

The unique challenges for vulnerable migrants, refugees, and people seeking asylum

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Definitions

Asylum seeker

- *Person who has departed their country of origin and officially applied for asylum in another country but is awaiting a decision on their request for refugee status*

Refugee

- *a person who 'owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country*

Undocumented migrant

- *Foreign born nationals who do not have the right to remain in the UK*

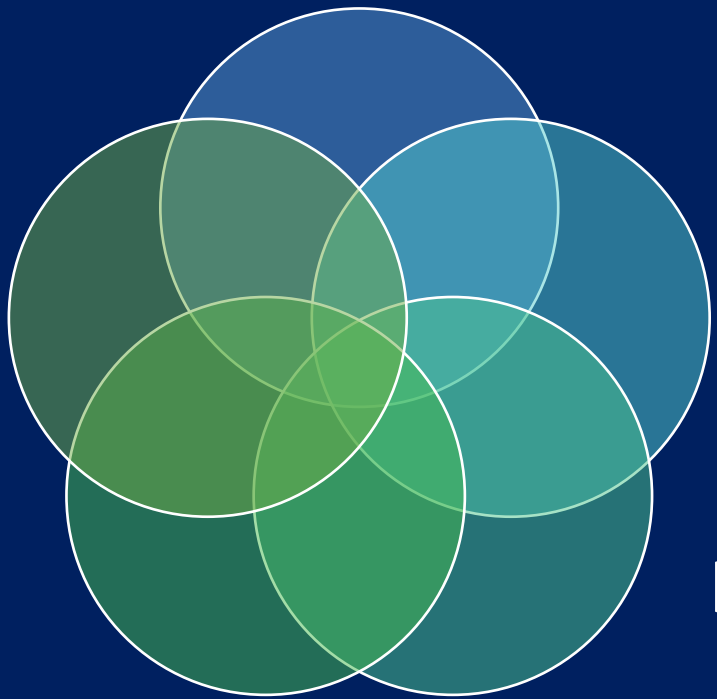
Exposure to
disease

Competing
needs and
priorities

Vulnerability
to disease
progression

Fear and
distrust

Healthcare
access
barriers



Pre-migration experiences



Migration journeys

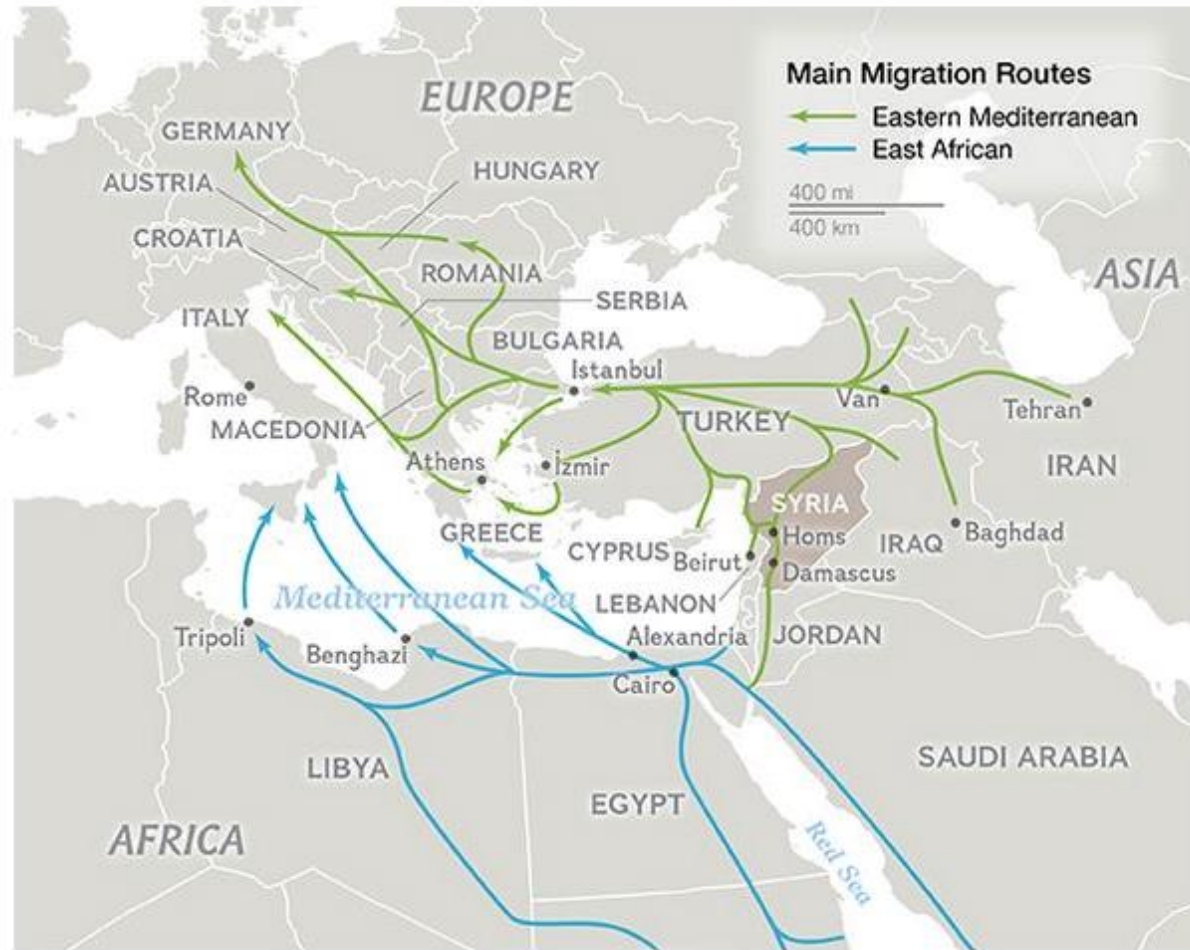


Routes to the UK

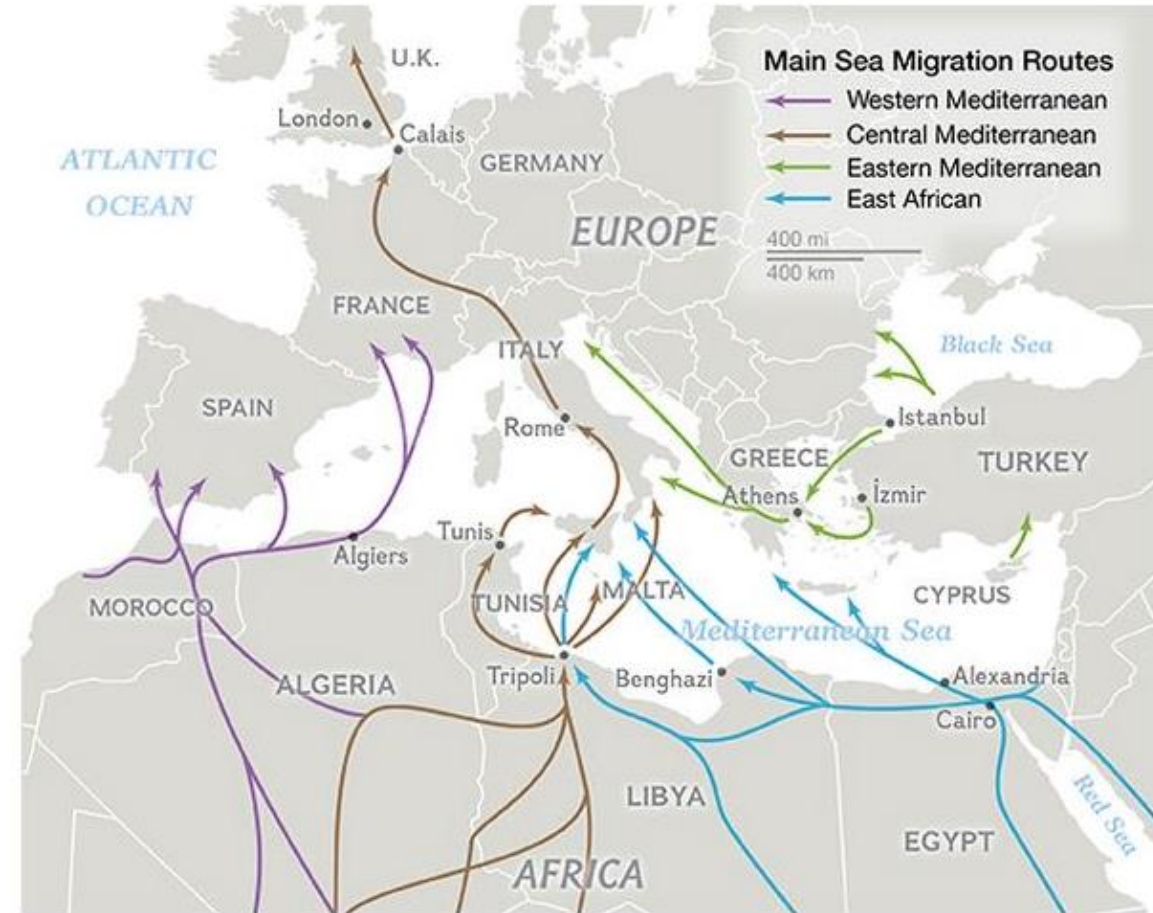
- The UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS)
- Community Sponsorship Scheme
- Mandate Resettlement Scheme
- Family Reunion
- Homes for Ukraine
- Irregular routes
- Trafficking



