

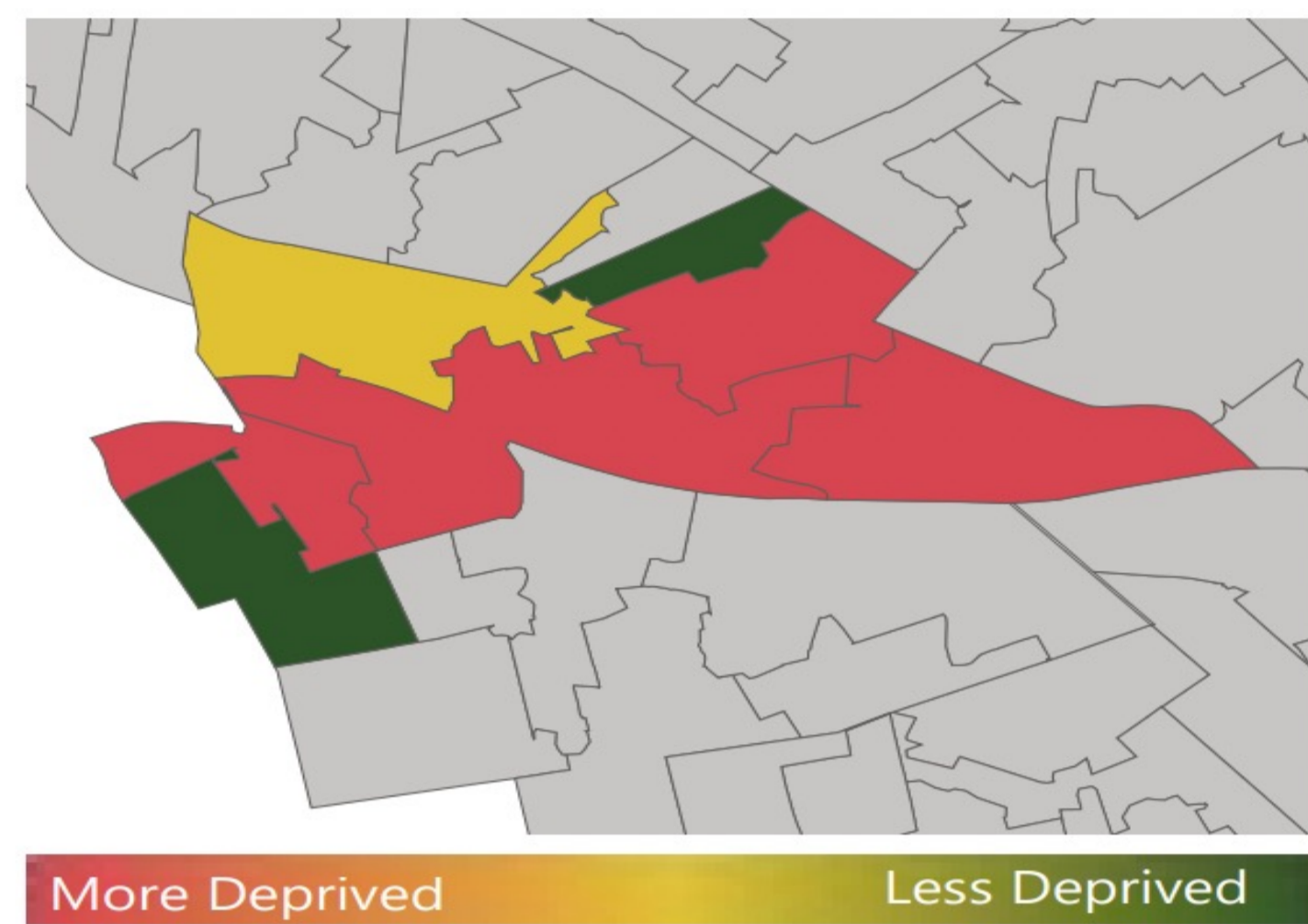
# Taking primary care services to refugee children: the impact of delivering a health engagement session in the community for the local refugee population

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## Objectives

- To increase both health engagement and health literacy in a severely deprived refugee population who have extremely poor engagement rates with the health service



## Background

- Asylum seekers and refugees face multiple barriers when accessing primary care, including lack of knowledge around how to access services, language barriers and inadequate interpretation, and reports of discrimination based on race, religion or immigration status<sup>1</sup>
- Studies in the UK among refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants have found that their health deteriorates over time<sup>2</sup>
- The avoidance of seeking healthcare in these populations - due to fear over costs or being detained - has been identified as a major contributor to this decline in their health<sup>3</sup>

