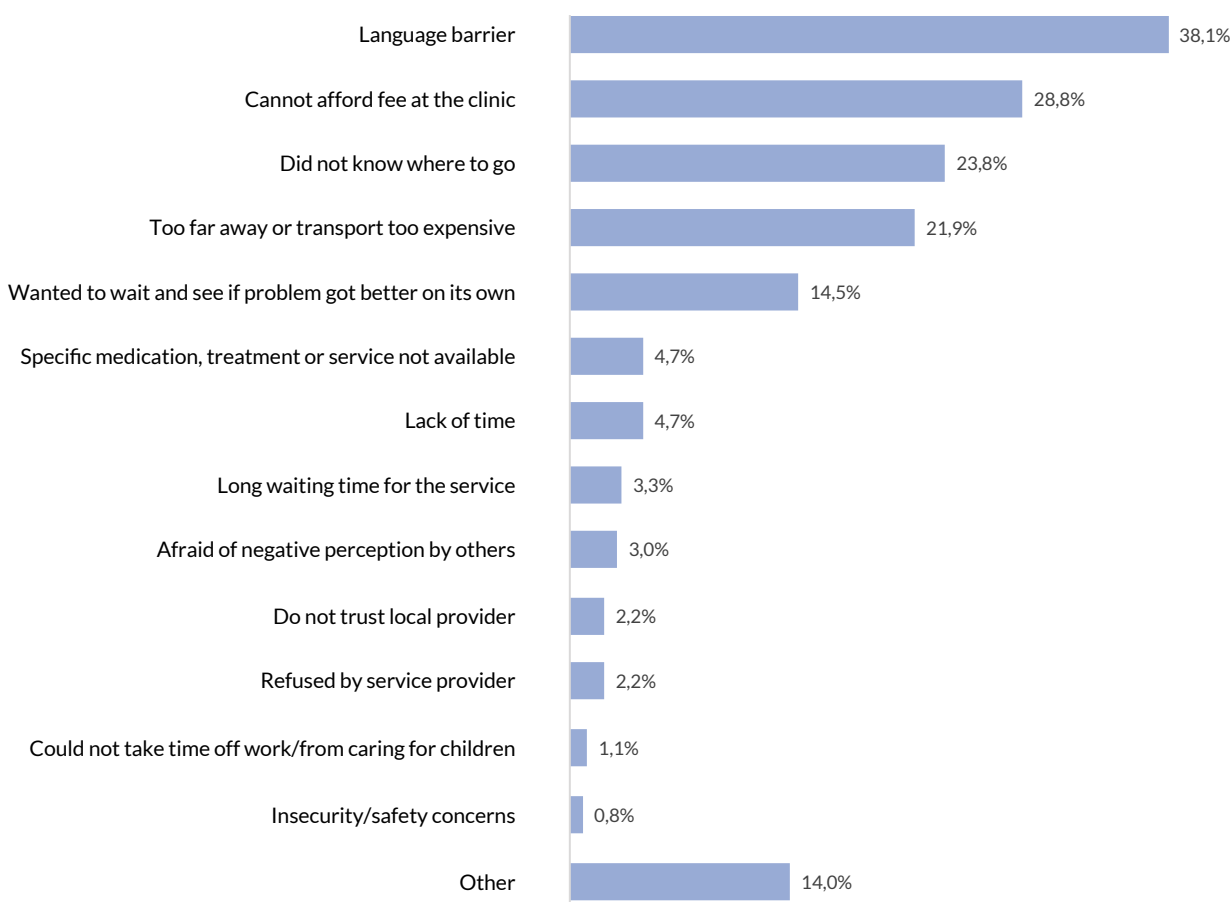


The primary reason cited by respondents for not receiving psychological and psychosocial support is a lack of knowledge about where to seek it (42.1 per cent). A significant proportion of refugees in the country reported waiting for their health problems to resolve on their own (26 per cent). Other reasons listed were infrequently mentioned. Younger respondents face challenges in accessing support for their psychological health due to a lack of knowledge about available resources. Conversely, language barriers are more problematic for the elderly. However, respondents over the age of 70 are less affected by language barriers but struggle with affording clinic fees.

When examining the additional obstacles to accessing psychological support, certain trends emerge. Secondary causes that are rarely mentioned as primary reasons become more prominent.

**Figure 46. Distribution of answers to question:**  
 “What were the additional reasons, if any, they were not able to access mental health or psychosocial support services?”

### What were the additional reasons, if any, they were not able to access mental health or psychosocial support services?



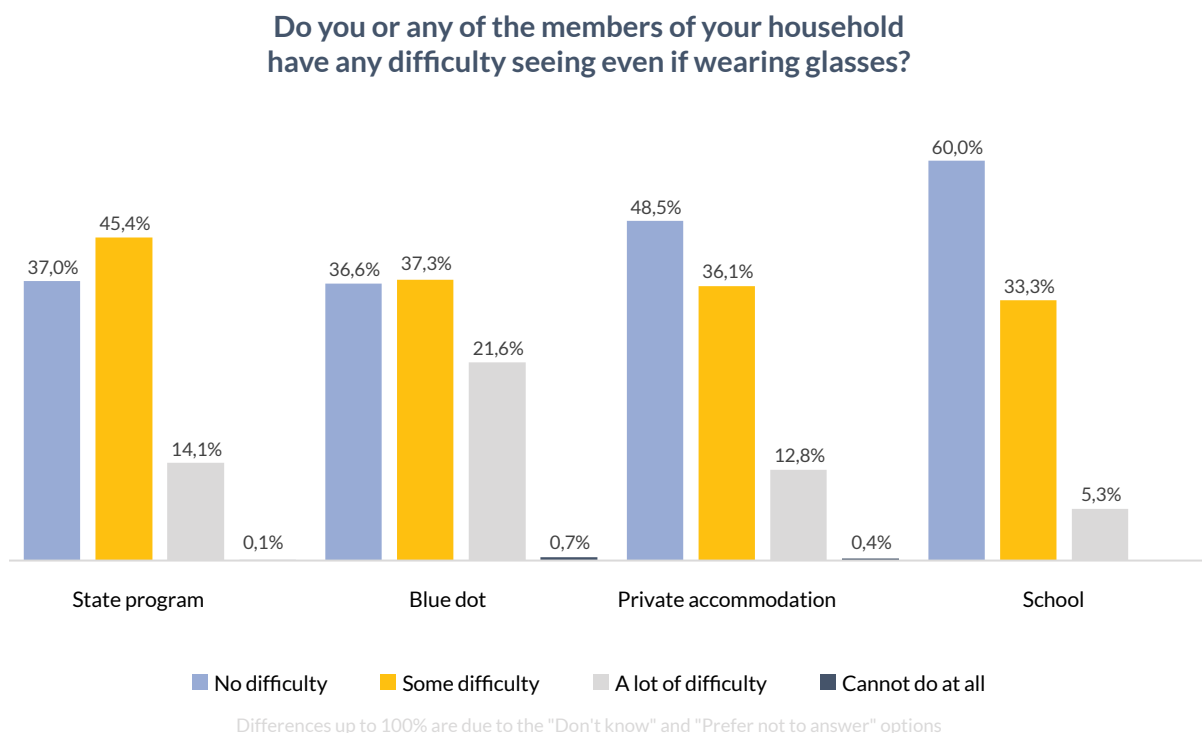
\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%

The most mentioned secondary reason for the lack of psychological and psychosocial support among Ukrainian refugees in the country is the language barrier (38.1 per cent). Financial constraints, particularly high fees in health facilities, also pose a significant obstacle for those in need (28.8 per cent). Approximately 23.8 per cent of respondents reported not knowing where to access such assistance, while 21.9 per cent mentioned the long distance they had to travel to receive the service. Nearly 15 per cent of refugees chose to wait for the problem to resolve on its own. Other reasons, such as medication unavailability or lack of time to seek support, were cited by less than 5 per cent of respondents. Instances of service provider refusal were reported in 2.2 per cent of cases.

### Various Physical Difficulties

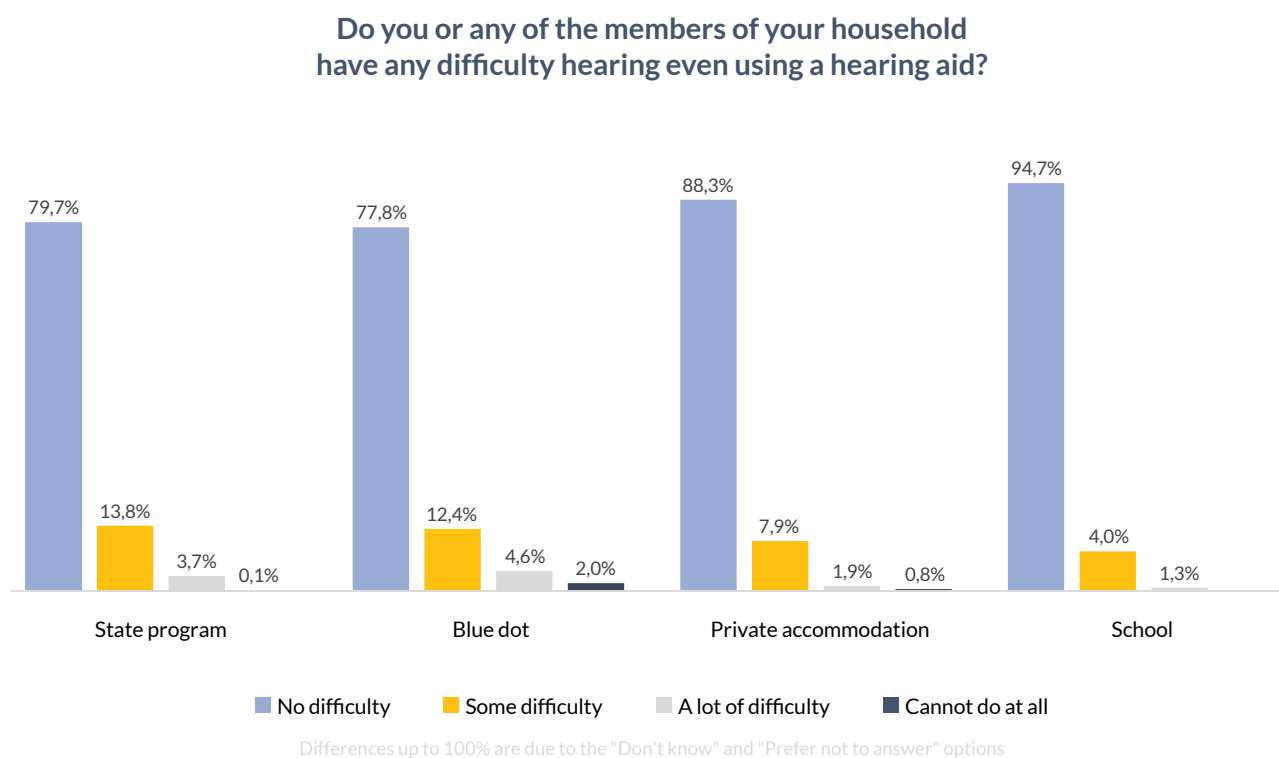
Around 36 per cent of Ukrainian refugees in Bulgaria have physical or cognitive impairments. Among them, 12 per cent experience these difficulties to a great extent, while 24 per cent experience them to some degree. The most common impairments are related to vision and mobility, with concentration and memory problems also being quite prevalent.

