Asylum Seeking Children and Young People

Guidance for Herefordshire Education Providers
(Including schools, settings, colleges and training providers)

2016
Foreword

This guidance was produced by Herefordshire Council to support Herefordshire schools receiving children/young people who are seeking asylum or are refugees. Some of these children/young people will be with their parents or other family members and others will be unaccompanied (UASC). This guidance is based on several documents including:

- DfE (2014) Care of unaccompanied and trafficked children
- Ofsted (2013) Care of unaccompanied and trafficked children
- DfE (2011) Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked

The advice of Kent County Council and Hampshire County Council has been invaluable in producing this guidance.

Herefordshire has a long tradition of creating secure and tolerant communities where everyone is valued and respected. Schools, colleges and settings have played a critical role in this.

We recognise that children and young people who are seeking asylum or are refugees are entitled to full time education appropriate to age, aptitude and cultural identity and that through integration into mainstream education, they bring an important dimension to the life of an institution.

Herefordshire Council recognises its role alongside partner agencies to prepare its asylum seeking and refugee children for full integration into the wider community. Herefordshire’s Children and Young People’s Partnership is committed to ensure all children and young people in Herefordshire have the best start in life and grow up healthy, happy and safe within supportive family environments. The Partnership wants them to have the best possible health, education and opportunities to enable them to reach their full potential.

This guidance focuses on practice and is set alongside the Herefordshire social care procedures for safeguarding children from abroad and the national statutory guidance for local authorities on the care of unaccompanied asylum seeking and trafficked children. As UASC will always be Looked After Children (LAC), the statutory processes for LAC will also be implemented.

Its aim is to support schools, settings and colleges to offer excellent provision for all children who are seeking asylum or are refugees, making use of the full range of best practice strategies and drawing on the knowledge and experience of schools who have worked successfully in meeting the needs of this particular group of students in the past.

We aim to support schools to enable these children and young people to access the full range of provision so that they may achieve good attainment and rates of progress throughout their time in education in the UK.

Local Authority and school policies on ethnic minority support, intercultural education and racial harassment can all contribute to a climate of effective learning for all pupils. What matters most of all is practice - how the principles of care, inclusion, support, access to good teaching and effective learning are put into practice. That is where this document begins.

Here you will find information on:

- The asylum process
- Safeguarding
- Admissions
- Pastoral care /welfare
- Assessment
- Teaching and learning

You can contact the Virtual School for any further advice that is needed:

VirtualSchool@herefordshire.gov.uk

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the social care procedures relating to the local authorities duties to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children which can be found at:

http://www.proceduresonline.com/herefordshire_children/
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Information on the asylum process

What is seeking asylum?

When seeking asylum the applicant is effectively asking for protection and permission to stay in the UK. The asylum seeker is seeking protection from persecution that has been suffered or that he/she is at risk of suffering because of his/her nationality, race, or ethnic origin, political opinion, religion or social group in their country of origin.

What is the difference between a refugee and an asylum seeker?

The term *refugee* is widely used to describe displaced people all over the world but legally in the UK a person is a refugee only when the Home Office has accepted their asylum claim. While a person is waiting for a decision on their claim, he or she is called an *asylum seeker*. Some asylum seekers will later become refugees if their claims for asylum are successful.

Who are unaccompanied asylum seeking children/young people (UASC)?

An unaccompanied asylum seeker is a person who, at the time of making their asylum application, is under 18 years of age or who, in the absence of documentary evidence, appears to be under that age and who is applying for asylum in his/her own right and is without adult family member(s) or guardian(s) to turn to in this country. A child is not unaccompanied if he/she is being cared for by an adult prepared to take responsibility for them.

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children who are looked after by Herefordshire Council have arrived in Herefordshire without an adult family member or guardian accompanying them. Many of these children and young people will have experienced trauma including the loss of their parents and/or siblings, or will have lived in war conditions.

Age assessment

Often an age assessment is not necessary and the age and date of birth the child / young person provides will be accepted.

If there is uncertainty about a child/young person’s age and it is possible that they are under 18 then they will be treated as a child (under 18) until an age assessment can be arranged. This will be carried out by two Herefordshire social workers and an independent adult using a recognised assessment tool. The child/young person has the right to appeal the decision of the age assessment if they do not agree with it but they will need to have sufficient grounds to appeal. If an age assessment is felt to be necessary, it will have been carried out before the child/young person is placed in a school. Schools should use the date of birth given to the child/young person at their age assessment. If no age assessment was carried out, schools should use the date of birth used by the Home Office.

What is the process for claiming asylum?

Asylum applications are made direct to UK Visas and Immigration, which is a section of the Home Office. The application can be made at the point of entry, eg a port or airport, or after the applicant has arrived in the UK. The asylum seeker will need to provide evidence of persecution, either orally or in writing. UK Visas and Immigration will make a decision based on the information given. UK Visas and Immigration aims to make their decision within 35 days, but in reality it can take much longer.
Since August 2007, there has been a system called the ‘New Asylum Model’ in place at the Home Office. This is the system used to process all asylum claims including those of UASCs. The claims of children/young people who have adult family members with them are treated together as a family unit. Each asylum application is assigned to a specific member of UK Visas and Immigration staff, a Case Owner. This person will deal with the case throughout the whole process, from the time the application is made until the family or child/young person is granted permission to stay or is removed from the UK on reaching the age of 18.

There will be an initial screening interview in which UK Visas and Immigration takes the personal details of the applicant, plus any dependents, and their journey to the UK, and checks if they have claimed asylum in the UK or Europe before.

Shortly after, the applicant and any dependent children will be asked to attend a ‘first reporting event’ where they will meet the Case Owner who will deal with their case.