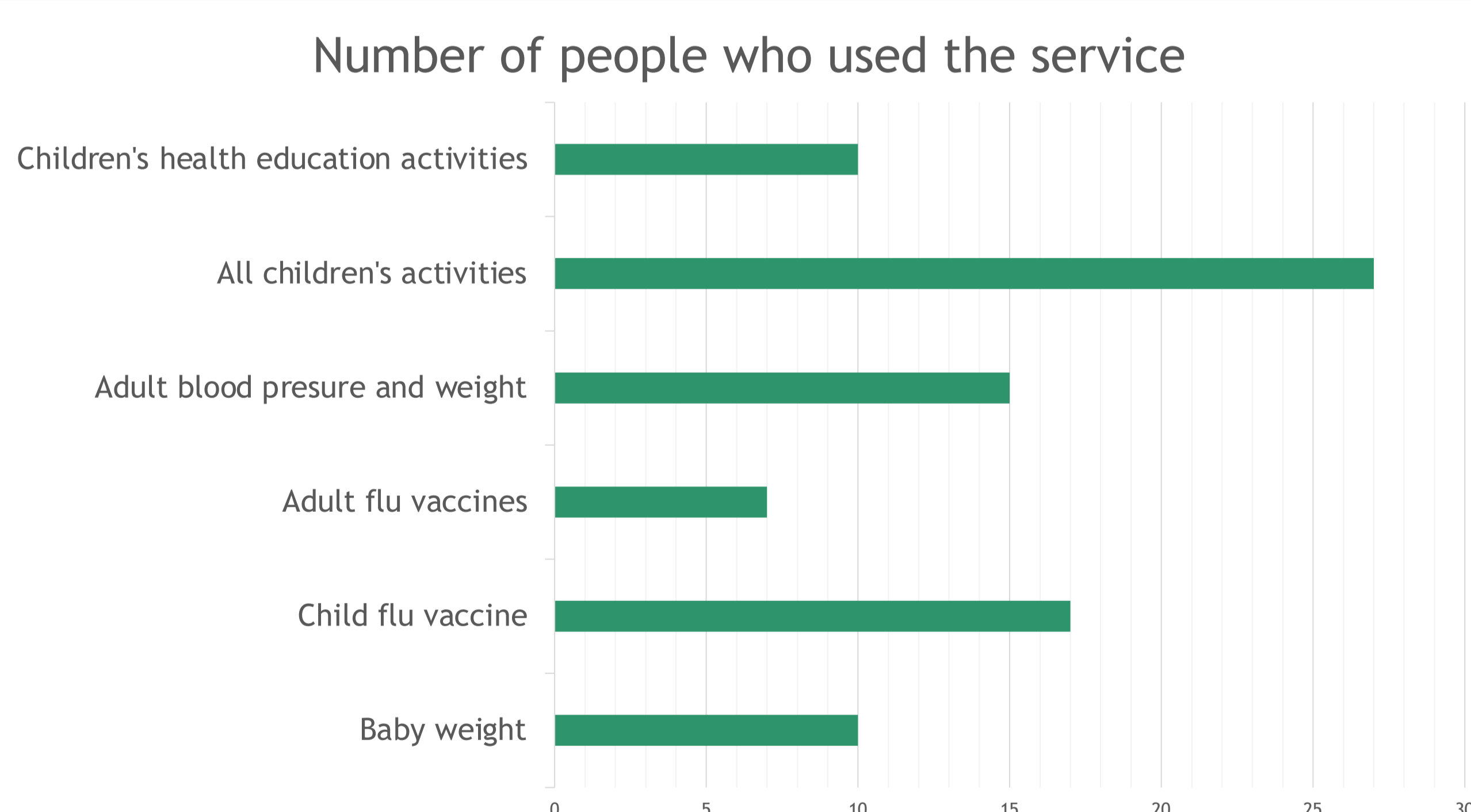
## Methods

- We delivered a half-day session for a severely deprived and refugee population, organised by a local GP practice and delivered in the community centre, during which several basic primary care services were available
- Involved in the organization and delivery of the session were the local GP practice, a nearby hotel housing a group of refugees, a volunteer-led refugee cooking group and the integrated paediatrics team from the local hospital
- Details of all those who took up any of the health services were recorded and the numbers used to assess the impact of the session

### Services available:

- Baby weight checks
- Adult height and weight checks
- Child and adult flu vaccinations
- Blood pressure monitoring
- Liver screening for the adults
- Opportunities to ask advice from GPs and secondary care doctors
- Health education and fun activities for the children

## Results



- 27 children took part in the activities run by members of the paediatrics team
- 10 of them engaged in the discussion and colouring activities based around teaching them which health service (i.e. A&E/999, GP or 111) would be most appropriate for them in various situations
- Anecdotal evidence from the health professionals revealed that several positive discussions were also had with parents who had questions on topics such as weaning and use of vitamins

## Conclusions

- A significant number of refugee children and their parents were reached by this session, resulting in many of them having important flu vaccines in addition to the vast benefits of simply being in a room with medical staff from whom they could seek other health advice
- Introduction of more sessions like this with a multi-faceted approach to target not only things like vaccine rates and healthcare engagement, but also broader health literacy and education has the potential to be invaluable in the drive to reach these so often neglected communities

## References & Acknowledgements

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