**Figure 47. Distribution of answers to question:**  
 "Do you or any of the members of your household have any difficulty seeing even if wearing glasses?" by subsamples



A significant number of respondents reported experiencing visual difficulties. Among the various refugee groups, the users of the Blue Dot centres reported the highest prevalence of severe visual impairments, with 21.6 per cent indicating such issues.

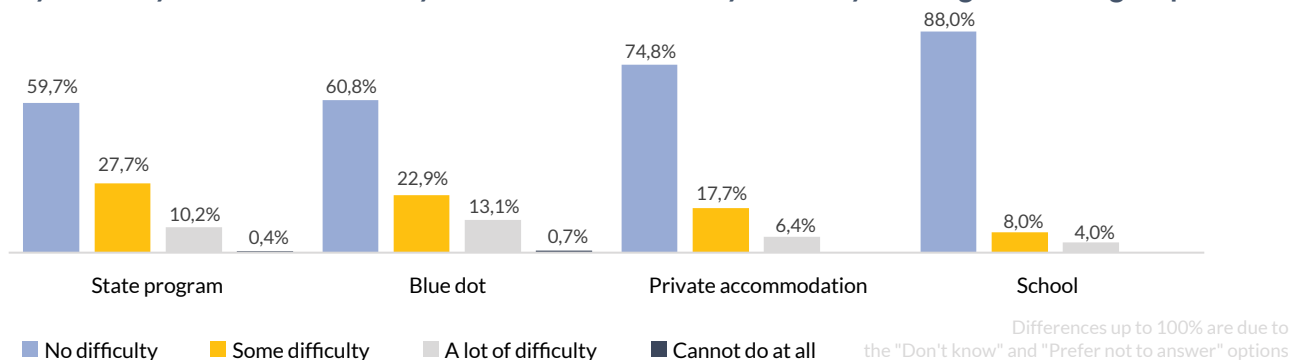
**Figure 48. Distribution of answers to question:**  
 "Do you or any of the members of your household have any difficulty hearing even using a hearing aid?" by subsamples



Serious hearing problems were reported by a small percentage of interviewees, totalling around 4 per cent. Among those who experienced hearing difficulties, most indicated that it affected their daily activities to some extent. This group primarily consisted of refugees accommodated under the governmental programme and beneficiaries of the Blue Dot centres, comprising 14 per cent of the total.

**Figure 49. Distribution of answers to question: "Do you or any of the members of your household have any difficulty walking or climbing steps?" by subsamples**

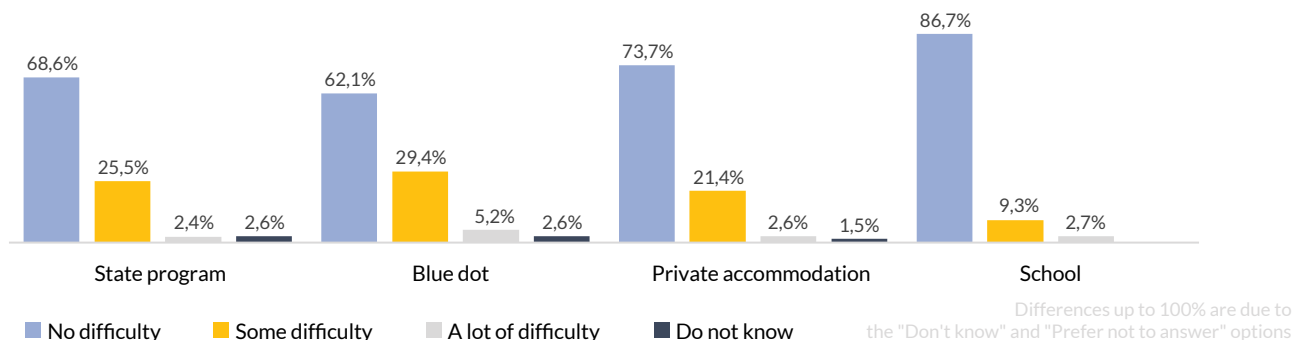
**Do you or any of the members of your household have any difficulty walking or climbing steps?**



The highest proportions of refugees experiencing physical difficulties are found among those accommodated under the governmental programme and users of the Blue Dot centres. Among respondents in the governmental programme, 38.3 per cent reported difficulties with walking or climbing stairs, with 27.7 per cent experiencing these difficulties to some extent, 10 per cent indicating great difficulty, and less than 1 per cent unable to walk or climb stairs at all. Similarly, among users of Blue Dot centres, there was a higher proportion reporting severe mobility difficulties (13.1 per cent) and a lower proportion with partial difficulties (22.9 per cent).

**Figure 50. Distribution of answers to question: "Do you or any of the members of your household have any difficulty remembering or concentrating?" by subsamples**

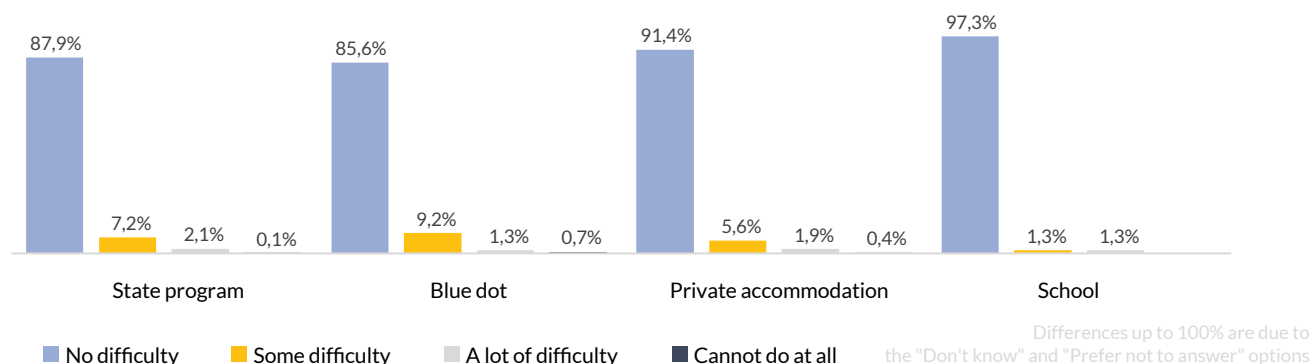
**Do you or any of the members of your household have any difficulty remembering or concentrating?**



Difficulties with concentration are frequently reported among respondents, but severe difficulties are only sporadically mentioned. Users of Blue Dot centres most commonly report impaired concentration, followed by those accommodated in state and municipal recreational centres and hotels. Similarly, those in private accommodation also report occasional problems with concentration (21.4 per cent). This issue is least prevalent among parents of children already studying in Bulgaria.

**Figure 51. Distribution of answers to question: "Do you or any of the members of your household have any difficulty with self-care (such as washing all over or dressing)?" by subsamples**

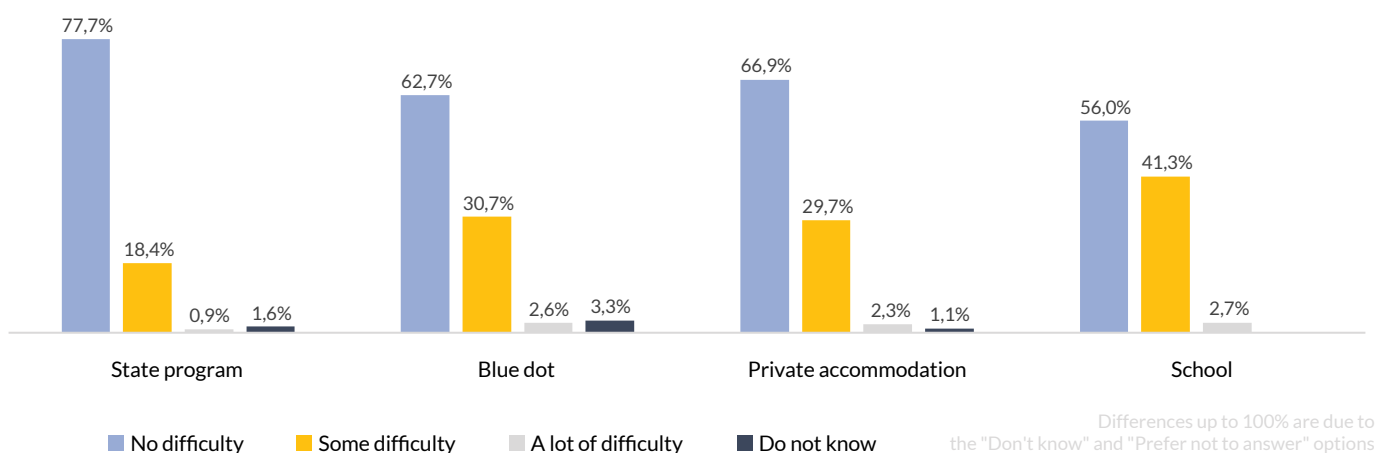
**Do you or any of the members of your household have any difficulty with self-care (such as washing all over or dressing)?**



Self-care difficulties are rare among Ukrainian refugee families. Only around 2 per cent of respondents in all studied groups report experiencing significant challenges in daily self-care. Among the users of Blue Dot centres, the proportion of individuals facing some difficulties in self-care is slightly higher at 9.2 per cent. Parents of children studying in Bulgaria stand out from the overall trend, with the highest percentage of families reporting no members with self-care difficulties (97.3 per cent). Older respondents, aged 50 and above, are more likely to report problems related to mobility, vision, hearing, concentration, and daily activities for themselves or their family members. These individuals are also more likely to be registered with a general practitioner in Bulgaria. Families with members experiencing severe vision impairments or mobility difficulties tend to seek healthcare more frequently. Communication difficulties were rare among the interviewees. However, all target groups acknowledged that isolated cases of communication challenges did occur.

