

ITEM No ...3.....

REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES COMMITTEE – 5 SEPTEMBER 2022

REPORT ON: UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN (UASC) AND UKRAINE

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 227-2022

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides a 12-month update on developments to support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) across the UK and local arrangements, Article IV of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 6 September 2021, report no 236-2021 refers. It includes details on developments with the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) since it was announced by the UK Government on 10 June 2021. It also provides an update on the emerging implications of the conflict in Ukraine and potential routes into Scotland for unaccompanied children and young people.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Elected Members:

- i. notes the content of this report;
- ii. note the developments locally since the council formally agreed to join the NTS;
- iii. notes the emerging response to the conflict in the Ukraine; and
- iv. instructs the Executive Director to provide a further update in 12 months.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The NTS scheme provides additional UK Government funding of either £114 per night for spontaneous arrivals or £143 per night for planned arrivals of young people. There is also an 'exceptional cases fund' of £3m to support local authorities facing higher costs for individual young people with higher needs. For those aged 18 years or over, the funding increases to £270 per week. The level of funding covers the cost of a young person in a Housing Support service or within their own tenancy and includes funding for daily living.

3.2 The financial arrangements for children and young people arriving in Scotland from Ukraine are expected to be £10,500 per person delivered to local authorities to provide wraparound health and wellbeing support; up to £8,755 per person to local authorities to provide early years and education services; and an optional £350 monthly 'thank you' payment to hosts, which will be extended to up to 3 years or if the child or young person is staying with the sponsor, whichever is less.

3.3 Additional funding to support local authorities include a tariff payment of £64,150 per child where sponsorship arrangements break down after arrival and the local authority needs to take the child into its care. There is also a tariff payment of £16,850 to support local authorities with the costs of supporting any children and young people who have arrived via this route, been placed into the care of a local authority and leave the care system once they reach the age of 18.

4.0 BACKGROUND TO THE NATIONAL TRANSFER SCHEME (NTS) FOR UASC

4.1 The NTS was established in 2016 to provide a mechanism for the transfer of UASC from an entry Local Authority to another in the UK. The aim was to ensure young people get the crucial care they need whilst facilitating a more equitable distribution of responsibility and alleviating growing pressures felt by some areas. Continued pressures on entry areas such as Kent

County Council and the transfer of young people to some areas much more than others led the Home Office to launch a new NTS in July 2021.

- 4.2 The scheme involves a rota with a definitive outline of numbers to be transferred to participating nations and/or Local Authority areas based on a standard formula of 0.07% of the local child population. The aim is to ensure that responsibility for placing a referred child is clear, with no requirement for ad-hoc requests and Local Authorities having time to plan for potential new placements. In Dundee, this means that up to 4-6 young people could come to the city over 12 months.
- 4.3 Since the scheme was mandated on 23 November 2021, over 2,000 children and young people have been transferred overall in the UK and Local Authorities in Scotland have welcomed 104 children and young people. There are also currently over 120 children and young people temporarily accommodated in interim hotels managed by the Home Office with more awaiting transfer from reception centres into the care of local authorities. The numbers have risen over the current summer and care arrangements need to be in place as quickly as possible.
- 4.4 In terms of spontaneous arrivals, at the point of presentation children and young people are assessed by the Home Office and either returned to their country of origin or permitted entry as an asylum seeker. Those who are given the right to remain as UASC become looked after by the local authority in which they present, involving specific requirements relating to assessments, plans and support as with care experienced children and young people in general. Their status as adults is then determined by the Home Office when they reach 18.
- 4.5 To date, most of the young people arriving in the UK as asylum seekers have been male, aged 16-17 years and likely to have travelled for many months. This may change over time as it is noted over recent months that there has been a growing number of arrivals of young people aged under 16. Most have experienced traumatic events, including separation from their families, time spent in refugee camps, human trafficking, physical and sexual abuse and their basic needs generally not being met. Many of them also face uncertainty about their future life in the UK while their immigration status and right to remain are determined.

