

To: Children's Champions Board - 5 December 2007

From: Joanna Wainwright – Director, Commissioning (Specialist Services)

Subject: EDUCATION PROVISION FOR UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING YOUNG PEOPLE

Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary: This report outlines the current position on access to education, employment and training for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People (age 14 – 19). It proposes a series of discussions with the Learning and Skills Council, Colleges of Further Education and other providers to further develop the range of provision for this vulnerable group in order to improve education outcomes.

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## **Background**

### *Context*

1. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Young People continue to arrive in Kent (80 since January 2007). On arrival they become Looked After Children. As such Kent has a number of commitments (as set out in the LAC Pledge), responsibilities and duties towards them. These duties include a holistic assessment of their needs at Appledore and placement in suitable education, training or employment. Those under the age of 16 are introduced into the school system and given appropriate support across the full curriculum. However, the majority (86% of arrivals since January 2007) are over 16 and are placed in LSC funded provision in Colleges of Further Education (FE).

### *Current Provision in Further Education and emerging issues*

2. (1) Of the young people attending FE (currently 52%) the majority 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 remaining on ESOL dedicated provision for two or even three years.

(2) Disaffection from ESOL provision is a significant feature due to the absence of progression and the impact of the asylum progress on mental health and well-being. Hence many UASCYP fail to complete their studies and become NEET. College ESOL places are at a premium with a number of constraints in terms of volume and entry points. One college only permits entry in September of each year while two others enable entry at any point subject to places. This means that many young people wait for a considerable period before being able to access a college place and so add to the number of UASYP who are NEET (currently 30.7%). Destinations (in terms of employment, education and training) is included as Appendix 1.

(3) Of those young people who have arrived since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007, 45% declare that they have had two years or less of education in their own country. It is therefore felt that 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 LSC.

(4) FE colleges in Kent that provide for this client group see ESOL as the major route and entry point for these young people. However, though the colleges make every effort to stimulate the learning of young people and vary the means by which they cover the curriculum, there is clear evidence of high drop out and little progression. This indicates that current provision is not meeting the needs of the young people. (This information on drop out rates has been sought from FE colleges and we are awaiting a response.)

#### *Impact of the New Asylum Model*

3. Kent has UASCYP who are subject to procedures pre the New Asylum Model and those whose cases are managed with the New Asylum Model. Children and Young People in either system experience stress and trauma. Those within the New Asylum Model have a 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 New Asylum Model experience long term uncertainty in terms of the outcome of asylum process. This impacts significantly on their capacity to engage in assessment and education provision.

#### **Informal Discussion with providers of Further Education since January 2007 re provision**

4. The three colleges that provide ESOL courses for the majority of UASCYP are Canterbury College, West Kent College and Mid Kent College. At each of these settings the teaching staff make every effort to engage the young people by making the ESOL provision varied and stimulating. There is also an understanding and appreciation that the client group need to progress onto the full range of FE provision but that this requires successful achievement of ESOL Entry 3. Early discussion with West Kent College and Mid Kent College about language acquisition through Independent Living Skills provision as an alternative to ESOL has also met with agreement but this is still to be prioritised by the Colleges.

#### **Issues arising from absence of education provision**

5. (a) The economic and social consequences of many UASCYP being NEET and the impact this could have upon communities and community cohesion.
- (b) Current education and training provision for those aged 16+ may not meet the needs of many who will return to their home country
- (c) Resources within FE are focused on ESOL provision.
- (d) Impact on the mental health and well being of UASCYP through boredom and isolation

## **Proposed education priorities for 16+ UASCYP<sup>1</sup>**

6. (a) Develop English speaking and listening skills to enable them to function in the community.
- (b) Develop a range of independent living skills appropriate to living in Kent.
- (c) Develop a range of transferable skills that will enable them to progress and contribute to society either in the UK or if returned at some time in the future to their home country.

The means to achieving these priorities differs for each individual but the inclusion of two or more of the options set out in Appendix 2 will address the needs of the majority:

### **Conclusion and next steps**

7. (1) The current range of LSC funded education provision for UASYP (aged 16 –19) is not achieving the best possible outcomes for the current cohort of UASYP. It is proposed that KCC CFE discuss the way forward with partner agencies through the following forum:

- (a) UASYP Assessment Service 14-19 Advisory Group (includes Connexions)
- (b) LSC Quality and Curriculum meeting with Colleges of Further Education
- (c) LSC FE Partnership Managers meeting

(2) KCC and the LSC would work in partnership to ensure and promote development for an appropriate range of provision.

### **Recommendation**

8. Children's Champions Board is asked:

- (a) to note the significant number of UASCYP who are NEET,
- (b) to be aware of discussions with the Learning and Skills Council, Colleges of Further Education, Key Training Services and other providers in order to secure the better outcomes for this vulnerable group and KCC commitments in the LAC Pledge.