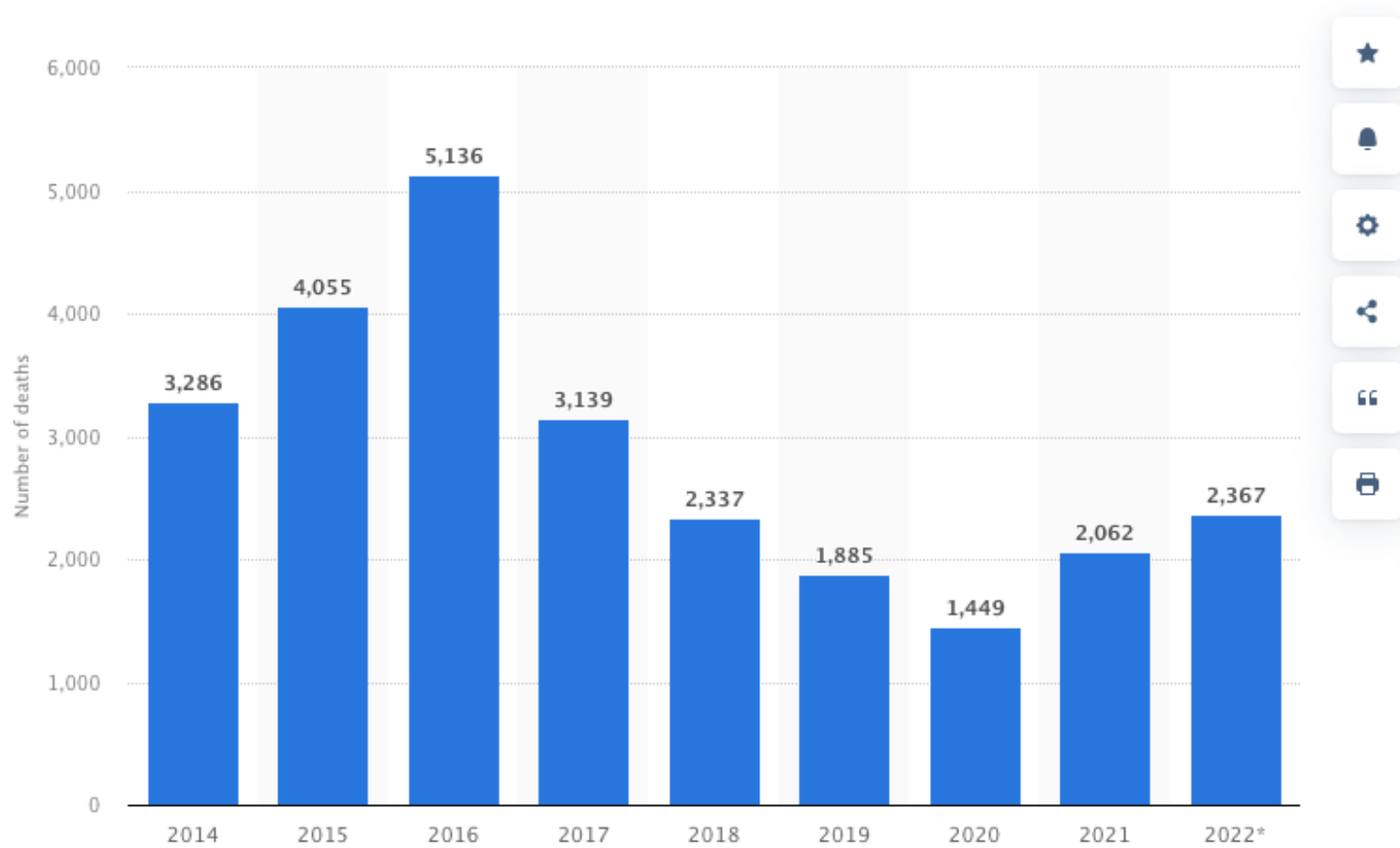
Eastern Mediterranean Route



Mediterranean Sea Route



Number of recorded deaths of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea 2014-2022



