

By: Joanna Wainwright, Director of Commissioning

To: Children's Champions Board – 3 December 2008

Subject: Education Provision for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report updates the Children's Champions Board on access to education, employment and training for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People (UASCYP) (age 14 to 19). It sets out the actions taken with Strategic Partners to develop the range of provision for this vulnerable group in order to improve education outcomes.

Background

1. (1) Context - Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking children and young people continue to arrive in Kent in increased numbers. The Education Assessment Service assessed 229 (and a further 11 young people were subsequently determined to be over 18) children and young people in the period September 2007 and August 2008. This reflects a considerable increase on previous years in terms of the number and pattern of arrivals each month (See Appendix 1). The total number of unaccompanied children and young people and their distribution across Kent is set out in Appendix 2 (Source: Services to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Young People). The majority of children and young people continue to be over 16 (57% of arrivals since September 2007) and are placed in LSC funded provision in Colleges of Further Education.

Current Provision

1. (2) The Education Assessment Service supports the assessment and placement of children and young people, Table 1 shows a snapshot of the caseloads for Advisory Teacher Refugee Outreach for March 2007 and March 2008. This shows the increase in the number of children and young people but also a reduction in the percentage of those who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). The majority of young people at Colleges of Further Education are working towards Entry or Pre Entry level English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) as a pre-requisite for all other studies. Although they eventually master the Speaking and Listening elements most struggle to achieve the Reading and Writing skills and the functional literacy required for vocational and academic programmes of study. The majority of the young people remain on ESOL dedicated provision for 2 or even 3 years.

Table 1: Caseloads for Advisory Teacher Refugee Outreach

Placement/ point in time	No of Young People on MCAS¹ Caseload	Secondary School	Primary School	College of FE or other training	Not in Education, Employment or Training
March 2007	161	24 (15%)	1 (1%)	98 (60%)	38 (24%)
March 2008	236	34 (14%)	4 (2%)	153 (65%)	45 (19%)

Disaffection from ESOL provision is a significant feature due to the absence of progression and the impact of the asylum process on mental health and well-being. Hence many UASCYP fail to complete their studies and become NEET.

Of those young people who arrived in the period September 2007 to August 2008, 44% declared that they have had two years or less of education in their own country. Therefore, ESOL may not meet the needs of all young people nor is it likely to achieve the retention, achievement or success rates required by the Learning and Skills Council.

Impact of the New Asylum Model

1. (3) Kent has UASCYP who are subject to procedures pre the New Asylum Model and those whose cases are managed within the New Asylum Model. Children and Young People in either system experience stress and trauma. Those within the New Asylum Model have to complete a significant number of meetings and processes within the first 2 months of their arrival in the UK. In addition, those young people whose cases are dealt with under processes before the New Asylum Model experience long term uncertainty in terms of the outcome of the asylum process. Asylum processes impact significantly on the capacity of young people to engage in assessment and education provision.

Education Assessment Service

1. (4) A jointly commissioned Education Assessment Service commenced in September 2006. Strategic partners in the Service include Connexions, Learning and Skills Council, secondary schools, KCC Children Families and Education (MCAS and SUASC) and Colleges of Further Education. The Service is managed by the Minority Communities Achievement Service.

Actions and Outcomes taken to develop Education Provision for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Young People

2. (1) Communication with Strategic Partners and Agencies
The Education Assessment Service Manager briefed a range of strategic partners (including the Kent and Medway Learning and Skills Council, Kent Association of Further Education Colleges and Kent Approved Training Organisations, Senior Management Teams in Further Education Colleges and KCC Youth and Community

¹ Minority Communities Achievement Service

Service) to raise awareness of the number of NEETs, the needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people and identify ways forward. As a result the following outcomes were achieved:-

- LSC identified project funding (£46,000) to pilot an Independent Living Skills Programme at Appledore.
- LSC identified E2E funding and European Social Funding conferred to NACRO to fund a 6 month pilot (September to March 09) of certificated independent living skills to be delivered by the Riverside Project.
- Kent Enterprise for Youth Training Services were commissioned to deliver the pilot programme (commenced November 2008).
- Thanet College provided targeted programme within their ESOL portfolio.
- West Kent College integrated catering within their ESOL programme with the intention of enabling progression to other catering programmes.
- Canterbury College have continued to develop the ESOL programme to ensure they are more relevant to the children and young people's needs and they have extended their capacity.
- Kent NEETs Prevention and Reduction Strategy 2008-11 includes actions to address specific support for vulnerable groups including unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people.

2. (2) Developments within the Education Assessment Service

A number of developments within the Service have contributed to improving children and young people's capacity to sustain access to education and training:-

- The specialist Connexions Personal Adviser delivers a rolling modular programme focused on 'Living in the Community'. This is a preventative programme and is delivered to groups of young people with interpreters and the feedback from young people and other professionals has been positive.
- The education assessment methodology has been reviewed by an independent education consultant and this has resulted in a number of recommendations for development focused on greater co-ordination across agencies in terms of information sharing, pedagogy, young person's voice and maximizing the information in the assessment report to inform the education opportunity. These will be implemented during 2008/9 and as part the MCAS Business Plan and continuous development of the service.

2. (3) Improved outcomes for children and young people.

The Service has considered evidence on progression following assessment and initial placement. As a pilot Canterbury College of Further Education monitored progression by young people. Of the 57 young people who attended ESOL provision at the College during 2006/7 18 continued to study ESOL, 22 progressed to vocational studies (including engineering, information technology, motor vehicle maintenance, art and design, catering and hospitality, business retail and administration, health and social care, applied science and public services) and 17 progressed to other programmes.