4.6 **UKRAINE**

- As of 15 July 2022, the Homes for Ukraine Scheme began processing applications from eligible children under the age of 18 who have already applied through the scheme to come to the UK without a parent or guardian in carefully defined circumstances.
- In the first instance the Home Office is working through the application made to the Homes for Ukraine Scheme before 22 June 2022 and there have been approximately 30 applications to date where the host is in Scotland.
- Local Authorities are required to undertake a Social Work assessment and host checks before the visa is issued and a national assessment protocol is currently being developed in collaboration with Local Authorities.
- The UK Government have confirmed that the requirements within the unaccompanied scheme will apply retrospectively to any children who are already in the UK without their parent or legal guardian. We await confirmation of any notifications for Dundee.

4.7 **KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN DUNDEE OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS**

- 4.7.1 In response to the changes introduced by the NTS, a working group involving key partners from the Council, NHS Tayside, Further and Higher Education and the Third Sector was established to plan and coordinate a local approach. Building on the experience gained through the resettlement and integration of foreign nationals arriving in the city through different processes, the group is now well established and has extended its remit to include oversight of the response to the conflict in Ukraine.
- 4.7.2 This group has ensured legal advice has been considered and that appropriate accommodation including the development of a supported lodgings scheme has been prioritised. It has also ensured a productive approach to matters such as responding to health needs, school/college attendance, summer school options, translation needs and English to speakers of other

languages (ESOL), as well as fun activities such as residential outings. Links have also been strengthened with neighbouring Local Authorities to share resources and best practice where possible.

- 4.7.3 As a result, Dundee was well positioned to take the first slot in Scotland on the new NTS rota in October 2021. Since then, we have welcomed 6 young people through the scheme and accommodated another 2 young people over and above our requirement because we were immediately able to meet their needs. We have also supported another young person who arrived through the spontaneous arrival route. To date, we have been asked to undertake 1 assessment of an unaccompanied child from Ukraine.
- 4.7.4 As all the young people are classed as 'Looked After', national practice requirements apply and they are allocated a case responsible Social Worker to coordinate their assessment and support. As this represents a significant and growing additional requirement which involves particular knowledge and expertise, a dedicated Social Worker and Support Worker model is currently being progressed to support individual young people and continue to strengthen the Council response to UASC overall.
- 4.7.5 Regarding our wider humanitarian support activities based around our temporary hotel accommodation for parents/carers who arrive with their child, we are cognisant of the need to support and protect all children and young people, including those who are accompanied. If additional need is identified, staff will follow established processes. We are also developing opportunities for these children and young people, with a member of staff dedicating time to developing a programme of activities which reflect their needs.
- 4.7.6 The service has also worked in partnership with colleagues from the HSCP to develop a protocol which outlines arrangements for host families receiving Ukrainian children, young people and parents/carers into their homes. There is a requirement for a home visit to any prospective host family to ensure the accommodation is suitable and an Enhanced Disclosure screening process. A protocol has been put in place to follow up any concerns or issues arising out of this assessment process.
- 4.7.8 Following their arrival, to ensure that prospective host families can provide a safe and supportive home for refugees, the service is providing further assistance, including access to appropriate services. Equally, support is available to intervene in the event of any concerns which arise once the refugee has been placed with the host family.
- 4.7.9 In relation to educational needs, as all the UASC who have arrived in the last 12 months have been aged between 16-18 assessment has had to consider their levels of literacy in their first language which determines their capacity to learn English as an Additional Language (EAL); their previous educational experience; and their future pathway to employability in Scotland.
- 4.7.10 All UASC have been enrolled on an ESOL programme to support their acquisition of language and literacy. This has mainly been delivered through Dundee & Angus College and CLD rather than a secondary school as access to the senior phase and the opportunity to gain skills and qualifications in the time period is challenging for the young people and has not been feasible. A pathway to employability which is based on ESOL has presented young people with a better chance of being included in their local community and progression to training and employment.
- 4.7.11 Further to this, Dundee and Angus College have run a summer school 5 days per week over 4 weeks of the summer holidays for young people aged 15–20 which has been very successful, Feedback from the young people has included statements such as "It was very good", "School learn was fun", "I like learning", "I am looking forward to the new course".
- 4.7.12 In relation to children and young people arriving from Ukraine, all children resident in Scotland are entitled to Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and education, irrespective of their immigration status or whether their accommodation is temporary or not. National guidance recommends that they are enrolled in their catchment school, or if this is not possible then the next nearest/most appropriate school which meets their needs.

