



Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre (BHCAC)

Beneficiaries' Timeline  
&  
Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Charity No. 1085815

[www.bhcac.org.uk](http://www.bhcac.org.uk)

BHCAC was set up in LB of Brent in 1997 to provide practical support to newly arrived survivors of Bosnia war (1992-1995)

*Some of BHCAC's beneficiaries survived Trnopolje concentration camp*

23 years on BHCAC is still dealing with consequences of Yugoslav wars (1991-2001) that targeted innocent civilians!

**Trnopolje concentration camp for Bosnian Muslims and Roman Catholics, Prijedor, Bosnia 1992**



*1992 footage of the concentration camp at Trnopolje. Photograph: ITN*

**Buchenwald concentration camp for European Jews, Weimar, Germany 1941**



*Primary Image: Prisoners in barracks at the Buchenwald concentration camp. (National Archives and Records Administration, 208-AA-206K-31. New Orleans)*

Manjača  
concentration camp  
for Bosnian and  
Herzegovinian  
Muslims and Roman  
Catholics, near Banja  
Luka, Bosnia and  
Herzegovina 1992

*Some of BHCAC's beneficiaries  
survived Manjača concentration  
camp*

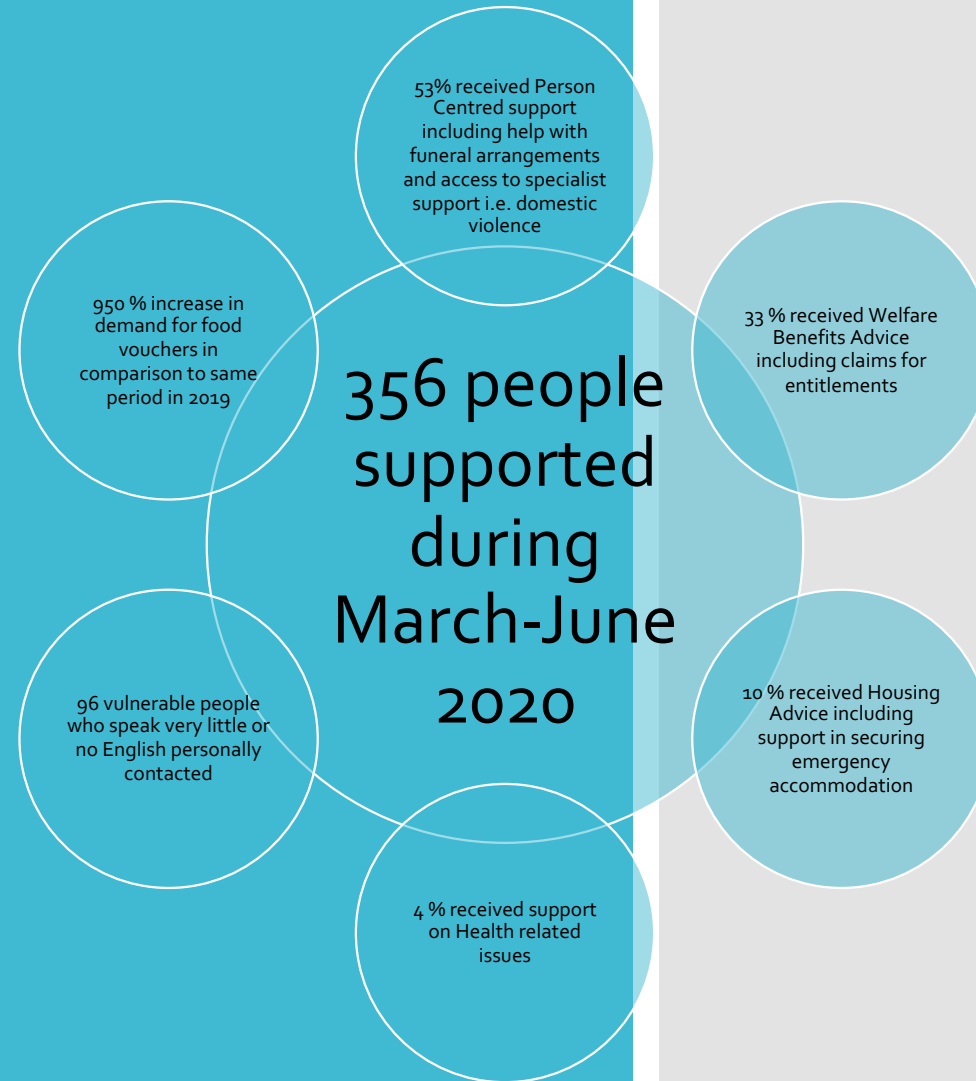


*Primary Image: Prisoners in concentration camp at Manjača.  
Photographer: Patric Robert (Genocid u Bosni, Genocid nad Bošnjacima)*

# BHCAC Beneficiaries' Timeline

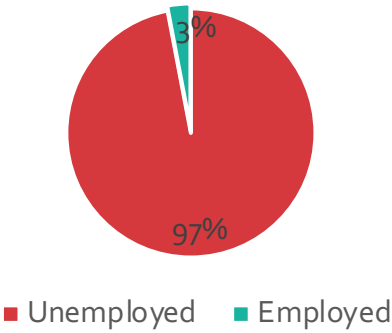
- **1990s:** Majority of BHCAC beneficiaries were Londoners originally from Bosnia and Herzegovina. They have arrived in the UK as refugees in the early 1990s following the breakup of former Yugoslavia, some were concentration camp survivors who arrived under the UK Government programme "1000" and under the protection of UNHCR and Red Cross. Others were their family members and emergency medical evacuees. Many have seen their homes destroyed, family and friends killed, suffered torture, rape and other traumas.
- In **2008** individuals with similar past experiences originating from other 5 western Balkans countries (Croatia, Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia) approached BHCAC for assistance.
- In **2016** over 85% of all BHCAC beneficiaries from West Balkans were identified as physically and/or mentally disabled resulting from Yugoslav war (1991-2001). 75 % of beneficiaries were over the age of 65 and 93% did not speak English.
- In **2017** due to gaps in Welfare Benefits Advice service provision in LB of Brent, BHCAC rolled out its outreach Welfare Benefits Advice services and support to the wider Brent community.
- Year ending 31 March **2020**, 1119 people benefited from BHCAC's work and out of this number 57 % of beneficiaries were individuals from the wider Brent community who experienced multiple disadvantages.

