

# HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD



<b>TO:</b>	Health and Wellbeing Board
<b>FROM:</b>	Dominic Harrison, Director of Public Health
<b>DATE:</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> March 2019

**SUBJECT:** Asylum Seekers and Refugees Health Needs Assessment

## 1. PURPOSE

To disseminate the finding of the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Health Needs Assessment (HNA).

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD

It is recommended that members of the Board;

- Note the recommendations made within the report
- Consider the way in which the recommendations may be used to inform and improve the health and wellbeing of asylum seekers and refugees in Blackburn with Darwen.

## 3. BACKGROUND

People seeking asylum and refugees are among some of the most vulnerable groups in society. Before arriving in the UK, they may have experienced violence, war, torture and may have been separated from, or even lost family members and friends. Almost universally, people seeking asylum will have experienced dangerous and difficult journeys to escape to safety. They frequently will have been separated from families and friends and may be bereaved. Arriving in an unfamiliar country, where they perhaps find it difficult to communicate and navigate the complex legal processes can be disorientating and disheartening.

There are up to 350 Asylum seekers in the town at any one time and an undetermined number of refugees.

## 4. RATIONALE

People seeking asylum and refugees may have considerable and varying health and social needs. Given their diverse backgrounds and experiences prior to entering the UK. Therefore, their social, economic and health needs cannot be addressed with a generic approach but should be considered within the context of an individualized, holistic model of care and service provision (Robertshaw, Dhesi, & Jones, 2017) A local Health Needs Assessment (HNA) adds to our understanding of these complexities and supports the development of appropriate support for this group.

This is the first HNA for asylum seekers and refugees conducted in Blackburn with Darwen. The purpose of the HNA was to identify local provision that is currently working well to support this group and understand any gaps that may be impacting negatively on the health and wellbeing and increasing vulnerabilities for this population.

## 1. KEY ISSUES

The HNA identified the following **key issues** for asylum seekers and refugees living in Blackburn with Darwen;

- Mental Health provision and access - unable to navigate the 'choose and book' system, lack of interpreters and reception staff at mental health services unaware of needs of ASR.
- Malnutrition and other associated dietary conditions due to limited cooking skills and lack of availability of familiar foods, also financial pressures
- Infections disease risks- incomplete vaccination schedules, also increased risk of Blood born viruses and other infections acquired during migration.
- Dentistry issues due to lack of interpreters at dentists and also poor knowledge on dental hygiene
- Exacerbation of chronic conditions due to migration and limited access to treatment due to lack of understanding of how to book appointments (choose and book letters not in native tongue)
- Women's health issues – Female Genital Mutilation, Rape, Pregnancy and Screening
- Lack of awareness on the rights of an ASR in Primary Care,
- Lack of awareness of ASR by healthcare staff (receptionist) could cause barriers to access
- Family members and friends acting as interpreters resulting in safeguarding concerns as often children doing this and also this use of translation leads to confidentiality and disclosure issues.
- Impact of housing, childcare and employment on health

The report makes the following **recommendations**;

### Mental Health

- Materials required in community languages,
- Trained mental health professionals facilitating support groups locally to break down barriers/stigma.

### Physical Health

- Explore possibilities of specialist services of healthcare professionals.
- Possibilities of one lead General Practitioner (GP) practice in Blackburn and one in Darwen for ASR
- Ensure all GP's using the Public Health England migrant checklist at first GP appt.
- Dentist to have and use Language Line rather than relying on ASR bringing own interpreters.
- Prepare ASR on future planning for appointments and what to expect.

### General Recommendations

- Training required for administration and front line health staff (GP's Dentists and Hospital) on the needs and rights of ASR.
- Translation services must be used by services and not encourage ASR's to use family or friends.
- Written communication to patients should be in native tongue.
- Targeted services for promoting healthy lifestyles should be used more e.g. Re Fresh.
- Development of community volunteer schemes for ASR's alongside peer ASR support programmes.

## 2. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this health needs assessment should be taken into consideration when developing any policy that may directly or indirectly affect the health and wellbeing of ASR living in Blackburn

with Darwen.

## 7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications of this paper.

## 8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Under the Health and Social care Act 2012 Health and Wellbeing Boards have duty to undertake Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) in relation to the health needs of the local population.

This health needs assessment will assist constituent organisations of the Board in their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and in meeting Home Office requirements for ASRs.

## 9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct resource implications of this paper.

## 10. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations made within the HNA seek to reduce the inequality gap faced by this population group. By ensuring the recommendations are addressed health and wellbeing outcomes for this group will be improved.

## 11. CONSULTATIONS

The needs assessment was carried out in consultation with asylum seekers and refugees living in Blackburn with Darwen and the agencies employed to support and represent them.

<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>Final</b>
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<b>DATE:</b>	03.01.2019
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<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	Blackburn With Darwen Asylum Seekers and Refugees Health Needs Assessment 2018
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