

**REPORT FOR: CORPORATE
PARENTING PANEL**

Date of Meeting: 12 July 2011

Subject: INFORMATION REPORT - Supporting
Unaccompanied Children and young people
Seeking Asylum in Harrow

Responsible Officer: Catherine Doran, Corporate Director,
Children Services

Exempt: No

Enclosures: Appendix 1: Partners involved in the Service
Managers Performance Group

Section 1 – Summary

This report sets out to inform and update Panel of the work being undertaken to support, in Harrow unaccompanied (separated) children seeking asylum in the UK and their transition to Leaving Care services.

To note the strategic and operational priorities recommended for consideration for Corporate Parenting

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

Harrow Council UASC service has a wealth of home grown expertise in the field of asylum seeker care and support. For 9 years, the UASC team has been at the cutting edge in developing the care provision arrangements for UASC in Harrow. The UASC service has enhanced the LAC service provision providing that additional specialist care and support required for children fleeing persecution, torture or death.

As well as providing direct support and accommodation to those entitled to a 16+ service under the Children Act 1989 and (Leaving Care) Act 2000 when they first arrive. It also provides direct services to children aged 0 to 16 and plays a considerable role in advising Harrow Schools, Housing, child and adult mental health services and Adult services (this list is not exhaustive) in all areas of asylum support, entitlement to services and the specific health needs of children separated from their family fleeing their country of origin; most of whom are or were deemed to be LAC in accordance with the directives associated with the Hillingdon Judgment and the DH Local Authority Circular 13 post 2003 (Appendix: 6a).

The Service Manager UASC and Leaving Care Team oversaw the development of Integration and safe returns strategy, dual pathway planning for young people returning home, holistic age assessment of children designed to ensure the appropriate and safe provision of services for children, the Integrated, multi-agency child trafficking (child protection) assessment and care arrangements for victims.

And Harrow's participation in the UNICEF 2010 review of statutory support for children seeking asylum in the UK

The Children Service, Service Managers meet regularly as part of the Service Managers Performance Group to review Practice Policy and Procedures.

Partners involved at Appendix 1.

Current Situation

This report covers period from 1st August 2010 to 31st May 2011.

Child Centred and Outcome Delivery Model

The overarching objectives for looked after separated children and young people leaving care in Harrow is structured to ensure their safety and security, education attainment, independent living skills, transition to independent living, integration in to the Harrow community and preparations for safe returns to a country of origin.

This approach is framed by the 5 key outcomes for children and young people which is at the core of the provision of services to these children in Harrow.

The internal child outcome review process for looked after children and young people leaving care, information management systems and internal service monitoring of attainment, through supervision, is used to measure the child and young adults attainment in all areas against the 5 key outcomes.

In order to meet the needs of the service users the service runs (R), (by social workers and key workers) or commissions (C) a range of services including;

Life Skills courses (R) & (C) and integrated into the life skills programme to be circulated for consultation in July 2011, to include age relevant pilot review in August 2011.

Sexual Health courses (C)

Independent Living Skills (R) & (C)

Bereavement course (C)

Counselling (C)

Living in a new land (R) & (C)

Cultural diversity (R)

Immigration support (R) & (C)

Group Meetings with the UKBA Local Immigration Team LIT's *the (LIT's are the UKBA teams that assess applications for asylum in the UK in this regards case owners for Harrow separated children and young people leaving care).*

Returning Home (R) & (C)

Living Independently (R)

Entering the Work Of Employment (R) & (C)

Education

Education outcomes for separated children in Harrow were highlighted as exemplary by UNICEF in their Level Playing Field report 2010 as was the fact that Harrow had inbuilt to all service provision the principle of 'Child First' framed by the Children Act 1989 / 2004, Human Rights Act, The United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child and the various statutory guidance

Education attainment is one key elements of the provision. Harrow separated children perform well above the UK national average and the analysis of Harrows UASC service this area showed in 2009/10.

In EET and NEET Statistics for 2010/11

78 % of clients in full time Collage

7 %of clients in University

10 %of client in employment and transitioning to full independent living

5 %of clients not in education employment or training due to their Immigration status (Although are in involved in Peer support and other related activates)

It is expected that all students progress academically each year their education plans and pathway plans are central to this outcome.

Key Improvements to the process are

Continue to work with Schools and collages to maintain attendance and provide additional support for those children whose first language is not English

Highlight expectations and support to achieve education outcomes within the Leaving Care Charter and London Pledge

Ongoing Placement and Finance review of 16+ Placements.

Develop an enhanced Foster carer-training model to meet the needs of separated children

Extend the community based working model in order to provide a speeder response to service users needs and provide needs enabling more contact between services users and key workers.

Build on the existing good practice of partner agency support in the community for service users.

Transition to Independence

Life skills & Independent Living skills;

Work has been undertaken to enhance the Life skills programme which has been updated based on feedback from young people and analysis outcome targets achieved.

The 18+ Independence review, carried out as part of the pathway plan review process, is designed to identify any additional needs and support.. The Independent living plan is designed to assist the young person to become fully competent in all the skills to enable a transition to independent living or return to their country of origin and is reviewed as part of this process. The enhancements to the review process were based on the "Core Skills" section of the Skills for Independent Living document owned by the Leaving Care Team.

Objectives:

To deliver improved outcomes for young people in transition to independence.

To employ an empathic and considered response to emotional barriers faced by young people in transition to independence.