**Figure 52. Distribution of answers to question: "Using your usual language, do you or any of the members of your household have any difficulty communicating - for example, understanding or being understood?" by subsamples**

**Using your usual language, do you or any of the members of your household have any difficulty communicating - for example, understanding or being understood?**

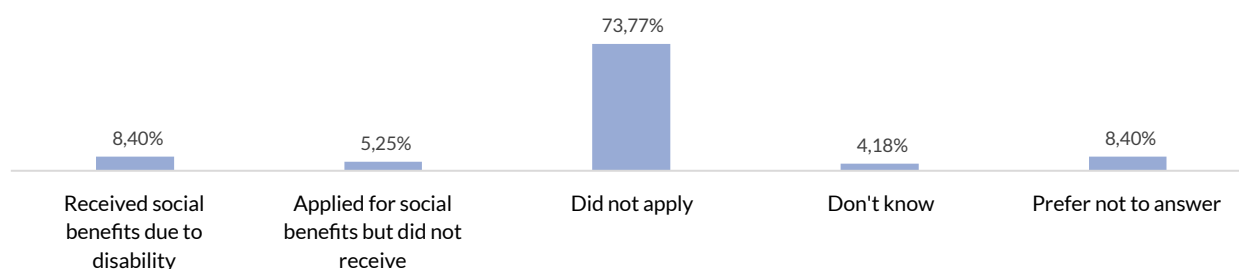


There seems to be a discrepancy in the understanding of the question about communication difficulties among the respondents. It is possible that they interpreted the question differently or faced challenges in accurately expressing their experiences. This discrepancy suggests that the reported share of individuals indicating communication difficulties may be overestimated and may not reflect the actual extent of the problem.

### Social Benefits for Persons with Disabilities

**Figure 53. Distribution of additional statistical processing of the answers to the question: "Do you or your family member(s) receive social allowance due to disability from the Bulgarian state institution (Agency for Social Assistance)?" and question: "Did you or your family member attempt to apply for such an allowance?"**

**Applied for and received social benefits due to disability from a Bulgarian state institution (ASP)**

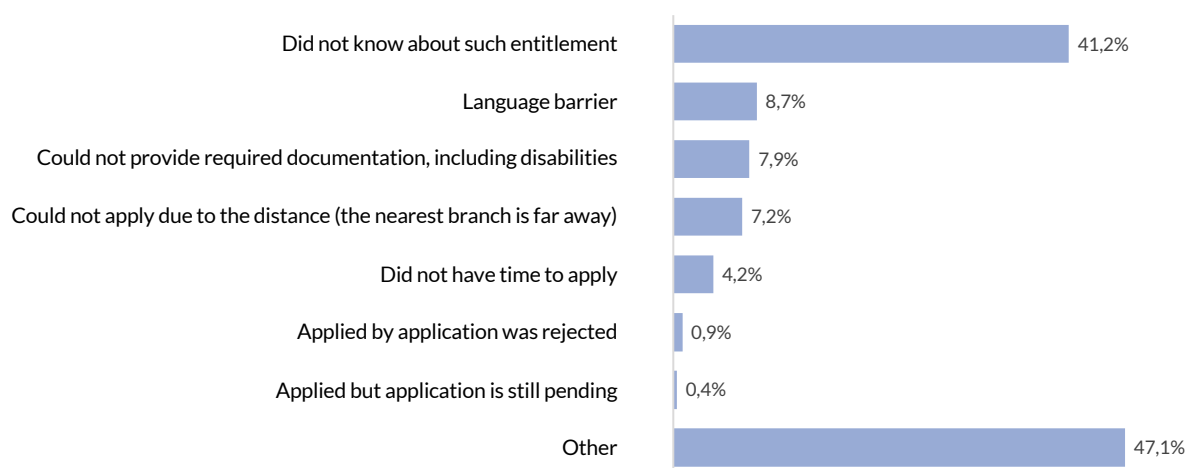


Approximately 8.4 per cent of Ukrainian refugees in Bulgaria received social benefits for disability from Bulgarian state institutions. Additionally, 5.2 per cent of applicants did not receive such assistance despite applying for it. Most applicants for disability benefits are individuals between the ages of 50 and 69.



**Figure 54. Distribution of answers to question:**  
**“Please, indicate the reasons why you did not apply for or did not receive social assistance for people with disabilities”**

**Please, indicate the reasons why you did not apply or did not receive the disability social allowance**



\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%

The main reason why Ukrainian citizens with disabilities did not apply for social assistance is the lack of information (16.76 per cent). This reason was cited significantly more often than the other commonly mentioned reasons, which include the language barrier, lack of necessary documents, and the distance to service branches. Lack of information was particularly prevalent among men and respondents aged between 18 and 24 years. Additionally, a higher proportion of respondents over the age of 70 did not have information about where they could access such support.



## VII. SAFETY AND SECURITY CONCERNS

### 1. Security and Risk of Various Forms of Violence

Most Ukrainian refugees in Bulgaria do not express concerns about the safety of their children, and there are no significant differences between different subgroups in this regard. Similarly, respondents do not indicate significant concerns about the safety of women in their living area, and no notable differences were found based on socio-demographic characteristics. However, in the Varna region, there is a slightly higher percentage of respondents expressing fear of robbery (3 per cent), and among women aged 25-29, there is a slightly higher percentage (8.3 per cent). In the Sofia region, women are more likely than women in other regions to report concerns about becoming victims of kidnapping or human trafficking (2.3 per cent).

**Table 23. Distribution of responses to the question:  
“Do you have any concerns regarding the safety and security of children in the area where you are staying?” by subsamples**

	State program	Blue dot	Private accommodation	School
No concerns	88.5%	88.3%	93.3%	95.9%
Increased risk of losing accommodation	3.3%	3.9%	2.2%	-
Worsened mental health and psycho-social wellbeing (anxiety/sleeping problems/other psychological problems)	2.9%	-	-	-
Increased risk of unhealthy food	2.7%	1.3%	0.6%	-
Increased vulnerability to physical violence	1.3%	1.3%	0.6%	-
Increased vulnerability to psychological violence	0.8%	-	-	-
No access to education	0.8%	-	0.6%	-
Increased vulnerability to violence online	0.2%	-	-	-
Increased vulnerability to neglect	0.2%	1.3%	0.6%	-
Others	1.0%	2.6%	-	-
I do not know	1.5%	2.6%	1.7%	1.4%
I prefer not to answer	1.0%	1.3%	1.7%	2.7%

\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%

**Table 24. Distribution of responses to the question:  
“Do you have any safety and security concerns for women in the area where you are staying?” by subsamples**

	State programme	Blue dot	Private accommodation	School
No concerns	94.6%	90.8%	95.1%	96.0%
Being robbed	1.3%	2.0%	1.5%	1.3%
Being threatened with violence	0.5%	0.7%	0.4%	-
Being kidnapped	0.4%	0.7%	-	-
Discrimination or persecution (because of nationality, ethnicity, status etc.)	0.3%	1.3%	1.9%	1.3%
Suffering from verbal harassment	0.1%	1.3%	1.1%	-
Trafficking	0.1%	0.7%	-	-
Being exploited (i.e., being engaged in harmful forms of labour - including sexual exploitation - for economic gain of the exploiter)	0.1%	-	-	-
Suffering from physical harassment or violence (non-sexual)	-	1.3%	0.8%	-
Suffering from sexual harassment or violence	-	1.3%	0.8%	-
Others	0.6%	2.6%	0.4%	-
I do not know	2.4%	2.6%	1.5%	-
I prefer not to answer	0.6%	0.7%	0.4%	2.7%

\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%

## 2. Sexual Exploitation and Violence

Most respondents, ranging from 97 per cent to 98.7 per cent, do not express concern about sexual exploitation and various forms of violence. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that cases of abuse, violence, and sexual exploitation are often underreported globally. Among the Ukrainian community, the highest percentage of respondents who indicated awareness

of existing cases of violence or gender-based violence is found in the Burgas region (1.9 per cent) and Sofia-city region (1.7 per cent). Men were more likely to come forward and report having information about cases of violence, with a percentage of 3.1 per cent. This trend is also observed among respondents in the age group of 15-36, where 3 per cent reported having such information. These findings suggest the need for targeted engagement with female community members to encourage reporting and further exploration of this issue. A qualitative study using an active participation approach could provide valuable insights. It is important to note that the data on these questions are based on a small number of respondent answers, limiting the ability to draw meaningful conclusions through statistical analysis. However, a few reported cases suggest a higher prevalence of sexual violence among those arriving from eastern Ukraine in February-March 2022.

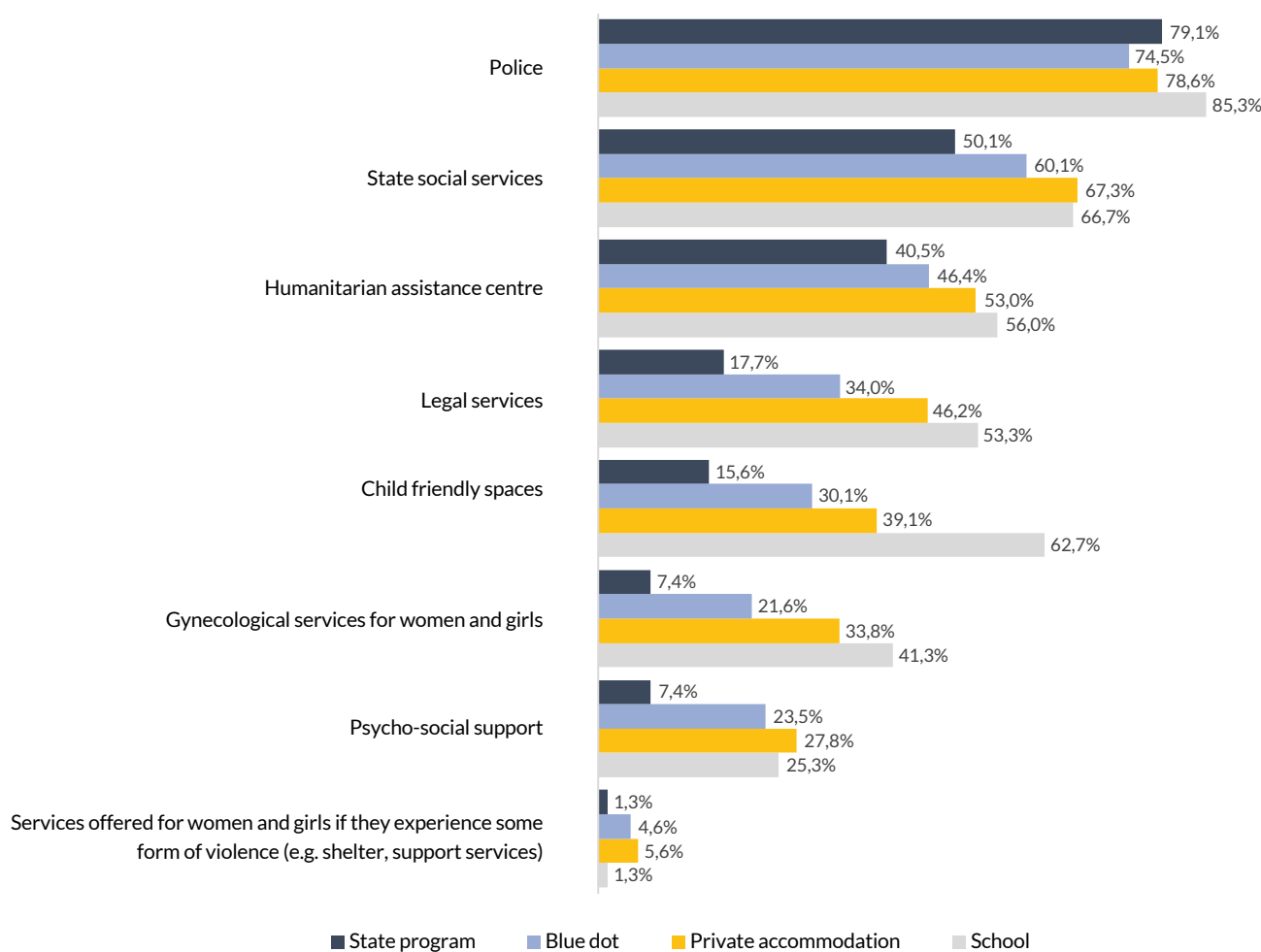
## VIII. ACCESS TO INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE

### 1. Access to Public Services

Overall, respondents express a high level of confidence in accessing public services in their respective areas of residence. The majority of those accommodated under the state program, those living in private accommodation, users of Blue Dot hubs, and parents of children enrolled in Bulgarian schools confirm that they feel safe and have secure access to the police, state social services representatives, and humanitarian assistance centres in their local areas. Access to services for women and girls who have experienced violence is limited across all types of accommodation.

