

HEALTHCARE for asylum seekers and refugees



- **Jean Young**, Associate Director Community Based Care and Healthy Populations (Southwark) South East London Clinical Commissioning Group
- **Dr Krishna Misra**, General Practitioner/Joint Clinical Lead for Refugee Health Services – Health Inclusion Team (HIT) Guy's and St Thomas NHS Foundation Trust (GSTT)
- **Tilly Wright**, Managing Partner, Villa Street Medical Centre
- **Rene Mehta**, Managing Partner, Blackfriars Medical Practice
- **Dr Christopher Ward**, GP and Clinical Asylum Seekers and Refugees Programme Representative

OVERVIEW

Background and Local Context

- **Jean Young**, *Associate Director Community Based Care and Healthy Populations (Southwark) South East London Clinical Commissioning Group*

Refugee & Asylum Seeker Services in Southwark: Health Inclusion Team (HIT) Guy's & St Thomas NHS Foundation Trust (GSTT)

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Good Practice - A GP Perspective: Afghan Refugees, Southwark Bridging Hotels

- **Tilly Wright**, *Managing Partner, Villa Street Medical Centre*
- **Rene Mehta**, *Managing Partner, Blackfriars Medical Practice*

Good Practice - A GP Perspective: Asylum Seekers, Contingency Initial Accommodation Centre (IAC)/ Hotels

- **Dr Christopher Ward**, *GP and Clinical Asylum Seekers and Refugees Programme Representative*

BACKGROUND

Who is a Refugee & Asylum Seeker

A refugee is defined by the 1951 UN Convention, as someone who is outside his/her country of nationality or habitual residence due to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is unable / unwilling to avail himself/ herself of the protection of that country.

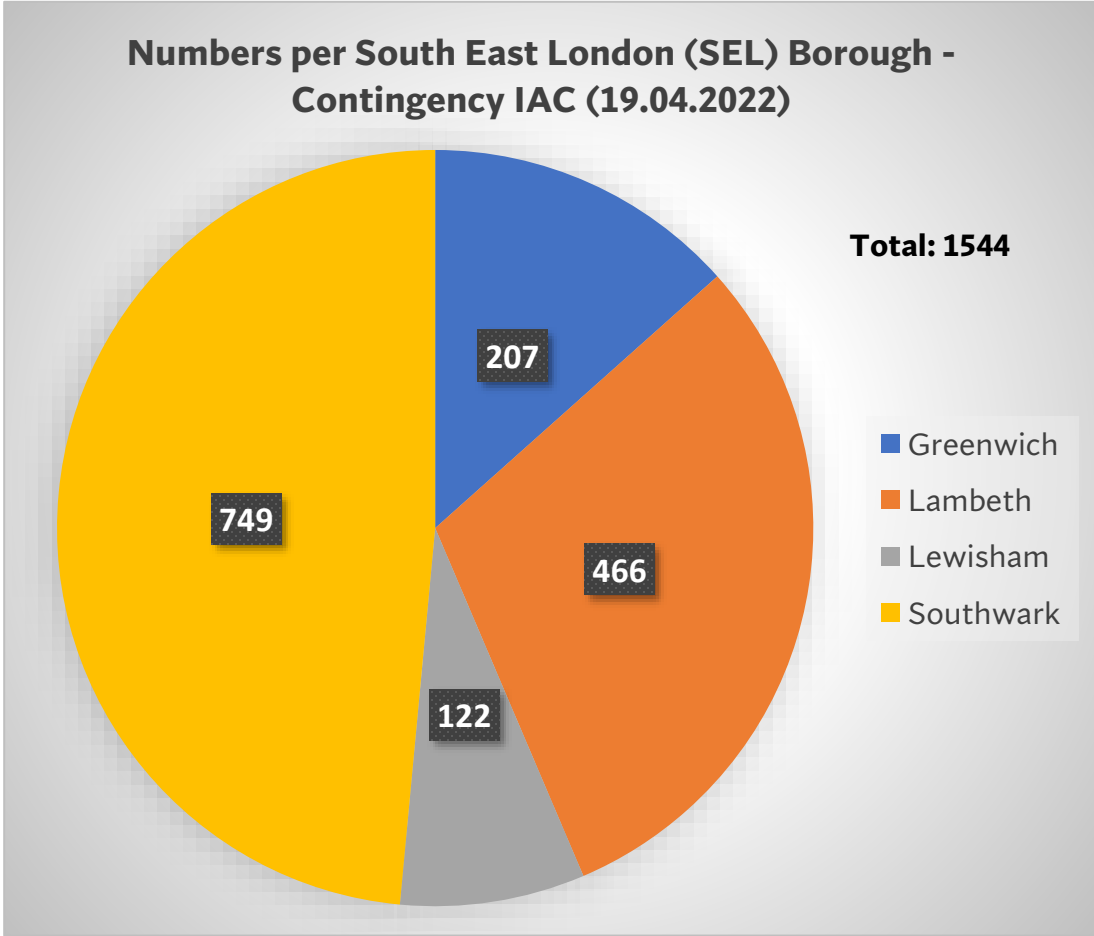
When someone gets **refugee status**, it means their claim for asylum has been successful

