

By: Peter Sass – Head of Democratic Services
To: Scrutiny Committee – 11 December 2015
Subject: Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (Funding Update) – Discussion Item

Summary: The Scrutiny Committee is receiving an update on the current operational, strategic and financial pressures related to KCC fulfilling its statutory responsibilities in relation to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC).

This covering report provides summary information which may assist Members in discussion of the item.

1. Background

1.1 An Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child is defined as meeting the following criteria:

- Under 18
- Arrived in the UK without a responsible adult
- Is not being cared for by an adult who has responsibility for them
- Is separated from both parents
- Has applied for asylum in their own right

1.2 Following the significant increase in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children being referred to KCC Children's services in 2015, relevant social care and partner agency services have been severely stretched. Briefing notes have been provided to numerous Cabinet Committees and to County Council over the course of this surge in demand.

1.3 As of November 2015, there were 978 UASC (age 17 or under) in KCC's care. This rise from 416, represents an increase of 135% since May 2015 (average of 93 additional UASC entering KCC care each month). By comparison, the increase between May 2014 and May 2015 was only 89% (220 rising to 416 over 12 months – average of 16 additional UASC entering KCC care a month).

1.4 The attached report from the directorate outlines to the work undertaken to ensure KCC was able to meet its statutory obligations and planned further work to identify a longer term solution.

2. Documentation

2.1 A report has been provided by the Specialist Children's Care directorate, supported by additional information supplied by the Finance and Procurement team. The report details the increased demand and steps taken by KCC in response. An earlier version of this paper was considered by the Children's Health and Social Care Cabinet Committee on Tuesday 1 December 2015.

- 2.2 A letter from the Home Secretary, Education Secretary and Communities & Local Government Secretary sent to all Council Leaders in response to pressures experienced by KCC and other gateway authorities is attached for information. This letter was sent on 24 November to progress the development of a voluntary scheme for the dispersal of UASC.

3. Attendance

- 3.1 The following Council Officers will be attending to provide information to the Committee:

- Andrew Ireland – Corporate Director for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing
- Andy Wood – Corporate Director for Finance and Procurement

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 The Committee may note the report and express comments to the relevant Cabinet Member, Corporate Director or Leader.

5. Contact details

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6. Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Update on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (Peter Oakford to Scrutiny Committee 11 December 2015)
- Appendix 2 – Central Government letter to all Council leaders (Voluntary UASC Dispersal scheme)

7. Background documents

- [Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee Item C1 – 2 December 2015](#)