Jenny Robson  
Head of Service, Minority Communities Achievement Service  
Tel: 01622 694059  
Jenny.robson@kent.gov.uk

Karen Goodman,

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1. As drawn from outcomes of discussions with young people by Education, Social Workers and Care Staff

Head of Operations, Services to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children  
Tel: 01622 694886  
karen.goodman@kent.gov.uk

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*Background documents:* None

**UASYP in Kent – June 2007**  
**Destinations: Employment, Education or Training**

<b>KCC Resident in Kent</b>	<b>Volume</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
NEET	80	30.7
Missing	5	1.9
School	46	17.6
College ESOL	86	33.0
College FE	32	12.3
University	1	0.4
Work	9	3.4
Other	2	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>KCC Resident outside Kent</b>	<b>Volume</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
NEET	19	35.8
School	8	15.1
College FE	21	39.6
University	2	3.8
Work	2	3.8
Other	1	1.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>All U19 KCC UASYP</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
NEET	99	31.5
Missing	5	1.6
School	54	17.2
College ESOL	86	27.4
College FE	53	16.9
University	3	1.0
Work	11	3.5
Other	3	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>100.0</b>

31.7.07

Source of data: manual translation of data provided by individual Social Workers.



**Possible solutions in terms of the development of new provision based upon the profile of the current UASYP population in Kent:**

**A. Entry to Employment** (funded by LSC via an FE College) delivered at Appledore to formalise and certificate skills prior to Independent Living and so provide structure to preparation for independent living and language acquisition during reception period at Appledore. An alternative to this approach would be to attend provision as soon as they move into the community to consolidate and build upon what they have gained at Appledore.

**LEADING TO:**

**A. ASDAN Award** programme - Customised and appropriate ASDAN Award programme (LSC funded) delivered outside a formal education environment. ASDAN comprises a series of “Challenges” that build credits towards a full certificate. The challenges can be customised to utilise and develop a range of transferable skills alongside language acquisition.

**OR:**

**B. Skills for Working Life** through an FE College - Customised / dedicated Entry Level to provide language acquisition + development of transferable skills. “Skills for Working Life” is a direct progression from Independent Living Skills. It offers a range of employment and vocationally focused activities and is available at Entry 2 and Entry 3. It can provide an introduction to further vocational education or employment.

**OR:**

**C. Customised E2E** (Entry to Employment) delivered by - KCC Kent Enterprise for Youth (KEY) or other E2E provider (LSC funded) Customised / dedicated Entry to Employment (E2E) to provide language acquisition + development of transferable skills. E2E is a short course of around 15 weeks that seeks to engage a young person in employment related skills. It can provide an introduction to employment or further education.

**OR:**

**D. Work Experience** - Identify and utilise opportunities for those who have had no previous education experience and for whom formal education is not a priority but may motivate or inspire for the future. This will provide language acquisition + development of transferable skills. This would need the establishment of a formalised scheme and lead organisation.

**OR:**

**E. FE - ‘Fast Track’ ESOL** - Tuition and accreditation (i.e. intensive 10 to 15 weeks) for those who have well developed spoken and written English Language skills and who are ready and able to access academic / vocational / further education.

**AND (FOR ALL 16+ UASYP):**

- F.** Extra Curricula activity – Kent Youth & Community and the Voluntary sector to provide dedicated activities and locations across Kent where UASYP can meet to maintain cultural links and build and develop links with the indigenous youth groups and be a focus for personal development.

**Note:**

**1. Language Acquisition**

The theme running through each of the above is “Language Acquisition” (with the focus on Speaking, Listening and possibly word recognition) and the development of Transferable Skills. If the young people can acquire language skills at the same time as a range of transferable skills they will make best use of their time and optimise scarce local resources to best effect.

In order to support identification of the most appropriate route the Education Assessment, whilst maintaining its broad approach, would state which of the proposed offer is(are) the most appropriate route(s) for each particular individual before the first LAC review.

**2. Planning Arrangements for individual young people:**

- Planning and providing the right location and volume for each of the education / training and extra curricula routes can only be done in full Partnership with all including the LSC, KCC Youth & Community and the Voluntary sector alongside an aligned accommodation strategy for the young people.
- At present, when a young person moves from Appledore the Transition Teams (Social Services) identify available accommodation and, once placed, Staff from the Education Assessment Service try to access an appropriate education placement in that locality.

There are currently 313 UASYP who are U19 (1<sup>st</sup> September 2007) and residing in Kent. A planning volume of around 200 places distributed across the above provision would enable the present cohort to be accommodated allowing for some U16 in compulsory education and others on a range of post 16 provision.