



COUNTY COUNCIL - TUESDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2019

Documents being circulated with the County Council agenda

Document	Report in County Council agenda to which it is related
Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources – Medium Term Financial Plan movements since July 2019 (Appendix 1 of the Cabinet report) (page 3)	Cabinet report, paragraph 1
Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources – options for use of one off funding (Appendix 2 of the Cabinet report) (page 4)	Cabinet report, paragraph 1
Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources – Medium Term Financial Plan: assumptions and information (Appendix 3 of the Cabinet report) (page 5)	Cabinet report, paragraph 1
Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources – Medium Term Financial Plan (Appendix 4 of the Cabinet report) (page 11)	Cabinet report, paragraph 1
Response to scrutiny review of the changing care market: adult social care workforce (Appendix 5 of the Cabinet report) (page 13)	Cabinet report, paragraph 2
Response to scrutiny review of the support for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (Appendix 6 of the Cabinet report) (page 19)	Cabinet report, paragraph 3
Scrutiny review of the changing care market: adult social care workforce (Appendix 1 of the People Scrutiny Committee report) (page 25)	People Scrutiny Committee report, paragraph 1
Scrutiny review of the support for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (Appendix 2 of the People Scrutiny Committee report) (page 43)	People Scrutiny Committee report, paragraph 2

PHILIP BAKER
Assistant Chief Executive

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Appendix 1 - MTFP Movements

Movement since State of the County	Ref	2020/21 Estimate £million	2021/22 Estimate £million	2022/23 Estimate £million	Total Estimate £million
State of the County, Cabinet 16 July 2019 DEFICIT/(SURPLUS) - excluding savings		20.418	5.470	8.532	34.420
Add back Savings 2020/21-2021/22	A	(5.208)	(1.972)		(7.180)
State of the County, Cabinet 16 July 2019 DEFICIT/(SURPLUS) - after savings		15.210	3.498	8.532	27.240
UPDATES TO THE MTFP					
Pressures added to the MTFP					
Pay Award Inflation increase to 2.5% for 2020/21	B	0.658	0.714	0.769	2.141
Update of staff data	C	0.500	0.010	0.011	0.521
Children's Services Structural Pressure (LAC)	D	4.900	2.500		7.400
Total Pressures added to the MTFP		6.058	3.244	0.780	10.062
REVISED DEFICIT/(SURPLUS)		21.268	6.722	9.312	37.302
Spending Round Funding					
Improved Better Care Fund: Supplementary amount roll in	E	(3.649)			(3.649)
Improved Better Care Fund: Winter Pressures roll in (after specific use in 20/21)	F		(2.586)		(2.586)
Social Care Grant 2020-21: Social Care Support Grant (one-off)	G	(4.417)	4.417		0.000
Social Care Grant 2020-21: New Funding (one-off)	H	(10.213)	10.213		0.000
SEND High Needs Block Additional funding ¹ (one-off)	I	(1.276)	1.276		0.000
Revenue Support Grant (RSG) additional inflation	J	(1.526)	(0.088)	1.005	(0.609)
Total Spending Round Funding		(21.081)	13.232	1.005	(6.844)
Other Changes					
Business Rates adjustment	K	(0.616)	0.701	0.002	0.087
Council Tax normal adjustment e.g. growth	L	0.292	0.302	0.329	0.923
Adult Social Care Precept	M	(5.814)	(0.175)	(0.180)	(6.169)
General Contingency	N	0.060			0.060
Children's Services Pressure Dedicated Schools Grant reprofile	O	(0.422)	0.422		0.000
Total Other Changes		(6.500)	1.250	0.151	(5.099)
DEFICIT/(SURPLUS) AFTER UPDATES TO THE MTFP		(6.313)	21.204	10.468	25.359

¹ The estimated one-off allocation is £5.8m in 2020/21; until permitted use is known, £1.276m has been allocated to offset SEND pressures already included in the MTFP in 2020/21. Noting that there are further pressures in the MTFP for 2021/22 and 2022/23 which cumulatively total £6.318m

Appendix 2 - Options for the use of one-off funding

Description	Ref	£m			
		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total
<i>Revised MTFP - current position</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>(6.313)</i>	<i>21.204</i>	<i>10.468</i>	<i>25.359</i>
ONE-OFF FUNDING REQUESTED					
Reprofile of savings in base budget:					
CSD - total Safeguarding savings	Q	0.586			0.586
CSD - family key worker element of Early Help savings	R	0.981			0.981
CET - part of Libraries savings	S		0.288		0.288
Subtotal reprofile of savings		1.567	0.288	0	1.855
Revenue:					
ASC - Assessment & Care Management journey	T	0.226	0.226		0.452
ASC - Behavioural Insight across the health and social care system	U	0.250	0.250		0.500
ASC - Bedded Care	V	0.359	0.300	0.196	0.855
ASC - Home Care Commissioning	W	0.110			0.110
ASC/CS - Accommodation and Floating Support	X	0.978	0.582	0.160	1.720
ASC/CS – IT Care Management System	Y	0.165	0.048	0.048	0.261
CS - No Wrong Door model (support for vulnerable adolescents)	Z	1.125	1.125	1.125	3.375
CS - Family Group Conferencing expansion	AA	0.350			0.350
Subtotal revenue		3.563	2.531	1.529	7.623
Capital:					
CET - Economic Development	AB	1.000			1.000
CS - Disability Children's Homes	AC	0.242			0.242
CET - Highways Works Programme Management	AD	2.000			2.000
Subtotal capital		3.242	0.000	0.000	3.242
TOTAL ONE-OFF FUNDING REQUESTED		8.372	2.819	1.529	12.720

Appendix 3

MTFP Assumptions and Information

A Savings

Savings identified as part of the Core Offer work undertaken by CMT and Services during 2019/20 RPPR. Further work has been undertaken to confirm the deliverability of these savings and, at this point in time and subject to ongoing consultations, all identified savings are expected to be delivered in-year. Noting that some departments have submitted options to reprofile certain savings – these are detailed at Appendix 2. A breakdown by department is shown below; subject to update should any reprofiling be approved:

	Approved Savings at Council Feb 19		
	2020/21 £m	2021/22 £m	Total £m
Communities, Economy & Transport	1.462	0.917	2.379
Children's Services	2.337	0.268	2.605
Adult Social Care	0.248	0.000	0.248
Business Services / Orbis	1.161	0.787	1.948
Total Departments	5.208	1.972	7.180

B Pay Award

The service inflation model has been updated for a 2.5% pay award; this will be subject to any union pay claim and the negotiated offer. National pay settlements for the public sector are running at 2.5% and above. A further 0.5% to increase the award to 3% annually would be in the region of £0.7m per annum.

C Rebase of Staff Data

Current estimates have been updated for rebased staff data and known changes to Teachers and Soulbury pay scales.

D Children's Services Structural Pressure (LAC)

Quarter 1 Monitoring showed structural pressure within Children's Services relating to Looked After Children (LAC). Principally due to the increases continuing from 2018/19 in agency placements for LAC with complex needs and an increasing number of semi-independent placements as children get older. There is also an emerging pressure around Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers reaching the age of 18 where costs are greater than the Government subsidy received.

E Improved Better Care Fund (IBCF) – Supplementary

It was announced in the technical consultation that Supplementary IBCF and Winter Pressures have been rolled into Better Care Fund (BCF). Therefore it is assumed that this is ongoing funding, whilst Government is still to confirm its status. This is because its removal would be a significant change in resources (and therefore this remains a risk). Inflation continues to be modelled at zero for the funding; this may change in future years.

F IBCF – Winter Pressures roll in

As stated at para E, Supplementary IBCF and Winter Pressures have been rolled into Better Care Fund (BCF). Use of Winter Pressures has already been agreed for 2020/21, consideration should be given around options for its use in future years.

G Social Care Support Grant

This grant was introduced for 2019/20 and will continue for 2020/21, resulting in an additional £4.4m. This has been merged with the Adult and Children's Social Care Grant.

H Adult and Children's Social Care Grant

The Spending Round announced a new £1bn funding for Social Care grants. The technical consultation, published on 3rd October 2019, suggests that the preferred distribution methodology is based on the current ASC relative needs formula, adjusted for presumed use of the ASC Precept. This results in additional one-off funding of £10.2m.

I SEND High Needs Block additional funding

Funding of £700m for SEND will be distributed as part of the high needs block. Based on current distributions this could result in an additional £5.8m for the Council, which could offset the current MTFP pressure and potential future years' pressures. However, the amount, distribution method and permitted use for this funding have yet to be confirmed.

J Adjustment to Revenue Support Grant (RSG)

The Spending Round announced £300m uprating of the core settlement. In the technical consultation more detail has been provided around the formula for distribution of this; Government is proposing to add inflation nationally to the Spending Formula Assessment and not just to authorities with negative RSG, resulting in a fairer distribution of resources nationally. This has been one of the ESCC's lobbying points, and will result in an extra £1.5m for the Council in 2020/21. The assumption thereafter is that RSG decline will have shifted on a year but be at the same rate as previously reported; ahead of any reform.

K Business Rates

Business rates have been updated for the latest information from Districts and Boroughs, which suggests the risk of a deficit occurring on the collection fund as a result of the pilot have not materialised.

L Council Tax normal adjustment

The previous estimated growth of 1.1% has been reduced to 1.0% given the lower than expected outturn in 2018/19 and estimates of growth provided by LG Futures showing a decline.

M Adult Social Care Precept

Announced in the Spending Round was the option to raise £0.5bn by way of a 2% Adult Social Care Precept. This will be consulted on through the Local Government settlement. As stated at paragraph H, the presumption is that Councils will apply the precept, as the distribution of the Adult and Children's Social Care Grant has been adjusted for this.

N General Contingency

The general contingency is currently set at 1% of net budget less treasury management, and has been updated to reflect changes in the MTFP since State of the County.

O Children's Services Dedicated Schools Grant reprofile

Use of the grant has been reprofiled, and reduces in 2020/21; the balance of £0.422m has been slipped to 2021/22.

Summary of Options for the Use of One-off Funding

P Hold 2020/21 surplus for future years

Given the level of uncertainty for future years' funding; other pressures arising through the pressures protocol that are yet to be assessed for inclusion in the MTFP; and the impact of decisions that are yet to be made regarding capital investment requirements, the surplus funding could be used to mitigate these risks. In effect the surplus would be held in reserve until there is more certainty around future funding.

Q One-off funding: CS reprofile of safeguarding savings (£0.586m in 2020/21)

Reprofile the entirety of Safeguarding savings from 2020/21 to 2021/22. This would allow a more cost effective response and a greater capacity to manage demand and mean fewer children will become subject to Child Protection Plans or not enter (or stay for less time in) the care system.

R One-off funding: CS reprofile of family key worker savings (£0.981m in 2020/21)

Reprofile the key worker element of Early Help savings (£0.981m out of total savings of £2.610m) from 2020/21 to 2021/22. Delaying level three key work savings would enable the department to preserve the capacity of early help teams to divert referrals away from social care. What this means in operational terms is that we will be able to recruit key workers to posts that have been held vacant to avoid the need for compulsory redundancies during the Early Help Review.

S One-off funding: CET reprofile of libraries savings (£0.288m in 2021/22)

Reprofile part of the Libraries savings (£0.288m out of £0.528m) from 2021/22 to 2022/23. This would still deliver £0.240m of savings in 2021/22, to allow for a comprehensive review of the strategic library commissioning strategy and allow a phased approach to the review of options in respect of the Ropemaker Park lease and better manage any impact on the 'back office' team (Librarians and Ropemaker Park team).

NB: should options Q-S be approved, the savings table would be revised as follows:

	<i>Revised Savings</i>			
	<i>2020/21</i>	<i>2021/22</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>2022/23</i>
	<i>£m</i>	<i>£m</i>	<i>£m</i>	<i>£m</i>
<i>Communities, Economy & Transport</i>	<i>1.462</i>	<i>0.629</i>	<i>2.091</i>	<i>0.288</i>
<i>Children's Services</i>	<i>0.770</i>	<i>1.835</i>	<i>2.605</i>	
<i>Adult Social Care</i>	<i>0.248</i>		<i>0.248</i>	
<i>Business Services / Orbis</i>	<i>1.161</i>	<i>0.787</i>	<i>1.948</i>	
<i>Total Departments</i>	<i>3.641</i>	<i>3.251</i>	<i>6.892</i>	<i>0.288</i>

T One-off funding: ASC Assessment & Care Management journey (£0.452m over two years from 2020/21)

Proposal to accelerate and expand current work with regards to channel shift, systems change and digital improvements supporting core ASC business; resulting in an improved client journey and reduced entrants into the social care system.

U One-off funding: ASC Behavioural Insight (£0.500m over two years from 2020/21)

Proposal to implement a behavioural insight project across the health and social care system to identify areas of focus and efficiency in: single health and social care economy; processes, systems, communications; Public Health interventions. This would deliver reduced demand

entering the system, improved flows within the system, improved outcomes for residents in the health and social care system and reduced late/non-payment of debt.

V One-off funding: ASC Bedded Care (£0.359m, £0.300m, £0.196m in 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 respectively)

Investment in the Bedded Care Team to increase brokerage capacity to purchase residential and nursing beds for ASC and the NHS. Also requested is investment in programme and project support to manage the work. This would facilitate a more efficient use of resources and timely hospital discharge.

The resources will increase capacity to ensure patients are able to be discharged from hospital in a timely way. Improving our contract management arrangements will also ensure we are able to purchase beds from the market to better meet changing demands and needs.

