

A Perspective

Rapid review of emergency
funding to the UK refugee and
migration sector during COVID-19
(March – November 2020)

Summary

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at  Global Dialogue

Objective: to surface descriptive and early quantitative info on scale and type of independent and statutory funding, purpose and process of the funds, grant distribution across the UK, the size and focus of recipients, intersectionality of issues, gaps in data and knowledge, and legacy and learning from this period

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as the positions of any of the funding organisations or Migration Exchange as a whole.

Methods & research limitations

- Mixed methods – a combination of a desk-based literature review, qualitative semi-structured interviews, and early capture and analysis of available grant-making data during the period March to November 2020.
- Interviews with 16 independent foundations (including two statutory funders), their raw grant-making data & 360Giving's COVID-19 Grants Tracker.
- Interviews with 9 frontline refugee and migration charities who provided on the ground insights and experiences
- Limited public data - intelligence gathering, learning, and research ongoing
- The emerging overall COVID-19 funding response is not comprehensive, and numbers and data remain opaque (timing issue not a transparency one)
- The real opaqueness, beyond headline figures, comes from statutory funders (largely government)

2021 has started with another lockdown and Covid-19 continues to shape every aspect of our lives.

The pandemic continues to hold a mirror up to our societal vulnerabilities and inequalities

The full scope of COVID-19's impact on the more than 570 charities working primarily on refugee and migration issues in the UK, who have a combined income of £117 million per annum, is still unfolding.

£380 million

worth of grants distributed of emergency funding

99 funders

@time of writing

£750 million

pledged by DCMS

£30 million

To Scotland

£20 million

To Wales

£200 million

Coronavirus Community Support Fund, NLCF

8,250

charities in England
received funding from NLCF

£10 million

To Northern Ireland

Funder practice – governance & process



Increased frequency of meetings



Increased delegated authority



Increased funding



Creation of new COVID-19 specific funds and collaborations



Realigned grant programmes, and/ or working through collaborations or partnerships to shift or share governance or decision-making



Quickly reached-out to existing grantees



Collaborations encouraged single portal, application and point of contact



Pro-active in COVID-19 grant-making



Independent external (equity) assessors and partners



Difficulty in distributing ££ at first and some charities returned or did not accept funding

Funder practice – collaborations



Respond & Adapt Programme (RAP) was a collaboration between Refugee Action, NACCOM and Migration Exchange.

£2,137,000 granted to 130 organisations across the UK.

Barrow Cadbury Trust partnered with The National Lottery Community Fund

£5 million distributed

The Community Justice Fund help specialist social welfare legal advice organisations cope with the immediate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

£11m in grants, of which £3m for immigration legal advice work

Funder practice - grants



Funder practice – action learning

Collaborations



- enabled funders to respond more easily, more strategically, and nimbly to the crisis
- encouraged the use of a single portal or point of contact, where possible, so that access was easy for both applicants and funders
- exposed new, smaller groups to funding and funders
- brought together external expert assessors to support the decision-making process

Trusts and foundations continue to:



- deploy expertise – using partner organisations to ensure funds reach the most in need
- create new funds and/or realigning grant programmes
- increase flexibility around reporting and payment schedules
- convert restricted grants to unrestricted funding
- provide top-up funding
- engage in advocacy

Funder practice – action learning

Funders have started to take stock and consider what resilience and recovery might look like.



- All funders who participated in collaborations positive about live and frequent information, data sharing and learning - keen to see this coordination continue
- Nine funders found that most of their grantees were stable, at the moment, but most were worried about post March 2021 spend deadlines or when all of the emergency statutory funding ends
- At November 2020, all foundations had either re-opened their normal grant-making programmes, re-launched new strategies, or are working towards developing new strategies centred on anticipated needs.
- Three funders mentioned they are looking towards systems change to address the needs and social problems unveiled by the pandemic.
- Most did not want to go back to the status-quo of short-term restrictive funding, recognised that more long-term unrestrictive support was needed, with a focus on policy and campaigning work

The frontline – accessing funding



Accessing funding

- COVID-19 presented many challenges to organisations working on refugee and migration issues
- A clear ‘bright spot’ has been that many have accessed financial support, especially those who are a registered charity.
- Small grassroots refugee, asylum and migrant groups that are not registered charities, were not eligible for many of the funding pots.
- Those reliant on grants seem to have fared better than those whose income more diverse



