



MIGREFHEALTH

# Stakeholder Newsletter

## Project overview

The project has now completed the first year of the three-year funding period (February 2024-January 2027). Following the official launches to stakeholders and community members in each of the 12 fieldsites [Barnet, Cambridge, Colchester, Gt Yarmouth, Greenwich, Ipswich, Islington, Lewisham, Lowestoft, Norwich, Peterborough, Wethersfield] which took place in the autumn of 2024, project tasks have been underway in earnest. Information about activities and highlights across local fieldsites are below. In every fieldsite, the team consists of both academic and community partners undertaking activities with refugee, asylum seeking and selected EU and non-EU migrant groups.



If you would like to find out more about activities in a particular area or wish to be put in contact with the designated academic lead for a particular fieldsite, do please contact [admin.migrantrefugeehealth@aru.ac.uk](mailto:admin.migrantrefugeehealth@aru.ac.uk).

## Community Co-Researchers

Across the entire project, 22 community co-researchers (CCRs) from the following communities-Hong Kong, Afghan, Ukrainian, Iranian, Nigerian, Syrian, Polish, Portuguese, Sudan and Indian-have been recruited and completed 3 one-day, introduction to research, training sessions. These included an overview of qualitative research methods, creative data gathering methods and focussed on the consent process, safeguarding and ethical research.

Other training consisted of how to conduct walking interviews and the use of photovoice to capture interviewees' lived experiences of asset use, and their local environment. CCRs have been carrying out walking interviews in each fieldsite and are also supporting some of the community forum asset data collection events.

## Data Collection

Asset information has been compiled from existing community directories and lists of resources, augmented by information captured via a short form circulated to known stakeholders and organisation contacts. This information has provided the basis for initial mapping sessions with communities which are near completion.



Community Forum events 2 and 3 have either taken place, or are soon to be carried out, in all fieldsites. These focus group mapping exercises have explored community members' use of local assets focusing on food and nutrition, housing and access to services. This data, together with the walking interview data, is in the process of being analysed thematically by the academic team.

Community Forum 4 will take place throughout April and May. This is the first of four creative sessions and is led by world renowned storyteller, Sef Townsend. Sef is travelling to all 12 fieldsites. He will be using stories from around the world, appropriate to the particular communities in fieldsites, to explore the theme of housing, home and belonging with participants.



## Mapping progress

Behind the scenes, work continues on the development of the mapping platform that will capture and display the assets gathered. Eventually, it will include audio and photographic evidence embedded into the interactive map, alongside details of community assets. Work to understand local stakeholder needs and contexts is also ongoing, which in turn will feed into the longer-term development of the place-based scalable models that the project will produce. To ensure the outputs are useful and relevant to you, we encourage your feedback and input throughout. You are welcome to get in touch with your academic lead at any time to do so. Whilst there are forthcoming stakeholder events in May and June specifically planned to gather your input, see below for more details.

## The latest fieldsite news - Islington

A very successful launch event of the project in the North London borough of Islington took place in early November 2024 with over 40 attendees. Held in the iconic location of Union Chapel, the event saw a balanced participation of stakeholders, including councillors and City of Sanctuary coordinators, of key third sector organisations, and of participants with lived experience from four nationalities of focus in this borough – Syrians, Ukrainians, Afghans, and Italians. Discussions with migrants in the three tables for housing, food and services, as well as that with stakeholders yielded valuable insights on the challenges migrants face and on what is both there and needed to better support them.



The following two Community Forums saw the deepening into migrants' challenges as well as resources and assets, and were conducted in venues of high religious and social value for the Somali and the Italian communities respectively. A world café format guided Forum 2, where mostly Somali, but also Afghan, Syrian and Ukrainian participants expressed financial difficulties and inadequacies of food and housing. The ethnographic immersion approach in Forum 3 to explore two assets of Italians in their third age powerfully revealed the significance of community resources assets to increase connection and wellbeing.

## Key date for your diary TBC

We will be presenting our initial findings of the Islington data in a community forum that all stakeholders will be invited to.

Please save the date. Invitations with further information will follow.

## The latest fieldsite news - Barnet

Attendance to MigRefHealth launch in mid-November at Middlesex University was excellent: with over 50 attendees, from council members to contingency accommodations' frontline staff, from key charities to people with lived experience from Syria, Iran, Afghanistan, and Ukraine. The discussion was lively in all the stages of the event: during the presentation it became apparent that official statistics do not fully reflect the borough's ethnic and migration diversity or the diverse accommodations asylum seekers live in; in the breakout room session, migrants split across the tables, mainly following their linguistic competence, and issues such as sense of food and housing insecurity were shared; in the last plenary session, lived-experience and stakeholders attendees talked together about their views and experiences, including aspects needing improvements and good practices.