Within a month, the Case Owner will have arranged a ‘substantive interview’ with the family or unaccompanied child/young person. This is where the applicant gets the opportunity to describe to the UK Visas and Immigration Case Owner what has happened to them and what it is they fear in their own country. Case Owners are available who have had specialist training in interviewing unaccompanied children/young people.

Within a week of the substantive interview, the Case Owner should be in a position to make a decision on the asylum application.

Some of the above steps will have already been completed by the time a child or young person seeking asylum starts school in Herefordshire. However, it is possible that the process may not be finished before they begin their education in the UK and schools need to be aware that a child or young person seeking asylum may need time off school to attend the interviews above and/or to meet with their legal representative. This will apply whether they are with a family member or are unaccompanied.

After full consideration by UK Visas and Immigration there is one of three outcomes:

- Full refugee status
- Humanitarian Protection (HP) or Discretionary Leave (DL)
- Refusal

**Full refugee status**

A person is recognised as a refugee when the Government decides they meet the definition of a refugee under the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to Refugees and accepts that the person has a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of his or her nationality, race or ethnic origin, political opinion, religion or social group. A person with refugee status is granted Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) after being in the UK for 5 years. ILR must be applied for just before the 5 years are up. The UK government will afford protection to the person and will not send him/her back to the country from which he/she fled. They will have full rights to benefits and social housing and will be helped to build new lives in the UK.

**Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave**

Under the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 these two new ‘statuses’ may be granted to someone seeking asylum.
Humanitarian Protection (HP) will be granted if the removal of a person to their country of origin would place them at ‘serious risk to life or person’.

Discretionary Leave (DL) will be awarded where the person is an unaccompanied asylum seeking child/young person (UASC). Most UASC placed in Herefordshire schools will be granted DL.

Asylum seekers will have full rights to benefits and social housing and they may have the right to appeal.

Both statuses will be time-limited and both will be actively reviewed. This could mean, in the event of the individual’s circumstances having changed (for instance if there have been developments in their country of origin,) they could be refused further leave and removed from the UK.

**Refusal**

Asylum seekers who are refused permission to stay, may be able to appeal against the decision. If an appeal is unsuccessful the asylum seeker may be removed from the UK. However, in the case of UASCs this will not be until after their 18th birthday.

Children/young people in the appeals process still retain their right to education.

The Home Office intends that all appeals be held within two months.

**Legal Assistance**

All asylum seekers have the right to legal advice regarding their claim. Adult claimants may have to pay for this, although legal aid is sometimes available. The claimant’s Case Owner will be able to advise on how to find a legal representative.

The government provides funding for legal representation for UASCs. It is imperative that the UASC seeks legal advice during their asylum application. The child/young person’s social worker will ensure that they receive appropriate legal advice and will organise interpreters if necessary.
Safeguarding asylum seeking children/young people

When a child first presents as unaccompanied, the local authority will undertake an initial assessment. This will take into account information from partner agencies including education, health and the police. The information collated through the initial assessment will be shared with schools in order to support them to keep all children and young people safe.

It is possible that some of the asylum seeking and/or refugee children and young people in Herefordshire schools will have been trafficked. Usually they will already have been identified as trafficked before starting their education in Herefordshire. In these cases, information will have been given to the school by the child/young person’s social worker on how to keep them safe whilst at school.

Trafficking is when a child/young person is moved either within a country or into a new country for the purpose of exploiting them, including the risk of modern slavery. They may be controlled by harm, including physical and sexual abuse, or threats of harm to themselves or their family. They are made to work to pay back the cost of their travel to the UK – their debt bond. Children and young people who are not trafficked do not have this debt as usually a family member paid for their travel to the UK before they left their country of origin. Most trafficked children/young people will be UASC.

Occasionally, a child/young person may not already have been identified as trafficked prior to commencing their education. If any school has suspicions that an asylum seeker/refugee may have been trafficked they should immediately report their concerns to the child/young person’s social worker, if they have one. If they do not currently have a social worker, a referral should be made to Herefordshire MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub). They will then initiate a multi-agency response to keep the child/young person safe. The school will be kept fully informed of any strategies that they need to use to keep the child/young person safe.

For further information, including strategies to support safeguarding UASC, please refer to Appendix B.
Admission to School

The most recent School Admissions Code (December 2014) states, under section 2.19, “Admission Authorities must treat applications for children coming from overseas in accordance with European Union law or Home Office rules for non-European Economic Area nationals. Non-statutory guidance on this is available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-admissions-applications-from-overseas-children

The fact that a potential pupil may have little or no English is not a valid reason for refusing admission. The School Admissions Code, referring to an admission authority’s obligation to comply with the Equality Act 2010, says “An admission authority must not discriminate on the grounds of ...race, religion or belief.”

In-Year Fair Access Protocols (IYFAP) exist to ensure that access to education is secured quickly for children who have no school place, and to ensure that no school is asked to take a disproportionate number of children with challenging behaviour.

Looked after children are exempt from the IYFAP as they can always be admitted over the admission number if this is necessary to secure the right school place for the child. UASC will be looked after children.

The School Admissions Code states that all schools must participate in their local authority’s protocol in order to ensure that unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school. This can include admitting children above the PAN to schools that are already full. The operation of the Fair Access Protocol is triggered when a parent of an eligible child has not secured a school place under normal in-year admissions procedures. If places remain within a school’s admission number, these must (apart from in exceptional circumstances - see next paragraph) be offered to children on whose behalf an application is made. They must be offered even if to do so might increase pressure on class sizes. A year group can only be said to be full when the admission number for that year group has been reached. For the year of entry to the school (i.e. Year 7 in a secondary school), the school is obliged, if the demand is there, to admit up to the admission number published on the County’s website (the PAN). It is important to remember that, in some cases, the admission number for later year groups might not be the same as the PAN, for example where a school is undersubscribed and only staffed and organised for a significantly smaller number than the PAN - or where a school has decided to admit and organise for a higher number of children in the year group.