Increasing brokerage capacity within the bedded care team will have a direct and positive impact on patient flow out of hospital. Securing appropriate bedded care placements within a community setting to enable timely hospital discharge reduces the length of stay in hospital beds. This releases hospital bed capacity which is generally more costly than community based care and also ensures people are not staying longer in hospital than is necessary, which is often detrimental to people who are frail and elderly. The estimated cost to healthcare providers of one non-elective admission is £1,609 per admission and the cost of one excess bed day is £346 per day (£2,422 per week). The brokerage team ensure a consistent, whole system approach to purchasing beds.

W One-off funding: ASC Home Care Commissioning (£0.110m in 2020/21)

A project to work with providers to test different ways of working alongside the current core home care business model. The four areas to be tested are; complex cases, reviews, hospital discharge and Occupational Therapy involvement, with the aim to support people to live independently at home and reduce admissions to care homes. The learning will inform development of the service specification for the new contract.

The Home Care recommissioning work has commenced. The investment will enable ASC to test out new ways of working, including an outcomes based approach.

Best practice theory promotes outcomes-based commissioning, specifically in terms of reducing ongoing reliance on services and therefore reducing overall demand over time. This will directly and positively impact on Community Care budget spend.

X One-off funding: ASC/CS Accommodation and Floating Support (£0.987m, £0.582m, £0.160m in 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 respectively)

A project to test alternative referral and access routes into floating and accommodation based support to ensure the service model is fit for purpose; meeting the needs of the people the service is designed to support and to establish links / protocols with other pathways (e.g. Rough Sleeping Initiative). This would mitigate demand and provide more appropriate and effective signposting and support for people who are currently presenting to floating support services and District and Borough Housing services, with complex needs, and/or who are at risk of homelessness.

This investment will enable ASC/CS to test new models of service delivery and evaluate their effectiveness prior to producing the future specification and contracts for these services. The models that will be tested will aim to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of

accommodation pathways for people with complex needs, including how they are supported to move-on into general needs housing, with reduced reliance on Adult Social Care.

Y One-off funding: ASC/CS IT Care Management System (£0.165m in 2020/21 and £0.048m in each of 2021/22 and 2022/23)

Investment to use the existing framework agreement with Liquidlogic (who supply ASC & CS case management system) to procure and implement the software called the 'Delegation Portal', for both ASC & CS. Funding is sought for a three-year period to determine the effectiveness of the portal; any recurrent costs beyond 2022/23 will be funded through social work force efficiencies.

This would give both ASC & CS the ability to electronically obtain multi-agency contributions from external professionals and providers into operational practice forms, which could save staff time in collating this information from professionals/providers, improve data quality/integrity and help manage the demand (e.g. in ASC reviews could be delegated from operational staff to care providers/other professionals to complete, rather than ASC staff doing this activity).

If the project progressed with just the ASC element, the costs would be reduced to £0.083m, £0.024m and £0.024m.

It is likely that in practice there could be efficiency savings of £0.010m-£0.050m p.a. from 2021/22 enabling a better Core Offer to be delivered from within existing resources, rather than cashable savings realised by reducing staffing levels.

NB: the outcomes of all work/projects/investment described at T-Y will be assessed and reflected in the MTFP as they emerge.

Z One-off funding: CS No Wrong Door (£3.375m over the three years to 2022/23)

Investment in a No Wrong Door model – an innovative model developed by North Yorkshire CC to work with adolescents experiencing complex challenges with an innovative multi-agency “hub” at the heart of the service. This would use short-term placements and edge of care support (in and out of care) and a range of services, support and accommodation options always progressing to permanence where young people’s aspirations drive practice. If the model is successful it would become part of Core Services and would therefore be an ongoing cost, offset by savings; the full impact will be modelled should this option be taken forwards.

AA One-off funding: CS Family Group Conferencing expansion (£0.350m in 2020/21)

Investment to expand the existing Family Group Conferencing service to Children in Need which is the most cost effective way to reduce risks and the likelihood of children being placed on CP plans or becoming LAC, and as a result reducing social care costs. The investment is expected to deliver non-cashable efficiency savings of £1.224m from 2021/22 resulting from reductions in Social Worker caseloads.

AB One-off funding: CET Economic Development (£1.000m in 2020/21)

The East Sussex Economic Intervention Fund (EIF) consists of: the ESInvest Business Grants and Loans fund; Stalled sites fund; and upgrading empty properties and business incubation unit fund. It has been running for 6 years and directly addresses one of the four Council priorities “driving sustainable economic growth” by supporting local businesses through capital investment to grow and create jobs. It is a key plank of Economic Development which is considered by the Council to be part of the Core Offer. In order to provide the baseline finance required to meet the demand for the EIF, there is a need for a

£1.000m injection into the scheme. Failure to have the correct resource in place will have a detrimental impact to deliver the additional jobs and economic growth this initiative is forecast to achieve. This will be a contribution to the project grants and loans within the Capital Programme.

AC One-off funding: CS Disability Children's Homes (£0.242m in 2020/21)

Investment to remodel the Children's Disabilities Children's Homes to create additional capacity and reduce the costs of residential care placements in the independent sector by keeping more children in local provision within the county. This would create an extra 3 beds and provide greater options for keeping children within local provision, minimising existing and onward costs and delivering better outcomes for them in the longer term. It is expected to achieve net savings of £0.352m p.a. from 2020/21.

AD One-off funding: CET Highways Works Programme Management (£2.000m in 2020/21)

A contribution towards the agreed basic need investment to be funded in the Capital Programme for Highways Works Programme Management in order to achieve agreed condition targets. The £2.000m could facilitate early investment to support management of the programme of works and avoid the need to borrow early with the associated borrowing costs.

Appendix 4

Medium Term Financial Plan	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	Approved Budget	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£million	£million	£million	£million
TAXATION & GOVERNMENT FUNDING		(375.145)	(388.290)	(397.278)
Business Rates (Inclusive of BRR Pilot)	(83.761)	4.133	(1.615)	(1.740)
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)		(3.561)	1.418	1.534
Council Tax	(290.498)	(8.234)	(8.919)	(9.188)
Adult Social Care Precept		(5.814)	(0.175)	(0.180)
New Homes Bonus	(0.886)	0.331	0.303	0.138
TOTAL TAXATION & GOVERNMENT FUNDING	(375.145)	(388.290)	(397.278)	(406.714)
SERVICE PLAN				
Service Expenditure	340.888	341.236	351.315	383.859
Inflation				
Pay Award	3.635	3.366	3.025	3.127
Contractual inflation (contract specific)	0.889	1.005	0.958	0.916
Normal inflation for contracts	6.270	9.537	8.782	9.154
Adult Social Care				
Growth & Demography	3.538	3.840	3.500	3.500
Adult Social Care Winter Pressures		2.586	(2.586)	
Children's Services				
Dedicated Schools Grant	4.891	1.778	0.422	
Growth & Demography	1.656	1.555	1.070	2.822
Looked After Children	1.043	4.715	1.909	
Post 16 i-Send (New Responsibility)	0.269			
Fostering	0.374			
Care leavers (New Responsibility)	0.163			
Home to School Transport	0.726			
Communities, Environment & Transport				
Waste Housing Growth	0.233	0.174	0.213	0.200
Street lighting Electricity/Re-payment of Investment		(0.195)	(0.655)	
Libraries Hastings rates and utilities	0.046			
Business Services				
IT & Digital Licences	0.297			
IT & Digital Data Centre		0.093		
Apprenticeship Team		0.117		
Savings				
Savings 2019/20	(5.131)			
Specific Grants				
Improved Better Care Fund	(18.551)	(2.586)		
Social Care Grant 2020-21		(14.630)	14.630	
SEND High Needs Block Additional funding ¹		(1.276)	1.276	
NET SERVICE EXPENDITURE	341.236	351.315	383.859	403.578

Corporate Expenditure		33.909	35.870	35.490
Treasury Management	17.696	0.687	(0.179)	0.221
Funding Capital Programme - New Homes Bonus		0.555	(0.303)	(0.138)
General Contingency	3.570	0.130	0.090	0.090
Contribution to balances and reserves	0.908	(0.216)		
Pensions	10.338	0.785		
Apprenticeship Levy	0.600			
Levies & Grants	0.797	0.020	0.012	0.012
TOTAL CORPORATE EXPENDITURE	33.909	35.870	35.490	35.675
TOTAL PLANNED EXPENDITURE	375.145	387.185	419.349	439.253
CUMULATIVE DEFICIT/(SURPLUS)	0.000	(1.105)	22.071	32.539
ANNUAL DEFICIT/(SURPLUS)	0.000	(1.105)	23.176	10.468
Savings 2020/21-2021/22		(5.208)	(1.972)	
CUMULATIVE DEFICIT/(SURPLUS) after savings		(6.313)	14.891	25.359
ANNUAL DEFICIT/(SURPLUS) after savings		(6.313)	21.204	10.468

¹ The estimated one-off allocation is £5.8m in 2020/21; until permitted use is known, £1.276m has been allocated to offset SEND pressures in 20/21. Noting that there are further pressures in the MTFP for 2021/22 and 2022/23 which cumulatively total £6.318m.

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF THE CHANGING CARE MARKET: ADULT SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE – ACTION PLAN			
SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION		DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
R1	<p>The Adult Social Care department and the Employability and Skills team to explore the options for broadening engagement in the work of the Health and Social Care Sector Task Group, to include consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enhancing links between the ASC department and the work of the Employability and Skills Team; the pathways for independent sector views to feed into the Task Group and for the work of the Task Group to be promoted in ongoing engagement with the sector; and the potential to expand the membership of the Health and Social Care Sector Task Group to include representatives of the independent sector. 	<p>Identifying further opportunities to bring together the work of the Employability & Skills Team with the wider social care sector is welcomed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult Social Care (ASC) key staff and the Employability and Skills (E & S) Team will meet to review the membership of the Health and Social Care Task Group to ensure that it includes the right membership to best support links between the social care sector and the E&S Team ASC representatives will be invited to attend the Skills East Sussex Health and Social Care Task Group. Independent care providers, under guidance from ASC, will be invited and encouraged to attend the Health & Social Care Task Group. 	<p>November 2019 to January 2020</p> <p>January 2020</p> <p>Invitations November 2019 / next meeting January 2020</p>

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF THE CHANGING CARE MARKET: ADULT SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE – ACTION PLAN			
SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION		DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
R2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With a view to increasing the numbers of Industry Champions and Open Doors opportunities drawn from the independent sector, the Adult Social Care department and Employability and Skills Team to work together to identify ways to further develop the Careers Hub's approach to generating interest in these roles. The aim being to create a pool of participants which is more proportionate to the size of the care sector in East Sussex. All contracts of £100,000 or more issued to the Independent Care Sector by the Adult Social Care department to include social value skills targets that are facilitated by the Employability and Skills Team. 	<p>The Careers Hub Lead from the E & S Team will seek opportunities to present information at the next Independent Care Group meeting. A communication plan will be developed with Independent Care Providers to promote and build the network of Industry Champions and Open Doors programmes.</p> <p>The E & S Strategy Manager to attend the ASC Commissioning Group meeting to present information about the Council's approach to Skills in Social Value procurement and to identify ways in which the E & S team can support this area of delivery.</p>	<p>November 2019 to February 2020</p> <p>November 2019 to January 2020</p>

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF THE CHANGING CARE MARKET: ADULT SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE – ACTION PLAN			
SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION		DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
R3	<p>The Adult Social Care department to work with the Apprenticeship Team to assess the impact of levy funding in relation to care sector employers. This could include evaluating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the level of interest from the care sector and whether further promotion is needed; • the effectiveness of the process for identifying which providers are allocated the levy funding; • whether the funding successfully targeted those areas where the recruitment pressures are the most challenging; and • whether vulnerable groups, such as Looked After Children, have been identified by the Apprenticeship team as requiring any additional support to access apprenticeships funded through the levy. 	<p>There is interest within the care sector to access funding for existing and new staff, however, there has been an issue in relation to social care employers following the process, laid down by the Education Skills Funding Agency, to access funding.</p> <p>The Apprentice Team (in accordance with Skills East Sussex) has identified priority areas for funding, where there are employment challenges within the county. Further work is needed to ensure these areas correlate with the experiences of ASC staff.</p> <p>East Sussex College Group and Heathercroft Training have been engaged as providers to work primarily with care sector employers. The apprentice team has, to date, been reliant on providers to use networks of care based employers to utilise funding. This information will be shared with ASC to ensure that the breadth of employers being targeted is appropriate.</p> <p>Within ESCC a sub-committee has been set up to look at ways of supporting young people to access apprenticeship opportunities, and in particular groups facing challenges such as: Looked After Children (LAC) and those not in education, employment or training (NEET). In terms of working with external employers in the county in doing this, the Apprenticeship Team has been focused primarily in allocating the funding. Further work will be undertaken by the team to prioritise employers who take on staff from recognised areas of need (LAC and NEET for example).</p>	<p>December 2019</p> <p>December 2019</p> <p>November 2019 to February 2020</p>

