



Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

1. Policy statement

Children's Services will ensure that unaccompanied asylum seeking young people are treated with the respect and dignity that would be accorded to any young person.

2. Policy status

- Statutory guidance for local authorities on the care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery 2017
- Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002
- European Convention on Human Rights
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2002
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Immigration and Asylum Acts 1996 and 1999
- Housing Act 1998
- Home Office Circular IND LAL 02/04
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Human Rights Act 1998
- UN Convention 1951 (Geneva Convention) as amended 1967
- National Assistance Act 1948
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Leaving Care Act 2005
- Operation Innerste
- Nationalities and Borders Act 2022
- Safeguarding Children who may have been trafficked, DfE 2011

3. Key Points

1. The local authority, in partnership with other statutory agencies and voluntary sector organisations will strive to meet the needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children within United Kingdom (UK) and relevant international legislation and national policy frameworks.

2. The United Nations High Commissioner for Children defines unaccompanied children as: ‘those who are separated from both parents and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, has the responsibility to do so.’
3. The Home Office UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)defines an unaccompanied asylum seeking child as a person who:
 - a. is under 18 and applying for asylum in his/her own right; and
 - b. is ‘separated from both parents and not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so’.
4. Unaccompanied children and young people have the same basic needs as other young people for care and attention. They may have additional needs linked to culture; ethnicity or religion and may often feel very isolated. They may have suffered from torture and be traumatised by this experience, with mental or physical health problems which may not have been diagnosed. They are often highly anxious whilst their asylum claims are being processed.
5. In Norfolk all unaccompanied children receive their services from the UASC County team.
6. The UASC Team strives to provide a trauma informed service which embeds the principles of trauma informed practice for children, young people and employees – Safety; Choice; Collaboration; Trustworthiness and Empowerment.
7. Working with unaccompanied minors is a highly complex area of work and therefore Norfolk will ensure UASC Social Workers, Personal Advisors and colleagues will have a solid understanding of the asylum process, and of additional vulnerabilities/safeguarding:
 - ▶ The Service will have good knowledge of immigration process, different types of leave and appeal’s processes;
 - ▶ Understanding of modern slavery, trafficking/exploitation identifiers, assessment tools and trafficking referral system, as well as understanding of the wider child protection system;
 - ▶ Competent in completing good quality age assessments which evidence an understanding the impact of cultural difference, trauma and lived experiences has on emotional and behavioural development/physical presentation;
 - ▶ Understanding the possible asylum outcomes and how that impacts on care/pathway planning.
8. The child’s needs should be assessed using the Assessment Framework guidance, and adopting Norfolk’s approaches – Signs of Safety, Vital Signs and Flourish.
9. UASC Social Workers will ensure expert/good quality immigration advice is provided on arrival in Norfolk.
10. An unaccompanied child or young person who becomes a looked after child is cared for under the looked after children guidance (e.g. Care Standards Act 2000, Foster Care Regulations).

- 11.** Advice and support should be given to promote links or reunification with the child's family where it is possible and safe to do so and interpreting services should be made available as required.
- 12.** Unaccompanied asylum seekers who become looked after should be offered an initial health assessment. Some asylum seeking children have very high levels of health need which are unusual in the UK, and it is essential that these are addressed by experienced practitioners at the earliest possible date. Advice may be required from the Medical Foundation for the Victims of Torture.
- 13.** All refugees have the same rights to education as other children in the UK. Their educational attainment will vary depending upon their country of origin and the opportunity for them to access schooling. However, only young people with indefinite leave to remain in the UK or who have temporary leave to remain and fulfil residency requirements are eligible for an educational bursary.
- 14.** Once the local authority has taken on responsibility for the child then the policies governing special educational needs, free school meals, uniform grant and travel will apply.
- 15.** Assistance for unaccompanied asylum seeker children under s.17 and s.20 ends at the age of 18. However the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 then applies for any young person who has been accommodated or received services equivalent to accommodation and a needs assessment and a Pathway Plan should be completed.
- 16.** Because of the uncertainty associated with the outcome of an asylum application it is important triple planning addresses the possibility that the child or young person may be required to return to their country of origin.
- 17.** Should a young person become Appeal Rights Exhausted secondary legal advice will be sought and, if appropriate, a Human Rights Assessment completed.
- 18.** Any further applications for leave to remain must be made in a timely manner, specifically before any previous leave to remain expires.
- 19.** Close liaison with the UK Visas and Immigration is required to ensure changes in status are monitored and services adjusted accordingly. UKVI Officers now have additional child protection responsibilities.