The School Admissions Code cites one set of circumstances in which it might be possible to refuse admission to a particular child even if there was still space with the PAN. “Where a governing body does not wish to admit a child with challenging behaviour outside the normal admissions round, even though there are places available, it must refer the case to the local authority for action under the Fair Access Protocol. This will normally only be appropriate where a school has a particularly high proportion of children with challenging behaviour or previously excluded children. This provision will not apply to a looked after child, a previously looked after child or a child with a statement of special educational needs or Education, Health and Care Plan naming the school in question, as these children must be admitted.” As with any other application, there is the right of appeal to an independent panel if a place is refused for this reason.

Please contact the School Admissions Team for advice.
In order to ensure a fair and equitable process for admitting UASC to schools, a decision will be made between the Virtual School Headteacher, Head of Service for Additional Needs, and Admissions and Transport Policy Manager to ensure that there are no indicators that a local mainstream school could not meet the child / young person’s needs. The UASC Initial Profile Form (Appendix A) and Social Care Initial Assessment will be made available to the child’s receiving school prior to admission.

For further details about inducting a UASC to school, please see (Appendix C)

**Admissions process for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children**

1. **Unaccompanied Child** becomes looked after by Herefordshire Council (social care undertake an Initial Assessment of the child's needs **to be completed within 10 working days**)

2. UASC Initial Profile form is completed by Virtual School **within 2 working days** (see appendix A)

3. Initial Profile and Initial Assessment considered by Virtual School Headteacher, Head of Service for Additional Needs, and Admissions and Transport Policy Manager **within 2 working days**

4. Appropriate provision identified **within 2 working days**
   - School admission form completed and sent to school with the initial assessment and initial profile
   - Virtual School to contact school to discuss admission arrangements

Each student’s school placement will be considered on a case by case basis. For those entering Year 11 late into the academic year, it may be appropriate to establish a programme of education that prepares the young person for Year 12 and beyond.
Preparation for Life in a Diverse Society

Research has found that a great many asylum seeking and refugee children report experiences of racial harassment in the school or home environment. Such experiences range from verbal abuse and spitting to physical attack.

Many incidents of racial harassment go unreported. This is made more likely by lack of English and a real fear some pupils may have of authorities like the police, based on experiences in their home country. Schools are required to record all racist incidents and parents/carers and governors are to be informed of any incidents and the actions taken to deal with them.

Schools can use the curriculum to raise awareness about asylum seekers and refugees in a way that stresses their humanity. A range of resources to support schools can be found at:

http://www.standup2racism.org.uk/resources/teaching/

Schools who have developed good practice in relation to welcoming refugee children have stated that they:

- Promote clear Anti-Bullying, Anti-Racism and Praise and Reward policies.
- Give leaflets promoting the school’s stance on equal opportunities and bullying to every new member of staff, pupil and parent/guardian. Racial discrimination is explicitly mentioned in these leaflets.
- Work to build and maintain strong links with community organisations.
- Celebrate and respect difference - making every pupil special by valuing who they are.
- Develop positive attitudes towards diversity - particularly in areas like gender, language, faith and culture.
- Work with all parents to inform them about the importance of dealing with bullying and racial harassment.
- Develop staff awareness and confidence in dealing with racism and bullying.
Assessment

There is no single ‘test’ that schools can administer on admission to assess a newly arrived asylum seeking child/young person or refugee. The assessment process needs to be on-going and ideally initiated within the first two weeks of admission. This will enable appropriate provision to be offered and appropriate learning targets put in place. It is good practice to review the progress and placement of the pupil at least termly. For UASC, there will be a termly Personal Education Plan review which will support this process.

Formal testing

Schools should be cautious about using formal standardised tests such as the Cognitive Abilities Tests (CATs) with older newly arrived asylum seeking children/young people.

Herefordshire’s Virtual School would recommend that these types of tests are not used at all.

However, if schools do decide to use them they should be aware that the results of asylum seeking and refugee children and young people are highly likely to be depressed even if the child/young person speaks English fairly well – the scores will not reflect their true ability. This is due to several factors including cultural bias of the tests and the fact that these tests were not standardised on a population that included asylum seeking and refugee children/young people. Even the non-verbal sub-test is unreliable with these children/young people, who often appear confused about what they are expected to do as this type of test is totally outside of their previous experience. (Zajda, J; Davies, L; Majhanovich, S. 2008. Comparative and Global Pedagogies: Equity, Access and Democracy in Education)

The English as an Additional Language (EAL) Assessment Process

Assessment should be carried out by a member of staff from the local authority EAL team who will visit to assess the child/young person, following the school’s referral. This should take place after the child has been in school for approximately 6 weeks.

They may also arrange to speak to the child/young person’s parents or guardians if present in the UK (with an interpreter if needed), or the carer or social worker in the case of an UASC and to relevant members of school staff.

Once complete, the assessment will identify the areas where the child/young person will need additional support. The school can now decide how to provide this support and should start to provide it as soon as practicable. The child/young person’s need for support will change over time so it is important to review the support on offer regularly to check that it is still needed and appropriate.

Preliminary targets can also be set at this point. These will also need to be reviewed fairly soon, e.g. by the end of the child/young person’s first term, to check that they are still appropriate.