Figure 55. Distribution of answers to question: "Do you have access to the following services in the area where you are residing?" by subsamples

#### Do you have access to the following services in the area where you are residing?



\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%

Access to services such as legal support, psychosocial support, gynaecological care, and child-friendly places is higher in regional cities compared to smaller settlements. However, the perceived access to the police is more limited in regional cities compared to smaller settlements.

**Table 25. Distribution of answers to question:  
“Do you have access to the following services in the area where you are residing?” by type of settlement**

	Regional city	A settlement other than a regional city
Police	69.2%	86.1%
State social services	56.2%	51.7%
Humanitarian assistance centre	45.8%	41.8%
Legal services	31.0%	19.4%
Child friendly spaces	29.4%	16.5%
Psycho-social support	21.9%	5.4%
Gynaecological services for women and girls	20.5%	8.5%
Services offered for women and girls if they experience some form of violence (e.g., shelter, support services)	4.3%	1.0%

\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%

## 2. Access to Information

Interviewees primarily use Google search engine and communication groups on social networks like Viber and Telegram to access information about regulations, conditions, and services for refugees from Ukraine in Bulgaria. Those accommodated under the governmental programme rely on group chats and coordinators of accommodation places for information, while users of the Blue Dot centres seek information from the centres themselves. Individuals living in private accommodation and those whose children attend Bulgarian schools tend to prefer using Telegram or Facebook group chats to search and exchange information. They also rely on representatives of local authorities or specific local social service providers as a source of information, especially those living in private residences. The official government portal (Ukraine.gov.bg) is known to all respondents but is among the least preferred sources of information.

**Table 26. Distribution of answers to question:  
“Where do you look for information if you have a question about regulations, conditions and services for refugees from Ukraine in Bulgaria?” by subsamples**

	State programme	Blue dot	Private accommodation	School
Google	64.8%	64.7%	66.8%	77.0%
Viber	64.8%	54.2%	57.4%	58.1%
Telegram	61.5%	69.9%	71.3%	93.2%
Hotel/Recreational facility group chats	49.4%	24.2%	16.6%	9.5%
Facebook	45.2%	53.6%	61.5%	73.0%
Volunteers	26.1%	36.6%	27.9%	31.1%
Hotel/Recreational facility Coordinators	20.5%	2.0%	3.4%	4.1%
Official governmental portal	15.3%	13.1%	21.1%	28.4%
Blue dots	13.0%	52.9%	36.2%	33.8%
Instagram	10.0%	13.7%	16.2%	18.9%
Local government/social services	7.9%	5.2%	11.3%	21.6%

\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%

The respondents expressed a need for more information on various domestic aspects of life in the country. The main areas where they require clarification are financial assistance, vouchers, food, hygiene materials, clothing, and access to public services such as medical care, transportation, accommodation, and job opportunities. A smaller proportion of respondents also sought additional information about accessing education and psychological support.

**Table 27. Distribution of answers to question:  
“On which topics do you need more information?” by subsamples**

	State programme	Blue dot	Private accommodation	School
Financial Aid	66.1%	65.1%	60.3%	83.6%
Vouchers	56.5%	55.9%	53.3%	76.7%
Food	49.3%	42.8%	44.4%	68.5%
How to access medical care	44.5%	40.8%	38.5%	43.8%
In-kind support (hygiene items, clothing, etc.)	42.7%	36.8%	27.2%	26.0%
Transportation	26.2%	9.2%	14.0%	21.9%
Accommodation	24.6%	14.5%	22.2%	26.0%
Job opportunities	21.1%	32.2%	37.0%	50.7%
My legal status in this country	20.8%	21.1%	26.1%	52.1%
How to obtain documentation and related rights	12.4%	21.7%	25.3%	42.5%
How to access education	10.9%	13.8%	11.7%	16.4%
How to access counselling/psychological support	9.9%	11.2%	10.1%	8.2%

\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%

The distribution of answers by type of settlement reveals differences in the degree of need for additional information on the researched topics. While topics related to financial assistance, vouchers, food, and in-kind support are important for most respondents, those living in smaller settlements express a greater need for information on accommodation options and transportation.

**Table 28. Distribution of answers to question:  
“On which topics do you need more information?” by type of settlement**

	Regional city	A settlement other than a regional city
Financial Aid	58.8%	70.0%
Vouchers	45.8%	63.2%
Food	34.3%	57.3%
In-kind support (hygiene items, clothing, etc.)	33.7%	43.5%
How to access medical care	32.8%	49.9%
My legal status in this country	29.5%	22.8%
How to obtain documentation and related rights	22.0%	12.1%
Job opportunities	21.8%	23.6%
Accommodation	19.5%	25.9%
Transportation	17.2%	27.3%
How to access education	9.2%	12.7%
How to access counselling/psychological support	7.9%	11.1%
How to re-establish contact with relatives I am separated from	1.7%	1.9%

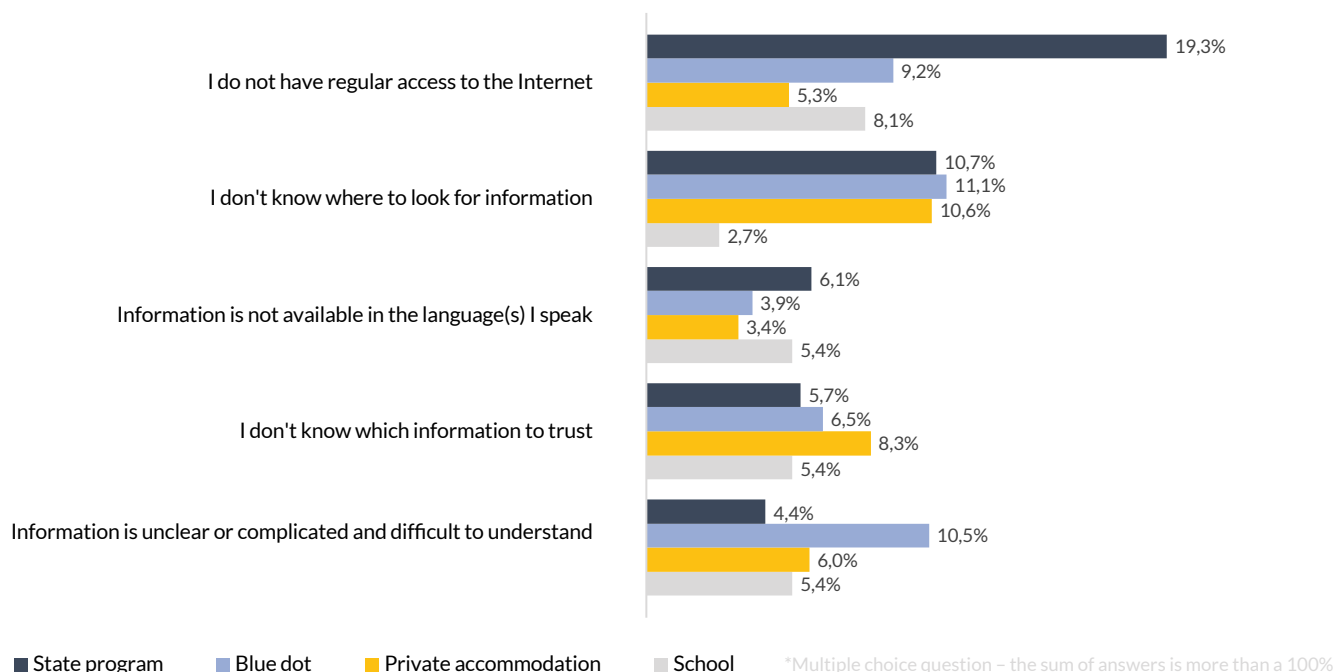
\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%

Despite the identified needs for additional information, most respondents reported that they did not encounter any challenges/difficulties when trying to obtain the necessary information.

Challenges that have been encountered are usually related to technical difficulties caused by the lack of regular Internet connection. Not knowing where to look for information or which sources are reliable has a significant impact on access to up-to-date information. Presenting the information in a vague and difficult to understand manner is also a challenge for some of the respondents.

Figure 56. Distribution of the top 5 answers that scored more than 4% to question: "What challenges are you facing in accessing information that you need at the moment?" by subsamples

### What challenges are you facing in accessing information that you need at the moment?

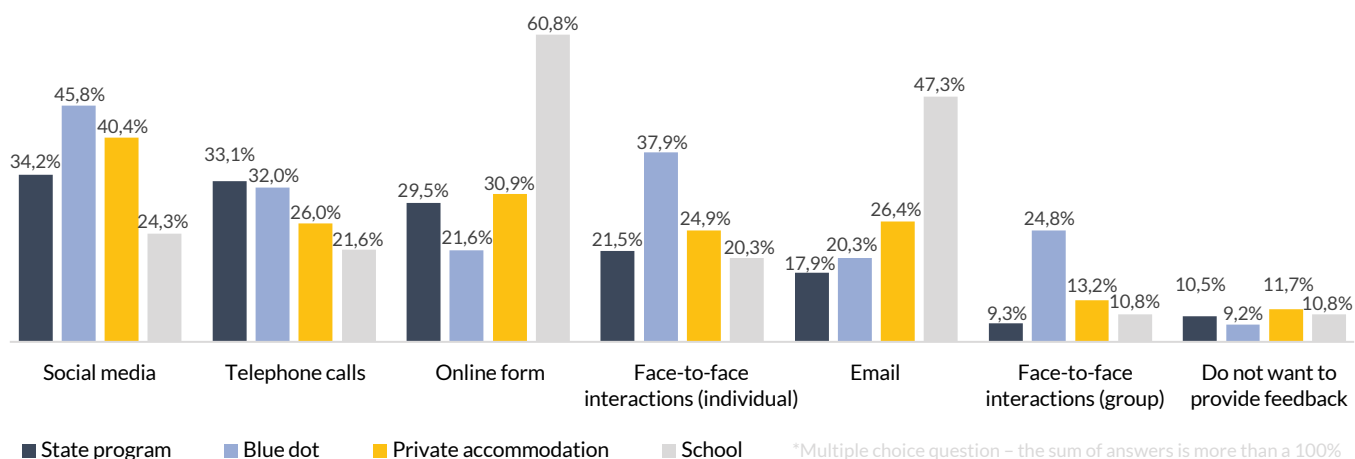


The topic of accessing information on provisions, conditions and services for refugees refers to the necessity to provide feedback to services' providers about the quality, quantity and appropriateness of the received assistance. About ten per cent of respondents said they were unwilling to provide feedback. However, the overwhelming majority are willing to give one, believing that the most appropriate form is through social media or a phone call.