Decision-making

- Quick decisions by trusts and foundations
- Statutory funding took longer to be distributed (many more hoops

Funding challenges

- Application process was difficult
- Minimum financial requirements were prohibitive
- Lacked ICT skills to fill in forms on-line
- Limited fundraising capacity
- Application fatigue

Funding anecdotal evidence

- Funding has emerged as a key long- term concern
- Like to see foundations continue to provide unrestricted long-term funding and support and consult or co-design with them how the pandemic will impact future funding

The frontline – accessing funding



Collaborations and partnerships

- Collaborations like the Respond and Adapt Programme helped make some specialist frontline providers more visible to new and previously unknown funders
- Collaborations also facilitated concerted funding for those outside London (Greater London received the biggest proportion of funding)
- Partnerships between VSOs were also important
 - ✓ Enabled information sharing and better coordination (e.g. data sharing and referrals)
 - ✓ Brought different sectors together (e.g. refugee, asylum and migrant and homelessness)
 - ✓ Several organisations interviewed spoke about joined up approaches to fundraising and direct service delivery

The frontline – responding to or leading change

Responding to or leading change



- Direct service delivery organisations rate the negative impact of COVID-19 significantly greater than those whose work is primarily advocacy and campaigning
- Majority of refugee, asylum and migrant groups who received support were reacting to the crisis, providing frontline services (e.g. essential supplies, food parcels, digital aid, housing advice, mental health support)
- Frontline organisations, in their service delivery, were also leading the funding agenda



Meeting community needs

- Organisations working primarily on refugee and migration issues are confronting additional challenges in meeting community needs in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, from lack of technology to increased secondary trauma
- Funding requests
 - Unrestricted core funding
 - Information, advice, guidance
 - Hardship support (e.g. people at risk, destitution, poverty)
 - Digital poverty – both needed by frontline charities and those they are supporting
 - Health and wellbeing



The frontline – action learning



- Spoke about a seat around the local/ regional statutory table to give their clients a voice, but there is a lack of resources to support this work.
- Layers of vulnerability on different segments of the migration and refugee sector
 - Homelessness
 - domestic violence
 - women and girls
 - people with disabilities and underlying health conditions
- Many VSOs interviewed felt the philanthropic sector could – and should – do more to address racial justice and other issues affecting these communities, including:
 - funding small, un-constituted grassroots organisations
 - Provide unrestricted funding
 - Provide more equity-related grants and use an equity lens in how foundations work and learn
 - More ‘real talk’ with those who have lived experience, informing and leading what needs to be done to shift power and make systems change