Asylum seeking children/young people and refugees usually make very rapid progress with their acquisition of English once they start school in the UK so may need their targets reviewing more often than other students that receive additional support.

It is important that early profiling reports are distributed to all relevant staff members. Care should be taken with the storage of early profiling reports as they will contain information that is confidential. For UASCs, early profiling reports can also be used to inform the child/young person’s PEP and so should also be shared with the UASC’s social worker.
At least twice per year re-assess the child/young person’s levels in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Initial progress is likely to be rapid followed by a steadier rate of progress. It should be remembered that it takes about two years for learners of EAL to reach conversational fluency and between five and ten years to reach full academic competency.

Tests, exams and qualifications

Key Stage 2 SATs

As with other children with English as an Additional Language, asylum seeking children/young people and refugees should not take the Key Stage 2 SATs if they are working below the level of the tests (below level 3). They should also not take them if they arrive in the UK shortly before the SATs take place and there has not been sufficient time to assess whether they are working at the levels of the tests or not.

For those who are working at the levels of the tests there are a number of possible special arrangements that are permitted. These include having a reader, a scribe, extra time, providing oral or written translation and writing responses in first language (the school will need to provide a written translation if this option is used). There is also the option to apply for ‘special consideration’ during the marking of a pupil’s scripts which may be appropriate for some asylum seeking children who have recently suffered severe trauma and are working at the level of the tests. The school is required to apply for some of these arrangements and others are at the Head Teacher’s discretion. Not all of the arrangements will be appropriate or necessary for any individual child. It is important to note that all special arrangements must be based on normal classroom practice for the pupil. The school is required to have evidence that any support provided in the tests is also provided in the classroom. Not all of the special arrangements are permitted in all papers. Full details of the arrangements for the current year with criteria for eligibility and information about when the arrangements are and are not permitted to be used can be found on the Department for Education’s website. These arrangements may be changed in future years so it is essential to check the detailed arrangements permitted for subsequent years.

GCSEs

In common with all other children and young people with EAL, asylum seeking and refugee young people are permitted to use a bilingual dictionary in their GCSE exams (not English) and to have up to 25% extra time. In order to qualify for extra time, the young person must have been in the UK for less than 2 years at the time of the examination. It is necessary to apply to the exam board for permission to use the dictionary and to have extra time. In order for permission to be granted, the young person must ordinarily use their bilingual dictionary in lessons. It is not possible for students to have the extra time without using the dictionary.

Young people may also be able to take a GCSE in their first language, if available. For details of which languages are available contact the exam boards used in your school. If a student’s first language is not available, it is worth checking whether they have a second or third language that is offered by the exam boards but make sure that their level of proficiency is sufficient to cope with the exam.

As well as GCSEs, there are a number of alternative qualifications that may be appropriate for asylum seeking young people and refugees.

Entry level qualifications

Qualifications at entry level are called ‘certificates of achievement’ and are the first level of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) below foundation level. This level is then divided into 3 sub-levels.
Students are able to study for these certificates at a rate that suits them, as there is no set time limit for completion. Post 16 colleges often offer the certificates during the day or at evening classes. Schools can set the certificates up to run as a one or two year programme within Years 10 and or 11. The range of certificates on offer is wide and includes the National Curriculum subjects such as English, Maths and Science; vocational qualifications such as Preparation for Childcare; and basic skills such as adult literacy or numeracy.

**English for Speakers of Other Languages**

Some exam boards offer an Entry Level Certificate in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). There are 5 levels from Basic to Advanced and students are able to demonstrate skills in reading, writing, and listening. Additionally, there is a certificate in Spoken English (SESOL). The certificates are internationally recognised by educational institutions and employers.

**Other awards**

Also consider the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN), an approved body that offers qualifications to develop life skills. Their website at [www.asdan.co.uk](http://www.asdan.co.uk) gives details of the various certificates on offer.

Further information regarding teaching and learning strategies and pastoral care can be found at Appendix D and E.
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Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child - Initial Pupil Profile

This MUST be read in conjunction with the Social Care Initial Assessment which will be provided to the school

Pupil name:

Gender:

DOB:

Year Group:

Language(s) Spoken:

Language(s) Written/Read by pupil:

Pupil’s Country of Origin or UK born:

Ethnicity:

Religion:

UPN No:

Date of admission to school:

School:

Date of arrival in UK:

Virtual School Staff, role and email:

Previous schooling: For example, which schools attended, where, which subjects studied

Any concerns noted by the police in relation to this child / young person:

Any immediate concerns/comments: For example, any known SEN or any safeguarding concerns:

Any dietary/health concerns:

Priority recommendations for this pupil:
Appendix B

Additional guidance regarding trafficked children / young people

Risk indicators: how to identify a trafficked child/young person

The presence of some of the following may indicate that a child/young person has been trafficked:

• Is from a country of origin where trafficking of children/young people to the UK is more common. The ten most common countries of origin for trafficked children/young people arriving in the UK are: Vietnam, Nigeria, China, Romania, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Morocco, Turkey and Afghanistan. (CEOP, Strategic Threat Assessment Child Trafficking in the UK, February 2011).

• Shows signs of physical or sexual abuse, and/or has contracted a sexually transmitted infection or has an unwanted pregnancy.

• Receives unexplained/unidentified phone calls.

• Has had periods of being missing.

• Exhibits self-assurance, maturity and self-confidence not expected to be seen in a child/young person of that age.

• Is withdrawn and refuses to talk or appears afraid of talking to a person of authority.

• Works long hours after or before school/college and at the weekends.

• Works in various locations.

• Has been seen begging for money.

• Talks of having to earn a certain amount of money each day.