Asylum seeker (AS): a person seeking protection from persecution in another country and is awaiting decision on their asylum claim.

Spot the Refugee



BACKGROUND & LOCAL CONTEXT

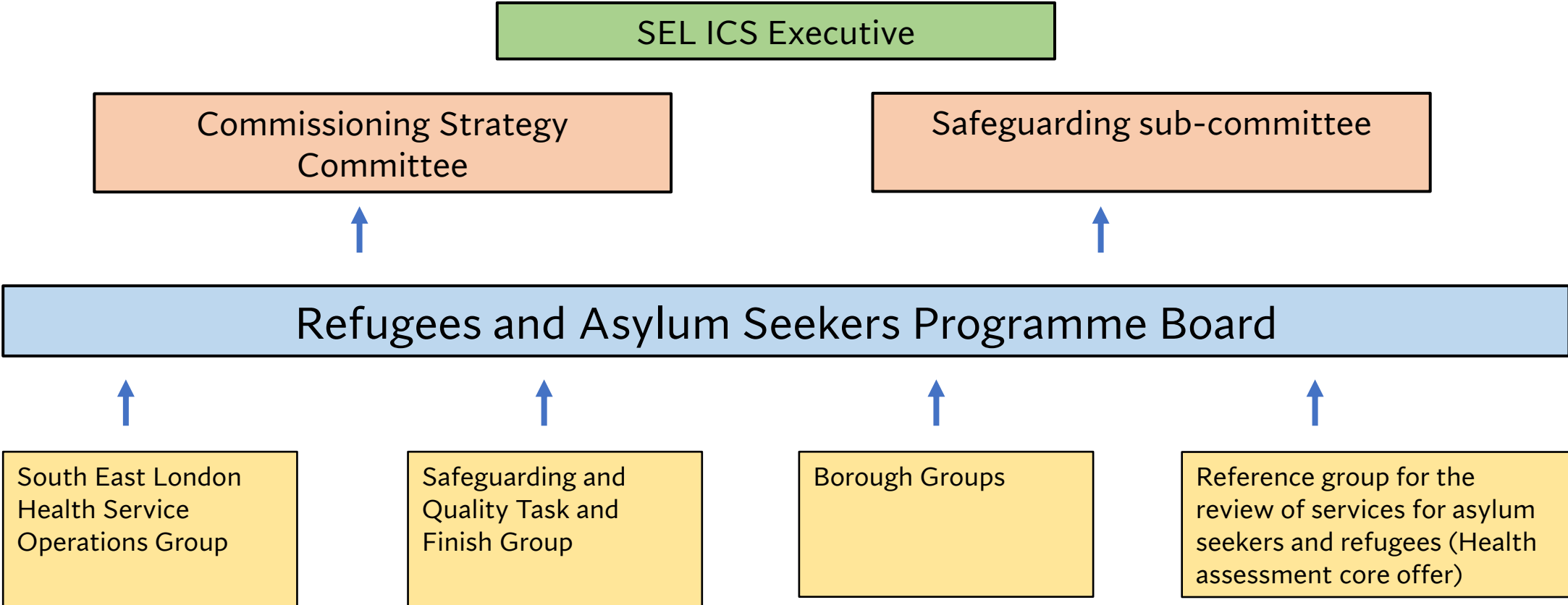


- Initial Accommodation Centre (Core) 1 in Southwark
- Contingency IAC: 11 in SEL (4 in Southwark)
- Bridging hotels: 2 in Southwark.