[Additional Information](#)

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Health Needs

- **Communicable diseases**
- **Incomplete immunisation history**
- Non-communicable diseases
- Malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies
- Obesity
- Anaemia
- Musculoskeletal complaints
- Oral disease
- **Sexually transmitted infections**
- Pregnancy
- Female genital mutilation
- Psychological disturbance



Post-migration context

- Long and complex legal immigration process
- Detention
- New culture and language
- Loss of identity and status
- Lack of family and community support
- Integration challenges
- Unable to work
- Delayed access to education
- Poverty and poor housing
- Racism and discrimination
- Digital exclusion
- Barriers to healthcare



- Rise in the populist radical right
- Negative media portrayal
- Austerity and deficit reduction policy
- COVID-19
- Illegal Immigration Bill and Rwanda

Political and economic landscape

Treaties ratified by the UK

- The Refugee Convention
- The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The European Convention on Human Rights and Human Rights Act 1998
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

National legislation

- The Children Act (1989)
- The Children Act (2004)

Hostile Environment policies



ID checks and upfront charging of undocumented migrants for hospital treatment and NHS-funded community health services



No recourse to public funds for asylum seekers and undocumented migrants



Banks and building societies prohibited from opening accounts for undocumented migrants



Criminalisation of letting to undocumented migrants and asylum-seekers awaiting a decision on their case as they are disqualified from renting



Criminalisation of employing undocumented migrants for whom it is illegal to work



Data sharing for immigration enforcement purposes between the Home Office and public services

Poverty

“Life is so difficult. I never have enough food for me and my children.”



Asylum seekers and undocumented migrants

- No recourse to public funds
- Not allowed to work
- Housing and £47.39 pp/pw

Refugees

- Asylum support axed after 28 days
- Need NI number to claim welfare benefits – delays in issue
- Home Office delay in issuing identity documents
- Employers, banks etc not recognising Biometric Residence Permits as form of ID



Housing - Asylum Seekers

- Initial Accommodation Centres
- Contingency accommodation
 - Barracks
 - Hotels
 - Barge
- Dispersal accommodation
 - “substandard, poorly maintained and, at times, unsafe”



- Asylum support axed after 28 days
- 28 days to move out of state provided housing
- Unable to pay rent deposits – homelessness and destitution
- Emergency accommodation unsuitable and unsafe

Housing - Refugees



Mother pleaded for help with mouldy flat before toddler Awaab Ishak dies, inquest hears | ITV News Granada

[Visit](#)



- Not automatically entitled to support
- Crime for landlords to knowingly let a property to disqualified persons
- Over crowding, frequent moves

Housing - Undocumented migrants

Exploitation and modern slavery



WHERE VICTIMS COMMONLY COME FROM

MODERN SLAVERY IS HAPPENING ACROSS THE UK

UK CITIZENS ARE ALSO VICTIMS

CHINA (Gender icon, Pickaxe icon)
ROMANIA (Gender icon, Pickaxe icon)
POLAND
ALBANIA
VIETNAM (Cannabis leaf icon, Pickaxe icon)
NIGERIA (Gender icon, Pickaxe icon)

Slavery is closer than you think. It happens all over the world including the UK. Find out more at modernslavery.co.uk or to seek help or report slavery call the helpline.

0800 0121 700

Calls are free from landlines and most mobile networks



- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children: Initial Health Assessment within 28 days of registration with the local authority
- No official health pathway for other refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants
- GP new patient checks
- Acute situations: be opportunistic and holistic!