Refugees from Ukraine using the services of Blue Dot centres rely on sharing their impressions through direct interaction, either individually or in groups. At the same time, the majority of persons whose children are enrolled in Bulgarian schools prefer to give feedback through forms of communication already known to them, which are used precisely in educational institutions - online forms or via e-mail.

Figure 57. Distribution of answers to question: "How would you prefer to provide feedback or make complaints to aid providers on the quality, quantity and appropriateness of the aid you have or will receive?" by subsamples

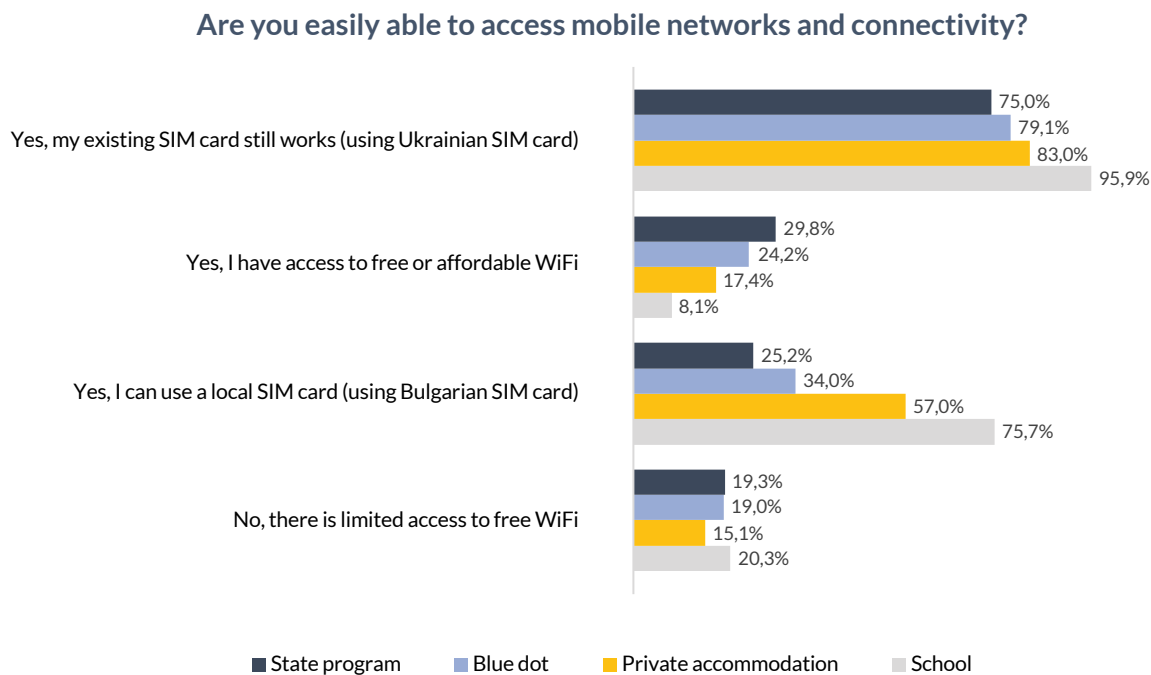
### How would you prefer to provide feedback or make complaints to aid providers on the quality, quantity and appropriateness of the aid you have or will receive?



### 3. Internet Access

The data indicates that most respondents still rely on their Ukrainian SIM cards for mobile connectivity in Bulgaria, while a smaller portion have switched to a local Bulgarian operator. Additionally, a significant proportion of those accommodated under the governmental programme or using Blue Dot centres have access to free wireless internet. However, most respondents reported paying for their internet connectivity.

**Figure 58. Distribution of all answers that scored more than 4% to question: “Are you easily able to access mobile networks and connectivity?” by subsamples**



\*Multiple choice question – the sum of answers is more than a 100%

## IX. SOCIAL COHESION

The outbreak of the military conflict in Ukraine and the subsequent influx of refugees have highlighted the urgent need for collective action at national and European levels to support those affected by the war. Initially, efforts were focused on providing immediate necessities such as food, shelter, and medical supplies. However, it is equally important to consider the long-term integration of Ukrainian citizens in Europe, including Bulgaria, where this study is conducted.

The concept of “social cohesion” plays a crucial role in this context and is widely used in academic studies and program documents of national and international institutions. Social cohesion refers to the overall sense of unity and interconnectedness within a community or society. It is a multifaceted concept encompassing individual opinions and attitudes, community, and group characteristics, as well as institutional factors at micro, meso, and macro levels. For this analysis, two definitions of social cohesion are being considered:

1. Social cohesion is a situation that encompasses both vertical and horizontal interactions within society. It is characterized by a set of attitudes and norms, including trust, a sense of belonging, willingness to participate, and mutual assistance. These attitudes and norms are also reflected in people’s behaviours.<sup>23</sup>
2. Social cohesion is a descriptive attribute of a collective, indicating the quality of togetherness within the group. It emphasizes the unity and solidarity among members of the collective.<sup>24</sup>

These definitions provide a framework for understanding and assessing social cohesion within the context of the Ukrainian refugee situation in Bulgaria.

<sup>23</sup> Chan, J., To, HP. & Chan, E. Reconsidering Social Cohesion: Developing a Definition and Analytical Framework for Empirical Research. Soc Indic Res 75, 273–302 (2006). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-005-2118-1>, p.290

<sup>24</sup> Schiefer, David & Van der Noll, Jolanda. (2017). The Essentials of Social Cohesion: A Literature Review. Social Indicators Research. 132. 10.1007/s11205-016-1314-5., p.14

According to Schiefer and Van der Noll, a cohesive society is characterized by close social relations, a strong emotional connection to the social entity, and a collective orientation towards the common good. Social cohesion is built upon three dimensions: social relations, attachment/belonging, and orientation towards the common good. Each dimension encompasses various subcomponents that contribute to the overall concept of social cohesion. Social relations encompass social networks, participation in political or civil activities, trust (both between individuals and towards institutions), and mutual tolerance. Attachment/belonging involves the personal sense of belonging to a group and the perception of group identity. Due to the focus of the study on refugees from Ukraine in Bulgaria, only specific aspects of social cohesion will be examined, primarily in the dimension of “social relations” with a focus on “trust” and “mutual tolerance”. The limitations of the research design prevent a more comprehensive analysis that would include the perspectives of other groups within Bulgarian society.

### Relations Between Refugees from Ukraine and Bulgarian Citizens

In general, the respondents describe Bulgarian citizens as tolerant, supportive and with a satisfactory degree of hospitality.

Figure 59. Distribution of answers by statement: “Myself or my household have felt welcome and cared for by Bulgarian citizens” by subsamples

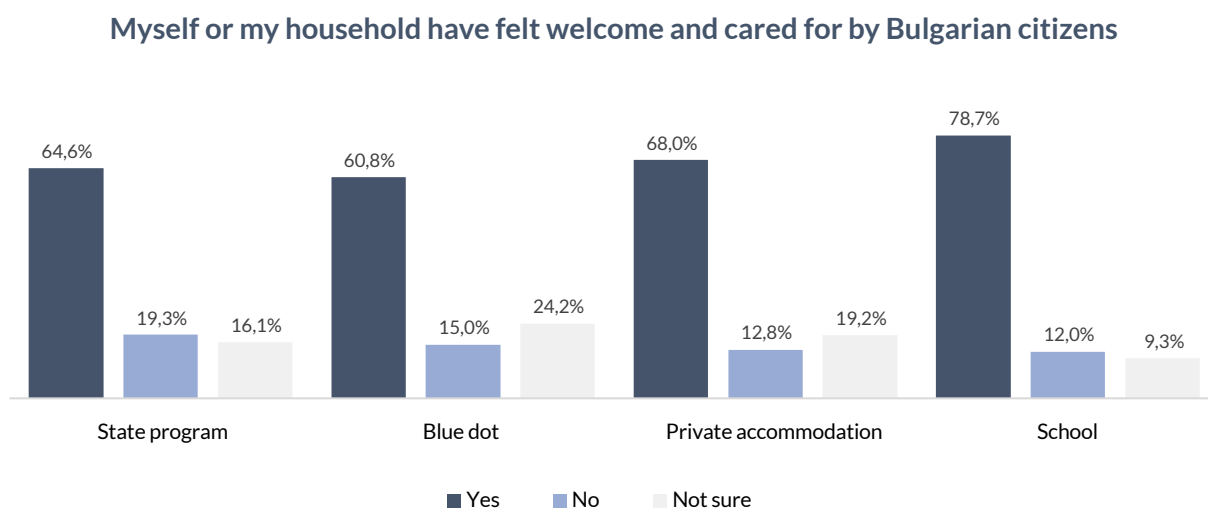
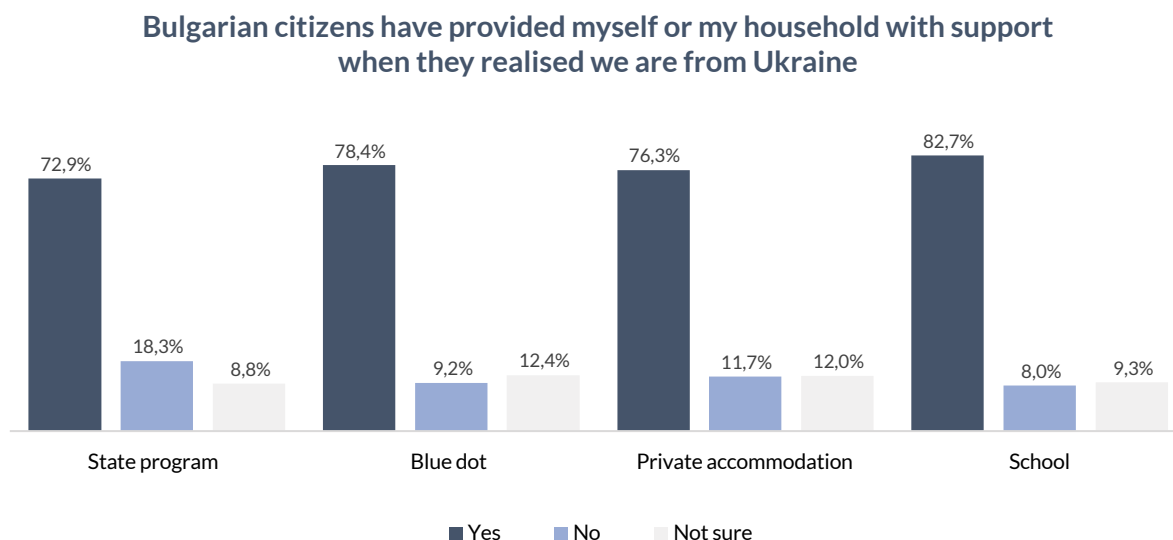