4. Procedures

National transfer referral	Age assessment/adult contingency hotel referral	Spontaneous arrival
<p>Referral received from the National Transfer Scheme</p> <p>Appendix A Unaccompanied asylum seeking children: national transfer scheme - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>Team Manager/Service Manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business Support to contact the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) with the new referral. ▪ The Placement Team to make preliminary searches. If under 15 year: Regulated placement/Foster Care. If over 16: UASC supported accommodation provision. ▪ On receiving referral Social Work Assessment will need to be closed until child/young person arrives. ▪ The Team Manager to allocate case and UASC Social Worker to complete the Looked After Children (LAC) matching paperwork and Risk Assessments. ▪ The UASC Social Worker to liaise with the transferring Local Authority (LA) and support the transfer under the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) guidelines and timeframes. ▪ The Service/Team Managers to complete Placement Confirmation form and return to NTS. ▪ An estimated time of arrival will be provided and will be disseminated to the placement/social care team. 	<p>Referral received from CADS</p> <p>Team Manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case to be allocated, Management Oversight added to Liquidlogic. ▪ The Placement Team to be informed of potential need for accommodation. <p>UASC Social Worker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The UASC Social Worker to complete the LAC matching paperwork and Risk Assessment. ▪ Initial assessment to be completed by Age Assessor/UASC Social Worker. <p>Appendix C Age Assessment Guidance 2015 Final.pdf (adcs.org.uk) Home ADCS</p> <p>Claimed age agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion to be held between the UASC Social Worker and line Manager – Management Oversight uploaded on to Liquidlogic. ▪ HoSW agreement for accommodation to be sought. <p>Team Manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Day one Decision to be added to the Social Work Assessment/Case notes. ▪ Child Looked After process to be completed. ▪ New arrival strategy meeting held. ▪ Business support informed and pre-payment card allocated to child. 	<p>Police to contact CADS and complete the Operation Innerste process</p> <p>On referral from Police (Work Hours) UASC Social Worker to attend police station as appropriate adult whilst young person's picture, finger prints are taken and to attend a joint interview.</p> <p>Appendix D Op Innerste process map Op Innerste guidance</p> <p>An initial assessment of age to be completed. If very clearly an adult UASC Social Worker to request police contact Migrant help – Section 95 Adult Asylum support. If benefit of doubt given LA to accommodate as claimed age.</p> <p>On referral from Police (out of hours) Emergency Duty Team (EDT) to arrange for an appropriate adult for taking of pictures/finger prints and police interview – (Foster Care Duty Scheme to be contacted) and the Young person accommodated.</p> <p>Team Manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case to be allocated and Management Oversight to be on Liquidlogic confirming plans. ▪ The UASC Social Worker and Team Manager to discuss outcome of initial assessment and next steps. ▪ If clearly an adult, the individual to be informed we will not be accommodating under Section 20 and the police to support a transfer to Adult Asylum Services via Migrant Help.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Social Work (HoSW) agreement of accommodation to be sought. ▪ Business support to allocate pre-payment card to Young Person. <p>On the day of accommodation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social Work Assessment to be reopened and the Day one Decision completed. ▪ Child Looked After process to be completed. ▪ The Home Office to transfer Young Person to placement. ▪ Child/Young Person to be seen by UASC Social Worker – in person at placement. ▪ Section 20 paperwork, Medical Consent and Data Protection (DP1) form to be signed by the Young Person and uploaded on to Liquidlogic. ▪ Team Manager to arrange a new arrival strategy meeting with police and multiagency group ▪ Placement Planning meeting be held within 72 hours – in person at placement. ▪ Service Manager to add the Young Person’s details to the monthly Annex A Grant Reclaim and return to the Home Office LA Grants Team. <p>Appendix B Funding to Local Authorities Financial Year 2022/23 (publishing.service.gov.uk)</p> <p>Within 5 days of arrival:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initial Heath Assessment request to be completed. ▪ Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service to be informed and IRO allocated. 	<p>UASC Social Worker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Young Person be transferred to placement by UASC Social Worker. ▪ Initial Assessment to be uploaded and the case note of visit. ▪ The Placement Planning meeting be held within 72 hours – in person. ▪ Section 20 paperwork, Medical Consent and DP1 to be signed by the Young Person and uploaded on to Liquidlogic. <p>Service Manager</p> <p>The Young Person’s details to be added to the monthly Annex A Grant Reclaim and return to the Home Office LA Grants Team.</p> <p>Appendix B Funding to Local Authorities Financial Year 2022/23 (publishing.service.gov.uk)</p> <p>Within 5 days of arrival:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Home Office to be informed and the age proforma sent confirming the Young Person’s claimed age. ▪ Initial Heath Assessment request to be completed. ▪ Independent Reviewing Officer Service to be informed, and IRO Allocated. ▪ Virtual School to be informed. ▪ Initial Care Plan to be completed. ▪ Laptop referral to be made. <p>Within 10 days:</p> <p>Initial PEP to be held and an Education Application to be completed.</p>	<p>If a child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HoSW agreement for accommodation to be sought. <p>On the day of accommodation:</p> <p>Team Manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business Support to be informed and Placement Team to initiate a placement search. ▪ Social Work Assessment to be opened and the Day one decision added. ▪ Child looked after process to be progressed. ▪ New Arrival Strategy meeting to be held. <p>UASC Social Worker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LAC matching forms and Risk Assessment to be completed ▪ The Young Person to be transferred to the placement by social Worker – in person by Social Worker. ▪ Section 20 paperwork, Medical Consent and DP1 to be signed by the Young Person and uploaded on to Liquidlogic. ▪ A Placement Planning meeting be held within 72 hours – in person at placement. ▪ The Service Manager to add the Young Person’s details to the monthly Annex A Grant Reclaim and return to the Home Office LA Grants Team. <p>Appendix B Funding to Local Authorities Financial Year 2022/23 (publishing.service.gov.uk)</p>
---	--	---

