

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUB-COMMITTEE
DATE OF DECISION	28 February 2023
REPORT TITLE:	Update on Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children in Education
CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:	Debbie Jones, Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education Shelley Davies, Director of Education
LEAD OFFICER:	Debby MacCormack, Early Help Service Manager
LEAD MEMBER:	Cllr Maria Gatland, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 A briefing regarding the support available for children arriving in the borough on asylum schemes, particularly for those who are not in full-time education; information on access to education, particularly KS4; information to demonstrate that schools are being properly funded for taking in Ukrainian refugees as per national government support schemes.

2 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

- 2.1 Croydon plays a key role in supporting children and young people arriving as part of the Homes for Ukraine visa scheme. Children arriving from Ukraine will have no specific additional priority for school admission, however the council is under a duty to offer advice to parents on applying for a school place.
- 2.2 At the end of the autumn term 2022 120 applications had been made, 109 children had been offered places and 99 were attending school with 9 applications pending. 12 children have moved out of Croydon since making the application.
- 2.3 In July 2022 eligibility under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme was extended to unaccompanied children under 18. The process for new applications requires the planned sponsor to first undergo safeguarding checks before a child can begin their visa application. At present Croydon is dealing with one such application and anticipate that if all is in order the child will arrive within around 6 weeks.

Ukrainian Applicants					
	Stat School Age Children Resident	Submitted School Applications	Offered School Places	On roll	Admissions Pending
23/11/22	120	120	109	99	9

2.4 Children of asylum-seeking families have a right to access school places with 255 children and young people being offered an education place

TOTALS						
	Stat School Age Children Resident	Submitted School Applications	Offered School Places	On roll	Admissions Pending	Moved Out of Croydon
16/02/23	256	255	248	233	15	116

2.5 Over 2020-2022 there has been a significant reduction in the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC):

Date	No. UASC
Sept. 2020	249
Sept. 2021	137
Sept. 2022	92
Dec. 2022	100
Reduction	149

There has been a marked decrease in UASC numbers when compared with the previous year. It is thought that the introduction of the mandatory National Transfer Scheme for UASC (a focus on distributing the UASC cohort nationally) has contributed to this alongside the impact of the pandemic. The UASC cohort ranges from ages 12 - 17 years on arrival.

2.6 The staffing structure within the Virtual School, means that we have a dedicated member of staff (UASC Office Manager), who is the main point of contact and support for foster carers and other LAs. This colleague helps with:

- the schools' admissions processes
- facilitating timely enrolment at suitable school / colleges in the borough

- providing guidance around accessing educational support whilst their young people are awaiting spaces in mainstream schools and colleges.
- The Virtual School Advisory team undertake weekly check-ins with UASC young people in their cohort. Emotional support and counselling is offered via the [Refugee Network](#) and [Off The Record](#) (a counselling agency for young people).

2.7 Interim Provision

Croydon Town School [CTS] (for 11-16 years olds) and Croydon Town College [CTC] (for 16 - 25 years olds) were interim provisions for newly arrived young people during the academic year 2020/2021, the provisions offered a full curriculum complement and intensive ESOL teaching as well as school readiness and preparation for understanding how schools and education in the UK works. Whilst attending the provision, the young people were also able to access AQA accreditation qualifications.

Last academic year, of the 45 KS4 cohort, there were 15 UASC young people (fewer than the previous year), of which 11 were in care for more than one year.

There is a particular focus on young people who arrive in year 10 and 11 and are finding it difficult to settle into mainstream. This is because, historically the Virtual School has found that this age group struggle significantly to settle and integrate into mainstream education, as their peers are in full GCSE preparation mode.

KS4 pupils attend the provision x3 days a week (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays) between the hours of 9am to 3pm to continue with intensive ESOL and there is an expectation that they attend their mainstream schools on Tuesday and Thursdays each week.

All KS4 pupils to date have successfully been integrated into mainstream schools and colleges either within Croydon or surrounding boroughs. Whilst priority was given to Croydon CLA, other boroughs also referred CLAs to the provision.

Without the necessary ongoing funding, the Virtual School was unable to secure a suitable venue from which to run the provision and it remained closed throughout the 2021-22 academic year. However, discussions are underway to look at re-opening the provision during the upcoming summer term, utilising other space available and workable Croydon Council buildings.

The plan is to continue to charge other LAs for places for each of their young people attending the provision. This will be paid for via their PPG funding. Croydon CLA who attend, will also be funded via their PPG funding. This funding stream should be sufficient to finance the running of the provision, likewise, funding the required resources for the students.

Resource	Cost	Rationale	Evidence of impact
Interim provision of UASC CLA. School age pupils (Setting, £8staffing)	All PPG for statutory school age UASC (£1,500 / year). Please note, there is no funding allocated for any yp who a Yr. 12 age is 16-year-old and older.	Access to long term school placements, integration support and ESOL. Assessment and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission data • Student and carer feedback

3 Funding for Councils

- 3.1. The government has set out the funding tariffs for those arriving on the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

The Home Office allocate councils funding of £10,500 per guest for the Homes for Ukraine. This is maybe subject to change.

- 3.2 The government is also providing additional funding to councils to provide education services for children from families arriving from Ukraine under this scheme. The Department for Education (DfE) will allocate funding to councils on a per pupil basis for the three phases of education at the following annual rates:

- Early years (ages 2 to 4) - £3,000
- Primary (ages 5 -11) - £6,580
- Secondary (ages 11-18) - £8,755

These tariffs include support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

- 3.3 DfE Grant funding of £670,000 has been received to help mitigate the impact on education services.

- 3.4 Work is underway to passport funding where children have taken up places. Croydon has worked with other London Boroughs to establish the model to enable funding to be allocated. Schools have provided information which is currently being referenced against the Government and Homes for Ukraine scheme databases as funding is only

available for children and young people arriving under the Homes for Ukraine scheme and not through other schemes.

- 3.5** Financial Support for Education places for children from Asylum Seeking is not available currently. The Home Office is keen to better understand the size of the financial burden that full asylum dispersal places on local authorities and Croydon has been selected as one of the 30 LAs nationally to take part in a Home Office data-gathering exercise (new burdens exercise) on the costs to councils of asylum dispersal alongside Hounslow, Enfield, Brent, Barnet and Wandsworth.
- 3.6** Finance are working closely with the programme manager for asylum seekers and refugees to understand the burden to the authority.
- 3.7** The Asylum dispersal grant received to date is £369,000

4. CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 4.1** The Mayor's priorities are detailed in the Corporate Plan, and highlight which outcomes the report and decision related to: Mayor's Business Plan 2022 - 2026 (croydon.gov.uk)

The issues discussed in this report cut across and address a number of priorities:

- Get a grip on the finances and make the Council financially sustainable
- Work with partners including schools and education settings to keep children and young people safe from harm

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

There are no specific financial implication for the Council arising from this report.

5.2 Legal Implications

There are no specific legal implications for the Council arising from this report.

5.3 Equalities Implications

There are no specific equalities implications for the Council arising from this report