• Talks about having to pay off a huge debt.

• Performs excessive housework chores before or after school and at the weekends.

• Is excessively afraid of being deported.

Strategies for keeping a trafficked child or young person safe in school

The specific strategies that are necessary to keep a particular trafficked child/young person safe will be discussed by the relevant social worker with staff from the school/college that they are attending. It is very important that the strategies are consistently applied and any difficulties are reported immediately to the social worker. The strategies implemented may change over time if the perceived risk level changes.

Recommended strategies may include some of the following (although not all will always be necessary or appropriate):

• Taking a photograph of the child/young person annually at school so that if they disappear there is a recent photograph of them to show to the police and to use to try and find them.

• Having a clear set of procedures for what to do if the child/young person goes missing during the school day. Action must be taken immediately – the first hour is critical to their chances of being recovered.
• Not allowing the child/young person unsupervised access to a mobile phone, landline telephones or the internet whilst in school.

• Checking each morning that the child/young person has arrived in school by a certain time.

• Checking that the child/young person is present in each lesson.

• Not allowing the child/young person off site during lunch times.

• Checking that the child/young person leaves the premises at the end of the day with only known adults or, if permitted to travel home independently, phone home to check that he/she has arrived safely by a certain time.

• Ensure that staff on the reception desk know not to allow anyone other than known safe adults to pick up the child/young person at any time. Be particularly wary of anyone saying that they are a relative of the child/young person and trying to take them out of school.

• Check with the child/young person’s social worker or the Virtual School before using an interpreter in school to speak with the child/young person as traffickers sometimes work as interpreters to gain access to their victims.

• Discuss any forthcoming school trips with the child/young person’s social worker who will risk assess each one and decide if it is safe for the child/young person to attend. An additional member of staff may need to be allocated to monitor the pupil at all times.
Appendix C

**Inducting an asylum seeking child/young person into your school**

Schools may not always know that an asylum seeking child/young person or refugee is about to join their school. The parents/guardians of accompanied children/young people may not always tell the school that they are asylum seekers or refugees for a variety of reasons. Even if school staff suspect that a family may be asylum seekers or refugees, perhaps because of their country of origin, it is often a question that schools are understandably reluctant to ask.

The way that an asylum seeking child/young person is inducted into their new school is key to their future success in education in the UK. It is essential to plan their induction carefully as early as possible. If it is not clear whether a particular child/young person is an asylum seeker/refugee it is advisable to proceed with induction as if they may be as much of the following advice is good practice in the induction of any child/young person entering the UK education system from abroad.

**Collecting information**

As soon as a school knows or suspects that it is to admit an asylum seeking child/young person it should start the process of collecting as much information about the child/young person as possible. Initially, information will be available from the child/young person's social worker and carer at home in the case of UASCs or from parents/guardians in the case of accompanied children/young people. Key information includes their date of birth (or the date allocated to them by the Home Office if unaccompanied), first language, country of origin, whether they are thought to be trafficked or not, their religion and whether they are practising or not, any significant health issues that the school needs to know about, details of any other languages they may speak, whether they can read or write in any of them and whether an interpreter will be needed for initial key meetings at the school.

It would also be helpful to know if the child/young person has suffered any trauma through what has happened to them or what they have witnessed, especially in the case of UASCs.

It is also important to try and find out if the child/young person has been to school before in their country of origin. It is quite common for UASCs to have very fragmented education or no formal education prior to coming to the UK.

**The admissions interview**

Once some initial information has been gathered, an admissions interview should be organised as soon as possible, together with an interpreter if required. As well as completing routine admissions procedures this meeting should be used to ask young people for their views on what they would like to study at school and to find out what their aspirations for their education and their future are in terms of jobs/careers. Practical issues such as the uniform needed (be aware that some children/young people will be unused to having to wear a uniform), and arrangements for food at lunch times should also be covered.

Asylum seeking children whose parents/guardians are in receipt of benefit, supported by Social Care or the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) are entitled to free school meals.

UASCs are not entitled to free school meals. Money to use in the canteen at lunch time should be provided by the UASC’s carer or alternatively they can provide a packed lunch.
Consideration should be given to any religious restrictions on what foods the child/young person may eat, e.g. a halal diet, and how this will be catered for in school. Either bringing in food from home or choosing the vegetarian or fish option in the canteen can be a satisfactory solution.

There may also need to be consideration about where the school will provide a suitable environment for wudu and prayer if this is required.

This meeting is also an opportunity to explain to the child/young person (and their parents/guardian if accompanied) what the school can offer them and how the education system works in the UK. It is important to remember that those who have not attended school before may have very little idea about education in the UK and may have little understanding of what primary and secondary schools are like, how they are organised, the teaching methods used and what the different opportunities on offer to them entail.

Even those who have attended school will probably have experienced a very different style of education to that found in the UK. It is sometimes inappropriate to ask young people to choose option subjects, for example, at this initial meeting as they may need a period of time to find out what the subjects are before deciding. In such cases it can be helpful to arrange for the young person to shadow other students in the same year group for a week or two to experience the subjects first hand before having to choose.

After the admissions interview it is helpful to admit the child/young person to the school as soon as possible after the necessary preparatory work has been completed, even if it is close to the end of a term. It can help the child/young person to have even a few days in school to get used to moving around the building and to start to see how school in the UK works before a school holiday. They are then able to start the following new term more confidently.