# BHCAC's RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

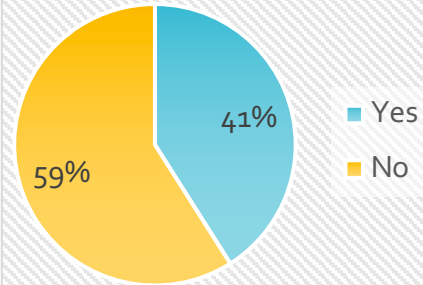




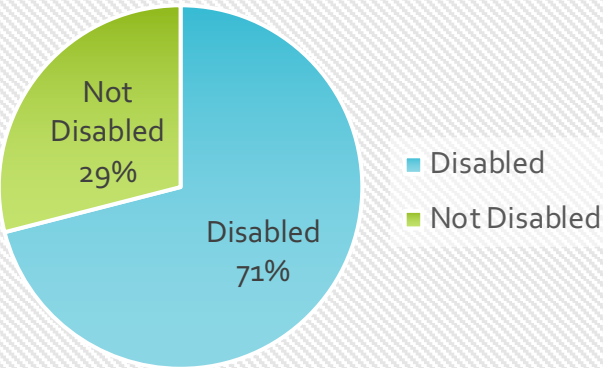
### Employment



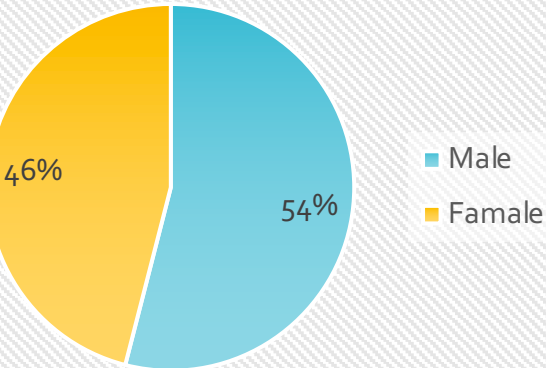
### English Language



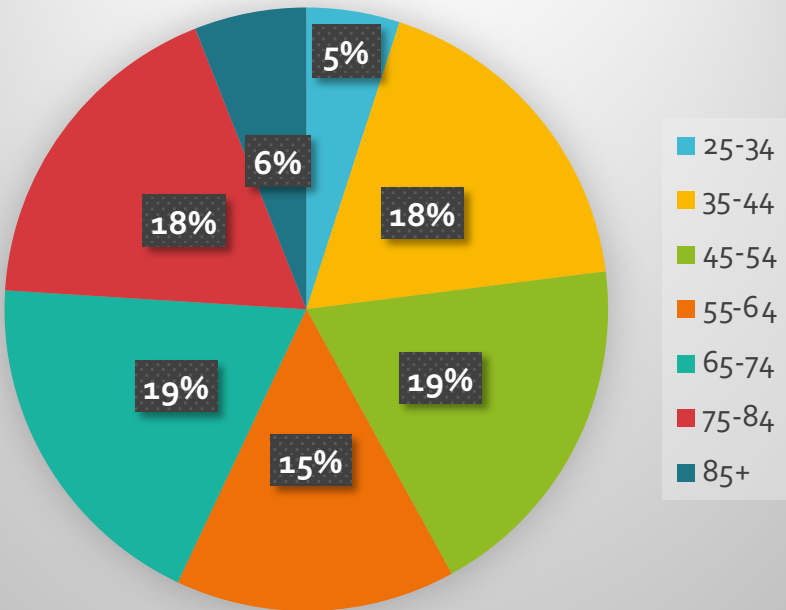
### Disability



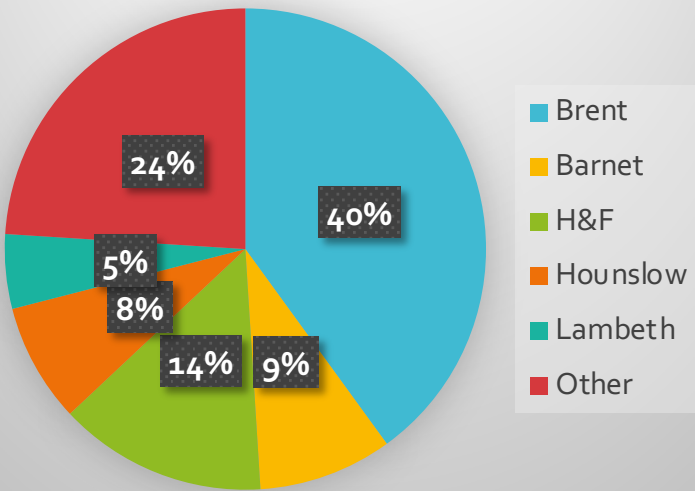
### Gender



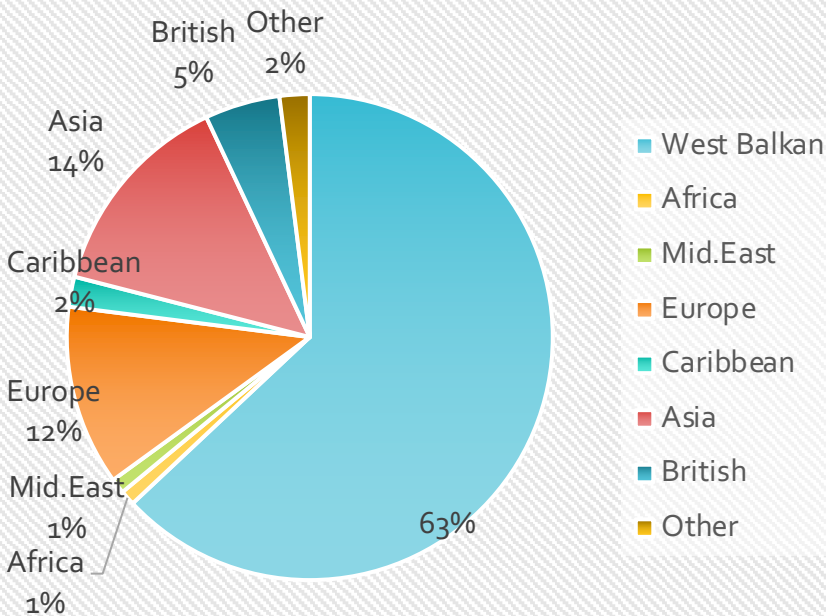
### Age Groups



### Beneficiaries by London Boroughs



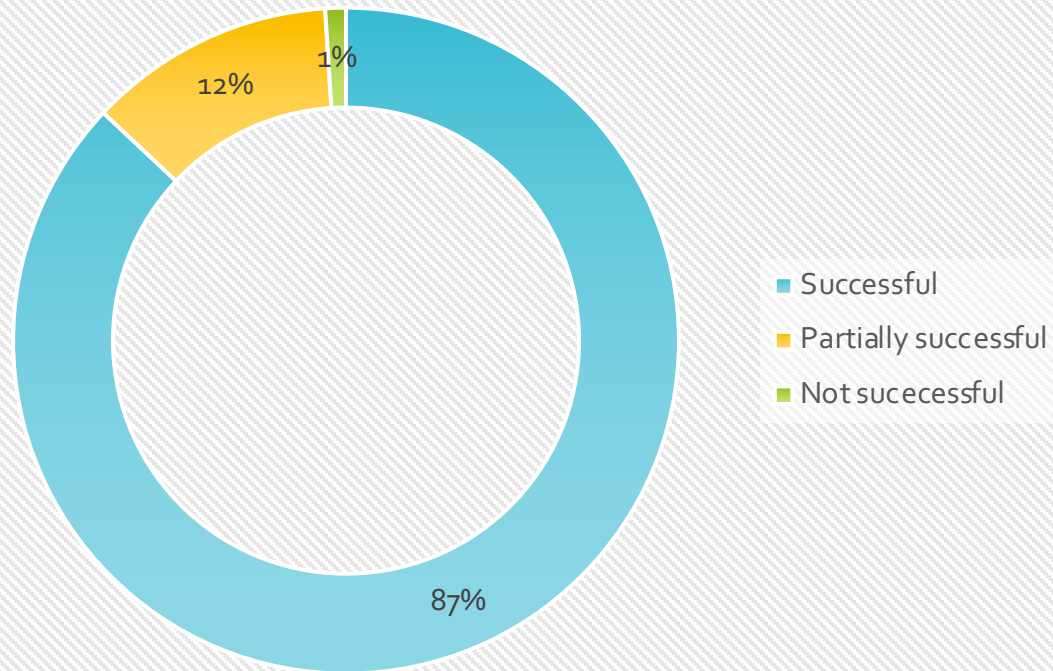
### Ethnic background



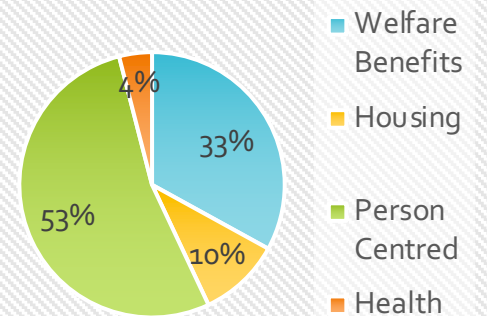
# BHCAC's RESULTS FOR 356 PEOPLE

March-June 2020

## COMPLETION RATE



## Area of Support provided







# BHCAC's Beneficiaries Testimonials

March-June 2020

*"My workplace closed as the result of Covid-19 lockdown and soon after that, I was illegally evicted along with my baby and partner. I could not access support on my own due to language barrier, lack of digital skills and knowledge on who to approach. I was referred to BHCAC by the Brent Hubs (Brent Council) for assistance to access benefits. BHCAC advised me on my entitlements and supported me with a number of claims including emergency food parcels, liaison with homelessness prevention team at Brent Council and my employer in respect of furlough payments. With BHCAC's support, we were placed into emergency accommodation and received our entitlements. I am back to work now, and I really don't have enough words to express how much their support meant to us. They made huge efforts in supporting us and I am so grateful for all they did, God bless them!"*

EEA national, family of three including baby