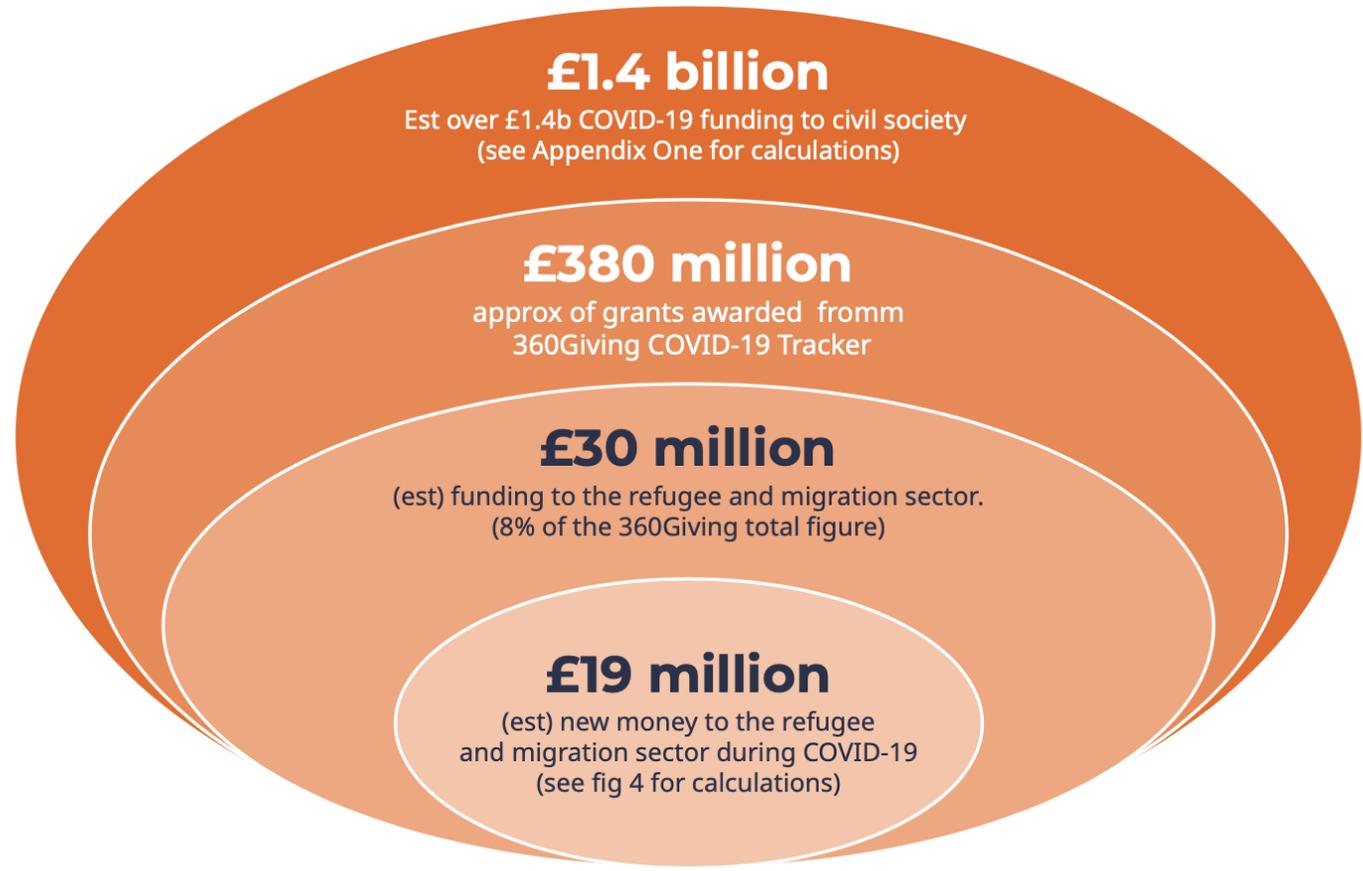


Creative and entrepreneurial not to mention strategic, they all are in the face of challenge

- Many are seeking and finding opportunity to commercialise their work, especially information, advice and guidance work
- At least three VSOs interviewed stated the restrictive nature of statutory funding meant they had to be more entrepreneurial about restricted and unrestricted budgeting and spend to ensure costs were covered beyond the March 2021 ‘spend by’ date

The numbers – scale & type

Figure 1: Sample overview of total COVID-19 funding figures (not comprehensive benchmarks)

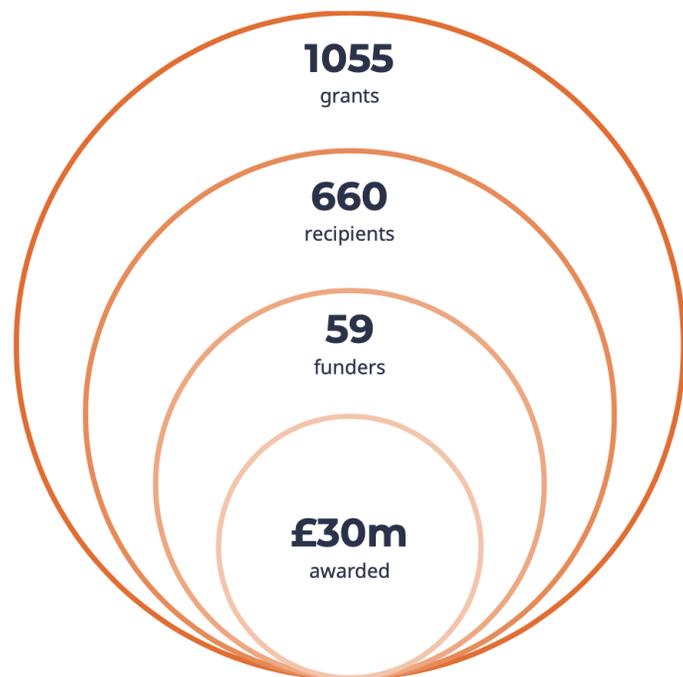


The numbers – scale & type

Figure 4: Estimate of total new COVID-19 (£) money in the refugee and migration sector during the period March to November 2020