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF THE CHANGING CARE MARKET: ADULT SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE – ACTION PLAN			
SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION		DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
R4	All councillors, via their connections with local groups and organisations, to help raise awareness of the role of the Personal Assistant and the related advice and support available from the Support with Confidence team.	Support from councillors, within naturally occurring opportunities, to raise awareness of the newer models of social care support would be welcomed by the department. Information and guidance can be provided as required.	Ongoing
R5	The Adult Social Care department to explore the feasibility and potential benefits of developing a bespoke website to provide information on jobs and careers in the East Sussex care sector.	The department will explore the approach, methodology, costs and feasibility of the West Sussex website model, and/or alternatives to this model, to determine whether there is a cost-effective and achievable solution that can be recommended within the current constraints on the Council's budget and the Core Offer. This work will include engagement with representatives of the Independent Care Sector to understand what would be of most benefit to the sector. Work will be undertaken to ensure that any developments make the most of the activity being undertaken within the Employability & Skills Team.	October 2019 – March 2020

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF THE CHANGING CARE MARKET: ADULT SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE – ACTION PLAN			
SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION		DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
R6	<p>The Adult Social Care department to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to reinforce the national recruitment campaign locally via support from the East Sussex County Council's Communications Team; and • work with the Employability and Skills Team to ensure that this is integrated into the cross sectoral careers campaign run by Skills East Sussex. 	<p>The department has sought support from the Communications team to reinforce stage two of the national recruitment campaign, including using the national campaign wording and images in our own media adverts; devising direct linkage to the Council's own recruitment branding and the potential to use the national campaign advert website to provide direct hyperlink access to our own job vacancies on the Council's website.</p> <p>The department will involve the Employability and Skills Team directly in this work, described above, to ensure that the Skills East Sussex campaign is able to access and utilise the linkages which can be achieved.</p> <p>ASC representatives to be invited to attend the first meeting of the Skills East Sussex Careers Campaign planning (21st November) to identify how the national campaign can dovetail in with the local campaign, and to explore the sharing of resources relating to care sector roles.</p>	<p>October 2019 to January 2020</p> <p>October 2019 to January 2020</p> <p>Development of resources by March 2020.</p>

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PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF SUPPORT FOR UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN (UASC):- ACTION PLAN			
SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION		DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
R1	The Children's Services Department to explore the potential for linking local UASC with the Hastings and Rother Buddy Project (HBRP) and, subject to the outcome of its work with the HBRP, to assess the feasibility of developing similar provision elsewhere within East Sussex in partnership with the voluntary sector.	The link with HBRP has been established following the Scrutiny Committee Review. Currently the project is only appropriate for young people aged 18 years or over. Children's Services will explore with HBRP how to use their experience, knowledge and resources in this field to develop something similar for younger children across East Sussex.	January 2020
R2	The Children's Services Department to assess the feasibility of developing in East Sussex a social space for UASC where they can meet with their peers and build their confidence, support networks and social skills.	Throughout the summer period the UASC team piloted a 'drop in' group for young people. The 'drop in' provided a social space, but was also attended by guest speakers including professionals from Health, Police and the Refugee Council. The Children's Service is now planning how to best roll the pilot out on a permanent basis.	November 2019

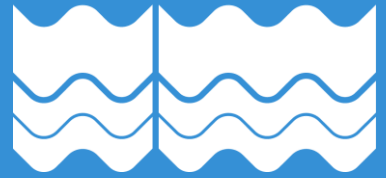
PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF SUPPORT FOR UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN (UASC):– ACTION PLAN			
SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION		DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
R3	<p>With a view to increasing both the amount and diversity of accommodation provision, the Children's Services Department to explore further the options for raising awareness amongst local communities of the specific accommodation needs of UASC. This to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviewing its advertising campaigns to include an element which highlights the specific needs of UASC. • assisting Members to foster connections with different sections of their local communities. • more cultural awareness training for existing foster carers and supported accommodation providers which seeks to address this need. 	<p>The UASC team will work in partnership with fostering colleagues to review local recruitment processes and learn from other Fostering Services on how best to raise awareness of the needs of this specific group of young people.</p> <p>The service will develop a toolkit to assist Members locally</p> <p>A training programme will be developed by the UASC team for supported accommodation providers.</p> <p>The UASC team will have a direct input to foster carer training and develop a bespoke programme to meet the local need. This will include some input from the young people already cared for by ESCC.</p>	<p>October 2019</p> <p>February 2020</p> <p>December 2019</p> <p>November 2019</p>

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF SUPPORT FOR UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN (UASC):– ACTION PLAN			
SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION		DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
R4	<p>The Children's Services Department to explore the options for increasing access to work experience opportunities for UASC. This to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> assessing the potential for the Department to raise awareness of the work experience needs of UASC with schools and colleges and to review the current levels of work experience placements for UASC. <p>Members to support this process by using their local leadership position to help raise awareness of the work experience needs of UASC and to help foster more work experience placements with public sector organisations and the voluntary sector.</p>	<p>The UASC team has developed links with the work experience coordinator in order to offer wider opportunities to this group of young people. The experiences of the current UASC cohort will inform the offer going forward. This will better equip potential providers with the requirements of this particular group of young people, including issues such as the limitations imposed by their immigration status etc.</p> <p>The UASC team will include support to Members in the toolkit.</p>	<p>December 2019</p> <p>February 2020</p>

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF SUPPORT FOR UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN (UASC):– ACTION PLAN			
SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION		DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
R5	<p>The Children's Services Department to explore how an increased early focus on English as an additional language could be provided to UASC. This to include a review of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Department's guidance to UASC and officers on this area; and the potential feasibility of providing intensive language courses which could include commissioning accommodation providers to deliver intensive support packages within the first 4-6 weeks of arrival. 	<p>An Education Specialist has been appointed into the UASC team and will develop guidance which will focus on the provision of this support to young people.</p> <p>The UASC team has developed a close partnership with the East Sussex EALS service to deliver English language lessons to UASC where appropriate.</p> <p>The department has identified a charity called ETC who operate an English Language School in Hastings. Over the summer period they have been able to run small group sessions for UASC. The UASC team and ETC will collaborate and explore if there is any wider support that could be provided to these young people, particularly in relation to spontaneous arrivals.</p> <p>A mini competition exercise will be instigated through a framework agreement for providers to deliver intensive packages of support via contractual arrangements.</p>	<p>January 2020</p> <p>October 2019</p> <p>October 2019</p> <p>October 2019</p>

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF SUPPORT FOR UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN (UASC):– ACTION PLAN			
SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION		DIRECTOR’S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
R6	<p>To help expand the range of support available in East Sussex, the Children’s Services Department to develop a UASC toolkit for Members The toolkit to provide guidance on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the key challenges facing UASC – such as accommodation needs, opportunities for social activities, access to work experience and English language support; what assistance is currently available for UASC; how Members can develop links with key organisations and communities. the process for referring potential leads to the Department. 	<p>The UASC team will develop a toolkit for Members drawing on local expertise and the input of the Principal Social Worker for the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration.</p>	<p>February 2020</p>

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Appendix 1

Scrutiny Review of the Changing Care Market: Adult Social Care Workforce.

Report by the Review Board:

Councillor Trevor Webb (Chair)

Councillor Charles Clark

Councillor Michael Ensor

Councillor John Ungar

People Scrutiny Committee – 19 September 2019

Cabinet – 12 November 2019

Full Council – 3 December 2019

The report of the Scrutiny Review of The Changing Care Market: Adult Social Care Workforce

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Recommendations

Recommendation	Page
<p>1 The Adult Social Care department and the Employability and Skills team to explore the options for broadening engagement in the work of the Health and Social Care Sector Task Group, to include consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancing links between the ASC department and the work of the Employability and Skills Team; • the pathways for independent sector views to feed into the Task Group and for the work of the Task Group to be promoted in ongoing engagement with the sector; and • the potential to expand the membership of the Health and Social Care Sector Task Group to include representatives of the independent sector. 	
<p>2 With a view to increasing the numbers of Industry Champions and Open Doors opportunities drawn from the independent sector, the Adult Social Care department and Employability and Skills Team to work together to identify ways to further develop the Careers Hub's approach to generating interest in these roles. The aim being to create a pool of participants which is more proportionate to the size of the care sector in East Sussex.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All contracts of £100,000 or more issued to the Independent Care Sector by the Adult Social Care department to include social value skills targets that are facilitated by the Employability and Skills Team. 	
<p>3 The Adult Social Care department to work with the Apprenticeship Team to assess the impact of levy funding in relation to care sector employers. This could include evaluating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the level of interest from the care sector and whether further promotion is needed; • the effectiveness of the process for identifying which providers are allocated the levy funding; • whether the funding successfully targeted those areas where the recruitment pressures are the most challenging; and • whether vulnerable groups, such as Looked After Children, have been identified by the Apprenticeship team as requiring any additional support to access apprenticeships funded through the levy. 	
<p>4 All councillors, via their connections with local groups and organisations, to help raise awareness of the role of the Personal Assistant and the related advice and support available from the Support with Confidence team.</p>	
<p>5 The Adult Social Care department to explore the feasibility and potential benefits of developing a bespoke website to provide information on jobs and careers in the East Sussex care sector.</p>	
<p>6 The Adult Social Care department to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to reinforce the national recruitment campaign locally via support from the East Sussex County Council's Communications Team; and • work with the Employability and Skills Team to ensure that this is integrated into the cross sectoral careers campaign run by Skills East Sussex. 	

Objectives and Scope of the Review

1. Members of the People Scrutiny Committee are aware of a range of challenges facing the local care market. Some of these were highlighted in the 2018 Care Quality Commission Local Area Review of East Sussex; others are well known locally and nationally and are linked to increased demand for services and resources which are declining in relative terms. The Committee established a Scoping Board to explore these challenges, with the aim of identifying specific areas which would benefit from additional scrutiny. The Scoping Board found that the Adult Social Care (ASC) and Health department has a range of initiatives in place to manage the immediate and short-term issues, particularly in terms of engagement with providers and the NHS to support the market and deliver appropriate and more integrated care. Work is also underway to address longer term challenges and this was the focus for scrutiny.

2. It was apparent to the Scoping Board that the care market will need to change significantly in the coming years to adapt to increasing demand, changing public expectations and the reduced resources available for statutory services. These challenges are particularly acute in East Sussex given the county's demographics. The Scoping Board identified four key areas for scrutiny:

- Public understanding and expectations of social care (subject of a completed scrutiny review)
- **Social care workforce challenges**
- Developing care markets
- Increasing community resilience, in particular addressing loneliness.

3. This review seeks to address aspects of the developing workforce challenges facing social care providers (the second bullet point above). The review is timely as the recruitment and retention challenges in this sector are stark. For example, Skills for Care (SfC) estimate that if the workforce continues to grow proportionally to the projected number of people aged 65 and over, then the number of adult social care jobs in the south east region will increase by 48% by 2035. Given the demographic profile of the county, the required increase in the size of the workforce in East Sussex is potentially even higher.

4. The Committee agreed three areas of focus for the review:

- **Older people's services:** It was agreed to focus on social care for older people as this is the biggest and the fastest growing area of demand for Adult Social Care.
- **Independent Care Sector:** It was agreed to focus on workforce issues within the independent sector (as opposed to the social care workforce directly employed by the ASC and Health department). This is because the independent sector is by far the largest employer of adult social care staff in the county.
- **Commissioned services:** It was agreed that the review should focus particularly on independent sector services commissioned by the ASC department.

5. The Committee also agreed that the review should consider the following two lines of enquiry which specifically relate to the Council's role:

- **Is the Council working effectively in partnership with others (e.g. schools and colleges) with regard to future workforce needs?**
- **Could the Council do more to support recruitment and retention in the independent sector?**

6. This report presents a summary of the Board's findings in relation to these questions and its recommendations. The Board focused on developing recommendations which are realistically achievable and within the Council's sphere of influence and available resources.

Background

Adult Social Care responsibilities

7. Section 5 of the Care Act 2014 states that a local authority has a duty to 'promote the efficient and effective operation of a market in services for meeting care and support needs'. The aim of this duty includes helping to ensure that residents who wish to access care services in the local care market have a range of providers to choose from who (taken together) provide a variety of high quality services. The Act also states that in performing its duty to promote a diverse and high quality care market, the local authority must also have regard to the need to:

- ensure that it is aware of current and likely future demand for such services and to consider how providers might meet that demand; and
- the importance of fostering a workforce whose members are able to ensure the delivery of high quality services.

8. The above (and other associated) duties are often referred to as 'market shaping'. In line with national recommendations, the county council has produced a '[Market Position Statement](#)', designed to help the social care provider market to contribute and respond to emerging need, required service developments and pathway reconfiguration.

9. The position statement supports the development of the social care workforce by providing information about where demand is likely to increase and therefore where workforce capacity and skills will need to develop. It also sets out how the council supports the independent sector in terms of training and workforce development.

The social care workforce

National context

10. The number of adult social care jobs in England was estimated by Skills for Care at 1.6 million in 2017. Only 22% of the total workforce were employed by local authorities, by the NHS (who have employees who are classified as adult social care workers) or in support of direct payments (clients employing care workers themselves with funding provided by a local authority). This means that independent providers, with 78% of the total workforce, are by far the largest employers in the sector. Services within the independent sector include residential nursing homes, residential care homes, home care, and extra care (which includes sheltered housing). The social care workforce comprises: contracted staff; casual staff; agency staff; self-employed personal assistants; front line staff and managers.

Local context

11. In line with the national picture, the majority of the social care workforce in East Sussex is employed by small independent organisations in the private and voluntary sectors. The county council purchases (commissions) services from some of these independent providers for clients who are entitled to funded social care services from the council under the appropriate legislation. However, many older people in the county (or their relatives) purchase care services direct from these organisations and pay for them without the involvement of the council. These people are often called 'self-funders'.