**Guidance on using interpreters in school**

When using interpreters in school to assist with meetings involving asylum seeking children/young people or refugees, or their parents/guardians the following advice/information may be helpful:

- Make sure that your interpreter speaks the same language as the child/young person including the same dialect if relevant and is also able to read and write in this language.
- Be aware that if the child/young person is from an area of conflict then the possible political affiliation/ethnicity of the interpreter may be an issue. If concerned about this check with the interpretation agency when booking or speak with the social worker in the case of an UASC about suitable interpreters.
- An interpreter of the same sex as the child/young person or parent/guardian may be more appropriate especially for those coming from cultural backgrounds where the sexes are more segregated than in the UK.
- UASCs may already be familiar with meetings involving the use of interpreters and may already have experienced at least one before starting school in the UK (probably with UK Visas and Immigration). It may be possible to arrange to book the same interpreter that was previously used – the UASC will probably find the process easier with a known interpreter. The UASC’s social worker will be able to advise on previously used interpreters and whether they would be suitable to use in school.
- Make sure that the interpreter is clear about the purpose of the session and has been adequately briefed before starting.
- Encourage the interpreter to interrupt and intervene during the interview when necessary, for example if the member of staff is speaking too fast or for too long without pausing or the child/young person, parent/guardian or interpreter has not understood and needs clarification.
- Be aware of cultural issues depending on the background of the interpreter.
It may not be appropriate to shake the hand of an interpreter from certain backgrounds, for example, especially if they are of the opposite sex. Similarly, it may not be appropriate to maintain prolonged eye contact with them, especially if they are of the opposite sex.

- Make sure that the interpreter is introduced to the child/young person or parent/guardian and that their purpose at the meeting is explained.
- Make sure that it is made explicit to the child/young person or parents/guardians that the interpreter will not pass on anything that he/she hears at the meeting – everything is confidential.

Asylum seekers and refugees may feel particularly worried about someone from his/her own cultural background hearing certain information in case anything is passed back to their country of origin or to UK Visas and Immigration.

- The interpreter should sit next to the child/young person or parent/guardian to facilitate communication.
- The member of staff leading the meeting should speak and look directly to the child/young person or parent/guardian, not the interpreter. Questions should be phrased ‘Do you …?’ for example, not ‘Does he/she…?’
- The member of staff needs to speak at a reasonable pace and must remember to pause to allow the interpreter to interpret. Do not speak for too long without pausing as this will make it difficult for the interpreter to remember exactly what has been said.
- The member of staff should use straightforward language and avoid jargon.
- Ensure that enough time is allocated for the meeting – a lot longer will be needed when using an interpreter.
- The interpreter will directly interpret what the member of staff says and will not give their own opinion or add extra information unless directly asked by the member of staff. They will, however, indicate if they feel the child/young person or parent/guardian has not understood the question or needs clarification. They will also indicate if there is a cultural reason for a possible misunderstanding and will provide clarification and explanation about the cultural issue.
- At the end of the interview check whether the child/young person or parent/guardian has understood everything and wants to know or ask anything else.

Preparatory work to be completed before the start date of the asylum seeking child/young person or refugee

- Decide on the most appropriate year group placement for the child/young person. In most cases particularly in primary school and lower secondary school, this will be the year group that they should be in according to their chronological age (according to either their date of birth or the date that has been allocated to them by the Home Office in the case of UASCs). However, in some circumstances it may be decided that a particular child/young person would benefit from being placed in the year group below their chronological age. This would be appropriate for some young people of Year 11 age, for example, who would have a chance of succeeding at GCSE exams if they joined Year 10 instead of Year 11 to allow them time to cover the whole syllabus.
- For secondary school aged young people, decide upon the most appropriate timetable for the child/young person. This should be close to a full time timetable in most cases. For those in Years 7, 8, and 9 a normal timetable for the year group is usually appropriate, perhaps with some minor alterations to allow for additional support to take place. For those in Years 10 and 11 there are various options depending on the particular young person, their abilities and aspirations. A near full-time timetable similar to other students in their year group may be appropriate. Alternatively, a near full-time timetable may be created especially for them with a restricted number of subjects perhaps with some ‘doubling up’ of subjects where, for example, both Year 10 and Year 11 Maths lessons are
attended. Another option may be a part-time timetable in school together with a part-time college course or part-time extended work experience placement / Live and Learn placement.

- Decide on appropriate sets/groups for the child/young person to be in for subjects which are set. Generally middle to higher sets (but usually not top sets) are the best sets in which to place asylum seeking children/young people in initially, even if they are in the early stages of learning English as an Additional Language. This is because in these sets they will have access to other students who can provide them with good models of English and effective peer support. Placement in the lowest sets should be avoided unless it is known that the child/young person has Special Educational Needs. As far as possible, aim to place students in sets according to their cognitive ability rather than their command of English.
- Once the child/young person has been in school for some time and their abilities are better known, their sets can be adjusted if required.
- Inform all staff who will be teaching the child/young person of their arrival and provide them with some basic background details such as the fact that they are or may be an asylum seeker/refugee, their first language, country of origin, if they speak or understand any English and their previous educational background.
- Identify one member of staff who can check on how the child/young person is settling in and can act as the first point of contact if there are any difficulties. This could be the child’s class teacher, form tutor, Learning Mentor, SENCo or Designated Teacher for LAC (in the case of UASC)
- Arrange a buddy system to provide support for the child/young person in his/her early days and weeks at school. If the school has any other students who speak the child/young person’s first language in the same class or year group these students could usefully be used as buddies. If not, check whether the year group has any other speakers of any additional languages that the child/young person speaks.

