

Taking Clinics into the Community

A drop-in health and wellbeing advice clinic at BRASS – May 2022



Providing a safe and confidential space for refugee and asylum seekers and their families, including those who are not registered with a GP, to talk about health and wellbeing concerns, ask questions and to get help.

Why:

Refugee and asylum seekers can have complex health needs. They may find it difficult to understand how the NHS works and how to access services. Providing them with support and sign-posting, along with assessing some of their health needs through simple health checks and informal chats, is a very important part of helping them to rebuild their lives.

Background:

- During the Covid19 pandemic, we partnered with BRASS to deliver Covid19 vaccinations to refugee and asylum seekers. Staff and volunteers from BRASS acted as advocates for the vaccine, reaching out to vulnerable individuals and their communities and helping to build confidence.
- We have worked with Healthwatch Bolton to gather insight and develop an innovative new model for reducing health inequalities and delivering cervical smear tests in non-clinical settings, removing barriers and increasing uptake in BAME communities.
- **We brought these two ideas together, using lessons learnt from both, to deliver a Health and Wellbeing Drop-in on Wednesday, 27 April 2022 at the BRASS community centre.**

18 people attended the clinic

14 female

4 male

(see their stories below)

Their countries of origin included:

| | |
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| Congo | Khat |
| Sudan | Somalia |
| Ethiopia | Iran |

Main languages spoken were:

Swahili, French and Arabic

Language support was provided by Ethel (BRASS volunteer)



This is a safe and confidential space for you and your family to get advice and support or just have a chat with our friendly team



HEALTH AND WELLBEING DROP-IN

No appointment needed

BRASS
(Befriending Refugees and Asylum Seekers)
The Park Lodge
Green Lane
Bolton
BL3 2HX

Wednesday 27th April 2022

10.30am-1pm-Women only

1.30pm-4pm-Men only

No need to be registered with a GP
Just turn up on the day

This is a safe and confidential space for you and your family to get advice and support or just have a chat with our friendly team



Taking Clinics into the Community

Kath Arrowsmith, Bolton GP Federation Chief Nurse, who led the clinic, said: “It was lovely to be there for these patients, some of whom did not know where to go to get the help they needed. I was very impressed with how up-to-date some of the families were with their vaccinations and immunisations, which is a real credit to the work BRASS has done to support these families so far.

“There was a really diverse mix of people who came to the clinic and the issues they brought. Here are some of their stories:”

Lady had found out that her family had been removed from their dentist’s list without being informed. She was very concerned as her child requires treatment. The Social Prescribing Link Worker (SPLW) telephoned the dental practice, who informed her that as the children had not attended on 2 occasions, that they had been removed from their practice list as this is their policy. The SPLW asked if the policy had been explained to the patients - they had not. The receptionist told the SPLW that there was a sign up in surgery explaining this policy. Unfortunately, the lady does not read English, her first language is Arabic. The dental practice agreed to take the family back on and an appointment was arranged.

A lady had housing concerns which she wanted to discuss with the team - she wanted to live nearer to her friend and the SPLW spent some time with her, chatting about her concerns. The BRASS team are now working with this family and supporting them with their concerns.

A gentleman had previously been diagnosed with borderline hypertension. The nurse took his Blood Pressure and provided dietary advice and discussed the benefits of physical activity to help lower his BP. The nurse gave him his readings to take to his GP, and advised him to use a home monitor and check readings twice daily leading up to his GP appointment.

One gentleman, who was homeless, attended as he had concerns regarding his ears. He informed the nurse that he needed them syringing. On examination, there was a slight amount of wax present, but they were not blocked and did not require syringing. The nurse advised him to use olive oil drops twice daily to assist with the removal of wax. He is registered with a GP, and was advised him to attend his own surgery if he had any further concerns. The SPLW provided the gentleman with information regarding where he could receive meals throughout the day. BRASS are working closely with him and providing him with shopping vouchers weekly.

A gentleman had concerns regarding his memory and constant back pain. The nurse telephoned his GP surgery to support him with making an appointment to discuss his concerns. He had telephoned the practice the day previously and had an appointment booked for that day. Our nurse explained to the Practice Nurse what he had informed her, she made a note of the issues in his clinical notes to assist the GP with the appointment later that day.

One gentleman required advice for haemorrhoids and dental treatment. The nurse discussed healthy dietary choices with him and the use of topical treatments. He is registered with a GP and will access them again if required. The nurse also informed him about pharmacy services and how he can request health advice from the pharmacist in his local pharmacy. He is going to attend the pharmacy to discuss purchasing creams. The nurse provided him with information on the urgent dental services so he could get the rest of the help he needed.

Six people required dental services in total.

Four ladies who attended reported issues with language problems, particularly when they telephone their practices. They have also tried going into the surgery to try to book appointments face to face, but the receptionists have made little or no effort to facilitate access to interpreters to support them. This is being fed back to the practice managers.