Community Forums 2 in Finchley central, before the winter festive break, followed a world café format – with participants from Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Ukraine, and Hong Kong rotating across the tables to share experiences of barriers to access and of assets used – highlighting educational, employment and mental healthcare barriers, among other.

Upcoming Forum 3 with Hong Kongers, a large group that the council has provided substantial support to, looks very promising.

## Key date for your diary TBC

We will be presenting our initial findings of the Barnet data in a community forum that all stakeholders will be invited to.

Please save the date. Invitations with further information will follow.

## The latest fieldsite news - Norwich

The project was launched in Norwich on 15 November, with participants from local organisations working with migrants and refugees in the area. On the 22nd January, the second community forum, CF2, was held at St Martin-at-Palace – a historic church near Norwich Cathedral – hosted by New Routes Integration. The forum provided a unique opportunity to engage with participants from Afghanistan, Syria, Sudan, Yemen, Eritrea, Cameroon, Iran, Guinea, Ukraine and Poland, focusing on the project's three key themes: access to services, food and nutrition, and housing. The discussions were rich and complex as attendees shared personal insights and explored barriers encountered but also potential strategies to improve living conditions. We would like to thank New Routes Integration and GYROS for their continuous support.



## Key date for your diary TBC

We will be presenting our initial findings of the Norwich data in a community forum that all stakeholders will be invited to.

Please save the date. Invitations with further information will follow.

## The latest fieldsite news - Ipswich

The launch of the project in Ipswich (CF1) saw 15 stakeholders in attendance, including community organisations, NGOs, local council, police and library representatives. To date, data has been gathered from two focus groups (CF2 and CF3) with local migrant, refugee and asylum seeker participants from Ukraine, Lithuania, India, Bangladesh, Syria, Afghanistan, Ghana and Turkey. Thanks to the community researchers, we have recorded 7 walking interviews with interviewees from Bangladesh, Lithuania, Syria and Afghanistan. All focus group and walking interview data is now being transcribed for analysis.



Notes from the Community Forum 2: mapping housing assets in Ipswich.



Project launch in Ipswich. Louise Humphries (GYROS) welcoming the stakeholders

## Key date for your diary TBC

We will be presenting our initial findings of the Ipswich data in a community forum that all stakeholders will be invited to.

Please save the date. Invitations with further information will follow.

## The latest fieldsite news - Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth

The Lowestoft project launch was held at Sam's Wellbeing Café on 5th November 2025. This was also the venue for Community Forum 2 on 21st January 2025 which had a mixed group of Portuguese, Bulgarian and Bangladeshi nationalities. The next Community Forum will focus on the other core nationalities by meeting at a community venue where people attend regularly. Our community co-researchers have completed 9 walking interviews, with a range of nationalities. All interviews continued to focus on accommodation, food and access to services.



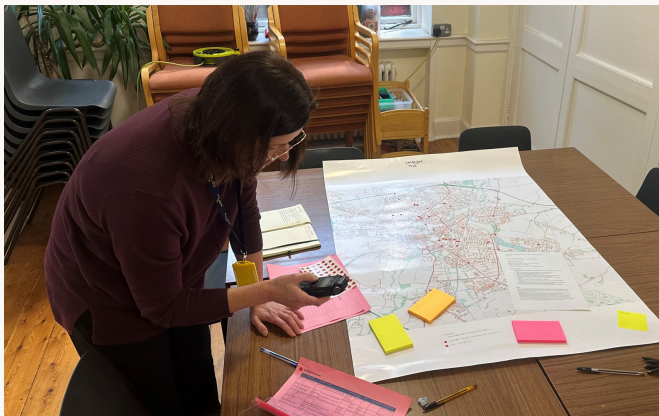
The Gt Yarmouth project launch was held at the Silver Darlings Café on 4th November 2025. Community Forum 2 (at the same venue) on 29th January 2025 had a good turnout of our core population of Portuguese speakers, who represent both EU and non-EU groups depending on nationality, and Ukrainians. An impressive 10 walking interviews are currently being transcribed ready for analysis. For Community Forum 3 we invited other nationalities who had not yet been represented among participants.

## Key date for your diary: TBC

We will be presenting our initial findings of both the Gt Yarmouth and Lowestoft data in a community forum that all stakeholders will be invited to. Please save the date. Invitations with further information will follow.

## The latest fieldsite news - Cambridge

The project launch on 17th September 2024 was very well attended at the Quaker Meeting House, with both community members and stakeholders who mingled over an excellent lunch, provided by Chef Anas from Stars Food, after the presentations. CF2 was held at the same venue on 12th November and had a large mixed group of virtually all the target nationalities. CF3 will focus on Spanish speaking populations. Work has been ongoing to identify routes into liaising with this community and an event will be held soon.



