

# Lincolnshire Refugee Doctor Project



## 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 communities of N/NE Lincolnshire and Lincolnshire. Similar schemes have been successful elsewhere in the UK.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To recruit Refugee Doctors to N/NE Lincolnshire and 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 and Lincolnshire.

### LEADERSHIP

The non-profit Community Interest Company board is led by Chairman Vince Ion, who has a breadth of experience at senior level in both Healthcare and the private sector.

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 Ben Hudson a Senior Lecturer in Law at Exeter University and specialist in immigration law.

Since the beginning of the project we have been clinically supported by Dr Werner Mueller , Dr Zulfiqar Haider and Dr Ajay Chawla as Clinical Leads.

We have recently appointed Ruth Ingamells as Director of Operations and Simon Behan as Deputy Director of Operations, both of whom have significant operational management experience, as well as wealth of experience of working in the Healthcare sector.

### SYSTEM

The project provides training for the doctors to learn English, both as a spoken and a clinical language. We help them to find housing, and schools for their children. We coach them through the OET and

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PLAB examinations towards registration with the General Medical Council, and then arrange clinical placements in primary and secondary care in N/NE Lincolnshire and Lincolnshire, and CV Writing coaching, with the eventual aim of engaging them on Foundation Training Programme posts within N/NE Lincolnshire and 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 provided by Health Education England [North] for the N/NE Lincolnshire part of the project, and funding for the Lincolnshire part of the project is being provided by Lincolnshire Community Health Services. As well as our main funders, we have several other private sector organisations and charitable organisations who have provided support to our project.

## 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.

We have had 12 Doctors on the programme since October 2019, 2 of whom have achieved GMC registration already, with the other 10 Doctors making good progress.

## 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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