Funder	Total Fund Amount	Est new £ refugee & migration funding during C19
NLCF EDA with BCT	5,000,000	5,000,000
ATJF CJF	11,600,000	2,320,000.00
RAP	2,137,000	2,137,000
NET	60,538,417	1,513,460
LCRF	42,000,000	3,360,000
Comic Relief /BBC Children in Need Big Night In Appeal	67,110,010	4,476,856.00
Total		18,807,316

Figure 2: Overview of scale - refugee and migration sector funding from March to November 2020



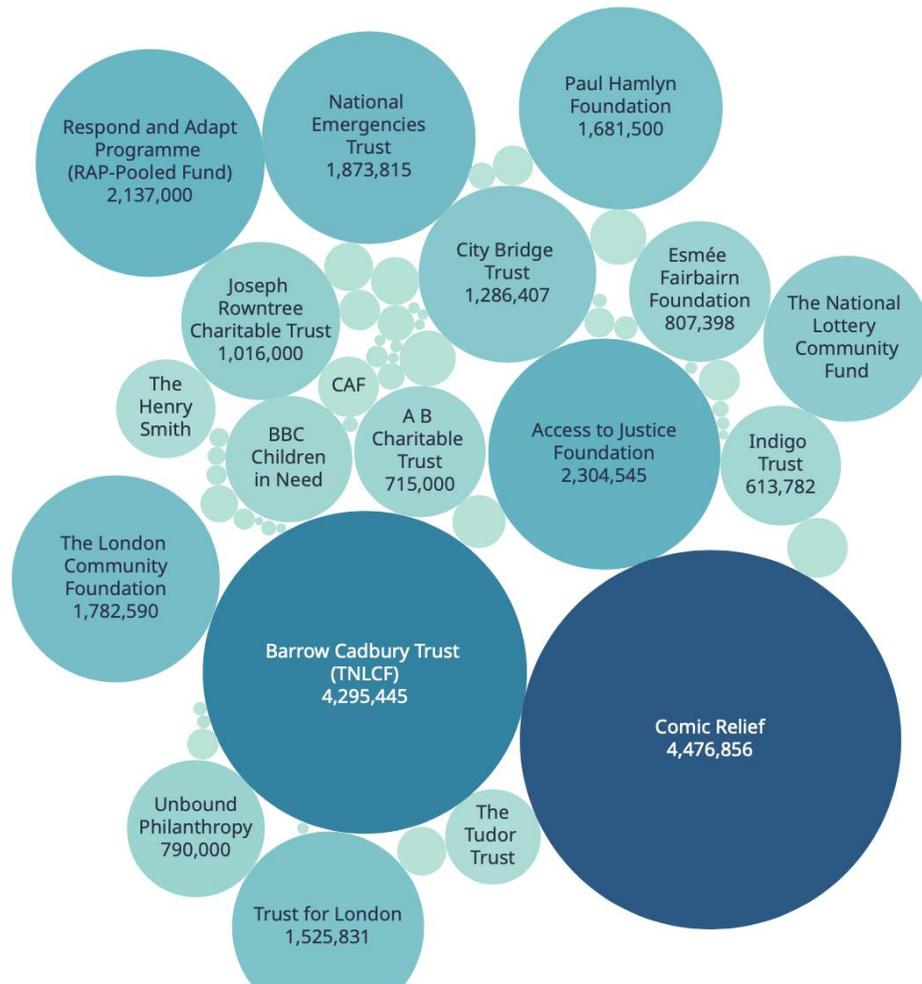
The numbers – scale & type

Of the 1,055 grants, the smallest grant amount was £500 for VSOs and the largest was £1.5m (approximate) to Refugee Council from The National Emergencies Trust (NET)

The median grant amount is £18,885 and the mode grant size is £10,000

Of the 1,055 grants:
720 small grants (up to £20,000)
291 medium grants (up to £100,000)
44 large grants (£100,000+)

Figure 3: Refugee and migration funders by total grant-making £ during the period March to November 2020



The numbers – scale & type

Comic Relief largest sector funder - £4.5m

Stockport Met Borough Council smallest sector funder with £3,000

Median size grant = £55,000

Mode size grant = £5,000

The numbers – geographic distribution

Figure 5: Geographic spread of refugee and migration funding by nation during the period March to November 2020

