

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children Policy

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Regulations and Standards:

The Children's Homes Regulations 2015:

- Regulation 6 – Quality and purpose of care standard.
- Regulation 12 – The protection of children standard.

Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Care of Unaccompanied Migrant Children and Child Victims of Modern Slavery – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (2017) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-of-unaccompanied-and-trafficked-children>

HM Government - Unaccompanied asylum seeking children and leaving care: funding instructions - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/unaccompanied-asylum-seeking-children-uasc-grant-instructions>

This policy should be read in conjunction with HND Children's Care Ltd policies related to: 'Safeguarding – Child protection Policy'.

'Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy'

'Child Criminal Exploitation Policy'

1. General Policy:

This policy and guidance is aimed at all HND Children's Care Ltd employees. HND Children's Care Ltd aim to offer the best possible service and support for UASC and requires all its employees to understand the difficulties challenges and the incredible personal stories and journeys of children persecuted by war and famine.



At its core, is safeguarding and how best HND Children's Care Ltd can protect and support those vulnerable children experiencing life changing and unimaginable circumstances.

Since February 2022, all Local Authorities with Children's Services were directed to participate in the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). As a result, we have seen the rate of transfers of children to Local Authorities across the country significantly increase. Despite this progress, it was necessary to make further fundamental changes in August 2022 to prepare for, and respond to, the sharp increase in UASC arrivals. There were 5,152 asylum applications from unaccompanied young people in the year ending September 2022, a 36% increase compared with 2019 (3,775), and this has placed our infrastructure under considerable strain.

The changes announced on 24th August 2022 included reducing the NTS transfer timeline from 10 working days to 5 working days from hotels and increasing the threshold under which Local Authorities must accept UASC from 0.07% to 0.1% of their total child population.

By the end of February 2023, Central Government aim to begin closing the hotels currently accommodating unaccompanied children. As such we can expect an increase for this cohort of young people and are likely to require placements for them.

2. What is an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child?

A UASC is defined as an individual, who is under 18 when the asylum application is submitted, is not being cared for by an adult who by law has responsibility to do so, is separated from both parents and has applied for asylum in the UK in their own right. All children in local authority care and being accommodated by the local authority who satisfy these criteria may be included in an application for funding unless they fall into one or more of the exclusion categories listed below.

For the purposes of this funding agreement an unaccompanied child who transferred to the UK under the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme, section 67 Immigration Act ('Dubs amendment') and Dublin Regulation articles 8.1 & 8.2 children (those who are being looked after by local authorities) will also be included within the definition of UASC within this instruction. Additionally, this funding agreement extends to children who are the dependant of an asylum seeker if they temporarily become a looked after child.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and child victims of human trafficking are some of the most vulnerable children in the country. They are alone, in an unfamiliar country and are likely to be surrounded by people unable to speak their first language. They may have experienced emotional trauma in their country of birth, or in their journey to the UK. They can be at risk of going missing, of returning to their traffickers, and of being exploited for sex, forced labour, domestic servitude or criminal activities. They are likely to be uncertain or unaware of who to trust or of their rights. They may be unaware of their right to have a



childhood.

3. What are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children entitled to?

Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 imposes a general duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need.

Children seeking asylum (UASC) who have no responsible adult to care for them are separated or 'unaccompanied' and are therefore 'in need'. The relevant local authority children's social services department has a gateway duty to assess such children under section 17, and then, almost always, to accommodate them under section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

A child asylum seeker's first encounter with the Home Office can be the point at which a welfare referral involves the relevant children's services. This will, in the first instance, always be the local authority in which the child is present.

4. What health risks unaccompanied asylum-seeking children subject to?

Refugees and asylum seekers can have complex health needs. These may be influenced by experiences prior to leaving their home country, during transit or after arrival in the UK. Holistic and person-centred care is essential to support resilience and help them adapt to life in the UK. Common health challenges include:

- untreated communicable diseases.
- poorly controlled chronic condition.
- maternity care (FMG, malnutrition, unknown pregnancies).
- mental health and specialist support needs.

