

CITY OF PLYMOUTH

Subject: Unaccompanied Asylum seeking children and young people in Care

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 13 September 2011

Cabinet Member: Councillor Sam Leaves

CMT Member: Director of Services for Children and Young People

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Ref:

Key Decision: No

Part: 1

Executive Summary:

The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel, through a Task and Finish Group, undertook a review of unaccompanied asylum seeking young people in care during February 2011.

The panel report is attached (Appendix A) and included the following recommendations:

1. A protocol must be established for facilitating the participation of groups of young people and adults in member-led meetings to aid communication, e.g. more use should be made of the corporate parenting leaflet
2. PCC should more widely disseminate the existing policy and procedure to all sections of the children's workforce and store these documents in a way that facilitates ready access
3. A review is conducted of the range of services for unaccompanied asylum seeking children, including services provided by Youth Services, those funded by the Social Inclusion Unit and any services provided by partners.
4. The Director of Children's Services should establish closer working arrangements between children's social care and other elements of the children's workforce that work with unaccompanied asylum seeking children to meet the needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children
5. The Director of Children's Services should improve training and understanding of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and asylum seekers and refugees issues for staff working with these groups

6. The Director of Children's Services should clarify and make explicit professional boundaries between individual workers and unaccompanied asylum seeking children. This should be monitored through supervision
7. A report should be prepared on how professionals across the Children & Young People's Trust work together to support the health and wellbeing of unaccompanied asylum seeking children, including where there are concerns.
8. The Corporate Parenting Group should regularly monitor outcomes for unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

It is recommended that the report's recommendations are accepted.

An Action plan has been developed in order to take forward these recommendations (Appendix B)

Recommendation 2: That the action plan be endorsed

Corporate Plan 2011-2014

Unaccompanied asylum seeking young people in care have issues that cut across a number of Council and Plymouth2020 partnership priorities, especially Inequalities. The recommendations contained within this report should be taken into account by the Council and all agencies when making decisions with regard to the future delivery and development of services to this group of young people.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land

Services should be reviewed to ensure cost effectiveness and where appropriate universal services such as health and youth provision should be encouraged to do more to support this vulnerable group.

Current budget plans do not include additional monies for expansion of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children services and it is expected that the improvements recommended are achieved within existing resources.

However, many of the recommendations are practical and can be achieved through better information sharing, partnership working and a more customer focussed approach to practice.

There are no direct implications for IT or land.

Other Implications: e.g. Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management and Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children have often entered the UK from countries actively involved in conflict and have fled violence or oppression. They have left their family and community networks and may have travelled for several months before arriving and making an application seeking asylum in the UK.

The policy in the United Kingdom is to provide discretionary leave to remain for this group of children and young people and local authorities are required to care for them under the Children Act 1989.

The basis of work with this group of children and young people is that for the majority to return to their home country at 18, or as soon after that as is deemed safe for them to return and that only a few will be granted permanent leave to remain in the United Kingdom.

The recommendations included here will ensure that Plymouth’s children’s workforce provide support for this group of children and young people whilst they living in the UK and that services are provided to help them to develop and grow.

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

Recommendation 1: That the report’s recommendations are accepted.

Recommendation 2: That the action plan (Appendix b) is implemented and that the Corporate Parenting group receive regular reports on this area of work

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

The recommendations could be rejected, but the area of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children identification and support has had cross party support in the past. The recommendations have a sound factual basis and every effort should be made to continue to improve services, albeit within limited financial resources.

Background papers:

Sign off:

Fin	SRA /ChS 034 9/2. 9.11	Leg	1274 5/PF.	HR		Corp Prop		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member Mairead MacNeil											