Issues affecting the primary healthcare of asylum seekers in Leeds: opinions of users and service providers

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Aims

The report outlines the issues affecting the primary healthcare of asylum seekers in Leeds and proposes recommendations for a future asylum seeker health service.

Methodology

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 4 asylum seekers, 5 housing support and hostel workers, and 19 primary healthcare providers.

Key issues

The report suggests that 28% of asylum seekers in Leeds were not registered with a general practitioner, which may be linked to the language barrier or extra time needed. Missed or late appointments negatively influenced the relationship of asylum seekers with practices. The idea of hand-held medical records that asylum seekers would keep with them was popular. Language was the most important factor identified, creating frustration and increasing appointment times. Key areas of concern in primary care were mental health and sexual health, insufficient knowledge of asylum seeker issues, funding for asylum seeker services, and the need for good communication between agencies.

Conclusions

The development of effective asylum seeker health services requires prioritising specialist language services, linking to other support groups and reducing the overall time it takes to see asylum seekers.

Recommendations

Aimed at primary healthcare providers, the recommendations include screening of new arrivals and registration at local practices to provide continued care.

Migrant Group
Asylum seekers

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