To consider how we can best meet the needs of young people in transition to independence in a climate of financial constraints.

Overall objective, to build on the strengths of the team to ensure best practice and service delivery to young people.

Key next steps:

Review and implement Leaving Care Charter and London Pledge

Ongoing Placement and Finance review of 16+ Placements

Life skills Programme & Independent Living skills

The UASC Service to continue to provide the enhanced separated children (person from abroad) life skills and independent living modules

Undertake gap analysis

The Young Person is assessed against all the skills critical to being able to live independently (in the event that the person is fully ready against the skill set, the gaps in skills are then addressed with the young person through a range of engagement strategies

The UASC service will review and enhance delivery of the training and holistic support approach to attain independent living. The UASC service will do this in partnership with young people and partner agencies.

Key next steps:

The draft Life Skills Programme to be circulated for consultation in July 2011, to include age relevant pilot review in August 2011.

Implementation of Life skills Programme in November 2011. The overall aim is to build on young people's practical skills; to monitor and record the progress of each looked after young person. This is to be achieved with a multi-agency approach and contribution to the implementation of a Life Skills Programme.

Employment, Education & Training

Draft Protocol is being prepared for consultation, to focus on expectations and objectives of education for LAC, to include scorecard to manage and monitor performance for LAC.

Draft Protocol due by June 2011 for consultation

Key next steps:

Draft Protocol to be circulated for consultation with all Services, agencies and partners in June 2011

Housing & Care Leavers

The UASC Service links with Harrow Housing and their partner housing associations have been well established for 10 years. As part of the wider Children service initiative to promote more effective partnership working with Housing and enhance the outcomes specifically associated with the accommodation needs of Young People Leaving Care. The Harrow UASC service forms part of the Children Service placement strategy working group, steering group and Children Looked After Life Chances Forum. All of which will merge with the Looked After

Life Chances Forum, as from July 2011. This will be monitored by and contribute to the Corporate Parenting Board

A partnership and review meeting is being held on 25th May 2011, to consider current process, partnerships and look to improve outcomes regarding views and wishes of young people, agencies regarding accommodation expectation and standards..

The multi agency Children Looked After Life Chances forum meets every two months and will be keeping an overview of this strategy and plan.

Feedback from children [The Voice Of The Child]

The UASC will continue to hold quarterly consultation meetings with service users designed to identify any gaps in provision and ensure the service provided meets the highest quality within current budget constraints. The UASC Service will produce reports and recommendations for the directorate and the Corporate Parenting Group and draft feedback reports for service users.

The UASC service will continue to facilitate regular meetings between young children seeking asylum and the UKBA local immigration teams meetings in order to ensure the voice of the child (outside of the asylum application process) is heard and to improve practice within all agencies working with children.

Young People receiving a service from the UASC Service were consulted on the creation of the LEAN service model. The Leaving Care Team Model included key outcome focused delivery models with a core transition to independent living model. The Young Person Lean consultation also included the 'voice of the child' component seeking their views on what they saw as priority needs for them and how the service could be configured to provide that need more effectively joint service /young person approach. The outcomes are measured against the outcome attainment analysis and risk model developed as part of the Service Function LEAN model element 2.

Young people are to be involved in the Pilot of a draft Life skills program in August 2011.

Future Work

Going forward and the challenges for 2011-2012

Developing Life skills programme, which will be piloted by young people in August 2011

Developing a single protocol for education attainment and achievement recognition to be launched in September 2011.

Working with the Local Harrow Safeguarding Children Board, Coordinate the Implementation of the London Safeguarding Children Board Child Trafficking guidance, toolkit and recommendations within the Monitoring Report

Strategic and operational priorities recommended for consideration by Corporate Parenting

Consultation with Young People on the 'community working approach to service delivery for young people' to; build better community links and peer group support as unaccompanied or separated migrant children may lack the necessary social skills and education to access the services they need.

Develop a more strategic and coordinated response for the identification of health needs and once the need has been identified the provision of services to provide support locally.

Continue to contribute to the development of the Safe houses and safe foster care placements for trafficked children taking into account the views of victims (what they believe will make them feel safe) and in partnership with the DfE, the London Safeguarding Children Board and NGO'S such as ECPAT UK..

Work with Local schools and colleges (Academies) and further education colleges to develop courses that combine the learning of English with subject based courses so that unaccompanied or separated migrant children

Continue to provide training for adults who are responsible for providing services to unaccompanied or separated migrant children in order to strengthen the acceptance that such children are entitled to the same level of support and funding as children who are permanently resident here.

Corporate parenting to agree to participate in that training

Establish up to date Leaving Care Charter to be launched in September 2011

Section 3 – Further Information

All relevant information is contained within the report

Section 4 – Financial Implications

There are no new financial implications.

Equalities Implications

This work supports the Council's Corporate Priority to support and protect people who are most in need in regard to separated children the UASC service ensures compliance with the;

The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

London Procedure for Safeguarding Trafficked and Exploited Children 2011

Working Together to Safeguard Children Safeguarding Children who may have been Trafficked 2009

-Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010

Human Rights Act 1998

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

Corporate Priorities

This work supports the Council's Corporate Priority to support and protect people who are most in need.

Name: Robert Stuckey



on behalf of the
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 24 June 2011

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Philip Ishola, Service Manager Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Services and Leaving Care Team: 0208 663 5611 ext 7546

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Background Papers: None