12. Skills for Care (the sector skills council for adult social care which takes a strategic lead on workforce development) estimates that in East Sussex in 2017 there were an estimated 21,000 jobs in adult social care. These were split between local authorities (9%), independent sector providers (83%) and jobs for direct payment recipients (9%). The figures indicate that the majority (79%) of the workforce in East Sussex was female and the average age was 43 years old. Those aged 24 and under made up 10% of the workforce and those aged over 55 represented 25%. Given this age profile approximately 5,200 people will be reaching retirement age in the next 10 years.

13. Pay rates for social care occupations in East Sussex are generally lower than average rates in the south east region, although usually higher than average rates in England. For example, the average hourly rate of a care worker (in 2017/18) was £8.27 in the county, £8.37 in the south east, and £8.19 in England. Skills for Care estimates show that 50% of the workforce in East Sussex hold a relevant adult social care qualification (49% in the south east and 53% in England). Of those workers without a relevant adult social care qualification recorded, 56% had three or more years of experience in the adult social care sector, 64% had completed or were in the process of an induction and 31% had engaged with the Care Certificate.

Future trends and challenges

14. **Demographic pressures:** The population in England aged 65 and above is projected to increase to 14.5 million by 2035 (from a population of 10 million in 2017). This necessitates a huge increase in the capacity of health and social care services, a challenge which will increasingly impact on all local authorities with social care responsibilities. Given the older than average age profile in East Sussex, the situation here is even more challenging. For example, assuming the workforce grows proportionally to the number of people aged 75 and over in the population, it is estimated that by 2030 the adult social care workforce in East Sussex will need to grow by 55% to meet the needs of the ageing population. This would result in an increased workforce total of 32,600 jobs in the social care sector in East Sussex (as opposed to the 2017 figure of 21,000). Whilst this figure includes those directly employed by the local authority and the NHS, the main impact of this potential increase in demand will be felt within the independent sector, given that over three quarters of care jobs are within that sector.

15. **New skills required:** As well as increased capacity in the social care workforce there is a need to develop the skills within that workforce to meet future needs. Health and social care services are becoming increasingly integrated, leading to new and different roles. The skills required of health and social care staff are undergoing significant changes as the roles increasingly require workers to enable people to manage their own health and care with support from technology. And, as people are supported to live independently at home for as long as possible, those needing residential or nursing home care are likely to have more complex needs requiring additional skills from staff. There is an increasing demand for newer roles such as Personal Assistant which require skills in managing a business as well as care and support.

16. **Recruitment and retention:** The scale of the recruitment and retention challenge in the sector is demonstrated by estimates from Skills for Care that in England in 2017/18 approximately 390,000 care workers left their job during the year and there were around 110,000 vacancies at any one time. The adult social care workforce within East Sussex has a vacancy rate of 8.6%, which equates to 1,700 vacancies at any one time. This vacancy rate is similar to the region average, at 8.7% and similar to England at 8.0%. The turnover rate in the workforce is high, at 31% overall and 36% for direct care roles. There is significant churn within the system with staff moving from one care role to another. However, whilst the turnover rate is relatively high, many staff are remaining within the care sector. National research suggests that it is difficult to attract workers because of relatively low pay and negative perceptions of the work. Compared to its neighbouring local authorities, East Sussex has the lowest rate of zero-hour contracts at 15%, compared to 26% in Kent, 24% in Brighton and Hove and 23% in West Sussex and Surrey.

17. **Future national policy:** There are significant uncertainties nationally regarding the direction of travel for adult social care policy. An anticipated Green Paper is still awaited and it is unclear if or how future government funding of adult social care will respond to demographic changes and the significant pressures on local authority budgets. In addition, there may be some impact on the social care workforce from Brexit as some staff working in the care sector in the UK are from EU countries. These factors contribute to a challenging backdrop for adult social care workforce planning and development.

Findings and Recommendations

Workforce planning and development

18. The Board heard that the Council works with Skills for Care to ensure a good understanding of future workforce needs both for the local authority itself and the independent sector. This includes projections of total future workforce needs and by type of role and service.

19. The Council's Market Position Statement provides an overview for the independent sector of where future demand is expected to fall, both geographically and by type of service, to inform the sector's plans for service development and the associated workforce requirements. The statement concludes that, if the current volumes of service provision and purchasing patterns are applied to the demographic data for East Sussex, there is an expectation that demand will continue to rise in the following areas:

- **Personal Assistants:** Given the trend for people to increasingly want to stay in their own homes, it is anticipated that the demand for Personal Assistants that can support more complex health and social care needs will continue to grow.
- **Home care:** Whilst in some areas of the county there is currently sufficient home care provision, there are locations in the county which have a shortfall of care options for clients.
- **Dementia residential care:** additional dementia residential care is needed in the west of the county.
- **Nursing care:** nursing and dementia nursing provision across the county which is able to cope with a clientele that has increasingly complex levels of need.

20. The Board was therefore satisfied that there is a good picture of future care and workforce needs available to both the ASC department and independent providers, and that this forms the basis of efforts to address workforce challenges. The Board went on to consider the work being undertaken by the council and its partners to develop the social care workforce and the effectiveness of these initiatives.

Skills development

21. The Board was informed about the work of Skills East Sussex (SES), the county's recognised strategic body for employment and skills and the East Sussex sub-board of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership Skills Advisory Group. SES is made up of representatives from colleges, universities, secondary schools, business representatives, employment agencies (DWP, careers service) and other key stake holders.

22. The overarching goal of SES is to agree and set priorities and provide direction for the county's approach to employment and skills. The main responsibilities of SES include providing forums and spaces that enable businesses and providers to develop a common understanding of employment and skills needs and deliver joint actions to address these. The responsibilities also include developing a sustained dialogue with East Sussex employers to:

- Identify generic and sector-specific skills needs and develop effective strategies to address these;
- Promote employer investment in workforce skills; and
- Encourage employer involvement in activities to promote and develop skills amongst young people and vulnerable adults.

23. The work of SES is supported by the council's Employability and Skills Team. The team is uniquely positioned between the Communities, Economy and Transport department and the Children's Services department. The Employability and Skills Team aims to embed activities relating to employment and skills across all relevant areas of the council's activities. The team's activities include:

- Updating and publishing a Sector Skills Evidence Base which is used to inform strategies for developing the county's skills landscape and addressing skills gaps. (The details of the evidence bases for each sector, including Health and Social Care, are available via the Council's East Sussex in Figures service.)
- Overseeing and coordinating the work programme of six Sector Task Groups, including a Health and Social Care Sector Task Group.

24. The Review Board focused on the role of the above mentioned Health and Social Care Sector Task Group and its potential for improving links with the independent sector. The Board were informed that the membership of the group includes a wide variety of representatives from the health and social care sector (including Skills for Care, Health Education England and the NHS and the Adult Social Care and Health Department). The scope of the Group is to:

- Identify ways of promoting careers in the Health and Social care sector to those in education, returning to work, considering a change in career
- Explore ways of upskilling those in employment in the sector to ensure that East Sussex has a highly skilled Health and Social Care workforce
- Explore and develop new ways and models for supporting and delivering Health and Social care teaching and training (e.g. virtual and remote learning)
- Promote Apprenticeships within the sector and encourage young people to explore working in the sector
- Examine opportunities for encouraging more men to take up work in the health and social care sector.

25. The Board heard that the Group have developed a range of initiatives. These include, for example:

- HEE and ESCC ASC staff providing training for secondary school Careers Leaders/ Coordinators on pathways in to Health and Social Care in December 2018.
- In December 2018, East Sussex Healthcare Trust, with the support of ESCC, won a bid through the Pears#iwill Fund to develop a Youth Volunteer Manager post to develop opportunities for young people to volunteer within health and social care settings.

26. Whilst the Board welcomed the creation of the Task Group and the range of activities it is undertaking, Members heard that there is scope to improve awareness of its work within the ASC department, including the impact of its initiatives and whether more needs to be done to ensure that it is addressing the needs of the independent sector. For example, the Board discussed the provision of work experience and were informed that it can be difficult to find placements for under 18's in the care sector. This is because some providers are stricter about the type of experience they are able to offer. Despite some of these challenges, the Board were informed that significant numbers of placements are being made by the work experience team which is based within the Children's Services Department. For example, in the academic year 2018-2019 there were 158 placements within the care sector as a whole. Whilst welcoming the number of placements, the Board heard that there is scope for ASC to be more engaged with this programme of work experience.

27. The Board were also informed that there may be a lack of awareness amongst independent sector providers too. For example, the Registered Care Association for East Sussex were not aware of the work of the Task Group within the independent care sector itself. Given that one of the key goals of SES is to provide forums for employers to discuss the skills gaps in their sectors, the Board concluded there is potential to broaden engagement.

28. Evidence considered by the Board indicated that there is scope to develop a clearer pathway for independent provider views to feed into the Task Group, informed by the engagement work which is already undertaken by the ASC department. A clearer pathway of this kind could help the council's employment and skills strategy be informed by a more developed picture of the needs of the sector. Given the size and importance of the independent sector, the Board concluded that there is a need to more closely align the activities of the Employability and Skills Team with the work being undertaken within the ASC department and with the independent sector itself. This should include considering whether the membership of the Task Group could be expanded to incorporate independent sector representation. The Board also considered that given the scale of challenges facing the sector, that the Task Group should be reconvened as soon as practicable and that further steps should be taken to promote the work of the Task Group within the independent sector.

Recommendation 1

The Adult Social Care department and the Employability and Skills team to explore the options for broadening engagement in the work of the Health and Social Care Sector Task Group, to include consideration of:

- **enhancing links between the Adult Social Care department and the work of the Employability and Skills Team;**
- **the pathways for independent sector views to feed into the Task Group and for the work of the Task Group to be promoted in ongoing engagement with the sector; and**
- **the potential to expand the membership of the Health and Social Care Sector Task Group to include representatives of the independent sector.**

Engagement with schools and colleges

29. Given the need to attract additional workers into social care, and the older age profile of the current workforce, the Board investigated whether effective partnerships are in place with schools and colleges to promote care as a career to school and college students. Another key area of activity for the Employability and Skills Team relates to the Careers Hub East Sussex. Launched in September 2018, the Careers Hub works strategically with the senior leadership of all 40 secondary schools, special schools and colleges in the county to improve the quality of careers, employability and enterprise by meeting the eight Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Careers Guidance, as set out in the Department for Education's Careers Strategy (December 2017).

30. The Board were informed that the Careers Hub engages with educational institutions and businesses in initiatives such as:

- **Industry Champions:** These are individuals who are directly involved with delivering activities for young people in schools. The expectation is that the volunteers who perform this role will have an ability to present their role, experience and knowledge with a positive energy and strong understanding of their industry. They are expected to commit some time to careers and enterprise activities in schools such as giving talks at school/college events, mentoring young people, attending careers fairs, giving premises tours or offering work experience opportunities. Candidates can come from any level of work (CEOs, sole traders, freelancers, or apprentices), the key quality being that individuals must have an interest in sharing their experience of work and promoting their industry.
- **Open Doors:** This is a workplace-based project which offers school pupils across East Sussex an opportunity to visit workplaces and hear from employers about the range of jobs they offer and the career paths into their sector. This initiative aims to help pupils by providing essential knowledge and experience which can help inform decisions about their career path. It also benefits employers as it offers the opportunity to engage with young people who might be attracted to pursue careers in their industry.

31. The Board were informed that the goal is to expand the network of Industry Champions, particularly with regard to a priority sector like health and social care. The Board also heard that the Employability and Skills Team are looking to further develop initiatives that help stimulate workforce growth in the independent sector and its work in this area could be accelerated if contacts with organisations in the sector were expanded.

32. The Board welcomed the steps being taken by the Careers Hub, including the Industry Champions and Open Doors initiatives. However, they were also informed that in the context of a care market of hundreds of employers, only a small number of Champions are drawn from the independent sector. The Board concluded that this figure highlights the need to improve the sector's engagement as the current low number of champions will not provide enough opportunities to make a significant difference to the numbers of young people interested in pursuing a career in the sector which employs the majority of care staff. The Board agreed that it was especially important that this area should be developed ahead of the introduction in 2021 of the new T Level courses in social care. (T-levels are new technical qualifications aimed at putting vocational qualifications on an equal footing with academic ones and making access to the job market easier.)

33. The Board also discussed the ASC department's role as a major commissioner of independent care services and whether there is potential to use its commissioning position to secure commitments to workforce skills development from independent care contractors. In addition to the Industry Champions and Open Doors activities discussed above, a policy of this kind could also include asking contractors to commit to participation in:

- Offering work experience
- Offering apprenticeships
- Taking part in the Skills East Sussex H&SC task group

Recommendation 2

- **With a view to increasing the numbers of Industry Champions and Open Doors opportunities drawn from the independent sector, the Adult Social Care department and Employability and Skills Team to work together to identify ways to further develop the Careers Hub's approach to generating interest in these roles. The aim being to create a pool of participants which is more proportionate to the size of the care sector in East Sussex.**
- **All contracts of £100,000 or more issued to the Independent Care Sector by the Adult Social Care department to include social value skills targets that are facilitated by the Employability and Skills Team.**

34. A further avenue for the Council and care sector employers to work in partnership with colleges and universities is via apprenticeships. From April 2017, all employers with an overall paybill of £3m or more were required to pay into an apprenticeship levy, calculated at 0.5% of the paybill. For East Sussex County Council, this currently equates to a levy of approximately £1.1m per annum. Levy funds can only be used to fund apprenticeship training and are stored in a digital apprenticeship account. From April 2019 it was agreed that levy paying employers can use up to 25% of their annual levy pot to pass on to other employers to fund external apprenticeship activity.