4.7.13 In this context, at the end of June 2022 there were 27 children and young people enrolled in our schools and nurseries. We anticipate at least another 65 children and young people to be enrolled in schools and nurseries during August whose families are currently living in hotel accommodation. Where possible children will attend schools and nurseries local to the hotel catchment area but we anticipate capacity issues in some secondary schools from S1-S3, which may mean enrolment in schools further away.

4.7.14 A leaflet written in Ukrainian has been prepared for new families which explains how enrolment in a new school happens and how they can access any support required. The Accessibility and Inclusion Service will continue to support children and families to enrol in schools/nurseries through access to interpreters and collaborative assessment with school and nursery staff of children's needs.

5.0 NEXT STEPS

5.1 Building on these arrangements, the focus over the next 12 months will be on the development of resilience within the staffing structure in order to adapt and respond to the needs of children and families impacted by a range of humanitarian crises. Partners are also committed to developing a suite of accommodation options to meet the needs of a potentially diverse range of children and young people.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 This report has been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment to identify impacts on Equality & Diversity, Fairness & Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. An impact, positive or negative, on one or more of these issues was identified. An appropriate senior manager has checked and agreed with this assessment. A copy of the Integrated Impact Assessment showing the impacts and accompanying benefits of/mitigating factors for them is included as an Appendix to this report.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 The Council Leadership Team has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None.

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August 2022

CASE STUDY 1

N's Story

N, a 16-year-old Vietnamese asylum seeker, fled from Kent in May 2021 and was eventually found in Glasgow in a distressed state in May 2022. There is no knowledge of her whereabouts and what was happening to her during the 1 year that she was missing but a strong suspicion of child trafficking and exploitation. Under the National Transfer Scheme, all Scottish Local Authorities were asked if they could accommodate her and she was supported to move into Supported Accommodation in Dundee.

Prior to her arrival in the city, N's accommodation was prepared in advance to be as homely and inviting as possible, including important cultural touches. Staff from one of the Young People's Houses and one of our other Vietnamese young people transported her from Glasgow. She was frightened and vulnerable and involving the other Vietnamese young person helped break down barriers and reassure her that she would be well supported by the team.

N was supported by the team and the other young person to settle into her flat and has since been supported to maintain and develop ongoing links with the other young people and staff in our houses. She has started an ESOL class and is actively learning English; she is being supported with independent living skills; she receives financial support from the Council; she is being supported to apply for asylum; and Aberlour provide an advocacy service to ensure her rights continue to be promoted in accordance with the UNCRC.

Going forwards, this support will be adapted to meet her needs, including in relation to any disclosure of her experiences. There are still significant risks as she has previously gone missing from the holding hotel in England so staff have built a robust risk assessment to promote her ongoing safety and security. She has now been in the city for 3 months and has said that as a result of the support from AFC, her Social Worker and other partners this is the first in a long time she has felt safe and happy.

CASE STUDY 2

A's Story

A, a 16-year-old Eritrean asylum seeker moved into Supported Accommodation in February 2022. He was transferred to Dundee as part of the National Transfer Scheme. A had been on the move across Africa and onto Europe since he was 4 years old and had been physically beaten, forced to work and neglected due to poverty. He was travelling with his father but was separated from him when he was put on a boat to Europe. A continued his journey to the UK in the hope of finding his father.

The Children and Families Service and partners prepared accommodation for A's arrival, where he was joined a fortnight later by another Eritrean national of the same age. A was frightened and vulnerable but having the two young people share a flat helped prevent loneliness and isolation.

A was supported by staff to settle into his flat, he has developed independent living skills and can keep his flat clean and tidy. A goes shopping independently, has basic cooking skills and has expressed an interest to develop his culinary skills further. He always has food in the house and manages his money well with no staff intervention.

