

Summary Fair Treatment Assessment (FTA)

Area for Assessment:	
Name of service or function etc	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children's service (UASC)
Which Service does this affect?	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Service
Is this a new, existing or revised function?	Revised
Summary of findings:	
Main conclusions on the likely impact of the function on different equality groups (protected characteristics):	
<p>The Fair Treatment Assessment was conducted to consider the equality impact, of the change in how the UASC service will be delivered in the future as a result of the significant reduction in the level of grant payable to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) by the United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA). The UKBA have been providing a grant, to SMBC, for supporting it in providing services for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC).</p> <p>The UASC Service is required to discharge the Children Act 1989 duties by providing services appropriate to the needs of these children. These duties include safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in need, The United Kingdom Border Agency has historically reimbursed the Local Authority the cost of doing this. UKBA have now changed the level of grant payable to Local Authorities due to budget saving measures by central government. Despite this reduction in funding, we as a Council, still have to provide services to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people and fulfil our duties and responsibilities under the Children's Act 1989, the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act.</p> <p>The Fair Treatment Assessment was conducted by consulting, face to face, with some young Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers. The consultation was through focus groups, arranged in consultation with the young persons' accommodation providers through the Solihull Council's Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Service. The United Kingdom Border Agency and colleagues who provide educational services and other services to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people were also consulted by having face to face interviews and meetings. This assessment also drew from the UASC 16+ Accommodation Strategy Fair Treatment Assessment which was done in 2010 by the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Service. The assessment also analysed local information/data as well as drawing from local, regional and national research, especially on the mental and emotional health of this group of young people.</p> <p>The findings of the Fair Treatment Assessment generally show negative impacts caused by the reduction in funding from the United Kingdom Border Agency to the UASC service. An example of this is that the revised funding grant levels from the UKBA for 16/17 year olds do not cover the cost of remaining in foster care. This may lead to more 16/17 year olds leaving care before they are ready to do so, and statutory guidance to local authorities is to encourage that age group to remain looked after. The grant payable to those over 18 reduces further.</p> <p>To mitigate such negative impacts, a "Solihull Policy on Decision-Making on Young Person's Readiness to Move to more Independent Accommodation" has been established. Under the service re-design it is proposed that consideration be given to UASC (and local children) aged 16/17 who have completed their education and who do not have any significant vulnerability</p>	

factors being assessed to move into semi-independent or independent accommodation..

It is proposed that young people who are 18+ (without significant vulnerabilities) will be supported to find adequate independent accommodation and claim full benefits in their own right., as before and in line with citizen peers. Returning 21+ and those in full time education will be entitled to the same assessments and financial support as their citizen peers.

Service re-design which concentrates available resources on ensuring that all unaccompanied minors are safe, living in acceptable accommodation and supported to achieve their full educational and economic potential may reduce the availability of staff to dedicate time to addressing the cultural, racial and ethnic needs of unaccompanied minors. This needs to be assessed in relation to the amount of time currently dedicated to these matters, young people's needs and future resources. To mitigate against any negative impacts associated with this finding, we will continue to support and ensure that our social work staff undertake holistic assessments, and develop good care plans, placement plans and pathway plans that take race and ethnicity into account. We will also continue to ensure that race and ethnicity are considered at every statutory looked after child/young person's review.

The consultation with young people and evidence from research has highlighted that religion/belief and faith play crucial roles in enabling young people to settle and make progress in the United Kingdom. It therefore remains a priority need to be addressed along with shelter, education and safety. We will continue to ensure that religion and faith and language are included in placement matching considerations, and if not achievable, plans will address how best to support that young person to meet their cultural, faith and language needs.

In conclusion, the Fair Treatment Assessment found that the needs of unaccompanied young people are many and complex. Their needs are similar to those of local young people who no longer are able to live safely within their own families. There are also considerable differences. Both sets of young people have certain levels of resilience and vulnerability.

The key message from the Fair Treatment Assessment consultation; research and from young people themselves, is that there is no 'right answer' or 'one size fits all' service – for local or unaccompanied minors – but that good individual assessment and consideration of need using a comprehensive framework which takes into account history, culture, faith, religious belief and practice and emotional and physical wellbeing is essential to deliver services which will deliver good outcomes for these young people both in the short and long term.

The proposed service re-design in Solihull will continue to take all these factors into account when care planning is undertaken to ensure fair treatment. Where potential disadvantage exists all mitigating action will be taken to reduce the impact on individual young people.

Actions:

Actions identified to address negative impacts identified or to better promote equality, human rights, cohesive and sustainable communities and safeguarding issues

Action	Outcome	Timescale
Analyse the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) data for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) against local and regional comparators	Understand impact and gaps	March 2012

Ensure that Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) includes Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and feeds into joint commissioning and service developments including emotional health and wellbeing strategy	Services in Solihull meet needs of UASC, especially emotional and mental health	March 2012
Maintain education support via induction and Education of Looked After Children service	Young people have the skills and qualification for successful transition to adulthood Including access to vocational and other training that will improve employability – in UK or elsewhere	March 2012
16+ accommodation strategy takes findings of FTA into account	Range of suitable accommodation that support and meets cultural needs	March 2012
Monitor, and ensure sub groups and arrangements for allocation are working effectively	UASC have fair access to workers that they know and who know them	
Implement “Moving On” protocol.	Fair treatment in decision-making about placements and moving on	March 2012
Counter risk of isolation for those young people moving on at 16/17	Staff to be aware of research and Commissioning arrangements to ensure that young people in semi-independent provision receive adequate support to meet individual needs.	March 2012
Identify any unmet needs amongst UASC group	Independent Reviewing Officers and designated health staff and UASC team and advocates and complaints team monitor and report unmet need	March 2012
Retain specialist UASC service	Specialist knowledge and skills applied in work with UASC	March 2012
Date Assessment Signed Off	November 2011	