Refugee Schemes

- 2014 - Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (VPRS)
- 2021 - Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) & Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) - Bridging Hotels
- 2022 - Ukrainian Schemes:
Family Visa Scheme
Homes for Ukraine (sponsorship scheme)

SOUTH EAST LONDON REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS PROGRAMME BOARD



Refugee & Asylum Seeker Services in Southwark
Health Inclusion Team (HIT) Guy's and St Thomas NHS
Foundation Trust (GSTT)

Dr Krishna Misra, General Practitioner/Joint Clinical Lead for
Refugee Health Services -GSTT

HEALTH INCLUSION TEAM (GSTT) REFUGEE & ASYLUM SEEKER SERVICES IN SOUTHWARK

HIT provides the following services for refugees and asylum seekers in Southwark:

- **Health Inclusion Clinic for Southwark core initial accommodation centre (IAC)**
 - Multi-disciplinary health team offering comprehensive specialist health assessment and primary care services to asylum seekers in home office initial accommodation. *Specialist health visitor, occupational therapists, paediatric and adult nurses, GPs, wellbeing practitioners, health navigators*
 - 150 beds: adults, children and families seeking asylum with health needs requiring high level support
 - Registration with GP, initial health assessment and screening, complex case management, immunisations, contraception, specialist antenatal support, well being support and facilitation of school registration

HEALTH INCLUSION TEAM (GSTT) REFUGEE & ASYLUM SEEKER SERVICES IN SOUTHWARK

- **Day Centre Outreach Support:**
 - Specialist nurse and caseworker support and advice- GP registration, NHS entitlements, signposting to social support services
- **Initial Accommodation Centre (IAC) Hotels:-**
 - Outreach health services to asylum seekers living in 4 IAC hotels across Southwark
 - Experienced multidisciplinary team (specialist adult and paediatric nurses, health visitors, health navigators) offering outreach clinics and services
 - Support with GP registration, Immediate health needs assessments, antenatal support, contraception, outbreak management
 - Signposting to GP for immunisations, chronic disease management, screening
 - Outreach COVID-19 vaccination clinics to asylum seekers living in IAC hotels 5years +

HEALTH INCLUSION TEAM (GSTT)

REFUGEE & ASYLUM SEEKER SERVICES IN SOUTHWARK

- **Bridging Hotels**
 - Afghan refugees temporarily accommodated as part of the home office resettlement programme since August 2021
 - HIT support to local GP practices to implement specialist initial health screening and access to health services, immunisations and outbreak management (more details to follow)
- **Additional specialist services:**
 - Development of specialist pathways for refugees and asylum seekers to access antenatal, contraception, mental health and infectious diseases services.
 - Specialist advice and support across the borough to organisations providing services to refugees and asylum seekers, building on extensive experience working with refugees and asylum seekers across SE London.
 - Liaison with national migrant health organisations, development of national educational guidelines, peer reviewed publications:
 - Recent publication in BMJ: Initial health assessments for newly arrived migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers (Knights F, Munir S, Ahmed H, Hargreaves S. *BMJ* 2022; 377 :e068821)

Good Practice

Afghan Refugees, Southwark Bridging Hotels - A GP Perspective

Tilly Wright, Managing Partner, Villa Street Medical Centre

Rene Mehta, Managing Partner, Blackfriars Medical Practice

GOOD PRACTICE

AFGHAN REFUGEES, SOUTHWARK BRIDGING HOTELS

A GP PERSPECTIVE

The Ask

To provide routine GP services, screening and health assessments for 200+ newly arrived Afghan refugees residing at Southwark Bridging Hotels as quickly as possible.

Challenges

- Multiple unknowns
- Overstretched and tired workforce teams
- Understanding the parameters of roles & responsibilities
- Operational set up and delivery in a short time frame

GOOD PRACTICE

AFGHAN REFUGEES, SOUTHWARK BRIDGING HOTELS

A GP PERSPECTIVE

How we did it

- Blackfriars Medical Practice and Villa Street Medical Centre Core teams met and agreed our approach
 - Blackfriars Medical Practice - practice based and routine care for refugees registered with them
 - Villa Street Medical Centre– hotel based focused on health assessments and screening
- Prioritised operational set up
 - Working clinical rooms at hotels
 - IT
 - Team communications
- Developed safe working processes
- Freed up solid management time for the set up period