A has been supported to maintain and develop ongoing links with the other young people in his community. A was supported to go to Street Soccer and has been an active part of this since his arrival. A is a skilled footballer and the link with Street Soccer helps fill his time and builds connection and friendship with peers. At first when he visited Street Soccer, he travelled with staff but now has the skill to travel independently across the city as he is more aware of his surroundings and is keen to explore. A has joined a local football team and is actively pursuing this on a weekly basis. A took part in a UASC football tournament in Milnathort, Fife. A was part of the Dundee and Angus team and they won the tournament and was awarded a medal for his participation. A visited Hampden Football Stadium last week with his Guardian. He said it was amazing to experience such a place.

A was supported to attend a 5-day residential which focused on outdoor activities and team building. A particularly enjoyed the climbing activities and it was a chance to build positive childhood memories for him. A was given the chance to focus on fun and friendship and staff said that they could see strong friendships that had been built on the back of the residential.

A has been supported to go to a Refugee Festival in Glasgow where he was able to mix with others from a similar background and eat food prepared by other refugees. It is important that A is given opportunities that are culturally appropriate so that he can celebrate his heritage and feel included.

A is being supported to apply for asylum in the UK, he has been attending Dundee and Angus College Summer programme and has now applied for the next level of ESOL. His English has improved so much as he has a great commitment to learning. A engaged with Community engagement team from Dundee and Angus College where he mixed with other young people and visited Edinburgh Castle and Zoo. He is continuing to be supported with Independent Living Skills by Action for Children, supported financially by Dundee City Council and Aberlour Childcare Trust continue to advocate for his rights.

Integrated Impact Assessment

Committee Report Number: 227-2022

Document Title: Committee Report on Unaccompanied

Asylum Seeking Children and Ukrainian Children Document

Type: Service Description:

The report outlines the national requirements of and local responses to the Home Office National Transfer Scheme for UASC and arrangements to provide humanitarian support to children, young people and families from Ukraine.

Intended Outcome:

The intended outcome of the approach is to support and help integrate a

manageable number of asylum seeking children, young people and families in the

city, including in relation to meeting their health, social care and educational needs.

Period Covered: 22/08/2022 to 21/08/2023 Monitoring:

The arrangements will be monitored via a multi-agency Steering Group reporting to the Children and Families Executive Board and Child Protection Committee on issues associated, for instance, with local capacity available to meet needs and the outcome of support to vulnerable foreign nationals.

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Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

Impacts & Implications

Age: Positive

The approach involves supporting up to 6 UASC per year as part of the NTS, alongside both accompanied and unaccompanied Ukrainian refugees who may arrive in the city via

different routes. They are typically aged 16-17 years, have experienced of trauma and require support in a welcoming and culturally sensitive environment.

Disability: Not Known

The number of children and young people who may arrive in the city with a disability is not yet known but given the nature of their needs and required support the impact on them should they arrive should be positive.

Gender Reassignment: No Impact

Marriage & Civil Partnership: No Impact

Pregnancy & Maternity: No Impact

Race / Ethnicity: Positive

Children and young people arriving in the city have come from various countries, including Eritrea, Vietnam, Syria and Ukraine. The approach being adopted is culturally sensitive, including support relating to different needs such as religion, language and national identity.

Religion or Belief: Positive

Please see above, noting pro-active support has and will be provided in relation to all children and young people specific to their religion or beliefs. This has included support to Muslim young people in attending the Mosque and making links with the wider Muslim community. Sex: No Impact

Sexual Orientation: No Impact

Are any Human Rights not covered by the Equalities questions above impacted by this report?

Yes

The approach is compliant with the UNCRC principles of protecting children and young people from harm, enabling them to attend school and meeting their health and social needs.

Fairness & Poverty

Geographic Impacts & Implications

Strathmartine:	No Impact
Lochee:	No Impact
Coldside:	No Impact
Maryfield:	No Impact
North East:	No Impact
East End:	No Impact
The Ferry:	No Impact
West End:	No Impact

Household Group Impacts and Implications

Looked After Children & Care Leavers: Positive

All children and young people arriving in the city via the NTS or unaccompanied children and young people from Ukraine will automatically be designated as 'Looked After' and will therefore benefit from rigorous assessment, planning and review processes.