Healthcare contact

NHS Overseas Visitor Charging

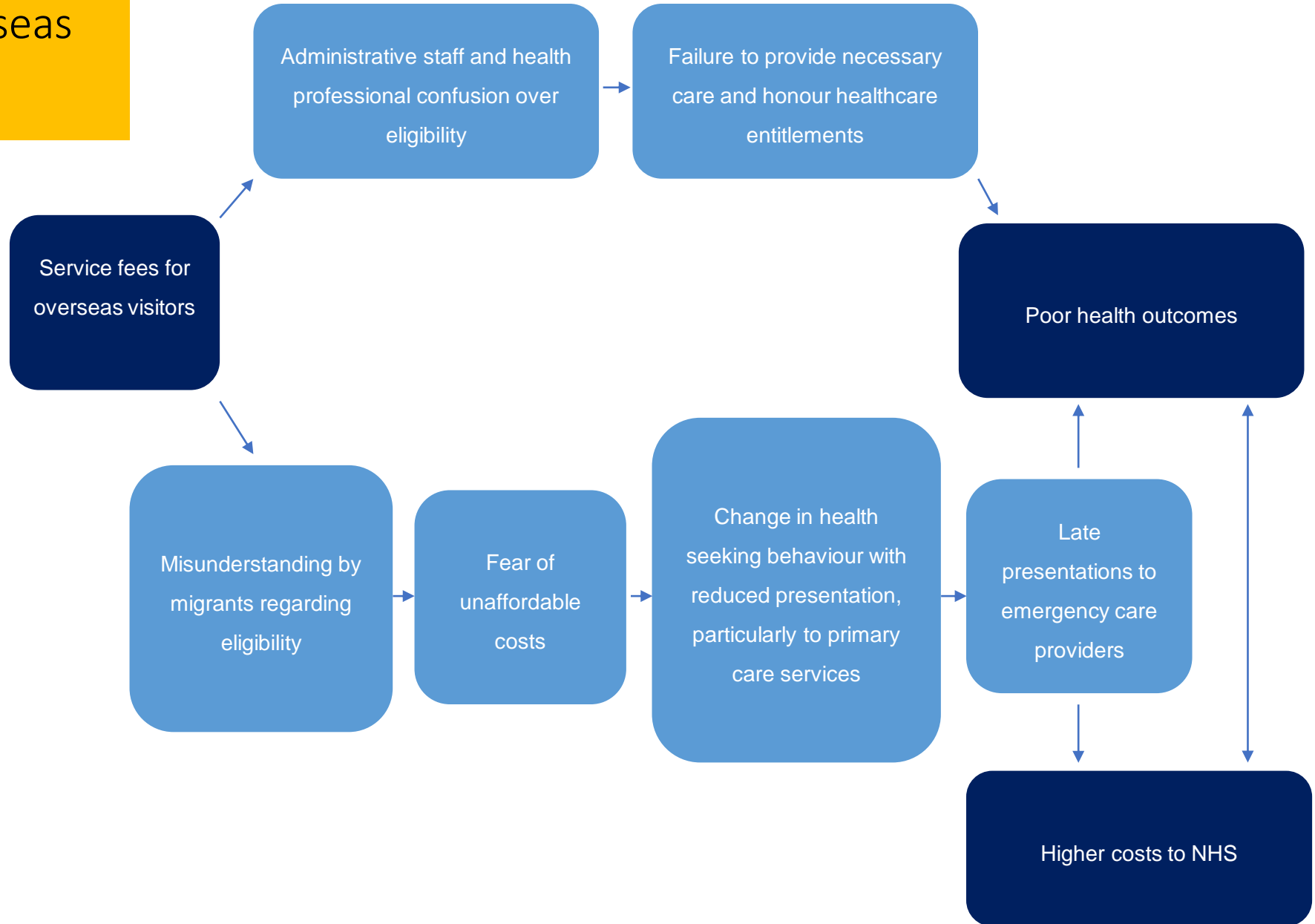
Universal entitlement

- Primary care
- Accident and emergency (A&E) services
- Diagnostic and treatment services for some communicable diseases (e.g. HIV, TB) and sexually transmitted infections
- Family planning services (not termination)
- Treatment of a physical or mental condition caused by torture, female genital mutilation, domestic or sexual violence
- Palliative care

Charged for NHS services

- Charged for hospital treatment at 150% NHS tariff
 - Refused asylum seekers and their dependents not entitled to s95 or s4 support
 - Undocumented migrants

Impact of NHS overseas visitor charges



Healthcare challenges

- GP registration
- Language
- Culture
- Digital exclusion
- Health provider knowledge
- Racism & discrimination
- Distrust
- Access to specialist services
- Under-resourced NHS



What can we do?

- Build trust and work with trusted partners
- Recognise competing needs and priorities
- Provide support to address intersecting needs: *“People not pathogens”*
- Meet language needs
- Work with the wider system to dismantle healthcare barriers
- Share learning and good practice
- Be aware of red flags for modern slavery and trafficking and know how to respond