GOOD PRACTICE

AFGHAN REFUGEES, SOUTHWARK BRIDGING HOTELS

A GP PERSPECTIVE

What went well

- Joint aim from day one
- Clear roles with flexible & practical attitudes allowing us to be nimble
- Funding released quickly
- Strong cross organisational relationships achieved by listening to each other, building trust, earning respect
- Joined up information across teams enabling effective overview of progress made and what to prioritise
- Providing accurate data to external organisations

GOOD PRACTICE

AFGHAN REFUGEES, SOUTHWARK BRIDGING HOTELS

A GP PERSPECTIVE

Outcomes

- Completed 195 health assessments within expected timeframe (16 weeks)
- Completed 193 blood screen tests following up on positive results for (IGRA) latent TB, asccaris, giardiasis, diabetes, Beta thalassemia, Alpha thalassemia.
- Delivered 96/105 eligible 1st Covid dose and 85/91 2nd Covid dose
- Delivered 151 flu vaccines
- Plus child immunisation and baby clinics, cervical screening +++, contraception advice
- Released time for Blackfriars to focus on routine care for refugees
- Created strong cross organisational connections for ongoing projects
- Satisfying and interesting work – keen to do more and include GP trainees

Good Practice

Asylum Seekers, Contingency IAC/ Hotels- A GP Perspective

Dr Christopher Ward, GP and Clinical Asylum Seekers and
Refugees Programme Representative

GOOD PRACTICE

ASYLUM SEEKERS, CONTINGENCY IAC/HOTELS

A GP PERSPECTIVE

The Ask and How we did it

Nexus health – princess street surgery

- Initially tasked to provide care and screening to residents in a hotel of around 80 (started 12/20). Turnover variable, have currently registered 232 asylum seekers to date at this IAC. GP freed up to provide a weekly half day clinic supported by practice nurse. All residents invited for a full health assessment.
- Another larger IAC was then opened in our area, capacity of nearly 300, this IAC only houses single males. Initially these patients split across different GPs. Worked with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and jointly recruited a nurse with MSF. Able to then register all residents at same clinic site and provide daily clinics for residents supported by GP.
- Most mornings nurse will visit site with medication needed and review any new medical issues. New arrivals are now registered with GP on same day.
- New patient checks are comprehensive health assessments reviewing patient's current needs, both physical and mental. Patients are also offered full catch-up immunisations and blood screening for infections and deficiencies.

GOOD PRACTICE

ASYLUM SEEKER, CONTINGENCY IAC/HOTELS

A GP PERSPECTIVE

Challenges

- Turnover – unpredictable when asylum seekers will be moved from IAC. At times this has happened with hours notice.
- Liaison with new GP at destination. Ensuring all patient's registered as soon as possible and allocated NHS number to allow notes to flow to new clinic.
- Dental problems – nurse worked closely with local dentist to facilitate registration and treatment.
- Working with many different teams – early help, ID consultants, obstetric team, paediatrics, mental health team, social prescribing team.
- High rates of mental health problems

GOOD PRACTICE

ASYLUM SEEKERS, CONTINGENCY IAC/HOTELS

A GP PERSPECTIVE

Outcomes

- >165 full patient checks done to date
- Managing high rates of nutritional deficiencies discovered. (>90% vitamin deficiency, often multiple)
- Managing high rates of latent TB and parasite infections.
- Most patients received multiple vaccinations during assessment – flu, MMR, meningitis, diphtheria, tetanus, polio.
- Worked with pharmacy next door to take patients for Covid vaccination on same appt.
- Working with interpreters: consults done with phone interpreter and/ or with an interpreter on site (enabled more efficient working).
- Engaging with North Southwark GP Federation, social prescribing teams: clothes provision, mobile, phone provision, signposting to local projects, assisting in gym registration, arranging football sessions. Producing a guide in various languages of local facilities.
- Working with SLAM to pilot a team to work directly with the hotel's residents

GOOD PRACTICE HEALTH SERVICE RESPONSE

Key common themes

- Ability to manage uncertainty, unpredictability and unknowns
- Communication and collaborative working
- Ensure GP registration and health assessments
- Engaging with a range of partners from health services, Local Authority, VSC, Southwark GP Federations, Home Office (HO), accommodation providers, etc.
- Solution focused to managed internal and external challenges (IT, clinic locations, roles, etc.)
- Outreach services when possible and appropriate

THANK YOU
ANY QUESTIONS?