35. Prior to the 25% optional external allocation coming into effect in April 2019, the council's Apprenticeship Team made contact with local colleges and universities to make them aware it was ESCC's intention to use the 25% funding to support primarily small and medium sized non-levy paying businesses in the county. This was in support of promoting apprenticeship opportunities in priority areas, including adult social care.

36. East Sussex County Council is now working closely with the Sussex College Group, Plumpton College and Brighton University to offer the opportunity of apprenticeship funding to the network of employers these organisations work with. In addition, this opportunity has been offered out via Procurement and the ASC department to their supply chain of care organisations. The Board was informed that there had been a very positive response from small and medium sized organisations within the county who wished to participate in the apprenticeship scheme. The scheme is proving popular as it supports a provider by organising staff training through colleges and universities which is paid for via the council. At the time of producing this report for example, and in partnership with local apprenticeship training providers, a commitment has been given to fund 29 x Care based apprenticeships at independent care homes within East Sussex. It is hoped to release more funds to support care-based apprenticeships at the end of September 2019. As this is the first year of funding apprenticeships through the 25% levy drawdown, officers will also have an opportunity to evaluate the scheme across all sectors. This will help inform the approach going forward.

37. Officers indicated that going forward it may be possible to more specifically pinpoint areas the council wants to concentrate on, for example to specify with apprenticeship training providers a desire to focus on promoting apprenticeships to those living in rural areas, or those in minority groups. The Board wished to ensure that vulnerable groups such as Looked After Children are able to benefit from the additional apprenticeship funding. Members were assured that the Employability and Skills Team work with under-represented and vulnerable groups, including Looked After Children, to promote social care as a career. The Board welcomed this approach but agreed that it would be helpful to assess whether any additional support is required for these groups to access apprenticeship funding, for example exploring the feasibility of including a requirement for schools and colleges to prioritise specific groups.

38. The Board welcomed the evidence of steps being taken to engage with small and medium size social care employers in the county with regard to apprenticeships. As the external levy funding scheme is new, and the council is learning how best to deploy the increased funds it can make available to support apprenticeships, the Board agreed that its impact in relation to social care should be assessed in due course.

Recommendation 3

The Adult Social Care department to work with the Apprenticeship Team to assess the impact of levy funding in relation to care sector employers. This could include evaluating:

- **the level of interest from the care sector and whether further promotion is needed;**
- **the effectiveness of the process for identifying which providers are allocated the levy funding;**
- **whether the funding successfully targeted those areas where the recruitment pressures are the most challenging; and**
- **whether vulnerable groups, such as Looked After Children, have been identified by the Apprenticeship team as requiring any additional support to access apprenticeships funded through the levy.**

Recruitment and retention

Support for the independent care sector

39. Independent sector care providers are independent businesses with individual responsibility for their own recruitment and retention of staff. However, the council's Care Act duties include a wider role in facilitating a diverse and quality care market and an appropriate workforce to deliver it. In this role the Council provides a range of support to the sector, aspects of which specifically relate to supporting recruitment and retention of the care workforce.

40. ESCC is also a significant commissioner of services from the local care market. In January 2018 the ASC department purchased approximately 1,660 beds from the independent sector, which equates to 24% of the overall market. ASC also commissions 51 independent sector agencies providing home care in East Sussex, delivering just over 19,500 hours of state funded care per week. The council therefore has a direct need to ensure appropriately staffed services are available to purchase for clients eligible for ASC funded care and has more ability to influence and work with providers of commissioned services.

41. The department's support to the independent sector includes:

- working in partnership with providers following a Care Quality Commission inspection to advise and support on areas for development.
- providing mandatory, bespoke and developmental training to registered managers, care staff and administrators working within the independent sector. This includes providing training to Personal Assistants. Between July 2017 and July 2018, 2529 staff attended training. The Council also offers free access to a range of e-learning modules relevant to social care staff.
- working with providers to enhance the level of service provided; and
- offering an accreditation for providers through Support with Confidence.

42. In addition to the support provided by the local authority, Skills for Care has developed materials to help employers recruit and retain staff. This includes supporting a national recruitment campaign, conducting research on what works well for employers and providing information on values-based recruitment. This approach to promoting careers in the sector places values and motivation at the heart of the recruitment process and enables candidates to demonstrate suitability through personal life experience, as well as qualifications and training. Research that supports this approach includes data provided by Skills for Care which indicates that for low turnover employers in the care sector "finding staff with the right values and behaviours is more important than finding staff who are already qualified; skills can be taught but personal attributes (kindness, compassion, reliability, honesty, etc.) cannot".

43. The Board considered the effectiveness of key aspects of the current support offered to providers in relation to recruitment and retention.

Support with Confidence/Personal Assistants

44. The Support with Confidence scheme provides a directory of vetted and approved providers who offer a wide range of care and support services for adults in East Sussex. The range of services covered is diverse and the scheme is designed to support providers across the independent and voluntary sectors by offering accreditation and the resulting increased accessibility and assurance to potential clients. There is a particular focus on Personal Assistants, a role which is relatively new and where demand is likely to increase. Personal Assistants are not currently regulated by the Care Quality Commission, hence the scheme provides an important accreditation function for this section of the market.

45. A Personal Assistant (PA) is employed or engaged on a self-employment basis directly by a person who needs care and support, either with funding provided by the council (if eligible) or by self-funding. They can also be employed or engaged by a family member or representative. A PA works directly with the client in a person-centred way, supporting them to continue to live independently in their own home and community. The Board were informed that of the estimated 800 PAs operating within East Sussex, 180 had been accredited under Support with Confidence.

46. The Board were also informed that in terms of the support it provides to PAs and Business Members, the scheme aims to:

- upskill and improve the services offered by the unregulated care and support market
- accredit care and support providers that have been checked and vetted on the grounds of quality, safety and training
- provide a list of accredited providers to the public and ASC operational teams
- provide clients with choice beyond more 'traditional' care options, including by developing the market for Personal Assistants, which increases consumer choice and protection.

- help develop and support local ASC providers

47. With regard to PAs the ASC department informed the Board that, as well as anticipated future increase in demand, there continued to be challenges in the rural areas of the county where there are not enough PAs to support the existing demand.

48. The Board heard evidence that Support with Confidence provides a market shaping and developing effect. It helps to build, through training and accreditation, a workforce of PAs comprised of people who may not otherwise want to work for home care or care home companies. This helps to increase the overall social care workforce and work towards meeting the growing demand for social care, as well as providing greater consumer choice.

49. In terms of developing the numbers of PAs working in the county to meet increasing demand, the Board heard that there is a limited marketing resource available for Support with Confidence. This is targeted at areas where there is an identified gap in the PA market, including in specific areas such as rural communities where domiciliary care agencies find it hard to deliver care packages. The Board were supportive of the approach being taken to target relevant rural communities and encouraged the Department to continue with this focus and develop it further where possible. The Board were also informed of a number of other initiatives which the Department are planning to take forward in support of the PA market. These include:

- Streamlined referral processes for operational staff
- Exploration of PA on-call networks
- Further targeted marketing campaigns

50. The Board discussed how elected members interact with a range of different community groups and how via these connections, they could help raise awareness of the role and help signpost interested individuals to the Support with Confidence team. To assist with this, the Board suggest that Members should be provided with a briefing note which explains the role of the PA and the Support With Confidence scheme and how interested individuals should be signposted to advice and guidance on how to apply.

Recommendation 4

All councillors, via their connections with local groups and organisations, to help raise awareness of the role of the Personal Assistant and the related advice and support available from the Support with Confidence team.

Online support for recruitment and retention

51. Evidence presented to the Board suggested that recruitment and retention are key issues for many providers. For example, the Registered Care Association for East Sussex indicated that the large number of small employers in the county makes it difficult to develop a strategic recruitment initiative across the sector (the RCA is an industry body which represents a range of providers of adult social care services in East Sussex).

52. The Board therefore considered evidence relating to the approaches adopted by other local authorities in support of their local independent care sector. Of particular interest to the Board was a West Sussex County Council initiative. This has involved the development of a recruitment website for independent care providers, which uses the campaign slogan 'Proud to Care' to advertise vacancies and promote careers in the sector. For example, visitors to the website are greeted with the following wording:

"Thank you for visiting Proud to Care West Sussex, a one stop website where you can find and apply for a variety of [jobs in care across West Sussex](#) and get information about what it's really like to work in care. At Proud to Care West Sussex we know that [working in care](#) can be a hugely rewarding role where you have the opportunity to help people to get the best out of every day. But don't just take our word for it; check out the films below from local people in West Sussex who work in care."

53. In terms of support for providers, the website has an Employers Hub which allows employers to easily submit vacancies which are then advertised for free. The website also has sections on careers in care and apprenticeships. To be able to promote through the website, individual providers must clearly set out their employment terms and conditions. This supports the recruitment and retention process as it means job seekers can see which organisations are more likely to suit their own expectations and requirements. More fundamentally it also means individuals can easily find in one place a list of potential employers and other helpful guidance and advice. This means providers have a better chance of having higher numbers of applicants, as well helping to reinforce a positive message about the benefits of working in the adult care sector.

54. The Board noted that there is not similar provision in East Sussex and explored whether a similar online presence would potentially produce benefits for the independent sector in the county. Members also considered that developing a site of this kind in East Sussex could help demonstrate the council's commitment to the independent sector and could help provide a focus for the sector.

55. The Board were also informed that a key area of workforce recruitment strategy relates to engaging adults and **returners to work**. The Board noted an initiative being pursued by Chichester College to develop a web resource to engage this group of potential new recruits. The Board agreed that the potential for promoting this resource and signposting providers to the site should also be explored.

56. Although the Board could see potential benefits to a dedicated online resource such as that in West Sussex, this would require significant resource to implement. ASC officers advised that in East Sussex the independent sector is supported through the offer of a detailed and well-regarded training programme which is freely accessible to providers and individuals without charge. Each local authority has had to make decisions around its own priorities for expenditure on support for the independent sector. Currently it is understood that neighbouring authorities do not offer free training of the kind available locally.

57. The Board were informed that the ASC department recognises that the West Sussex model does produce tangible benefits for the sector and that, by extension, this helps relieve the pressure on the authority. However, given the continuing difficult funding context, the department would have to fully explore the costs associated with the development of a bespoke online facility and may need to seek external funding to create such a resource. The department would not, at this stage, support downgrading its training offer to release funds to create an offer of this kind.

58. That said, a website could include, for example, creating a one-stop hub for people interested in working in the East Sussex care sector by bringing together links to a range of existing information and would be developed in partnership with the Employability and Skills team. The website could information such as:

- Job vacancies across the County;
- The work of Skills East Sussex to promote opportunities that raise awareness of careers on Social Care.
- Support with Confidence;
- Initiatives such as Chichester College's work on the development of a web resource which seeks to engage adults and returners to work;
- Details of the ASC training offer;
- Information about the activity of the East Sussex Employability and Skills team to include, for example, initiatives such as the Careers Hub and any other relevant information;
- Details of apprenticeship schemes and opportunities;
- Links to relevant materials, for example the Skills for Care Staff Recruitment and Retention toolkit.

59. In addition to posting already available information, the website could also form the basis of information sharing about new initiatives that support recruitment and retention in the independent sector, for example:

- setting up of job fayres, in partnership with independent providers to create economies of scale;
- careers events, in partnership with local education providers.

60. However, such work requires further resource and would need to be fully considered and costed. This would include evaluating the success of other such schemes for example in West Sussex.

Recommendation 5

The Adult Social Care department to explore the feasibility and potential benefits of developing a bespoke website to provide information on jobs and careers in the East Sussex care sector.

Recruitment campaigns

61. The Board researched the Department of Health and Social Care's approach to the recruitment and retention challenges facing many providers of adult social care nationally. One key line of support provided is a national recruitment campaign which aims to drive applications into the adult social care sector. The first iteration of the campaign was launched in 2018 under the banner heading 'Every Day is Different'. The campaign used national and regional media engagement, as well as google, online, radio and social media advertising to promote a career in the industry. In support of the campaign, a toolkit and suite of partner materials were also made available for care providers to use to meet their local recruitment needs. The campaign website www.everydayisdifferent.com remains live and includes information on different job roles, case studies, quizzes and a job search.

62. The Board were informed that following an evaluation by the Department of Health and Social Care, it was likely that funding would be approved for a second national wave of the campaign to run in 2019/20. The Board discussed the benefits of the national recruitment campaign and were supportive of the ASC department's development of materials that are in keeping with nationally delivered promotional material. The Board agreed that there is potential for further development of the local promotional work so that it is also suited to the needs of the independent sector. This could form part of the work undertaken in recommendation 5 and may involve, for example, consultation with key representatives of the sector about what they believe would help deliver an effective campaign and how providers can support it locally.