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Virtual School to be informed. ▪ Initial Care Plan to be completed. ▪ Laptop referral to be made. <p>Within 10 days:</p> <p>Initial Personal Education Plan (PEP) to be held and Education Application to be completed.</p> <p>Initial LAC review – within 28 days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Combined Assessment/Review form to be completed 5 days before review. ▪ Care Plan updated to be completed 10 days after review. <p>UASC Social Worker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undertake Social Work Assessment to include the full name and age, nationality and country of origin, religion, first language, contacts in the UK, other travel companions, events since arrival. ▪ Ensure Young Person has been subjected to immigration screening, receives legal advice and the Statement of Evidence Form is completed and sent to the Home Office by a Solicitor. ▪ All placements will be planned and reviewed in keeping with the LAC requirements. All Young People accommodated for the required period will have a pathway plan which incorporates triple planning. ▪ Ensure that the Young Person's immigration status is monitored and that an application for extension of any temporary leave to remain 	<p>Initial LAC review – within 28 days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Combined Assessment/Review form to be completed 5 days before review. ▪ Care Plan updated to be completed 10 days after review. <p>UASC Social Worker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undertake Social Work Assessment to include the full name and age, nationality and country of origin, religion, first language, contacts in the UK, other travel companions, events since arrival. ▪ Ensure Young Person has been subjected to immigration screening, receives legal advice and the Statement of Evidence Form is completed and sent to the Home Office by a Solicitor. ▪ All placements will be planned and reviewed in keeping with the LAC requirements. All Young People accommodated for the required period will have a pathway plan which incorporates triple planning. ▪ Ensure that the Young Person's immigration status is monitored and that an application for extension of any temporary leave to remain is made to the UKVI four weeks before the end date of the temporary leave. ▪ Ensure that it is recorded in the Young Person's pathway plan when they need to seek advice from a solicitor to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain – to present at a solicitor's three months before the end of the Young Person's Leave to remain/other legal status. 	<p>Within 5 days of arrival:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initial Health Assessment request to be completed. ▪ Independent Reviewing Officer Service to be informed and IRO allocated. ▪ Virtual School to be informed. ▪ Initial Care Plan to be completed. ▪ Laptop referral to be made. ▪ The Home Office to be informed and the Young Person's Asylum Claim registered. <p>Within 10 days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initial PEP to be held and an Education Application to be completed. <p>Initial LAC review – within 28 days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Combined Assessment/Review form to be completed 5 days before review. ▪ Care Plan updated to be completed 10 days after review. <p>UASC Social Worker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undertake Social Work Assessment to include the full name and age, nationality and country of origin, religion, first language, contacts in the UK, other travel companions, events since arrival. ▪ Ensure Young Person has been subjected to immigration screening, receives legal advice and the Statement of Evidence Form is completed and sent to the Home Office by a Solicitor. ▪ All placements will be planned and reviewed in keeping with the LAC requirements. All Young People accommodated for
--	--	--

