

UK Report 2016





Foreword



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2016 marked the 10-year anniversary of our first UK clinic in London's Bethnal Green. We held a photo exhibition to mark the event with volunteers and service-users coming together to reflect on the great work that has been done.

But it was by no means a celebration as, a decade on, our services are needed more than ever. Thanks to our 170 volunteers we saw a 20 per cent increase in the number of people we helped in 2016 at clinics in London, Hackney and Brighton and through our national helpline.

For many, barriers to healthcare increased in 2016. We continued to see people being unable to register with a GP because they were asked to provide documents they didn't have or were turned away by hospitals because they could not afford to pay.

In April we launched our first Registration Refused report that showed GP surgeries were refusing to register two in five of the patients we tried to get access to a doctor. We also learned of a deal between the Home Office and the NHS to share patient information for immigration enforcement purposes. We will vigorously campaign against this deplorable intrusion into the consulting room while continuing to meet our patients' medical needs.

I want to say a huge thank you to our outstanding volunteers, our donors and most of all our patients who put their trust in us to help when they most need it. We'll continue to give them a voice and strive to get everyone in the UK the healthcare they need.

Lucy Jones
Head of UK Programme

Our UK clinics

London clinics

As the government continues its policy of using healthcare to create a 'hostile environment' for undocumented migrants by making further plans for ID checks and stricter charging at hospitals, our UK clinics are a lifeline for pregnant women, the vulnerable and the sick.

At our clinics in Bethnal Green, Hackney and Brighton we saw first-hand how this climate affects destitute people afraid to attend healthcare services.

In 2016, 170 volunteers at these clinics provided help to 1,924 people – a 20 per cent increase from 2015.

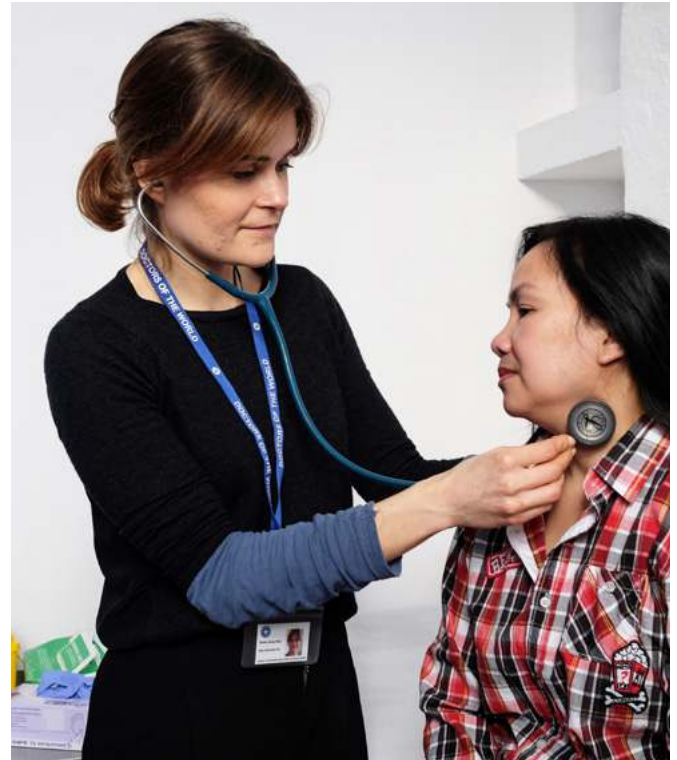
Our volunteer doctors and nurses provide consultations on the day for our service-users, while our caseworkers help them register to see a GP so that they have future access to a doctor. Everyone in the UK has the right to see a GP for free, regardless of immigration status.

In 2016, 89 per cent of our service-users were not registered with a GP when they first came to us, even though they had been in the UK for 5.9 years on average. In addition, 87 per cent were living in poverty. After coming to our clinic, 91 per cent of those service-users are now accessing healthcare. Of those we asked, 9 out of 10 felt more confident about going to their GP and 7 out of 10 had seen an improvement in their health.

Women and Children's Clinic

We saw 132 pregnant women in 2016, most of them at our fortnightly women and children's clinic, which is also in Bethnal Green. Many only come to the clinic for the first time in the late stages of pregnancy. Fear of being asked for immigration papers or being charged huge sums of money prevents many vulnerable women from seeking antenatal care earlier.

The clinic offers obstetric checks, health assessments and STI screenings. Volunteers also help with antenatal referrals and ensure women know their rights around accessing care.





Hackney clinic

In Hackney we held a weekly clinic until July 2016, which saw 101 patients. This was supported by City and Hackney Clinical and Commissioning Group until April and our own funds for a further three months. We have successfully launched a new community-led structure after funding was awarded in April 2017.

Brighton clinic

Our weekly Brighton clinic became an established voice on healthcare access for the city's vulnerable groups in 2016. We conducted social and medical consultations for 91 people and our referral networks to the service grew significantly. We established pathways with social services, local sexual and reproductive health services, homelessness organisations and gypsy/traveller groups, as well as the already strong relationships with refugee and migrant support groups.

Pop-up clinics

To reach excluded people who don't or can't come to our clinics, we extended our pop-up clinic pilot in different sites across London throughout 2016, providing social and medical consultations to 81 people. We partnered with the Latin American Women's Rights Service, Notre Dame Refugee Centre, and Justice for Domestic Workers to hold monthly sessions that help us reach their service-users.

Case study: Ariam

Ariam, 28, fled Eritrea with her husband after he came into conflict with the government, leaving her daughter behind. They got as far as Sudan before her husband was captured and shot dead by Eritrean soldiers.