Our community co-researchers have completed ten walking interviews, recording lived experiences of those from Afghanistan, Syria, Hong Kong and Ukraine. They have also been invaluable in providing peer translation support during our data collection activities.

## Key date for your diary: TBC

We will be presenting our initial findings of the Cambridge data in a community forum that all stakeholders will be invited to. Please save the date. Invitations with further information will follow.

## The latest fieldsite news -Peterborough

The project launch on 3rd October 2024 was well attended at the Allia Conference Centre with stakeholders keen to be involved throughout the project. An Indian lunch was held downstairs in the PVCS room which was the perfect place to chat and learn more about related work in the area. CF2 was held at the ARU campus on 13th November with Syrians, Indians and Ukrainians. CF3 was held on 3rd February 2025 at the Volunteer Fire Station with a large number of Afghans, Ukrainians, Latvians and Lithuanians present.

Our community co-researchers have recorded the lived experiences of food, accommodation and access to services with 8 interviewees so far. This represents a range of nationalities including those from Latvia, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, India and Ukraine. Interviewees have used captioned images (photovoice) to express feelings of wellbeing linked to the project topics.

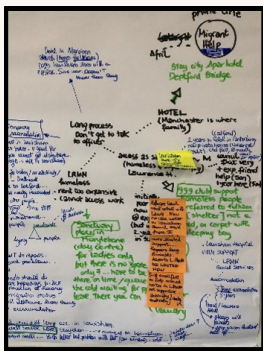


## Key date for your diary: TBC

We will be presenting our initial findings of the Peterborough data in a community forum that all stakeholders will be invited to. Please save the date. Invitations with further information will follow.

## The latest fieldsite news - Greenwich & Lewisham

In South London, a joint launch event at Woolwich Works gathered nearly 60 attendees from two boroughs, including councillors, organisation representatives, and individuals with lived experience from Afghanistan, Syria, Nigeria, and Ukraine. Sessions with stakeholders, migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers were lively and thought-provoking. Local stakeholders shared their visions for migrant justice, while migrant participants discussed challenges with accommodation, particularly for asylum seekers and resettling Ukrainians, and issues around food, where cultural and dietary needs were unmet. Discussions on accessing health services revealed difficulties for non-English speakers, those facing homelessness, and individuals feeling unwelcome in a confusing system with long waiting times.



These topics were further explored at two Migrant Community Research Forums (MCRFs) in Deptford and Lewisham, using a world café-style facilitation. These data collection events provided a valuable space for open dialogue and laid the foundation for upcoming research activities. Future forums aim to uncover some of the lived experiences of this lesser-known of the Polish and Vietnamese communities. We are very thankful to our community researchers and South London partners, LRMN and Creating Grounds, for their excellent organisation and collaboration.

## Key date for your diary TBC

We will be presenting our initial findings of the Greenwich and Lewisham data in a community forum that all stakeholders will be invited to. Please save the date. Invitations with further information will follow.

## The latest fieldsite news - Colchester

In Colchester, CF2 was held at the Salvation Army Citadel on 11th December 2024 with participants from Syria and Hong Kong talking about their experiences of food, accommodation and accessing services in the UK. The CF3 was held at RAMA House on 11th February 2025 and attended by participants from Ukraine and Afghanistan. Our Community Co-researchers have carried out 6 walking interviews with people from Hong Kong, Syria and Ukraine so far.



For the future we still need to recruit the Afghan community, as well as Romanians and Iranians to include their views in the project. We want to thank our community partners and hosts for their much-appreciated efforts in undertaking the recruitment, providing the venues and delicious African slow-cooked food from local caterers that allowed us to come along and have some brilliant conversations and tasty lunches.



## The latest fieldsite news - Wethersfield

Wethersfield is a very different field site from the others. Given that we have been unable to access the site itself, we were very grateful for Care4Calais' kind invitation to come along to their drop-in sessions in Braintree for Wethersfield residents. We attended 3 sessions on 18th December 2024, 12th and 13th February 2025. We spoke with men from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Yemen, Kuwait and Libya about their experiences of living in the only large-scale migrant accommodation centre in the UK. We want to thank Care4Calais, Elim Church and local voluntary groups for their support and the residents of Wethersfield for generously sharing their stories with us.



People travel to these 3 locations by bus

## Key date for your diary: TBC

We will be presenting our initial findings of both the Colchester and Wethersfield data in a community forum that all stakeholders will be invited to. Please save the date. Invitations with further information will follow.