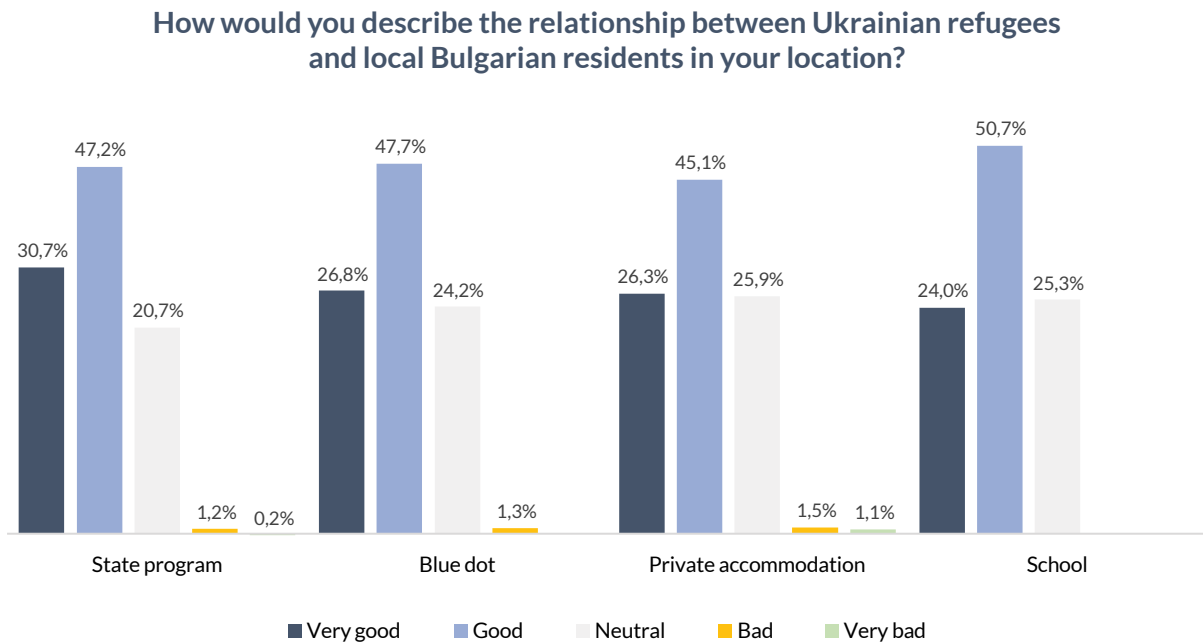
Figure 60. Distribution of answers by statement: “Bulgarian citizens have provided myself or my household with support when they realized we are from Ukraine” by subsamples



Most respondents (72.9 per cent to 82.7 per cent) received support from Bulgarian citizens aware of their refugee status, rating it higher than their personal feeling of being welcomed and cared for (60.8 per cent to 78.7 per cent). Parents of children in Bulgarian schools felt the highest acceptance and support. Women, highly educated individuals, and those in regional cities reported a stronger sense of acceptance and support from the local community.



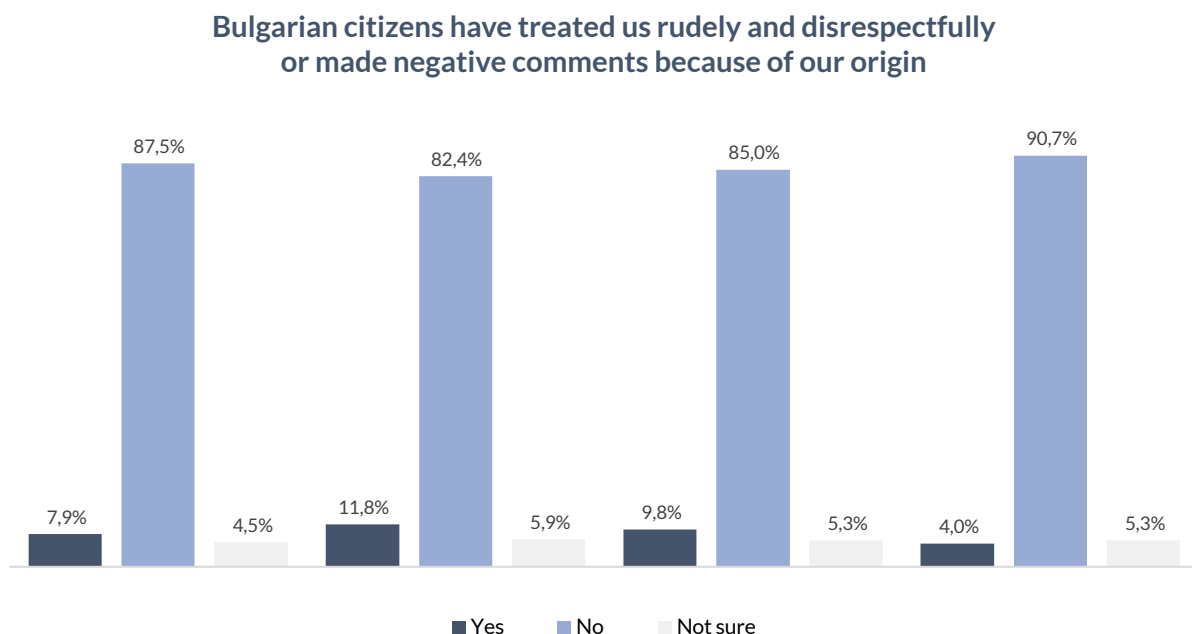
**Figure 61. Distribution of answers to question: "How would you describe the relationship between Ukrainian refugees and local Bulgarian residents in your location?" by subsamples**



Refugees from Ukraine generally have good relations with local residents, with 71.4 per cent to 77.9 per cent of respondents rating their relationships as positive. A smaller proportion, around 20 per cent to 25 per cent describe their relations as neutral, while less than 3 per cent report having negative relationships with Bulgarians. The acceptance of refugees from Ukraine by Bulgarian society is high, with over 80 per cent of respondents indicating that they feel accepted by Bulgarian citizens, rating their acceptance with a score of 6 or higher.<sup>24</sup>

The highest proportion of respondents who felt completely accepted were those accommodated under the governmental programme, with 31.7 per cent indicating so. On average, Ukrainian refugees rated their acceptance by Bulgarians between 7.55 and 7.82, depending on the subgroup. It is noteworthy that among more integrated groups, the degree of feeling completely accepted slightly decreases, as they may also encounter more diverse attitudes. Men, respondents over 60 years of age, the less educated and those living in smaller settlements feel more accepted by Bulgarian society.

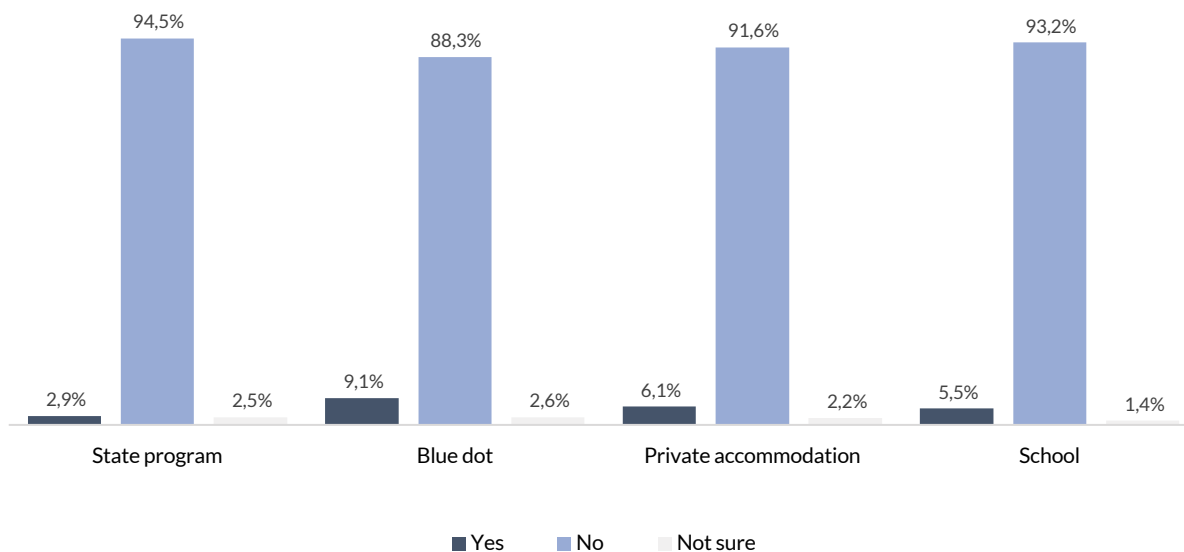
**Figure 62. Distribution of answers by statement: "Bulgarian citizens have treated us rudely and disrespectfully or made negative comments because of our origin" by the subsamples**



<sup>24</sup> On a scale of 0 to 10.

