



OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

The Lincolnshire Refugee Doctor Project was set up in 2016 in response to a growing awareness of the need to give doctors who are coming to or already living in the United Kingdom as Refugees or Asylum-Seekers some focus and purpose, and the opportunity to embed their families in the local community of N/NE Lincolnshire. Similar schemes have been successful elsewhere in the UK.

OBJECTIVES

1. To recruit Refugee Doctors to N/NE Lincolnshire, to support them within the community here, to provide them with the skills and knowledge required to satisfy examination in Language and Clinical Skills, and to allow them to practice safely as medical practitioners in the UK.
2. To encourage those Refugee Doctors who, having gained sufficient skills to satisfy those examiners, to apply to join the appropriate workforce in Lincolnshire in training or in a service post in Primary or Secondary Care in the area.
3. To give Refugee Doctors a meaningful experience of being valued in the health community of N/NE Lincolnshire.

LEADERSHIP

The non-profit Community Interest Company board is led by Chairman Vince Ion, and Vice Chairman Dr Andrew Mowat, who is also Chair of Trustees of BMA Charities, a registered charity with many years' experience of funding refugee doctors through support programmes. Dr Mowat has over 30 years' experience both in General Practice and in medical education in Lincolnshire.

The project board is drawn from members of the partnership organisations, Lincolnshire LMC Ltd, and United Lincolnshire Hospitals Trust [ULHT], and from leaders in the health communities of Lincolnshire, including Andrew North, former Chief Executive of ULHT, and of North Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Trust [NLAG], and Cllr Sarah Parkin, from Lincolnshire County Council and East Lindsey District Council.

In 2019, we have appointed Dr Werner Mueller [Consultant Obstetrician/Gynaecologist] [Programme] and Dr Zulfiqar Haider [Consultant Paediatrician] [Support] as Clinical Leads. Muna Abu-Jaber is our Programme Manager muna.abujaber@lrpd.org.uk.

SYSTEM

The project will provide training for these doctors to learn English, both as a spoken and a clinical language. We will help them to find housing, and schools for their children. We will coach them through the IELTS/OET and PLAB examinations towards registration with the General Medical Council, and we will then arrange clinical placements in primary and secondary care in N/NE Lincolnshire, and CV Writing coaching, with the eventual aim of engaging them on Foundation Training Programme posts within N/NE Lincolnshire.



It is crucial that colleagues and the public understand that, in the experience of other programmes running for more than ten years, the vast majority of refugee doctors achieving GMC registration are suited best for moving onto a Foundation Training Programme at FY1 or perhaps FY2 level: this is determined by the GMC on an individual basis. It takes 12-36 months on average to pass all necessary examinations.

FUNDING

Funding has been difficult to find in the NHS: Health Education England [East Midlands] were able to provide staff secondment to run a scoping project in 2017, which established the value and business case for the project. Unfortunately, despite the project's mention in the Lincolnshire Sustainability and Transformation Plan, and recognition by the Local Workforce Action Board that the project should be supported, the local NHS in Lincolnshire has been unable to find the required funding.

Health Education England [Yorkshire & Humber] have identified some one-off funding for 2018 for preparatory work. There is support for the project in Northern Lincolnshire & Goole NHS Trust.

We have appointed a Programme Manager from January 2019, and a p/t administrator from June 2019.

REFUGEE DOCTORS

The BMA has over 750 doctors within the UK registered on its Refugee Doctor Initiative: the GMC registers about 25 refugee doctors each year. There are three active refugee training programmes in England – Salford, Teesside and London. There is a shortage of data on what happens to these doctors, but many drop out when they struggle to pass the language requirements of the GMC. It may be that the new OET examination helps more of these doctors to progress. Many choose to work as Physician Associates or Health Care Practitioners instead, put off by the demands of DWP for them to accept lower-paid work to get off state benefits.

Following advertisement, shortlisting and interview, we have appointed our first cohort of refugee doctors to join the Programme in August/September 2019.

COSTING

In 2013, the BMA published detailed costing of training a medical student through to FY2 level as about £290,000 [per doctor]. Having forecast our costs to run a programme over three years, we believe the overall cost to be around £100k for a cohort of 10 doctors per year, or £10,000 per doctor per year.

CONTACT

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