

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF SUPPORT FOR UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN (UASC) – ACTION PLAN

SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION		DIRECTOR’S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	UPDATE NOTES	TIMESCALE
R1	<p>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 HRBP, to assess the feasibility of developing similar provision elsewhere within East Sussex in partnership with the voluntary sector.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Children’s Services have explored ways to replicate the support offered by HRBP.</p> <p>Links have been made with the ECIG (Eastbourne Cultural Involvement Group) to explore ways that young people in Eastbourne can be introduced to, and supported by, local community groups.</p> <p>Work has been undertaken with Diversity Resource International (DRI) who have been able to provide mentoring and one to one support to young people. This was funded by DRI themselves.</p> <p>Work has also been undertaken with older Care Leavers to act as mentors to young people who have had less time to establish support networks of their own in the UK. This has had mixed success largely as a result of the limited numbers of young people with the legal framework of Leave to Remain (just under half of the young people have been with East Sussex for less than a year).</p> <p>The UASC Social Group was developed to provide opportunities for</p>	<p>Completed</p>

			<p>young people to develop social networks and meet professionals who work within the community.</p> <p>There are plans to develop a young person's 'arrival video' which will feature current UASC speaking in their own language about what it means to be looked after in East Sussex.</p>	
R2	<p>The Children's Services Department to assess the feasibility of developing a social space for UASC in East Sussex where they can meet with their peers and build their confidence, support networks and social skills.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The social group became a permanent group running once a month in Hastings. The group was well attended and valued by young people.</p> <p>UAS young people were also encouraged to attend other groups run by the Through Care Team and it was wonderful to see a number of young people attend the Through Care Christmas party in 2019.</p> <p>The group had to stop unfortunately as a result of COVID.</p> <p>During the summer, small groups were run in Alexander Park in Hastings, again offering social opportunities for young people. These were well received.</p> <p>In the early autumn, plans were made to re-establish a small group for UASC who had arrived during the pandemic. The premise of the group was to give advice and support about life in the UK with guest speakers however stricter COVID restrictions introduced in early</p>	Complete

			<p>winter prevented the group from being established.</p> <p>The Through Care Participation Worker is currently exploring “virtual” meetings for UASC and Care Leavers.</p>	
R3	<p>With a view to increasing the amount and diversity of accommodation provision, the Children’s Services Department is to further explore 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"> • A review of 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>Training to foster carers has been developed and delivered by the UASC team.</p> <p>The response from foster carers highlighted some learning needs for carers and prompted a discussion with fostering colleagues about the best ways to raise awareness and address prejudices and fears about this group of young people. Review on actions is due in April 2021.</p> <p>Training is to be given to Supervising Social Workers who support foster carers and more information about UASC will be incorporated into the Skills to Foster Training.</p> <p>The UASC team are able to offer country specific advice about young people to foster carers with individual workers taking responsibility for being “experts” on different parts of the world (those areas where the most young people come from).</p> <p>Following discussion with the ECIG, a commitment was made by them to raise awareness of the need for more</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>To be Reviewed with Fostering April 2021</p> <p>April 21</p> <p>April 21</p>

			<p>diverse foster placements in East Sussex and this was taken back to their members to consider in Nov 2020.</p> <p>A written programme has been developed to support all accommodation providers to help the UAS young people to understand life in the UK. This covers topics including the Police in the UK, relationships and consent, how to look after your physical and mental health, keeping safe online and being safe around drugs and alcohol.</p> <p>There has been considerable work done with accommodation providers across the county to ensure that there is a good standard of accommodation available to young people. In addition to fostering, the following has taken place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explored Supported Lodgings with a specific speciality in supporting UASCs. One placement has been recruited. • Increased semi-independent provision across the county, particularly in Eastbourne, for those young people who struggle to live in family homes or for whom a family home is inappropriate. • The service has worked closely with a specialist therapeutic provider in Eastbourne to ensure those young people with 	<p>Complete</p>
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			<p>the most significant therapeutic needs are being looked after appropriately.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed a pathway to enable move on options for those young people who are over 18 and have not received a decision from the Home Office and therefore have no independent source of income. This enables young people to develop appropriate independent living skills, gives them the opportunity to feel they are progressing and reduces costs to ESCC by way of reduced support costs. 	
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. Members to support this process by using their local leadership position to help raise 	<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>There has been limited uptake of work experience opportunities by young people. This seems primarily to be as a result of language barriers both on the part of young people and from work experience providers.</p> <p>COVID has also had an impact on the roll out of this and there are plans to revisit it once restrictions allow.</p>	ongoing

	<p>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>			
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 young people, particularly in relation to spontaneous arrivals.</p>	<p>The Education Specialist in the team, has continued to offer support and guidance around the education of young people, building good working relationships with the East Sussex College Group and with BHASVIC in Brighton and Hove</p> <p>Part of the Education Specialist's work has been to support college staff to understand some of the barriers to learning that are specific to this group of young people. Their level of trauma and previous experiences had not previously been fully appreciated by college staff. This has also been particularly pertinent given the shift to online learning for young people who have not had previous experience of using this sort of technology.</p> <p>There are plans to develop training for the Safeguarding Partnership around this issue.</p> <p>The greatest demand for places is in the East Sussex College group and they are struggling to meet the needs of</p>	complete

		<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>the young people as a result of the sharp increase in numbers. The Education Specialist has worked with the colleges to explore options for offering English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) at different sites across the county. Currently Hastings campus has a significantly more developed offer than the Eastbourne site.</p> <p>However, the college is able to offer a rolling programme where it is possible to enrol new students every 14 week. When young people arrive at a time when they are unable to enrol, the International College (part of the East Sussex College group) and an online education provider 'TLC Live', can provide bespoke education.</p> <p>A formal mini tendering exercise has still to be done.</p> <p>Working relationships with the English as an Additional Language Service have remained strong and the service has been very flexible in their approach to working with young people. They have been able to offer value for money and to provide lessons in a way that are accessible.</p>	
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R6	<p>To help expand the range of support available in East Sussex, the Children's Services Department is to develop a UASC toolkit for Members. The toolkit should 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>A Draft version will be circulated for comment .</p>	
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