Figure 63. Distribution of answers by statement:  
 “Bulgarian citizens have treated our children rudely and disrespectfully, or our children  
 have been bullied at school because of their Ukrainian origin” by subsamples

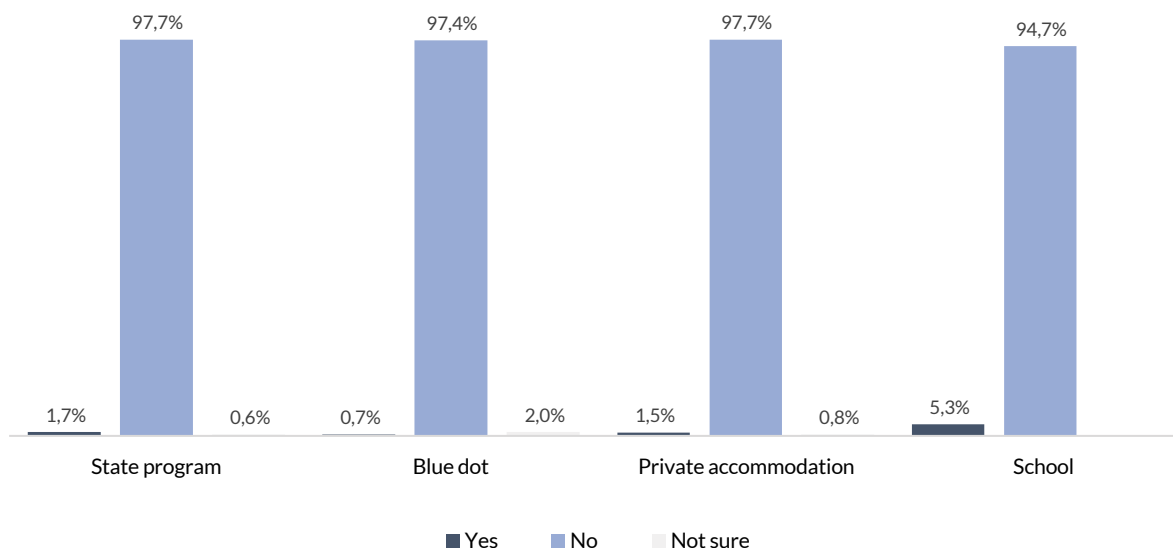
**Bulgarian citizens have treated our children rudely and disrespectfully, or our children  
 have been bullied at school because of their Ukrainian origin**



Instances of aggressive and rude behaviour by Bulgarian citizens towards refugees from Ukraine based on their origin are not widespread. Most respondents, ranging from 82.4 per cent to 90.7 per cent across the four subgroups, stated that they have not experienced such behaviour. The children of Ukrainian refugees attending Bulgarian schools have also largely been spared from rude behaviour, with between 6 per cent and 9 per cent reporting disrespectful treatment. The majority, between 88.3 per cent and 94.5 per cent completely agree that their children have not been subjected to aggression based on their origin. However, a higher percentage of those using Blue Dot hubs, around 11.8 per cent for personal aggression and 9.1 per cent towards their children, have experienced such aggression. Women and those living in the regional cities of the country more often have become an object of verbal aggression towards them personally and towards their children.

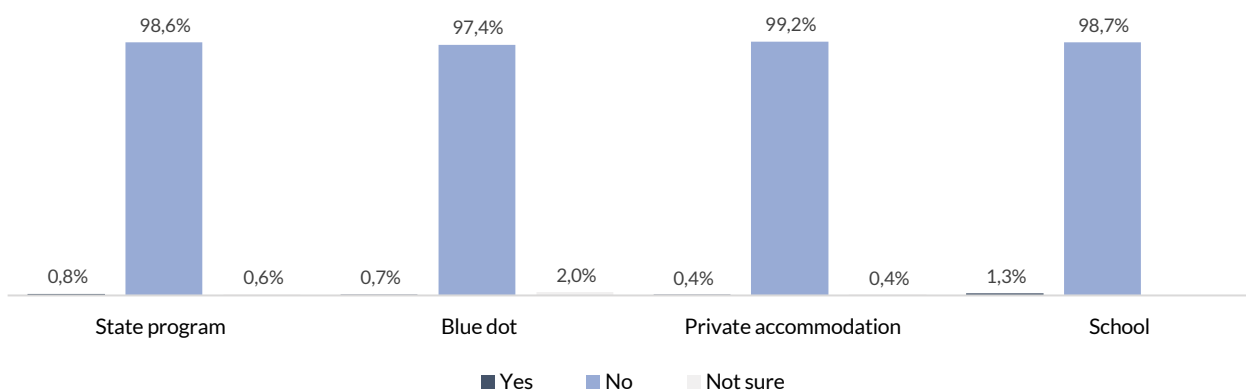
Figure 64. Distribution of answers by statement:  
 “Myself or my household have had incidents that caused serious material damage to our property” by subsamples

**Myself or my household have had incidents that  
 caused serious material damage to our property**



**Figure 65. Distribution of answers by statement:**  
**“Myself or my household have had incidents involving physical assault on a family member” by subsamples**

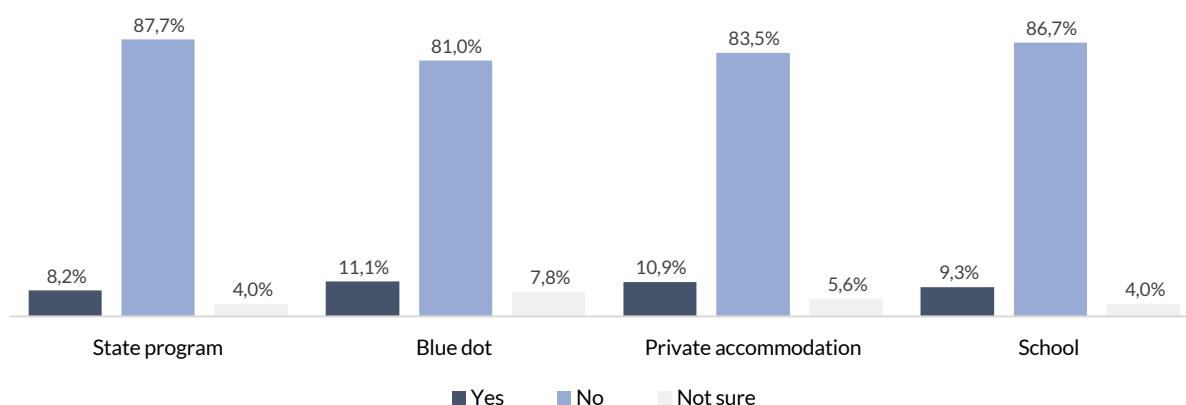
**Myself or my household have had incidents involving physical assault on a family member**



Instances of extreme violence, such as material damage to property and physical assaults, are even rarer among refugees from Ukraine in Bulgaria. Over 95 per cent of respondents stated that their property has not been damaged, and over 97 per cent reported no experience of physical aggression. Among those whose children attend Bulgarian schools, there is a slightly higher percentage of individuals who have encountered such acts of aggression, although the overall figures remain low.

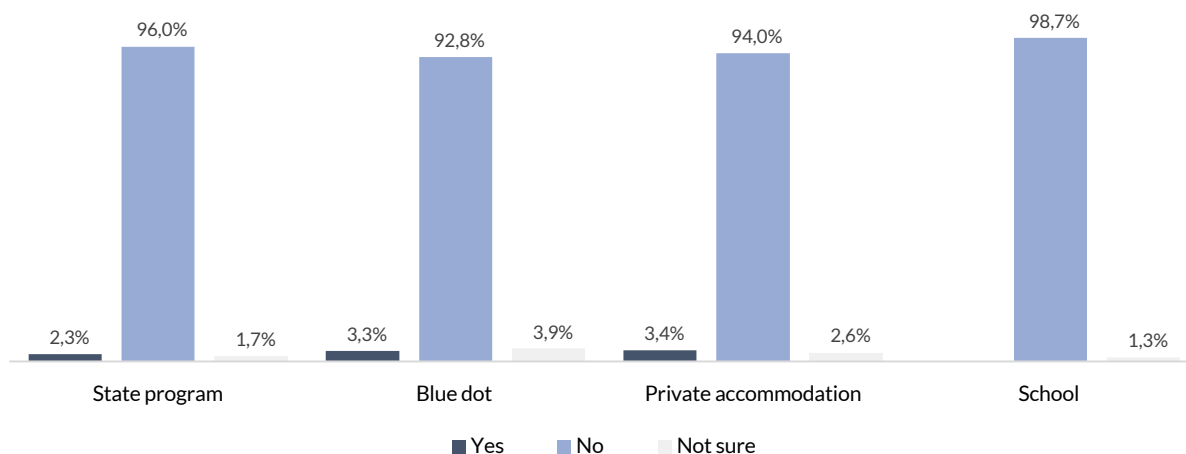
**Figure 66. Distribution of answers by statement:**  
**“I know of other citizens of Ukraine who are in Bulgaria and who have been treated rudely and disrespectfully by local residents” by subsamples**

**I know of other citizens of Ukraine who are in Bulgaria and who have been treated rudely and disrespectfully by local residents**



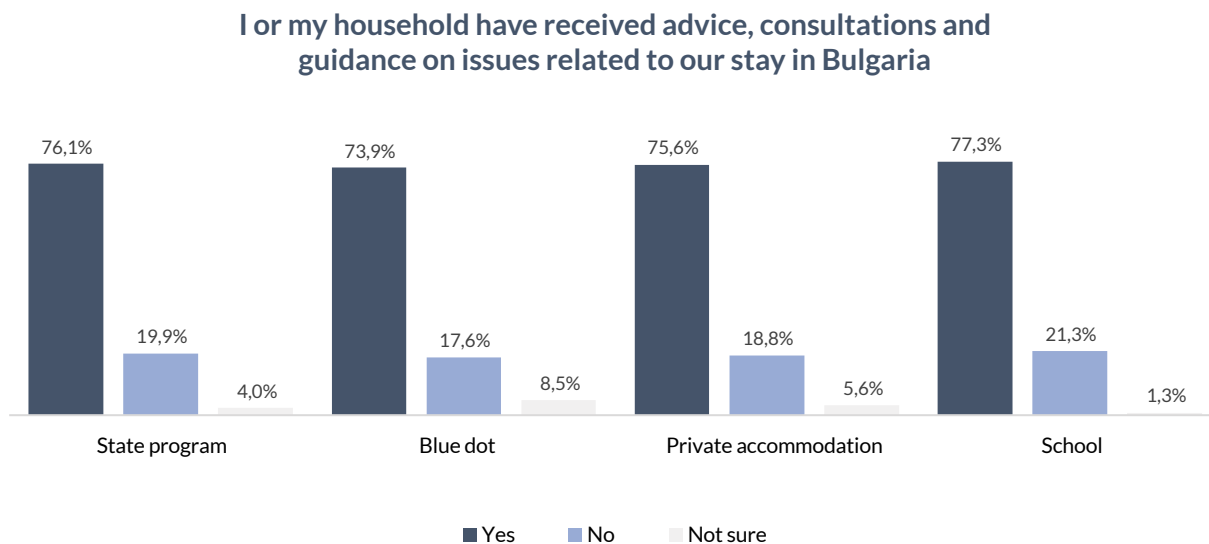
**Figure 67. Distribution of answers by statement:**  
**“I know of other citizens of Ukraine who are in Bulgaria and who have been physically attacked by local residents” by subsamples**

**I know of other citizens of Ukraine who are in Bulgaria and who have been physically attacked by local residents**



Instances of aggression towards refugees from Ukraine in Bulgaria, whether personally experienced or observed, remain relatively low. Most respondents, ranging from 81 per cent to 87.7 per cent reported not knowing about cases of verbal aggression based on Ukrainian origin, while between 92.8 per cent and 98.7 per cent were unaware of physical assault incidents. However, users of Blue Dot services were more likely to be aware of verbal aggression towards their fellow refugees. These manifestations of non-acceptance and disrespectful attitudes are more prevalent in highly urbanized areas, particularly in major cities. Refugees residing in regional cities are more likely to be aware of instances of verbal aggression towards their compatriots.