Recommendation 6

The Adult Social Care department to:

- **continue to reinforce the national recruitment campaign locally via support from the council's Communications Team; and**
- **work with the Employability and Skills Team to ensure that this is integrated into the cross sectoral careers campaign run by Skills East Sussex.**

Conclusions

63. The Board were presented with a stark picture regarding the scale of the workforce challenges facing the independent adult social care sector. These challenges are not unique to East Sussex. Relevant local authorities and independent providers throughout the UK are concerned about the pressures discussed in this report (and given the demographic make-up of the county, it is clear that East Sussex is facing an especially difficult set of circumstances).

64. The Board agreed that whilst many of the challenges will require a national response, it welcomed the Adult Social Care and Health Department's well-developed local strategy for supporting the care market in East Sussex. However, and in the context of a complex and evolving situation, the Board identified a number of practical recommendations which it believes will further enhance the Department's strategy. These enhancements aim to both help more closely align the work of the Council's employment strategy with the needs of the independent sector, particularly the offer of training, and aid the promotion of careers in the sector.

Appendix 1

Scope and terms of reference of the review

The Review was established to consider and make recommendations on matters relating to the developing workforce challenges facing social care providers. More specifically the Committee agreed three areas of focus for the review:

- **Older people's services:** It was agreed to focus on social care for older people as this is the biggest and the fastest growing area of demand for Adult Social Care.
- **Independent Care Sector:** It was agreed to focus on workforce issues within the independent sector (as opposed to the social care workforce directly employed by the ASC and Health department). This is because the independent sector is by far the largest employer of adult social care staff in the county.
- **Commissioned services:** It was agreed that the review should focus particularly on independent sector services commissioned by the ASC department.

The Board also agreed it would focus on exploring responses to the following two key questions:

- **Is the Council working effectively in partnership with others (e.g. schools and colleges) with regard to future workforce needs?**
- **Could the Council do more to support recruitment and retention in the independent sector?**

Board Membership and project support

Review Board Members: Councillors Charles Clark, Michael Ensor, John Ungar and Trevor Webb (Chair).

The Project Manager was Stuart McKeown, Senior Democratic Services Officer, with project support provided by Hannah Matthews, Democratic Services Officer.

Kay Holden, Assistant Director provided ongoing support to the Board throughout the review.

Review Board meeting dates

First formal meeting – 15 April 2019

Second formal meeting – 7 May 2019

Third formal meeting – 24 May 2019

Fourth formal meeting – 22 July 2019

Witnesses providing evidence

The Board would like to thank all the witnesses who provided evidence in person:

ESCC Officers.

Kay Holden, Assistant Director, Planning, Performance and Engagement.

Phil Crook, Head of ASC&H Workforce Planning & Training.

Caroline Bragg, East Sussex Employability and Skills Strategy Manager.

Martin Kelly, Apprenticeship Levy Strategy Manager.

Bianca Byrne, Head of Policy & Strategic Development

Lyndsey Potts, Scheme Manager: Support with Confidence

Skills for Care

Karen Stevens, Locality Manager (London and South East).

Registered Care Association

Mike Derrick, Chair of RCA

Independent Care Sector

Maria Mapletoft, Care Home Operator

Anita Brett-Everest, Personal Assistant

GR, Client

Evidence papers

Item	Date considered
Skills for Care – National Recruitment campaign	11 04 2019
Skills for Care - Recruitment and Retention in adult social care: secrets of success.	11 04 2019
Adult Social Care – Market overview presentation	15 04 2019
Distribution of Support with Confidence accredited PAs across the county	07 05 2019
Data on clients receiving Direct Payments	07 05 2019
Ratings - Adult Social Care	07 05 2019
Skills for Care - A summary of the adult social care sector and workforce in East Sussex 2017/18.	07 05 2019
Skills for Care - Individual employers and the personal assistant workforce, 2019 – survey research	07 05 2019
Employability and Skills report	07 05 2019
South East LEP Skills Strategy	07 05 2019
Briefing note - 25% Apprentice Levy funding to support apprenticeships within East Sussex	07 05 2019
Support with confidence – presentation	24 05 2019
Support with confidence - Code of Conduct	24 05 2019
Changing Care Market - Adult Social Care Workforce - Zero-hours contracts	24 05 2019
RCA Response to the Scrutiny Review of workforce in Older Peoples services	24 05 2019

Contact officer: Stuart McKeown, Senior Democratic Services Advisor

Telephone: 01273 481583

E-mail: Stuart.mckeown@eastsussex.gov.uk

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Scrutiny Review Board

Support for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

Report by the Review Board

Councillor Kathryn Field (Chair)

Councillor Francis Whetstone

Councillor Trevor Webb

People Scrutiny Committee – 19 September 2019

Cabinet – 12 November 2019

Full Council – 3 December 2019

The report of the Scrutiny Review of Support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

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Recommendations

Recommendation	Page
1 The Children's Services Department to explore the potential for linking local UASC with the Hastings and Rother Buddy Project (HRBP) and, subject to the outcome of its work with the HRBP, to assess the feasibility of developing similar provision elsewhere within East Sussex in partnership with the voluntary sector.	9
2 The Children's Services Department to assess the feasibility of developing in East Sussex a social space for UASC where they can meet with their peers and build their confidence, support networks and social skills.	10
3 With a view to increasing both the amount and diversity of accommodation provision, the Children's Services Department to explore further the options for raising awareness amongst local communities of the specific accommodation needs of UASC. This to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviewing its advertising campaigns to include an element which highlights the specific needs of UASC. • assisting Members to foster connections with different sections of their local communities. • more cultural awareness training for existing foster carers and supported accommodation providers which seeks to address this need. 	11
4 The Children's Services Department to explore the options for increasing access to work experience opportunities for UASC. This to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessing the potential for the Department to raise awareness of the work experience needs of UASC with schools and colleges and to review the current levels of work experience placements for UASC. • Members to support this process by using their local leadership position to help raise awareness of the work experience needs of UASC and to help foster more work experience placements with public sector organisations and the voluntary sector. 	12
5 The Children's Services Department to explore how an increased early focus on English as an additional language could be provided to UASC. This to include a review of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Department's guidance to UASC and officers on this area; and • the potential feasibility of providing intensive language courses which could include commissioning accommodation providers to deliver intensive support packages within the first 4-6 weeks of arrival. 	13
6 To help expand the range of support available in East Sussex, the Children's Services Department to develop a UASC toolkit for Members The toolkit to provide guidance on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the key challenges facing UASC – such as accommodation needs, opportunities for social activities, access to work experience and English language support; • what assistance is currently available for UASC; • how Members can develop links with key organisations and communities. • the process for referring potential leads to the Department. 	14

Objectives and Scope of the Review

1. Supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) is a challenging area of responsibility for the Children's Services Department. The children and young people in this group are designated Looked After Children (LAC). They therefore have the same range of support needs as British-born children and the Council has the same range of obligations.
2. However, UASC also have an additional range of needs which makes supporting them an even more complex and challenging process. These challenges include often having little or no spoken English and needing specialist therapy (as they may have suffered trauma in their country of origin and/or during their journey to the United Kingdom). Very often UASC will also arrive with little background information.
3. In seeking to meet the specific needs of these children and young people, the department must also deal with a range of significant operational and financial challenges. For example, ensuring the council has sufficient capacity to cope with UASC arrivals is difficult as, by their very nature, such incidents can be highly unpredictable. Whilst some arrivals are known about in advance, (see the National Transfer Scheme in para 17), many are 'out of the blue' discoveries. A particular concern for the department in this respect is the impact of a discovery of a large group of UASC. Such spontaneous arrivals (as they usually referred to) have occurred in East Sussex. For example, in November 2018 11 Vietnamese UASC were discovered in a lorry at the port of Newhaven. Finding appropriate and immediate support for such a significant number of vulnerable young people at short notice was a major challenge for the Department.
4. Setting aside the operational challenges, spontaneous arrivals also create additional financial pressures for the department. This is because of a funding gap between the grant allocation from Government per young person and the actual cost that is required to support each UASC. Consequently, a sudden increase in UASC numbers could have significant financial implications for the authority and its ability to support these vulnerable children and young people.
5. Another area of challenge for the department is the current insufficient level of experienced providers of supported housing, supported lodgings and foster placements for UASC within the Council's provision. As a result, the council currently places a significant number of UASC in either 'out of county' provision or in other expensive in-county provision.
6. All these factors make assessing the needs of these children and young people and providing them with appropriate support especially challenging.
7. In the light of these and other challenges the People Scrutiny Committee agreed on 27 November 2018 to undertake a scrutiny review of support for UASC. The goal of the review would be to investigate the potential for developing realistic, practical recommendations that would assist with supporting UASC.
8. Following some initial scoping work, the Committee agreed to explore the following lines of enquiry:
 - **What scope is there for developing strategies that would help both increase and diversify the capacity and range of providers of accommodation for UASC in East Sussex?** Such an increase in capacity would have the benefit of leaving the department better placed to deal with a spontaneous arrival incident involving significant numbers of UASC. It would also increase the likelihood that UASC could be placed in accommodation which has a better fit to the individual's cultural background and help reduce the number of out of county placements. In looking at this area, the Committee were aware of the financial pressures on the service. However, given the fact that the overall financial package of support available to support UASC is driven by policy at the national level, the Committee agreed with the Scoping Board's suggestion that it would be more effective for the review to focus on capacity issues (as this in turn could help mitigate some of the financial pressures).
 - **What could be done to help deliver improved opportunities for social activities and mentoring support?** Improvements in these areas could help address some of the mental health and other emotional and wellbeing needs of UASC. Other important areas of support which the Board agreed to explore included the potential to further develop practical opportunities, such as work experience options and support with learning English.

- **The role of the local Member** was also considered. Members have a well-developed knowledge of their local communities and have a network of contacts which include local businesses, organisations and community groups. There is potential therefore for Members to help with raising awareness and support for UASC in their local communities.

9. The Board also received evidence relating to the legal restrictions placed on asylum-seekers regarding paid employment whilst their asylum claim is processed. The Board heard that these paid employment restrictions are often viewed negatively by UASC. The Board were also aware of a wider concern about the length of time it can take to process asylum claims and that there is a 'lift the ban' campaign. However, the Board recognise that this is ultimately an issue that affects the whole of the country and is not something the Council can directly influence and is also not part of the agreed lines of enquiry for the review. The Board therefore agreed to focus its attention on more local issues.

10. This report firstly provides an overview of the national and local context within which support for UASC is provided in East Sussex. It then outlines the findings and recommendations of the Review Board.

Background

Definitions and responsibilities

11. Asylum-seekers are people who have fled their home country and are seeking refuge in another country. They are referred to as asylum-seekers whilst their application is being determined. Children who are seeking asylum and who arrived without a family member or other responsible adult are usually referred to as Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC).

12. The Home Office defines an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child as a person who, at the time of making the asylum application:

- is, or (if there is no documentary evidence) appears to be, under eighteen;
- is applying for asylum in his or her own right;
- has no adult relative or guardian to turn to in this country; and
- is fleeing persecution from their own country.

13. At the national government level, the Home Office is responsible for processing and making decisions on asylum applications. In terms of process, whilst an asylum claim is ongoing, UASC are given the status of "UASC Leave". With this immigration status the young person can participate in education but is not allowed to work. The Home Office decision about a young person's claim can result in an offer of either "Refugee Status" (for 5 years or until 17.5 years age) or Discretionary Leave until age 18. At 18 the young person must make a fresh claim to remain in the UK indefinitely (indefinite leave to remain).

14. At the level of local government, local authorities are responsible for the care of this vulnerable group. Section 17 of the Children Act (1989) imposes a general duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area and who are in need. Children seeking asylum who have no responsible adult to care for them (UASC) are considered to meet this 'in need' criterion. As UASC are LAC under Section 20 of the Children Act (1989) they are eligible for support in the same way as any other child in the care of the council. This duty of care remains in place until the young person is 21 and can be extended to 25 if the young person is in education.

15. With regard to local authorities, of particular importance is the role of elected Members. This report is the product of the work of the three Members drawn from the People Scrutiny Committee. The Members of this group have a keen interest in this area and have built up over time their experience and knowledge of many of the issues considered in this report. However, this report is highly relevant to all fifty Members of East Sussex County Council. This is because, when elected, all councillors take on the role of 'corporate parent' to children who are looked after by their local authority. This means all Members have a duty to take an interest in the wellbeing and development of all LAC, including UASC. For example, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 defines, for the first time in law, the role of Corporate Parents:

(a) to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;

(b) to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;

(c) to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;

(d) to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;

(e) to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;

(f) for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;

(g) to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

(Definition set out in Part 1 Chapter 1 'Corporate Parenting Principles' of the 2017 Act as cited in the Local Government Association's 'Corporate parenting resource pack')

16. With the above in mind, the Review Board encourages all Members to engage with this report and have particular regard to the suggestions set out in Recommendation 6.

How do UASC arrive in the UK?

17. There are various routes by which unaccompanied children can arrive in the UK:

- **Spontaneous arrival:** Those young people who are discovered by Police or Border Force staff having arrived in the UK illegally (for example those found on lorries coming into Newhaven port). East Sussex County Council becomes responsible for these young people if they are found in the county.
- **Dublin iii regulation:** This EU law addresses where asylum should be claimed. If an unaccompanied minor has a family member in a member country, they can apply to join them and make their asylum claim in that country. A family member includes siblings.
- **Dubs amendment:** This relates to the UK's commitment to the resettlement of children in refugee camps in Europe.
- **Vulnerable children's resettlement scheme:** A scheme introduced in 2016 to resettle vulnerable children from the Middle East and North Africa in response to the Syrian Conflict.
- **National Transfer Scheme (NTS).** The location of UASC across the UK is not evenly spread and local authorities with "entry points" such as ports and airports have a disproportionate number of UASC in their areas. The NTS was set up to manage this with the aim of dispersing young people more evenly across the country. Local Authorities that signed up for the scheme agreed to take unaccompanied children up to 0.07% of the total child population.