It is important to have several students acting as buddies in order to avoid overloading one particular student but also to enable the child/young person to have the opportunity to get to know a wider range of students and to enable a greater number of existing students to have the good learning experience of buddying a newly arrived child/young person. Make sure that buddies have been briefed on what to do, especially on the first day, e.g. show where the toilets are, what to do at lunch time, help them get to the correct classrooms for lessons etc.
- Organise a tour of the school for the child/young person a few days before their start date to familiarise them with the layout of the building and to find out more about what happens in different parts of the school. If possible a speaker of the child/young person’s first language should be present to interpret if needed. This could be one of their future buddies or a relative/friend of the family in the case of accompanied asylum seeking children/refugees. Provide older children/young people with a map of the school.
- Order any resources that may be needed such as bilingual dictionaries, electronic translators, Talking Pens or laptops/iPads.
- Start to think about what additional support the child/young person may need and how the school will provide it. This will vary for each individual. Generally, in class support is the most effective type of support together with peer support. However, there are times where short term 1:1 support is needed to master specific skills such as learning to read in English. Older children/young people may also need support with homework.

**Once the child/young person has started school**

- If needed arrange for the older young people in secondary schools to attend some taster lessons in subjects where he/she is not likely to be familiar with what happens in different curriculum areas. Possible areas could include Drama and the various types of Technology lessons on offer. This will enable the young person to make more informed choices when it comes to choosing options. An
alternative could be having the young person shadow particular students for a period of time, experiencing their lessons.

- Use the buddy system and check that it is working smoothly.
- Ensure that the child/young person has been told about what after school and lunch time clubs are available and knows the details of times and days for any that he/she wishes to attend. Encourage attendance to at least one club wherever possible as this is a good way of making friends.
- Check on the general well-being of the child/young person from time to time. Ensure that they know who to go to if there are any problems.
- Refer the child/young person to the local authority EAL team as a new arrival. A member of the team will carry out an early profiling assessment that can be used as a baseline from which to measure future progress.
- Utilise good practice strategies for students with English as an Additional Language (EAL) in lessons. See Teaching and Learning section (Appendix D) for further details.
Appendix D

Teaching and learning

- Ensure that names are pronounced correctly.
- Ensure that there is familiar writing and script on welcome posters and notices.
- Posters and pictures of members of the child/young person’s community or country of origin, with a mixture of rural and urban images, can also help.
- Give children/young people an opportunity to hear their family language/s – use CDs or downloads of songs and stories in appropriate community languages and books in dual language where available.
- Pictures featuring members of the community participating in everyday British life as well, will add to children’s sense that there is a place for them in their new country.
- Use a buddy system.
- Maintain high expectations of pupils: the majority of pupils will be of average and above average ability. Asylum seeking children/young people and refugees usually make very rapid progress and can achieve GCSEs after only being in the UK for two years provided that the right support is given.
- Place in middle to higher sets/ability groups.
- To support teaching and learning, aim for joint planning between class/subject teachers and support staff.
- Emphasise differentiation and teachers’ careful use of language/questioning skills.
- Ensure that children/young people have access to good language models and supportive peers. Avoid them sitting and working alone – collaborative work with a partner or small group is much more effective.
- Set targets and review progress regularly. Ensure that these targets are reflected in PEPs for UASCs.
- Build specific topics and activities into the curriculum, e.g. consider the theme of journeys in primary school and include consideration of refugee issues within history topics.
- Have very clear systems in place to deal with any challenging behaviour resulting from trauma.

Helping asylum seeking children/young people and refugees who are new to English.

- Make sure you pronounce their names properly, and try to greet them every lesson.
- Make sure students know your name: introduce yourself and write down your name for them.
- Sit the students next to sympathetic members of the class, preferably those who speak the same language and can translate.
- Try to encourage students to contribute to the lesson by using their home language or non-verbal communication initially.
- Do not worry if beginners say very little at first as plenty of listening time is important when starting to learn a new language. Allow time for the student to ‘tune in’ to the sounds and intonation of the new language. But obviously just listening all the time can be frustrating and boring for students.
- Try to teach beginners some useful basic phrases such as ‘yes, no, miss/sir, thank you, please can I have….., I don’t understand’.
- Encourage them to help give out equipment and collect books so they have to make contact with other students. But don’t treat them as the class ‘dogsbody’!
- Encourage the students to learn the names of equipment, symbols or terms essential for certain topics or subjects. Use pictures and labels. Students can make their own ‘dictionaries’ for key words.
There are also some commercially published dual-language lists of key words for different subject areas. Short vocabulary lists can be provided for each lesson.

- Ask students for the home language equivalents of English words.
- If students are literate in their first language, encourage them to use their bilingual dictionaries, electronic translators or on-line dictionaries in class. It is helpful if the teacher indicates which key words they should be looking up.

As looking up words in a dictionary is quite time consuming, it is best if longer lists of words are looked up as homework tasks.

- Encourage students to annotate their written work in their first language to help them with reading their work back to themselves with understanding at a later date.
- Collaborative learning activities are very helpful for learning English, but working in groups with other students will be a new experience for many children/young people, as most have come from countries where the educational system is more formal than the UK. Other students in a group need to be supportive too.
- Visual cues are extremely helpful, for example videos, slides, pictures, diagrams, flash cards and illustrated glossaries.
- Reading material can be made easier by oral discussion, relating it to a student’s own experiences. If reading material is recorded onto an mp3 player, a student can listen and read simultaneously.
- It is important to maintain students’ confidence in learning a new language, and help them feel they can complete written work, however simple.

Successful strategies

Successful strategies used by schools have included:

- providing visual support, i.e. pictures, diagrams demonstrations etc. Other students can be a resource; use them to demonstrate the activity/task;
- providing the pupil with their own copy of the text, slides etc. so that key words, phrases and sentences can be highlighted and/or translated and diagrams and pictures annotated;
- adapting resources given to the class, i.e highlighting the relevant sentences, rearranging the information on the sheets so that irrelevant information has been omitted;
- using true/false statements to build up a short continuous piece of written work;
- using word-searches to help the pupil revise and learn to spell new vocabulary;
- providing simplified versions for key literacy texts in secondary school, e.g. Romeo and Juliet.

