

**Report of:** Leeds Migrant Health Board

**Report to:** Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board

**Date:** 14 November 2024

**Subject:** Leeds Migrant Health Board Annual Report 2024

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|---|---|--|
| Are specific geographical areas affected?                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| If relevant, name(s) of area(s):  |   |  |
| Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No            |
| Is the decision eligible for call-In?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| If relevant, access to information procedure rule number:<br>Appendix number:   |   |  |

**Summary of main issues**

This is the second Annual Report of the Leeds Migrant Health Board (LMHB). The report describes work by the Board and its members to address the health needs of migrants in 2023-24 and presents recommendations for future work by partners and the wider health and care system.

We aim to shine a light on the work of the Board, amplify the voice of those with lived experience, inspire partners to champion and advocate for migrant communities in Leeds, and identify recommendations for the Health and Wellbeing Board and wider system.

The Leeds Migrant Health Board aims to improve health outcomes for Leeds migrant communities by providing a strategic, citywide approach to understanding and addressing migrant health needs in Leeds.

The Board has three overarching priorities:

1. **Access for all** - to shape services and strategies that are accessible to all.
2. **Communication** - including interpretation, translation, accessible information, and involvement in English language learning opportunities.
3. **Work and Austerity** - to ensure a workforce equipped to respond to new and emerging communities and linking to austerity agendas.

This report provides national and local context and highlights the Board's work across these priorities in the past year, with a focus on challenges and progress on: Access - Housing and Health, Communication – Interpretation services, Roma health inequalities.

## Recommendations

- Note the content of the Migrant Health Board Annual Report 2023-24
- Recognise the rapidly changing migration patterns in Leeds, ensuring services and approaches are culturally appropriate and forward planning for expected new communities.
- Ensure the voices of migrant communities are central to the development and design of services that they use.
- Champion work that supports increasing early identification and intervention for migrant communities.
- Support the Leeds work to be a city of sanctuary and adopt the principals that improve health and wellbeing for migrant communities.
- Recognise and collaborate with Voluntary and Community Sector partners who demonstrate system leadership in advocating for and supporting migrant communities.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

### **1.1 To share an overview of the Migrant Health in Leeds Report 2023-24**

**1.2** This is the second annual report of the Leeds Migrant Health Board (LMHB). The report describes work by the Board and its members to address the health needs of migrants in 2023-24 and presents recommendations for future work by partners and the wider health and care system.

**1.3** We aim to:

- Shine a light on the work of the Board and our partners to improve the health of migrants
- Amplify the voice of those with lived experience to understand the complexities and challenges faced by migrants
- Inspire partners to champion and advocate for migrant communities in Leeds
- Identify specific priorities and recommendations for the Health and Wellbeing Board and wider system to address the health inequalities faced by migrants in Leeds.

## **2 Background information**

**2.1** The Leeds Migrant Health Board aims to improve health outcomes for Leeds migrant communities by providing a strategic, citywide approach to understanding and addressing migrant health needs in Leeds.

**2.2** The Board includes members from the health and care system, wider statutory services and the voluntary and community sector in Leeds, and champions inclusion of the voices of migrant communities. A full list of members is provided in Appendix 1.

**2.3** Recent migrant groups have diverse health needs, face many barriers to accessing services and disadvantages in access to education, jobs, housing and other building blocks of health. We have therefore defined our principles: to achieve an excellent experience for migrants, to ensure equitable access, to adopt trauma informed approaches and to work collaboratively across the health, care and Voluntary and Community system.

**2.4** The Board has three overarching priorities:

- Access for all - to shape services and strategies that are accessible to all.
- Communication - including interpretation, translation, accessible information, and involvement in English language learning opportunities.
- Work and Austerity - to ensure a workforce equipped to respond to new and emerging communities and linking to austerity agendas.

**2.5** This report highlights work across these priorities in the past year, with a focus on Access and Communication. We work with a wide range of migrant communities, with a particular focus this year on support for asylum seekers and refugees and Roma communities.