Why do UASC come to the United Kingdom?

18. Many of the young people who come to the UK as unaccompanied minors are trying to escape conflict and persecution in their own country. In Eritrea, for example, many male children are forced into a brutal army regime. Conflicts in Afghanistan and Syria have resulted in many children being displaced and separated from their families. Some of these children will come to the UK as UASC.

19. Some children and young people are trafficked into the country by criminal gangs who intend to force them to work in places such as cannabis farms or nail bars; some are sold into sex work. A number of UASC report being “sold” to traffickers in their country of origin. Some children’s journeys are arranged by their families. The children and their families believe they are being smuggled into the UK to look for a better life, only to find that they need to “work” indefinitely to pay off the family’s debt. A small percentage of UASC come to escape poverty in their own country or because they believe they will have better life chances in the UK compared to their own country.

The situation in East Sussex

20. In East Sussex there is an estimated child population of 106,000 which means that the government figure for UASC that ESCC should care for is 74 (with regard to the NTS target discussed above in paragraph 17). At the time of producing this report, the Children’s Services Department provide support for 71 young people who have sought asylum and are either currently under 18 years of age or who are now designated as care leavers (former UASC).

21. Of the 71 young people, 40 are under 18-year olds, and distributed amongst the following two age groups:

- 11 young people aged 13-15
- 29 young people aged 16-17

The breakdown of placements for this group are as follows:

- 10 in foster care locally (mixture of agency and in house)
- 4 in foster care out of county
- 2 in supported lodgings placements
- 20 in Supported Living accommodation
- 4 are currently missing. To clarify, UASC are a group of young people who are at high risk of going missing from care. This can be due to a distrust of professionals as a result of experiences in their countries of origin. It can also be because individual UASC are threatened or coerced into leaving local authority care to go to work to pay the ‘debt’ owed for their travel (if they were trafficked into the UK).

22. Of the remaining 31 young people who are 18 years old and over, 22 have ‘leave to remain’ status and 9 have ‘without leave’ status. The young people in this group are living in the following range of accommodation options:

- 11 are in Supported Living (see paragraph 24 for more detail).
- 7 are in Supported Living outside of East Sussex.
- 2 are in foster care – under “staying put” guidance (staying put refers to the situation where young people are able to remain with their foster carers after the age of 18).
- 11 are in their own accommodation.

23. As the area of asylum and immigration is complex and requires specialised knowledge, the Children’s Services Department created a specialist service within the Through Care Service to focus specifically on UASC. This new service became fully operational at the end of November 2018. In the years prior to this new service, UASC were allocated a worker across the wider children’s social work service, which sometimes led to an inconsistent approach to supporting the children and young people.

Types of placement

24. As UASC are LAC they must be placed in accommodation accordance with section 22C of the Children Act 1989. There is also statutory guidance on the placement of LAC set out in the *Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review*. This guidance states that a range of placement options may be suitable, which include:

- **Residential Care Home:** This is a placement within an Ofsted registered children’s home.
- **Foster Care:** Foster care is a way for children to be cared for within a family setting when their own family is unable to care for them. It is considered temporary in that there is no legal split from the family (as with adoption), but can be long term where this is in the best interests of the child.

- **Supported Lodgings:** Supported Lodgings are a placement whereby a young person can live in a family home, but with a lower level of monitoring than in foster care. The young person will have their own room but will share the kitchen and bathroom facilities with the family or householder (referred to as 'host'). A host can be a family, couple or single person. The recruitment, scrutiny and approval of a host's accommodation is provided by the local authority or by an independent organisation.
- **Shared housing:** Shared housing is where a young person lives in a multiple occupancy house which is shared with other young people to provide peer support, with additional visiting support. This type of accommodation allows a young person to live with independence but usually with visiting support to provide that additional level of care and support.
- **Supported accommodation:** Supported accommodation is a shared living space with multiple rooms and facilities. Supported accommodation typically is staffed 24/7 and these staff are trained in providing support and care to vulnerable young people. The young people staying in supported accommodation have a large amount of independence and therefore cook, manage their own money, do laundry and come and go as they please.

25. In its *'What is a suitable placement for an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child?'* guidance document, the DfE advises local authorities that:

"Good supported accommodation will provide a supportive environment in which unaccompanied asylum-seeking children can learn to develop and grow. This can serve to nurture a sense of belonging – strengthening their confidence and trust in adults – and providing them with the emotional stability needed to develop positive friendships and engage with their wider community. House meetings can provide an opportunity to encourage young people to eat together and share, whilst also providing them with a forum to air any frustrations within the community and to teach them resolution skills."

Findings and Recommendations

Mentoring Support

26. The Review Board was informed that, even with expert support, the process of adapting to life in the UK will often be challenging and bewildering for UASC. On one level there are complex legal processes, such as the asylum process. However, UASC also face barriers which can prevent them from successfully participating in a range of everyday tasks and activities. For example, understanding how and where to shop and how to access services can be a daunting prospect for a potentially traumatised young person who is not familiar with UK customs and social expectations and who may speak little or no English.

27. The Children's Services Department informed the Board that all UASC are provided with support which aims to help them develop their knowledge and confidence levels with respect to the type of everyday activities discussed above. Expert support is also provided regarding more complex matters such as navigating the asylum process. However, the department also indicated to the Board that there is a need to further develop the mentoring support it offers to UASC. More specifically, the department wants new UASC to be able to access enhanced support from volunteers, not only on practical matters like how to access services and deal with processes, but also advice on how to engage with local people and participate in activities which are both fun and interesting. Such activities are important as they build knowledge and experience of life in the UK. Such support would be particularly valuable were it to be drawn from former refugees who have settled successfully in the UK.

28. The Board therefore explored how the goal of providing an enhanced mentoring offer of this kind could be delivered. Members were particularly interested therefore in the support being provided by an initiative called the 'Hastings and Rother Buddy Scheme'. The scheme is run by 'Hastings Community of Sanctuary', a community group which provides support to asylum-seekers. The primary aim of the project is to assist newly arrived asylum-seekers with their integration into local communities. This is achieved by pairing families with a 'buddy' who has experience navigating the asylum process and who can provide support, friendship and guidance. The Board was also informed of other schemes in the county which aim to provide similar support. As things stand, however, this support is only currently available to adult asylum-seekers.

29. Members considered this gap in provision and whether there is scope to expand the types of scheme discussed above to include an expanded mentoring offer. The department agreed that further improvements in this area would be beneficial as it would not only provide increased access to practical advice and guidance, it would also help address the emotional and wellbeing needs of UASC and aid their integration. However, officers also indicated that the following factors should be taken into account:

- That it would be prudent to first conduct a pilot scheme. The department would then be able to use the evidence generated by the pilot to help inform a decision as to whether to explore with other providers the potential for expanding their schemes to include a mentoring offer for UASC.
- That for such initiatives to flourish, support from the voluntary sector would be essential and that stronger links with communities from different cultural backgrounds would greatly assist with this goal.
- That the department would value the support of Members to help generate public understanding and interest in supporting the mentoring scheme.

30. With the above in mind therefore, the Board discussed Members' roles both as community leaders and corporate parents. The Board agreed that Members will often be better placed than officers to both help raise awareness of the needs of UASC in their local communities and to make introductions with organisations and individuals who might be interested in assisting. However, the Board also agreed that to enable them to effectively assist, Members would need some support from the Department. The Board discussed therefore the development of a UASC toolkit which Members could refer to as needed. The toolkit could include information relating to the mentoring role and detail about what provision is available in the local area. The support Members could potentially provide to UASC is discussed in more detail later in this report.

Recommendation 1

The Children's Services Department to explore the potential for linking local UASC with the Hastings and Rother Buddy Project (HBRP) and, subject to the outcome of its work with the HBRP, to assess the feasibility of developing similar provision elsewhere within East Sussex in partnership with the voluntary sector.

Access to social activities and other opportunities that promote wellbeing

31. UASC are provided with access to the same range of social activities as other LAC. However, and given their unique challenges, the Board heard that UASC can still experience feelings of loneliness and isolation. For example, compelling evidence was provided by two former UASC witnesses (referred to in this report as YP1 and YP2). YP2 discussed how he 'often feels lonely and that he misses his family and cries when he thinks about home'.

32. Findings regarding feelings of isolation and loneliness amongst UASC and its impact have also been identified at the national level. For example, in 'Children's Voices – a review of evidence on the subjective wellbeing of children subject to immigration control in England (2017)', the Children's Commissioner found that:

"Establishing positive relationships in England was found to be a crucial determinant of migrant children's wellbeing, particularly for those who were on their own in the UK."

33. The report then moves on to discuss how negative relationships were found to significantly undermine wellbeing, whereas positive relationships were viewed as important sources of support which strengthened self-esteem and enabled children and young people in this group to cope with stress and anxiety.

34. With the above in mind, the Board considered whether more could be done to help provide opportunities for UASC to form positive friendships with their peers and other young people from the local community. The department informed the Board that some local authorities have developed provision which aims to address this need. For example, the Board discussed a project based in Brighton called 'The Global Social Club', which is run by the refugee and asylum seeker support charity organisation, 'The Hummingbird Project'. The club, which was established in autumn 2017, is for 14-25 year olds and meets weekly. It provides a venue which allows young people from all backgrounds to meet and expand their social networks, increase their intercultural understanding, build their self-esteem, confidence, resilience and creative skills.

35. The club is run by a core group of six volunteers, although there are a significant number of other volunteers who, in addition to the club's central goal of providing a social space, also provide emotional, counselling and medical support, as well as legal advice. The club also offers a homework club whereby young people can receive educational support from a qualified teacher. Whilst the club is run by volunteers, some funding is provided by Brighton and Hove City Council. The Board also heard that, due to the trauma many of the attendees have faced, a key challenge for the club is to ensure that these young people feel comfortable and able to speak about their experiences (with there being no pressure to do so).

36. The Board explored the possibility of developing similar provision in East Sussex. Members agreed that providing a safe, nurturing environment where UASC would feel comfortable to meet and develop friendships would potentially help improve their emotional wellbeing. Such a venue could help UASC build their confidence and help them form connections with local sporting, cultural or community activities. The Board was informed that there are, for example, football clubs being set up across the region which welcome asylum-seekers.

37. Evidence from officers supported the view that the development of a hub which provides a safe social space for UASC to meet would potentially be beneficial and indicated that the department has some limited resource which would enable it to provide a venue for this where there is greatest need. However, the department also stated that, whilst it could potentially facilitate the development of provision of this kind, the delivery of the support at any venue(s) would be largely reliant on volunteers. Officers also indicated that the support of Members in helping to generate interest from volunteers from the local community and organisations would be welcome.

38. The Board agreed that there is scope for Members to assist with raising the profile of UASC and their needs and helping to identify volunteers who could help deliver support at social space of the kind discussed above. However, whilst it accepted that Members are well-placed to make connections with their local communities, the Board agreed that Members would need some minimal support from the Department. For example, with information about the agreed remit of the social space and how Members could refer potential volunteers on. As a result, the Board concluded that such information could also be added to the Member's toolkit which is discussed at Recommendation 6.

Recommendation 2

The Children's Services Department to assess the feasibility of developing in East Sussex a social space for UASC where they can meet with their peers and build their confidence, support networks and social skills.

Capacity and diversity of accommodation

39. A major challenge for the department is ensuring it meets its duty to provide sufficient accommodation for *all* LAC. However, the group which is the most difficult to find appropriate accommodation for are adolescents and within that group, UASC are especially challenging. This is because, as set out in the Council's 'Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children 2017 to 2020':

- UASC sometimes require a very high level of supervision and liaison with a range of authorities in order to keep them safe and prevent them being exploited.
- For LAC who are not UASC, the department are normally able to provide potential carers with a detailed history and picture of their needs. This is not the case with many newly arrived UASC.

40. Officers informed the Board of the efforts made to secure placements that address the specific cultural and other needs of this group. However, and despite best efforts, children and young people in this group are much more likely to be placed outside of East Sussex than other LAC. The latest figures indicate that 35% of new placements of UASC were out of county compared to 11% of other LAC.

41. In the case of spontaneous arrivals, the challenge is even greater. The Board heard evidence from two UASC witnesses regarding their initial experience of the accommodation provided. Whilst YP2 was very positive about his current supported lodging, he felt the initial placement was not suitable for him. However, since living in his new supported lodgings, YP2 has become happier and feels that ‘..having a suitable living situation was important for the overall happiness of young people’.

42. In response, officers informed Members that although some young people may have some initial difficulties with their placements, the department must prioritise a young person’s safety and well-being over other factors. This is a particular issue where it is necessary to source a placement in the context of some UASC arriving without any prior warning and the department needing to secure a place as quickly as possible.

43. In terms of trying to increase the capacity within East Sussex, the department informed the Board that it had tried block-booking entire sections of accommodation to decrease costs. Unfortunately, this had only provided a minimal reduction and so was not an effective solution. The Board heard therefore that the key challenge is finding both value for money and experienced providers of supported housing.