In terms of sustaining access to education there is still progress to be made, however, analysis of the caseload for Advisory Teachers Refugee Outreach (who support the placement and induction of young people into education) indicates 81% are successful in an education placement in March 2008 compared to 76% in March 2007.

3. Priority Actions for 2008/9

- Develop the education assessment process (see 2(2) above)
- Engage Colleges of Further Education in discussions about the development of appropriate provision for this group.
- Work with Kent Youth and Community (through the Positive Activities for Young People initiative and the main locality based Youth provision)
- Work with strategic partners to evaluate the KEY Training (Appledore) and Riverside pilot programmes.
- Work through the NEETS Strategy Group
- Engage 14 to 19 Forums in localities to develop provision

Recommendations

4. The Children's Champions Board is asked to:-

- (i) To note the progress made in developing and extending the education provision for unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people; and
- (ii) Support the on-going discussions with strategic partners to ensure better outcomes for this vulnerable group and the commitments set out in the LAC Pledge.

Officer Names:

Jenny Robson
Head of Service, MCAS
Tel. 01622-694059
Jenny.robson@kent.gov.uk

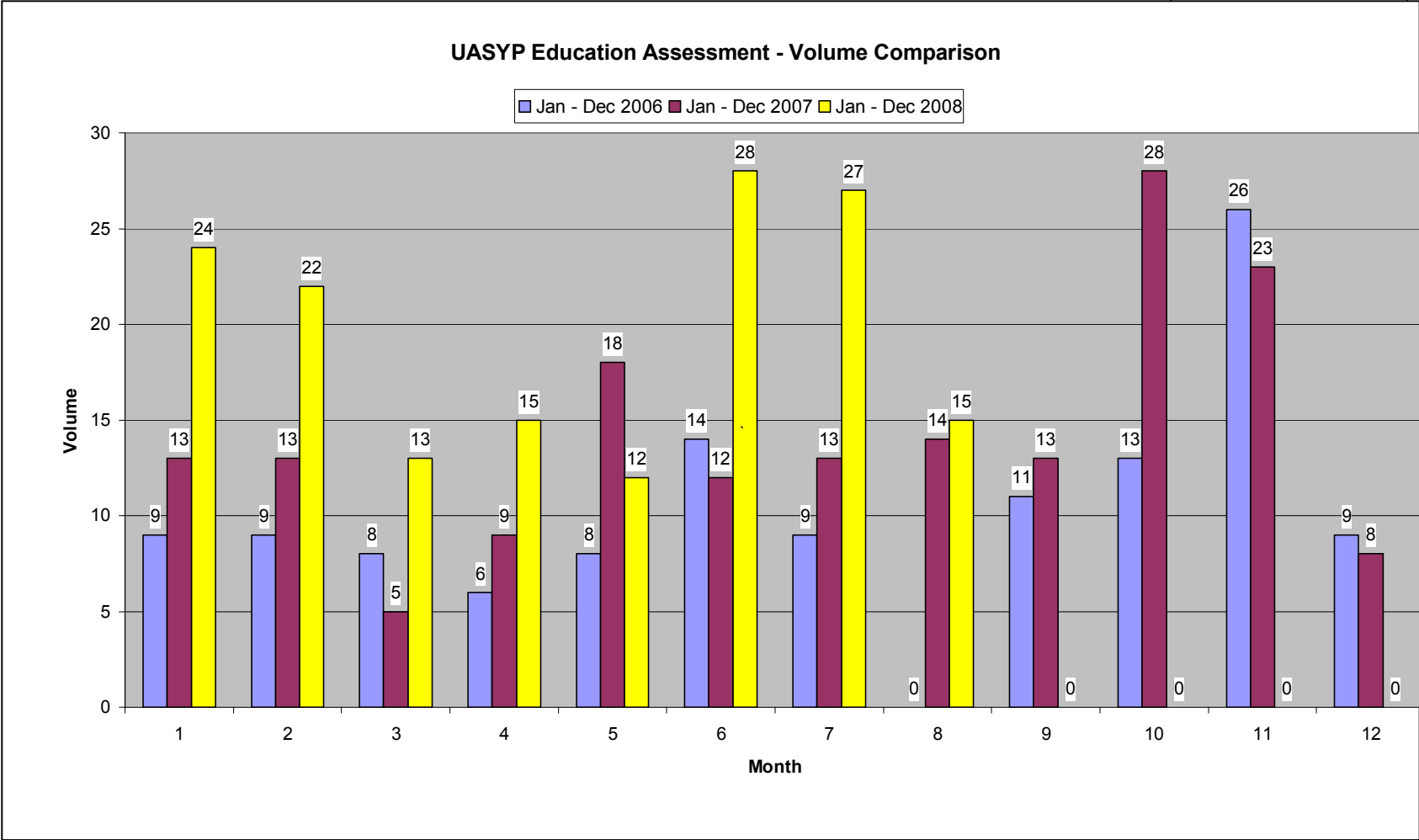
John Reymond
Manager, Education Assessment Service
Tel. 01580-261717
John.reymond@kent.gov.uk

Karen Goodman
Head of Operations, Services for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
Tel. 01622-605258

Background Documents:

None

Other Useful Information:



Graph shows the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people assessed by the Education Assessment Service.