Carers: Not Known

Existing carers may volunteer to be a host family for Ukrainian families and this will be subject to a standard assessment process involving a home visit, interview and enhanced disclosure checks. The children and young people will attend schools and standard GIRFEC arrangements, including child protection, will apply.

Lone Parent Families: Not Known

It is possible that lone parent families may volunteer to become a host family and they will be subject to the same standard checks and support as others, as described above.

Single Female Households with Children: Not Known

Please see above - lone parent families and single female households with children would not be ruled out as potential host families and would be subject to the same standard checks and support as others.

Greater number of children and/or young children: Not Known

The proposal does involve a greater number of children and young people but in accordance with a national formula of 0.07% of the population at 6 NTS per year, which is manageable. The number of Ukrainian accompanied and unaccompanied children and young people arriving from Ukraine will be monitored.

Pensioners - single / couple: No Impact

Unskilled workers or unemployed: No Impact

Serious & enduring mental health problems: No Impact

Homeless: No Impact

Drug and/or alcohol problems: No Impact

Offenders & Ex-offenders: No Impact

Socio Economic Disadvantage Impacts & Implications

Employment Status: No Impact

Education & Skills: Positive

All children and young people arriving in the city will be entitled to education and will be enrolled in a school or college. They will continue to receive support into early adulthood.

Income: No Impact

Caring Responsibilities (including Childcare): No Impact

Affordability and accessibility of services: No Impact

Fuel Poverty: No Impact

Cost of Living / Poverty Premium: No Impact

Connectivity / Internet Access: No Impact

Income / Benefit Advice / Income Maximisation: No Impact

Employment Opportunities: No Impact

Education: Positive

All children and young people arriving in the city will be entitled to education and arrangements are being made to ensure that, where possible, they attend schools in their catchment area. Where this is not possible due to capacity issues or individual needs, they will be enrolled in alternative schools.

Health: Positive

Children and young people arriving in the city have experienced trauma and will be supported to meet their needs including, where necessary, referral to specialist services such as CAMHS.

Life Expectancy: No Impact

Mental Health:

Positive Please see

above.

Overweight / Obesity: No Impact

Child Health: Positive

Please see above

Neighbourhood Satisfaction: Not Known

It is possible that there might be negative reactions to the arrival of foreign nationals in the city but this is a positive humanitarian response to an international crisis and any tensions will be monitored and responded to appropriately. Transport: No Impact

Environment

Climate Change Impacts

Mitigating Greenhouse Gases: No Impact

Adapting to the effects of climate change: No Impact

Resource Use Impacts

Energy efficiency & consumption: No Impact

Prevention, reduction, re-use, recovery or recycling of waste: No Impact

Sustainable Procurement: No Impact

Transport Impacts

Accessible transport provision: No Impact

Sustainable modes of transport: No Impact

Natural Environment Impacts

Air, land & water quality: No Impact

Biodiversity: No Impact

Open & green spaces: No Impact

Built Environment Impacts

Built Heritage: No Impact

Housing: No Impact

Is the proposal subject to a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA)? No further action is required as it does not qualify as a Plan, Programme or Strategy as defined by the Environmental Assessment (SEA) Act 2005.

Corporate Risk

Corporate Risk Impacts

Political Reputational Risk: Not Known

It is possible that there will be some negative reactions to the arrival of foreign nationals in the city but this is a positive response to a humanitarian crisis and the capacity of the city to continue to provide appropriate support will be continually monitored.

Economic/Financial Sustainability / Security & Equipment: No Impact

Social Impact / Safety of Staff & Clients: No Impact

Technological / Business or Service Interruption: No Impact

Environmental: No Impact

Legal / Statutory Obligations: No Impact

Organisational / Staffing & Competence: Positive

The approach places demands on Social Work and other teams but includes additional funding per child or young person and a designated model is being explored to build capacity and ensure staff have the required knowledge, skills and competence.

Corporate Risk Implications & Mitigation:

The risk implications associated with the subject matter of this report are "business as normal" risks and any increase to the level of risk to the Council is minimal. This is due either to the risk being inherently low or as a result of the risk being transferred in full or in part to another party on a fair and equitable basis. The subject matter is routine and has happened many times before without significant impact.