Improving the health of asylum seekers: an overview. Occasional Paper No. 5

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Aims

To present a picture of the population of asylum seekers; to identify available data and shortcomings in collection and use; and to provide an overview of health service provision, gaps, needs and good practice.

Methodology

The research was commissioned by the Northern & Yorkshire Public Health Observatory. It was carried out between October 2001 and January 2002 through attending meetings and conferences, 76 questionnaires with asylum and health service

providers, and interviews with 17 asylum seekers in Hull and a focus group with refugee community representatives in the North East.

Key issues

The report provides an overview of asylum seekers in Yorkshire, Humberside and the North East in 2001. Asylum seekers are socially excluded and vulnerable to poor health. Many agencies are committed to providing services but coordination is variable. There is a need for better data gathering and dissemination. Mental health is a major concern. Language and communication issues are key.

Recommendations

Recommendations are directed at the Department of health, the National Asylum Support Service, regional coordination and to those supporting the community sector. The report recommends action to develop national policy on health issues; improved information systems; translated health care information at a national level; commitment at regional level across agencies, support for community sector development and mechanisms of dissemination of good practice.

Migrant Group
Asylum seekers
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Access to healthcare

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