*"My husband passed away from COVID-19 in early April 2020 and I have experienced great difficulties in getting support because I have no access to public funds, speak little English, have limited digital skills. I was referred to BHCAC by Brent Hubs (Brent Council) and they have advised me on entitlements, assisted me with claims and liaised on my behalf with relevant government departments and my husband's employer. Throughout the process, I gained trust in my Adviser called Selma and I was confident to ask other agencies who contacted me to deal with matters with Selma as she knows my situation so well and was a great advocate. The last point of support for my children and I was Brent Council Social Services to which I was reluctant to approach because I was scared my children might be taken into care. Selma kindly explained to me that my situation is not about children being taken away from me but financial support to meet the needs of the children as they are the only source of help that we would be entitled considering that I have no access to public funds at present. I am very grateful for the BHCAC support and I have told my Adviser Selma that I simply could not do it without her help, she was there to support me when I needed it the most. God only knows what would happen to me and my children...thank you from bottom of my heart."*

Non-EEA national with two children





# BHCAC's Beneficiaries Testimonials

March-June 2020

*"My partner and I were placed in emergency accommodation in Buckinghamshire by Brent Council and I was told by the Council Officer that someone will be in touch to provide further support. I am pregnant and was extremely worried as we were running out of everything and still had to wait 4 weeks for our first Universal Credit payment. On my way to Buckinghamshire, I received a phone call from BHCAC Adviser who arranged emergency food parcel to be delivered to me the next day, also she assisted me with the claim for Housing Benefit and Local Emergency Support from Buckinghamshire Council as immediate support to last us until our first Universal Credit payment. I thank the BHCAC Adviser for her help, she has been an angel to us."*