Where possible show the video of the text and provide extra opportunities for viewing – possibly at home;

- using writing frames to help with the structure of their writing;
- using mind maps to help with organising their ideas;
- using computers, e.g.: word processing coursework allows the student to make use of the spell checkers and grammar facilities;
- using the internet, e.g.: first language versions of some key texts are available, subject content in first language, online bilingual dictionaries.
Appendix E

Pastoral Care /Welfare

It is important to recognise that asylum seeking children and young people will almost certainly be showing signs of trauma, particularly if they are UASC. They may have witnessed horrific events. In the case of UASCs, their parents and other family members may have been killed or the children/young people may not know if they are dead or alive.

The journey to the UK will also have been quite traumatic in many cases. All asylum seeking children and young people are also having to cope with living in a new country where they initially may know no-one, learning a new language and starting school possibly for the first time in their lives. They may be living with people who do not share their cultural background, language or religion.

Schools can play an important part by providing stability and a normal routine for asylum seeking children and young people. It is important that class teachers, subject teachers and any other relevant staff are aware that these children and young people may be suffering from the effects of trauma, loss, separation and change and that this may affect their behaviour in school as well as at home.

The Virtual School can provide training to schools which have a UASC to support them to understand the effects of trauma on learning and development.

Ways in which children and young people may show their feelings about loss, separation and change

• Fear of loud noises or voices, or of groups of men, or men in uniform
• Sadness or irritability
• Distressed children/young people may appear worried, miserable or lacking in energy
• Poor concentration and restlessness
• Being overactive, unable to settle at any one activity, being generally ‘silly’
• Aggression and disruptiveness - one of the commonest manifestations of distress as well as one of the hardest to deal with. Children/young people may hit out in the absence of other ways of expressing their frustration, may act out inappropriate aggressive behaviour they may have witnessed or may try to keep away from adults or alternatively cling to them, terrified of abandonment
• Physical symptoms, such as nightmares, aches and pains, loss of appetite
• Frustration and insecurity as a result of unfamiliarity with toys and books, routines, food and customs in the school

Ways in which children and young people may react to severe distress or trauma

• Losing interest and energy
• Being very withdrawn
• Mood swings
• Being aggressive or feeling very angry
• Being disobedient and disruptive
• Lacking concentration, feeling restless and irritable
• Experiencing memories of the events which produce emotions of panic similar to the initial emotion
• Avoidance of stimuli associated with traumatic events
• Repetitive thoughts about traumatic events, or repetitive play and drawings
• Physical symptoms - poor appetite, eating too much, breathing difficulties, pains and dizziness, headaches
• Nightmares and disturbed sleep – thus appearing very tired in school
• Being nervous or fearful of certain things e.g. sudden loud noises, uniforms, fireworks
• Crying and feeling very unhappy - depression
• Not thriving
• Self-injury or self-abusing behaviour
• Isolation by being unable to form relationships with other students
• Have difficulties in relating to adults because of distrust of them
• Bed wetting
• Being late, absences, truanting

Very young children may show distress in these ways:
• Being withdrawn and lacking interest in play or in food
• Stopping speaking
• Bed wetting
• Nightmares
• Being restless, overactive or provocative
• Becoming wild and aggressive if they have not been to school or nursery before

Factors that may help asylum seeking/refugee children and young people to deal with their feelings of loss, separation, change, severe distress and trauma
• Having supportive parents or other carers who are coping well
• Being able to listen to music, watch movies and read newspapers from their country of origin
• Being able to attend a place of worship relevant to their religion and being able to practice their religion in other ways if they so wish, e.g. having access to a prayer mat and a schedule for prayer times if Muslim
• Making friends
• Being able to share experiences with others in a similar situation
• Being able to meet up with others who share the same language as them both inside and outside of school
• Following a ‘normal’ routine of attending school regularly
• Having teachers that offer encouragement and praise
• Making progress in their school work and with their English
• Receiving the support of other students such as their buddies
• Pursuing an activity or interest they enjoy either at home or through an after school club
• Having the opportunity to express themselves through Art, Dance or Music
• Receiving support from outside agencies
• Attending a homework club
• Having supportive carers that encourage them to participate in out of school activities
• Being aware of bullying and racism both in and out of school and dealing with any incidents swiftly and effectively
• Having access to counselling services, preferably school based
• Having someone to confide in
• The capacity to seek help from others
• Having hope for the future
• Ensuring that UASCs are aware of the Red Cross Tracing Service (see below for details)

The Red Cross Tracing Service
The Red Cross provides an international message and tracing service for people who have become separated from close relatives as a result of war or natural disasters. UASCs may wish to use this service to search for family members in their country of origin. The Red Cross can search for relatives and pass messages to them even in hard to reach places such as refugee camps. The service is totally confidential to the young person. No information will be given to anyone else. UASCs may need reassurance about this, in particular reassurance that no information will be passed on to UK Visas and Immigration.

Using this service will not affect their asylum claim in any way.

The Red Cross Tracing Service can be contacted at:

Portsmouth Red Cross,
338 Commercial Road,
Portsmouth
PO1 4BT

Telephone: 02392 894214

Or the following link can be used to access a form to fill in to contact the tracing service:
https://www.redcross.org.uk/Forms/Service-forms/International-family-tracing-request?id=4fd54e77-9f28-43cf-aa84-81dac66bac93