<p>is made to the UKVI four weeks before the end date of the temporary leave.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that it is recorded in the Young Person's pathway plan when they need to seek advice from a solicitor to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain – to present at a solicitor's three months before the end of the Young Person's Leave to remain/other legal status. At all times the Young Person's financial and work-related position must be monitored to ensure that they continue to be eligible for financial support and that their immigration status allows them to work. Ensure that, at the point where the Young Person becomes 'all appeal rights exhausted', they are aware of the need to apply to the UKVI for support under S4 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 as the LA can no longer support them financially. The Young Person to be offered secondary legal advice before completing a Human Rights Assessment – following this Norfolk County Council (NCC) may need to withdraw support and services. <p>Appendix E Assessing and supporting children and families with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) (nrpfnetwork.org.uk)</p> <p>The Young Person should also be reminded of their option for voluntary return to their Country of Origin under the Voluntary Assisted Return Programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At all times the Young Person's financial and work-related position must be monitored to ensure that they continue to be eligible for financial support and that their immigration status allows them to work. Ensure that, at the point where the Young Person becomes 'all appeal rights exhausted', they are aware of the need to apply to the UKVI for support under S4 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 as the LA can no longer support them financially. The Young Person to be offered secondary legal advice before completing a Human Rights Assessment – following this Norfolk County Council (NCC) may need to withdraw support and services. <p>Appendix E Assessing and supporting children and families with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) (nrpfnetwork.org.uk)</p> <p>The Young Person should also be reminded of their option for voluntary return to their Country of Origin under the Voluntary Assisted Return Programme.</p> <p>Initial Assessment finds young person to be an adult:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A discussion to be held between assessing SW and Team Manager. Management Oversight of decision making to be added to Liquidlogic. The initial assessment/case note to be uploaded. Referral to be closed. 	<p>the required period will have a pathway plan which incorporates triple planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the Young Person's immigration status is monitored and that an application for extension of any temporary leave to remain is made to the UKVI four weeks before the end date of the temporary leave. Ensure that it is recorded in the Young Person's pathway plan when they need to seek advice from a solicitor to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain – to present at a solicitor's three months before the end of the Young Person's Leave to remain/other legal status. At all times the Young Person's financial and work-related position must be monitored to ensure that they continue to be eligible for financial support and that their immigration status allows them to work. Ensure that, at the point where the Young Person becomes 'all appeal rights exhausted', they are aware of the need to apply to the UKVI for support under S4 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 as the LA can no longer support them financially. The Young Person to be offered secondary legal advice before completing a Human Rights Assessment – following this Norfolk County Council (NCC) may need to withdraw support and services. <p>Appendix E Assessing and supporting children and families with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) (nrpfnetwork.org.uk)</p>
---	---	--

		The Young Person should also be reminded of their option for voluntary return to their Country of Origin under the Voluntary Assisted Return Programme.
--	--	---

This link to the [Home Office website](#) is for information only, care should be taken to clarify that the information is up to date, relevant and pertinent to the situation in hand. If in doubt, legal advice should be sought.

End