44. Members also heard that supported accommodation is not Ofsted inspected. Instead providers are monitored by District and Borough Councils as they fall under the category of ‘houses of multiple occupancy’. There is also a geographic element to this challenge because most providers are situated in the urban coastal strip. There is a need therefore to develop further provision in other parts of the county which could help reduce the numbers of UASC placed out of county. Ultimately the department had tried a range of different tactics to increase its accommodation portfolio, but this had had mixed results.

45. The Board were concerned about the number of ‘out of county’ placements the council is forced to make and fully supported the aim of diversifying and increasing accommodation options. The Board therefore identified the potential for Members to assist by helping to forge links with different communities within their divisions. This could include conversations with voluntary groups, religious community leaders and the Black and Minority Ethnicity (BME) community to help raise awareness of the needs of UASC. This would not only potentially increase the number of accommodation options, it could also help deliver a more diverse range of accommodation that has a better chance of offering placements that more closely fit the faith and/or cultural background of individual UASC (if that is what they felt would help them). The Board also agreed that the department should review its approach to advertising for carers to see whether it could be adapted to better engage with the different communities discussed above. With a view to seeing if improvements could be made, the Board also concluded that the cultural training provided to existing foster carers and supported accommodation providers should be reviewed.

Recommendation 3

With a view to increasing both the amount and diversity of accommodation provision, the Children’s Services Department to explore further the options for raising awareness amongst local communities of the specific accommodation needs of UASC. This to include:

- **reviewing its advertising campaigns to include an element which highlights the specific needs of UASC.**
- **assisting Members to foster connections with different sections of their local communities.**
- **more cultural awareness training for existing foster carers and supported accommodation providers which seeks to address this need.**

Work experience

46. Work experience provides young people with a valuable introduction to the work environment and it can help students decide on future career paths or study options. It can also help develop a young person’s employability skills which is consistently identified by employers as being a high priority.

47. However, arranging work experience for UASC is more complex than for other young people. This is because, apart from the issues relating to their unique background circumstances, there are legal duties that restrict the scope of such activities. For example, in its 'Permission to work and volunteering for asylum seekers', the Home Office states that *'Children under the age of 18 should not be given permission to take employment. However, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children or children dependent on their parents are entitled to secondary education whilst their claim is being considered. They are also able to take part in work experience placements or training if that forms part of their education'*. Furthermore, UASC are entitled to volunteer, but only for charities or public sector organisations, not private organisations.

48. With the above restrictions in mind the Board were informed that despite efforts to provide such opportunities, there is a need to identify further work experience options for UASC in East Sussex. As a result, the department were therefore seeking support from Members to help it identify such opportunities from within local communities.

49. In terms of the process of organising work experience, the Board were informed that placements can be organised by the schools and colleges themselves or they can purchase support via East Sussex County Council's Work Experience Service (WEX) traded service offer. The WEX service provides access to a range of work experience placements for pupils and includes a bespoke placement matching service for vulnerable learners which ensures they are placed in safe and appropriate work placements. Support is provided for both the learner and the employer. The Board heard that this service would be potentially applicable to UASC. The Board were also informed that the service is offered to schools and colleges who purchase the service for specific cohorts of pupils and it is a matter for individual schools and colleges to decide whether they want to purchase support for any UASC within their school population.

50. The Board accepted that the legal restrictions placed on UASC, together with their unique circumstances, makes delivering work experience a significant challenge. The Board also agreed that there is a role for local Members who could help make connections with public bodies and voluntary sector organisations who might be open to providing appropriate work experience placements.

51. The Board also noted that at the time of its consideration of the evidence for this area, no UASC were accessing a work experience placement via the WEX traded service offer. Furthermore, it was not clear to the Board whether any UASC had been offered work experience placements via schools who make their own arrangements. Given this finding, the Board recommended that the Department consider exploring whether more could be done to raise awareness of the work experience needs of UASC with schools and colleges, so that they are aware of the legal framework for work experience for this group and what support is available to them to help ensure placements are arranged.

Recommendation 4

The Children's Services Department to explore the options for increasing access to work experience opportunities for UASC. This to include:

- **assessing the potential for the Department to raise awareness of the work experience needs of UASC with schools and colleges and to review the current levels of work experience placements for UASC.**
- **Members to support this process by using their local leadership position to help raise awareness of the work experience needs of UASC and to help foster more work experience placements with public sector organisations and the voluntary sector.**

English as an Additional Language support

52. As discussed elsewhere in this report, UASC often arrive with little or no proficiency in English. In this context, the Board heard evidence about the importance of developing this fundamental skill. For example, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration states in its *'Integration not Demonisation'* report that:

"The ability to understand and speak English to a reasonable standard is a prerequisite for meaningful engagement with most British people and the key to full participation in British society."

53. Even those with language skills which are sufficient for everyday conversations will still find their progress inhibited if they do not become competent users of the language. For example, the Board were interested to hear about the experience of YP1.

54. This young person explained that when he first arrived in the UK, he was keen to start working and earning money as soon as possible. He had at that time only very basic English language skills, but these were sufficient to enable him to work as a labourer on construction sites in London. However, YP1 eventually became disillusioned and concluded that he would not be able to progress without developing his English. He therefore regretted not fully engaging with the English language support that was offered to him when he first arrived. In conclusion, YP1 informed the Board that he wished he had been more strongly encouraged to focus on learning English as an immediate priority. This view was shared by YP2.

55. The Board noted the negative practical consequences for YP1 of not developing his English language skills. For example, when he later decided to pursue a career, YP1 was unable to enrol on his preferred college course because his English was not of the required standard.

56. Officers informed the Board that all UASC are provided with English language support. However, they noted the comments of YP1 and undertook to review the approach to the advice provided to newly arrived UASC regarding the importance of an early focus on English tuition. The department also informed the Board that it is aware of local authorities where accommodation providers are commissioned to deliver intensive support packages during the first 4-6 weeks after arrival and that these packages of support include intensive English language tuition. Having said that, the department also stated that providing access to English language tuition is a further area of challenge, as there is a shortage of English as an Additional Language (EAL) teachers.

57. With regard to the situation at local educational institutions, the Board heard that whilst colleges are often helpful and do their best to accommodate individuals, if a new UASC arrives mid-term or the course is already at capacity, finding a suitable alternative can be difficult and expensive. With regard to compulsory school age children, the Board were informed that schools are entitled to use the Pupil Premium to fund EAL tuition. However, there is a particular challenge relating to UASC who are in Year 11. This is because integrating an asylum-seeking young person in these circumstances can be very challenging for the school, as the cohort they are joining is fully focused on their GCSE exams.

58. In response to the evidence received, the Board concluded that it is essential UASC prioritise developing their English language skills. The Board had particular regard to what could be done to focus on this need within the first six months of arrival. The Board agreed therefore that the feasibility of providing intensive language courses for newly arrived UASC should be explored. The Board also concluded that the department should review its guidance to officers and UASC on this area to see whether more could be done to encourage an early focus on developing proficiency in English. In reaching this conclusion, the Board noted the challenges facing the Department regarding the availability of EAL tutors. The Board agreed therefore that Members could potentially assist by helping to identify individuals and organisations in their local communities who would be able to provide EAL support for UASC.

Recommendation 5

The Children's Services Department to explore how an increased early focus on English as an additional language could be provided to UASC. This to include a review of:

- **the Department's guidance to UASC and officers on this area; and**
- **the potential feasibility of providing intensive language courses which could include commissioning accommodation providers to deliver intensive support packages within the first 4-6 weeks of arrival.**

Member engagement and support for UASC

59. The Board heard throughout this review that there is a need to raise awareness amongst the public and local organisations about the specific needs of UASC. The Board noted that there are 'mixed attitudes' towards asylum-seekers nationally and, as a result, this group can face discrimination. The Board agreed therefore that an increased public understanding of the specific needs of this vulnerable group might not only generate further support of the kind discussed in this report, it could also help combat some of the negative stereotypes UASC can sometimes face.

60. The Board therefore discussed the local leadership role of councillors and how this leaves Members well-placed to help raise the profile of UASC, make connections and generate new leads for the department. In support of this perspective, the Local Government Association states that:

"..councillors are uniquely placed to develop strategies, shape thinking and take an active lead locally because they alone have been democratically elected to represents the interests of the people and the council. This gives them a legitimacy and a mandate no other local body or individual has, apart of course, from MPs" ('A councillor's workbook on community leadership').

61. The Department agreed that Members have a unique role and that effectively utilizing this 'resource' could have a significant and positive impact on the range of support available to UASC in East Sussex. The Board therefore discussed the types of issues which Members could assist with. This included Members helping to:

- identify individuals or organisations that could provide more social opportunities, such as becoming involved in community events;
- make links with groups from diverse cultural backgrounds in the community who might be prepared to accommodate UASC specifically (groups which the department might otherwise struggle to engage with); and
- identify resources in their local communities that would be able and willing to support UASC through work experience placements or providing support with English language tuition and mentoring.

62. Whilst keen to find ways for Members to assist, the Board also asked for clarification as to what practical support might be provided by the department. Furthermore, whilst the Board accepted that each Member should seek to play an active role in supporting UASC (and other LAC), they agreed that many Members will need some updated guidance as to how they can fulfil this role. The Board therefore discussed the potential for developing a UASC toolkit for all Councillors, with consideration being given as to whether the toolkit could provide clear guidance on:

- helping Members to understand their role as a corporate parent;
- the key facts and issues relating to UASC (and other LAC);
- those areas where the Department would like Member assistance; and
- how Members should interact with UASC and how to refer them on for assistance.

63. Officers agreed that Member assistance could provide a significant boost to efforts to improve support for UASC. It was also agreed that there is scope to develop a practical toolkit that individual Members could use as a resource to help them generate interest in supporting UASC. With regard to its development, and to help produce a document that is tailored to the needs of Members, the Board also offered its assistance to the Department with drafting the toolkit.

Recommendation 6

To help expand the range of support available in East Sussex, the Children's Services Department to develop a UASC toolkit for Members The toolkit to provide guidance on:

- **the key challenges facing UASC – such as accommodation needs, opportunities for social activities, access to work experience and English language support;**
- **what assistance is currently available for UASC;**
- **how Members can develop links with key organisations and communities.**
- **the process for referring potential leads to the Department.**

Conclusions

64. The Board's primary goal throughout this review has been to identify what can be done to further assist with helping young asylum-seekers develop their confidence, skills and improve their emotional well-being as they build a new life in the United Kingdom. The Board concluded that the Children's Services Department have already developed a highly effective service which is well-attuned to addressing the needs of this especially vulnerable group of young people. However, and given the complex and evolving nature of the challenges facing the department, the Board have developed a number practical recommendations which it hopes will further complement the work already being undertaken in this area. The recommendations recognise the role of elected Members and how all councillors can play a role in supporting this group, the potential for the wider community to provide support and suggestions as to how the unique needs of UASC could be addressed.

Appendix: Terms of reference, membership and evidence

Scope and terms of reference

The People Scrutiny Committee appointed a Scrutiny Review Board to consider and make recommendations on matters relating to the support provided for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. The Board agreed it would focus on exploring the potential for:

- increasing and diversifying the capacity and range of providers of accommodation for UASC;
- delivering further opportunities that improve the wellbeing of UASC and provide more opportunities for social activities, access to mentoring, English language support and work experience.
- Members to help with raising awareness and support for UASC in their local communities, including generating more enquiries from a wider range of people interested in supporting UASC.

Board Membership and project support

Review Board Members: Councillors Kathryn Field (Chair), Trevor Webb and Francis Whetstone.

The Project Manager was Stuart McKeown, Senior Democratic Services Adviser, with project support provided by Aaron Sams, Democratic Services Officer.

Sally Carnie, Head of Looked After Children Services, Children's Services Department, provided ongoing support to the Board throughout the review.

Witnesses providing evidence

The Board would like to thank all the witnesses who provided evidence in person:

Young people

UASC Care Leaver 1

UASC Care Leaver 2

Community and voluntary sector

Rossana Leal – Founder and Director of The Hastings and Rother Buddy Project

Sarah Bennett – Service Manager of The Hummingbird Refugee Project

ESCC officers

Liz Rugg – Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care, Children's Services Department

Sally Carnie – Head of Looked After Children Services, Children's Services Department

Chelsea Walsh – Practice Manager, Children's Services Department

Peter Richards – Operations Manager, Looked After Children, Children's Services Department

Pamela Middleton – Personal Adviser, Children's Services Department

South East Strategic Partnership for Migration

Sarah Spain - Principal Social Worker for UASC, South East Strategic Partnership for Migration

Review Board meeting dates

26 October 2018

17 January 2019

10 April 2019

24 July 2019

Evidence papers

Item	Date considered
Seeking Support – a guide to the rights and entitlements of separated children (Coram Children's Charity)	12.10.18
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children – Corporate Parenting Panel report	19.10.18
Discussion document produced by Children's Services department	17.01.19
Global Social Club: 2018 Evaluation Document	22.05.19
Article on the Sussex Express website (published 15 May 2019) regarding a former UASC Care Leaver	05.06.19
Home Office guidance document - Permission to work and volunteering for asylum seekers	05.06.19
Notes from a telephone interview with Rossana Leal – Founder and Director of The Hastings and Rother Buddy Project	05.06.19
Notes from a telephone interview with Sarah Bennett – Service Manager of The Hummingbird Refugee Project	05.06.19

Contact officer for this review: Stuart McKeown, Senior Democratic Services Adviser and School Appeals Manager

Telephone: 01273 481583

Email: stuart.mckeown@eastsussex.gov.uk

East Sussex County Council, County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes BN7 1UE

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