### 3 Main issues

- 3.1 Background** - Global and national events and policies significantly impact on people migrating to the UK and settled migrants, including their experiences and journeys and the services and support available to them. People migrate for a number of reasons, including for work, to join family or friends, to study or to seek sanctuary.
- 3.2 National context** - The national policy context has changed significantly over the last year. The Illegal Migration Act 2023 was passed in July 2024. This led to a high volume of people needing help and advocacy with understanding their rights. This placed pressures on already stretched services nationally and locally. In July 2024 the UK elected a new government, which swiftly made changes to migration policy. Charging for NHS care has been in place since the 2014 Immigration Act, with potential implications for the health of individuals and communities.
- 3.3 Local context** - The population of Leeds is growing and increasingly diverse. A total of 15.8% of the population were born outside the U.K and 1.5% of the Leeds population arrived in the U.K in 2020-2022. Leeds City Council and partner agencies continue to work together to support people seeking sanctuary in our city despite the complex and ongoing pressures faced across the wider system including health and care.
- 3.4** Leeds has a proud and long-held commitment to supporting asylum seekers and refugees and is dedicated to being a city of sanctuary. Leeds has a valued and diverse Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) supporting migrant communities across the city.
- 3.5** Our communities and partners have been personally, as well as professionally, affected by national and local unrest over the summer. Prejudice and discrimination have consequences for health and wellbeing and long-term impacts on trust and cohesion.
- 3.6 Access to housing for health** - Access to affordable, secure and quality housing is a key building block for health and wellbeing. Following last year's report, we have focused on access to housing as a key health issue and strengthened links with housing services in 2023/24. Leeds Housing Options operates in a challenging context, providing crucial support for increasing numbers of people seeking asylum to find accommodation in very short timeframes. However, considerable challenges remain in relation to risk of homelessness and poor housing quality. Board members have worked to improve support and resources for asylum seekers and refugees to improve access to housing. The Board is now commencing work using the Improving Housing Outcomes for Refugees Toolkit to identify and take forward local action to improve access to housing and health, and linking with Fairer, Healthier Leeds work.
- 3.7 Communication** - The NHS is committed to providing equitable high quality and effective healthcare services that are responsive to the needs of all patients and there is strong evidence that highlights the importance of high-quality interpretation and translation services. A well-attended workshop was held to focus on user experience of the current service commissioned by the ICB. The workshop highlighted the need for better access, booking procedures, personalisation, and feedback mechanisms in interpreting services to ensure patient safety and comfort. We will share learning and advocate for other services to involve people with lived experience in the development and design of services that they use.
- 3.8 Health inequalities for Roma communities** - In the UK, Roma people live ten years less on average than non-Roma, and experience more of the risk factors for poor

physical and mental health. There are estimated to be over 5,000 Roma people in Leeds, but we had little information on their health needs and experiences. Public health collaborated with members of the Roma community to conduct a Roma Health Needs Assessment 2023 (HNA) with a focus on wellbeing and mental health, and develop recommendations for change. Small community grants (£200-£4,000) were awarded to five organisations to help improve the health and wellbeing of the Roma community in Leeds. The Migrant Health Board are championing the recommendations. A task and finish group is being set up to focus on the recommendations, and report on progress to the Migrant Health Board.

**3.9 Partners' achievements** - We describe a range of work by partner organisations that is innovative, takes collaborative approaches, responds to insight from migrant communities and is delivering impacts for migrant health and wellbeing, and ongoing challenges faced (see report).

**Partners' challenges** - Our partners identified key challenges this year, including cost of living pressures, shortage of Legal Aid solicitors, the streamlined asylum process, eVisa concerns, increased demand on services, and the need for positive messaging.

## 4 Health and Wellbeing Board governance

### 4.1 Consultation, engagement and hearing citizen voice

4.1.1 The Board recognises the importance of Migrant Voices, and the Board has an ongoing and open dialogue with migrants via PAFRAS, LASSN, the Leeds Migration Partnership and third sector organisations.

### 4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 This report highlights the health inequalities faced by migrants in the city, demonstrating the need for collective action to support access, communication, work and wider issues to improve health for migrant communities.

### 4.3 Resources and value for money

4.3.1 This report demonstrates key partners in the city and their commitment to the LMHB key priorities. Reducing health inequalities supports wider strategies in the city including the Health and Wellbeing Strategy

### 4.4 Legal Implications, access to information and call In

4.4.1 There are no access to information and call-in implications arising from this report.

### 4.5 Risk management

4.5.1 Risks will continue to be managed by the LMHB and partners but specific risks to share with the Health and Wellbeing Board include:

- Voluntary and community sector organisations and specialist services are increasingly stretched and not able to provide the full level of support required for all migrant groups in the city.

- With further pressures on these services, the wider health and wellbeing system is likely to experience more demand on services.
- There is an increased risk of homelessness for asylum seeker and refugee populations.

## **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1** The Leeds Migrant Health Board has contributed to effective action on our priorities and worked with partners to influence change.
- 5.2** Despite committed work locally, challenges remain that have put significant pressures on voluntary and community sector organisations and statutory services and continue to impact on the health and wellbeing of the migrant population in Leeds.

## **6 Recommendations**

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

- Note the content of the Migrant Health Board Annual Report 2023-24
- Recognise the rapidly changing migration patterns in Leeds, ensuring services and approaches are culturally appropriate and forward planning for expected new communities.
- Ensure the voices of migrant communities are central to the development and design of services that they use.
- Champion work that supports increasing early identification and intervention for migrant communities.
- Support the Leeds work to be a city of sanctuary and adopt the principles that improve health and wellbeing for migrant communities.
- Recognise and collaborate with VCS partners who demonstrate system leadership in advocating for and supporting migrant communities.

## **7 Background documents**

Appendix 1 - Migrant Health in Leeds 2024

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# Implementing the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-30

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## **How does this help reduce health inequalities in Leeds?**

The MHB works collaboratively across the health and care system to identify and address the key issues that create inequalities in health between our migrant population and the rest of the population of Leeds.

## **How does this help create a high quality health and care system?**

Focus on inclusive, accessible approaches in health and care which will benefit the most vulnerable citizens.

## **How does this help to have a financially sustainable health and care system?**

Strong focus on prevention and early intervention which in turn is more cost-effective than the treatment of physical and mental ill health.

## **Future challenges or opportunities**

Challenges are detailed in the report. There are huge opportunities to embrace the skills and culture of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, their families and communities.