5. What risks are posed to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children?

Refugees and asylum seekers are at risk of exploitation, trafficking and modern slavery. This can often involve experiences of mental, physical and sexual violence. People seeking asylum in the UK have felt unsafe, unable to disclose experiences of human trafficking and have been forced into domestic servitude, sexual and labour exploitation and forced criminality.

The lack of time to find employment before being evicted from asylum support, and the lack of support around transitioning into work in the UK means that refugees continue to take up work in informal arrangements which can result in exploitation.



6. What can an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child face during the journey to the UK?

Those that do decide on the UK face an extremely tough journey. Recently, our news has been filled with tragic stories of people attempting to reach the UK, whether on a boat crossing the Channel or by land hidden in a lorry. With such a dangerous and horrific route, it can be difficult to understand why an individual may choose to make such a journey. In short, currently to date, the UK provides no solid option for a safe, legal and formal process for those wishing to seek asylum in the UK.

When a boat is intercepted in the Channel, Border Force officers will take it to the Port of Dover. The Home Office will then screen the migrants in a shipping container, before likely taking them to the Kent Intake Unit.

Young people can face a variety of hardships during the journey to the UK, young people can be extremely traumatised upon arrival to the UK. Young people traveling across countries can face a number of different types of abuse such as physical, sexual, financial, neglect and many more. Young people can face starvation and malnutrition meaning they're at risk of further disease and illness.

7. What does HND Children's Care Ltd offer to asylum seeking children?

HND Children's Care Ltd can offer accommodation and care to UASC. UASC are provided with information and guided to find suitable support networks in the areas they are placed, HND Children's Care Ltd ensure to support religious and cultural beliefs. HND Children's Care Ltd provide UASC with workbooks to complete training around independent living skills if required. HND Children's Care Ltd incorporate dietary requirements and ensure to signpost and support children to complete healthy well-balanced food shops. HND Children's Care Ltd have a diverse staff team of who have understanding towards cultural needs.

HND Children's Care Ltd ensure to gather supporting documents to swiftly complete GP registrations to ensure children are seeing Doctors at the earliest opportunity. We ensure to have devices on sites to translate conversations so young people have a clear understanding of conversations and decisions being made. HND Children's Care Ltd ensure to include children in all decision making relating to their placements.

Prior to admissions of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, we receive referrals containing all collated information relating to the UASC. We ensure to translate all information to the spoken language.

8. Children's Guide:

Each child will be given a copy of the Children's Guide. This will include a summary of the admission information; daily routines; policies and procedures and relevant information relating to their new home. We will ensure that the guide is translated into a language that



the child can understand.

9. Urgent Admissions:

If it is not possible to hold a planning meeting before the placement, because of the urgency, it must take place within 72 hours.

At the time of the placement, HND Children's Care Ltd must receive records of any current plans and pathway plans.

It is essential that children are given a copy of our Children's Guide which provides written information about our service, including information on using the complaints and representation procedure.

In all cases, HND Children's Care Ltd expect the child to be accompanied to their new placement by the social worker or PA and helped to settle in.

10. Staff Training:

HND Children's Care Ltd provide a thorough training programme, which is assigned to all employees, this is completed before any employees first shift at HND Children's Care Ltd. Additional training is sourced through the year ensuring employees are equipped and knowledgeable.

Appendix:

REFUGEE SUPPORT

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-as-a-young-refugee-or-asylumseeker

Call Asylum Help UK if you're an adult asylum seeker.

Asylum Help UK

Telephone: 0808 801 0503

Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm

(24-hour service for emergencies)

[Find out about call charges](#)

Call Asylum Support Application UK if you're an asylum seeker and can't support yourself financially and want to apply for asylum support.

Asylum Support Application UK

Telephone: 0808 801 0503



Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm
(24-hour service for emergencies)
[Find out about call charges](#)

Call Children's Panel if you're a child in the UK on your own and applying for asylum.

Children's Panel (England only)

Telephone: 020 7346 1134
Monday to Friday, 9am to 5:30pm
(limited service at other times)
[Find out about call charges](#)

CHILDLINE – 020 7825 2505

NSPCC FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – 0800 1111

NSPCCFOR ADULTS WITH CONCERNS – 0808 800 5000

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