Ariam was able to escape and was later trafficked to Libya, but the van she was travelling in crashed, killing many of the passengers and leaving her wounded.

She ended up in the hands of Libyan police who tortured her, including waterboarding, because they saw a cross around her neck. She was only allowed to leave after bribing them.

She eventually paid to be trafficked to France and was raped by one of the traffickers. In France she was put in another lorry which took her to England. It had taken her six horrible, harrowing years in total to get from Eritrea to England.

She had been living in the UK for two years before she came to see Doctors of the World. She had tried to register with a GP but was wrongly turned away because she didn't have proof-of-address documents.

In the weeks before she came to see us she had severe pain in her abdomen and went to A&E. The hospital diagnosed her as pregnant and she spent three nights in hospital. After she was discharged, she started sleeping in a bus shelter as she had nowhere else to go.



During this period he made contact with a charity who referred her to Doctors of the World. Our volunteers helped her register with a GP and access the abortion services she wanted.

"This was the first time that I could breathe freely," she said when asked about the impact of this support. "In our country we were looked down upon. This is so different here. I am so grateful."

She later found a place to live with a friend and now has leave to remain in the UK until 2019. Her daughter, who is now 13, was able to join her in the UK and start school here.

"I am very happy where I am living and also that my daughter is here with me now," she says. "There is nothing like freedom. I can go out as I wish. It is wonderful."



Stills from our animation *Why are vulnerable pregnant women in the UK afraid to see a doctor?* Go to <http://bit.ly/2taCOoQ> for full version

In 2016 we provided
social and medical consultations
to **1758** people across our UK clinics


ASYLUM
SEEKERS
15%


UNDOCUMENTED
MIGRANTS
56%


UNDEFINED
29%

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

NIGERIA
5.9%

INDIA
10.6%

BANGLADESH
7.8%

CHINA
11%

PHILLIPINES
15.5%


49%
came from 83 other countries
around the world



87%
WERE
LIVING
IN
POVERTY



35%
WERE LIVING
IN UNSTABLE
ACCOMODATION



89%
WERE NOT
REGISTERED
WITH A GP



2 in 5

were refused GP registration
due to:

lack of ID **39%**

lack of proof of address **36%**

lack of immigration status **13%**

5.9 YEARS

the average length of
time spent in UK before
accessing our services

Advocacy work

Advocacy is at the heart of Doctors of the World's work. Using patients' stories and data collected in our clinics, we campaign for policies and practices that ensure universal healthcare coverage for everyone living in the UK, regardless of immigration status or income.

We have engaged with the Department of Health on how government policies are having a negative impact on vulnerable people. We submitted evidence to its consultation on extending NHS charges for migrant patients and we briefed parliamentarians on how the Immigration Act 2015 affects refused asylum seekers. We also gave evidence to a parliamentary inquiry 'Refugees Welcome?' and spoke at a parliamentary screening of the film Everyday Borders.

Registration Refused

In April we published Registration Refused: A study on access to GP registration in England which covered Doctors of the World's attempts to register patients with GPs. The report found 39 per cent of people were wrongly refused registration, with the biggest barriers being lack of proof of ID (39 per cent) and lack of proof of address (36 per cent). The report findings got extensive media coverage on Sky News, The Guardian, The Independent and BuzzFeed.

Right to Care

Now in its second year, our Right to Care project, funded by Trust for London, works to improve access to healthcare for vulnerable migrants in the UK. The project has trained over 800 medical students in refugee and migrant healthcare rights at five universities. Three quarters of those who did the training said they felt more confident to advocate on behalf of patients to ensure they receive healthcare. We have also delivered training and talks for healthcare professionals, GP receptionists, migrant support groups, and health and wellbeing boards across London. We also worked in partnership with commissioners and providers to develop guidance.

Ten-year clinic anniversary exhibition

In October we marked a decade of our pioneering east London clinic for vulnerable refugees and migrants with a photography exhibition *Undocumented: Healthcare for the Hidden*.

Eight well-known photographers – including Julian Anderson, Toby Coulson, and Katie Peters – collaborated with us to create a series of unique portraits to show just some of the thousands of people helped by the clinic since 2006, alongside the dedicated staff and volunteers.

The exhibition at the Four Corners gallery in Bethnal Green included a portrait of a young Sri Lankan, Tavish, by photographer Jenny Lewis. Tavish was forced to leave his country after being tortured due to suspected links to the Tamil Tigers.

Brought to London by a people smuggler his physical and mental health deteriorated, yet despite being in need of urgent medical help, no GP surgery would register him.

The east London clinic has been filling a gap in the NHS for 10 years and the demand for its services is increasing. Since the clinic first opened in 2006, the number of people using the service has increased three-fold.

Speaking at the exhibition launch Leigh Daynes, our Executive Director, said: “Ten years on, our Bethnal Green clinic is needed now more than ever as successive governments make it harder for vulnerable, destitute migrants to get the healthcare they are entitled to. This exhibition speaks not just of their plight but also of the power of many acts of compassion.”

The week-long exhibition was the gallery’s most visited and received widespread media coverage from publications including The Guardian, BMJ, and the Lancet, as well as several features throughout launch day on BBC London.





Two images from our exhibition *Undocumented: Healthcare for the Hidden*.
Above: Tavish by Jenny Lewis; below: Dr Thelma Thomas by Kate Peters



Thank you

We would not be able to work without the help of our generous partners. We'd especially like to thank the following for their support in 2016:



As well as:

Hackney and City CCG
Brighton and Hove CCG
The Pickwell Manor Foundation

To support us please contact a member of our fundraising team on 020 7167 5789.

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