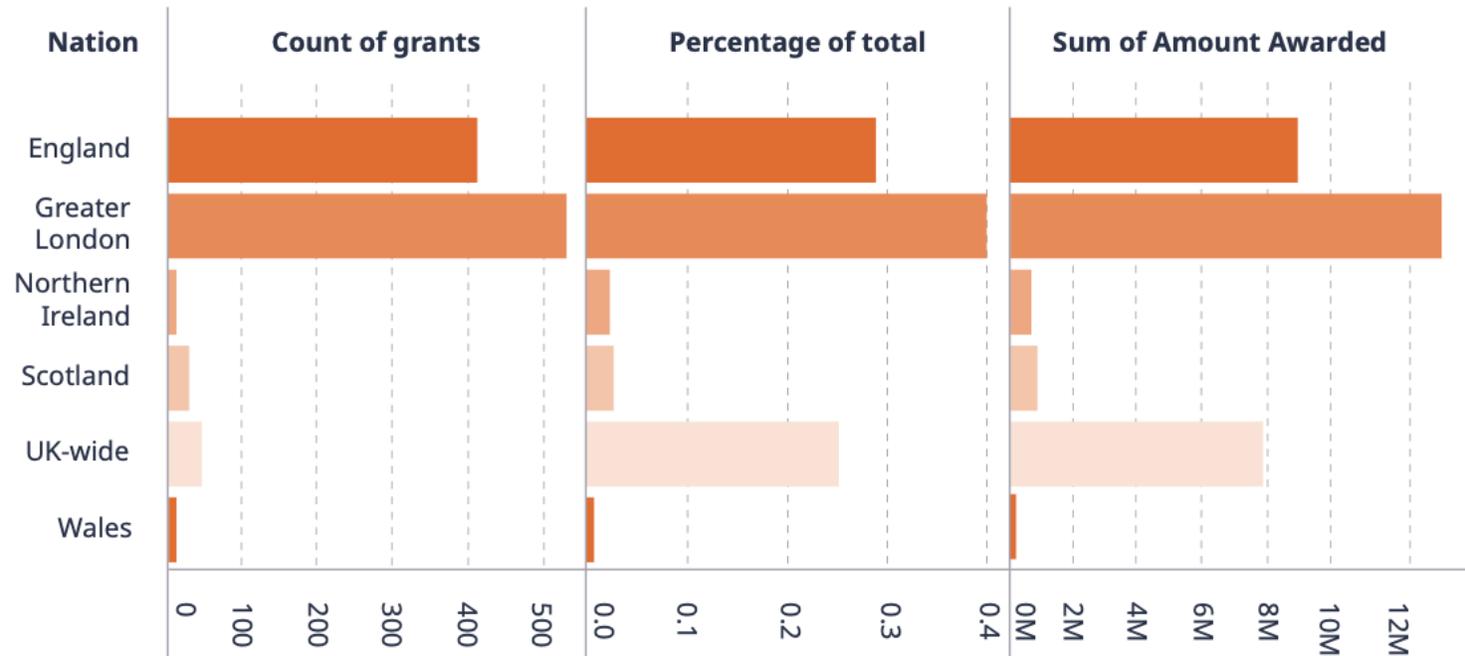


Figure 7: Approximately 3500 words were used to describe types of grants received or recipient 'focus' areas. These are the 50+ most frequent words used in the 1,055 grants.



The numbers – size, focus, purpose

660 distinct recipients
67% were core refugee and migration organisations

72 of the 660 organisations received more than one grant

Organisation size ranged from top end of £2m to low end of £7,000 and a median of £143,000

70% of all grants made were small grants:
720 small grants: 1,055 total grants

What might come next



Ideas to support a resilient refugee and migration sector through the continued crisis and others

- It appears like more work needs to be done on individual and collective real time, live, data and evidence, especially when it comes to statutory data
- More sector-wide adoption of data coding standards and frameworks will be helpful
- There are many small but vital, grassroots organisations, who have deep relationships and trust in their communities but whose work are invisible to many funders
- Many funders reached into their endowments to provide more money to the sector
- Digital exclusion remains a grave pandemic challenge but especially among people who are refugees, asylum seekers and migrants
- Anecdotal stories and impressions have been powerful during this period
- The need to continue and amplify the great work of the sector specific collaborations that emerged during the pandemic



Please continue to be brave and take more positive risks to shore up and sustain the
refugee and migration sector.

We hope that your bravery will catalyse the same from others; especially constructive
government attention and positive action in policy and practice, including more helpful
investment and funding

Thank you.

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