**British national, pregnant lady**

*" All I can say is WOW! I am blown away by the quick response and immense help given by BHCAC. What an amazing organisation! Thank you so much for helping Sam & John (not real names), even myself, during the difficult time!"*

**Housing Needs Officer (Brent Council)**



# BHCAC's Beneficiaries Testimonials

March-June 2020

*"I am 78 years old widower with chronic heart disease, a non- English speaker living alone in London borough of Lambeth. Since the coronavirus outbreak and lockdown, I have had to stay at home due to my age and underlying health condition. My son, who lives nearby provides me with weekly food shopping and I receive weekly welfare check up calls from BHCAC. In one of their calls in June 2020, I informed them that I was not feeling well and that my son liaised with my GP and I was waiting for them to contact me. I felt very weak and was losing breath and found it difficult to speak. BHCAC Advocacy Worker immediately called 111 and soon after the assessment, the ambulance arrived. I was taken to King's College Hospital where I stayed for a week and was later discharged. I am at my home, safe and feel well now. I am thankful to BHCAC for all they did for me, the welfare check up call in early June from BHCAC probably saved my life and I owe it to them. I hope all this is over soon and I look forward to seeing them in person to thank them properly with the box of chocolates and flowers."*

**Londoner from West Balkan, 78 years old vulnerable gentlemen**