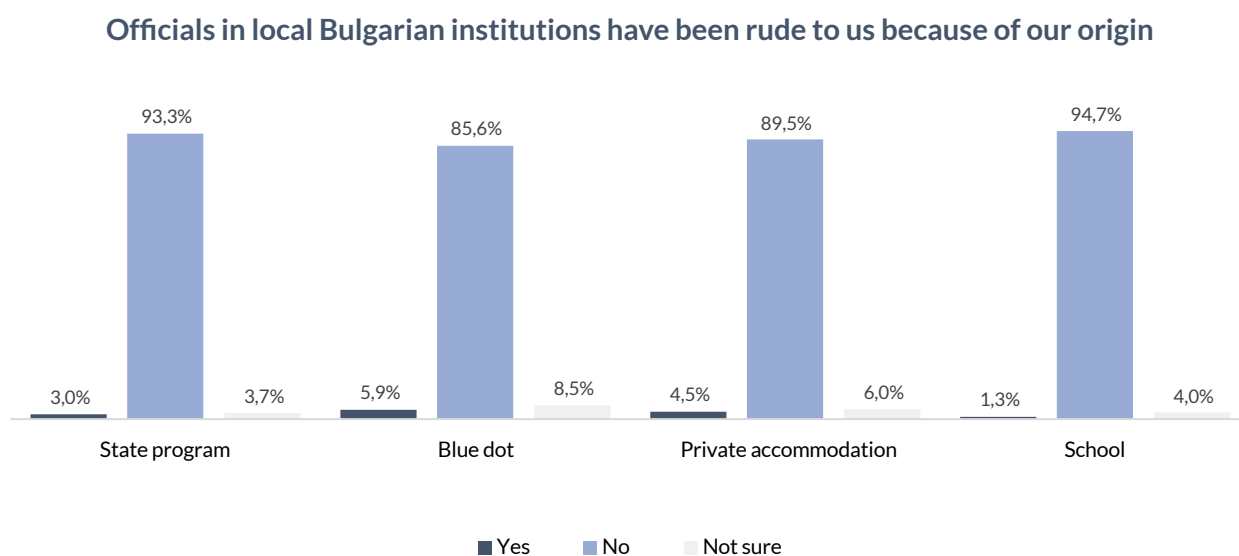
Figure 68. Distribution of answers by statement: "I or my household have received advice, consultations and guidance on issues related to our stay in Bulgaria" by the four subsamples of respondents



About three-quarters of refugees from Ukraine report that they have received advice, consultation and guidance on issues related to their stay in the country.

### Relations Between Refugees from Ukraine and Bulgarian Institutions

Figure 69. Distribution of answers by statement: "Officials in local Bulgarian institutions have been rude to us because of our origin" by subsamples



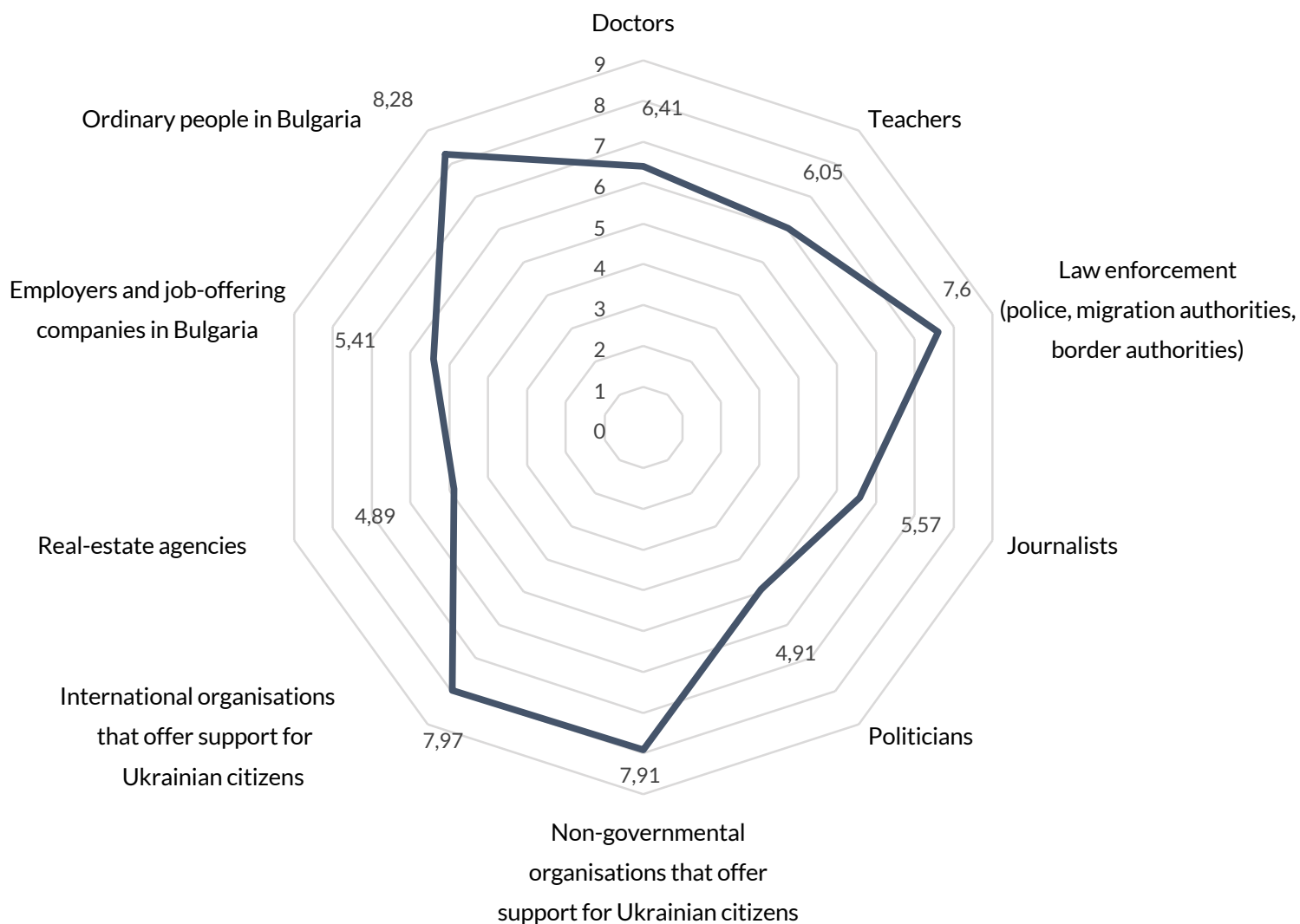
Most refugees from Ukraine in Bulgaria report not encountering rude or disrespectful treatment from officials in Bulgarian institutions based on their origin. The shares range from 85.6 per cent to 94.7 per cent among the four subsamples. Only a small percentage, between 1.3 per cent and 5.9 per cent of respondents, report negative experiences in this regard. However, refugees living in regional cities have reported encountering rude and disrespectful treatment by institutions more frequently.

## Trust in Key Individuals and Institutions at the National and International Level

Figure 70. Average scores on question: "To what extent do you personally trust the following groups in Bulgaria?" on a scale from 0 to 10.

To what extent do you personally trust the following groups in Bulgaria?

Please indicate on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "I do not trust at all" and 10 is "I trust completely".



Refugees from Ukraine in Bulgaria exhibit a high level of trust in ordinary people in Bulgaria, with average scores ranging from 8.03 to 8.29 out of 10. Non-governmental and international organizations that provide support and assistance to refugees also receive high levels of trust. Representatives of law enforcement agencies are trusted to a lesser extent. Doctors and teachers receive average trust scores of 6.41 and 6.05, respectively, with higher trust in teachers among parents whose children are enrolled in Bulgarian schools. Trust in professions that may have less direct contact with refugees, such as journalists, employers, and real estate agencies, is comparatively lower. Politicians and real estate agencies are rated the lowest in terms of trust, particularly by parents of children enrolled in Bulgarian schools. Trust in law enforcement agencies is higher among respondents over the age of 60, and trust in ordinary people in Bulgaria also increases with age. Residents of regional centres demonstrate higher levels of trust in doctors, teachers, organizations providing support, employers, and real estate agencies. Among employed Ukrainian citizens, trust in employers or job-offering companies in Bulgaria is higher compared to those who are unemployed.

# RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the key findings of the MSNA, these recommendations aim to aid the Government of Bulgaria in providing comprehensive support and fostering the successful integration of refugees from Ukraine into Bulgarian society:

- 1. Improve access to psychological and psychosocial support:** Recognize the high need for psychological support among Ukrainian refugees and ensure that adequate resources and services are available to address their mental health needs. This includes providing information about available support, addressing language barriers, and ensuring affordability of services.
- 2. Enhance integration/inclusion efforts:** Focus on promoting social cohesion and integration of refugees from Ukraine into Bulgarian society. This can be achieved through fostering positive interactions between refugees and local communities, promoting cultural understanding, and providing support for language learning and job opportunities. Furthermore, enrolment in schools can be supported through information campaigns, ensuring additional educational support and providing transportation.
- 3. Strengthen information dissemination:** Improve the accessibility and clarity of information related to rights, services, and opportunities available to refugees from Ukraine. Enhance communication channels, including online platforms and social networks, to ensure that accurate and up-to-date information reaches refugees in a timely manner.
- 4. Address specific needs of vulnerable groups:** Pay special attention to the needs of vulnerable groups, such as children, women, and persons with disabilities, ensuring their safety, well-being, and access to essential services. Develop targeted support programs and initiatives to address their specific needs and challenges.
- 5. Combat discrimination and promote tolerance:** Take proactive measures to combat discrimination and xenophobia towards Ukrainian refugees. Raise awareness, provide education on cultural diversity, and promote tolerance and acceptance among the local population through targeted campaigns and initiatives.
- 6. Strengthen institutional response:** Improve the capacity and responsiveness of institutions involved in supporting Ukrainian refugees, including law enforcement agencies, healthcare providers, and educational institutions. Provide training at national and local level and resources to ensure effective and culturally sensitive service delivery.
- 7. Foster partnerships and coordination:** Enhance coordination among relevant stakeholders at national and local level, including government agencies, municipalities, non-governmental organizations, and international partners, to maximize the effectiveness of support and integration efforts. Foster collaboration and information sharing to address the complex needs of refugees from Ukraine.