



Meeting of East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership	Integration Joint Board	
Held on	29 March 2023	
Agenda Item	12	
Title	National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and the Ukrainian Resettlement Scheme	
Summary		
<p>This report is intended to update the Integration Joint Board on two areas of support that the HSCP is currently providing to people seeking asylum within the UK. These are the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), and the Ukrainian Resettlement Scheme which has placed individuals and families within East Renfrewshire as a safe destination away from the Ukrainian war.</p> <p>The report will inform the Integration Joint Board of the impact of the National Transfer Scheme particularly as regards financial pressures created by the scheme. Projections will also be shown as to the likelihood of increased pressures as this scheme progresses beyond this financial year.</p> <p>By way of contrast information will be provided regarding the Ukrainian Resettlement Scheme which involves services from East Renfrewshire Council beyond this partnership, but does not show indications of significant financial pressure.</p>		
Presented by	Raymond Prior, Head of Children Services and Criminal Justice, Chief Social Worker Officer	
Action Required		
<p>The Integration Joint Board is asked to consider the contents of the report and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the arrangements set out in the report which allow the HSCP to meet its statutory responsibilities to vulnerable young people under the National Transfer Scheme. • Note the impact of the National Transfer Scheme on our current service provision within Children's Services and other supporting services and the projected financial costs and other pressures arising from this. • Note the information regarding the Ukrainian Resettlement Scheme 		
Directions		Implications
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Directions Required <input type="checkbox"/> Directions to East Renfrewshire Council (ERC) <input type="checkbox"/> Directions to NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC) <input type="checkbox"/> Directions to both ERC and NHSGGC		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finance <input type="checkbox"/> Risk <input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Legal <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure <input type="checkbox"/> Equalities <input type="checkbox"/> Fairer Scotland Duty

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EAST RENFREWSHIRE INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD

29 March 2023

Report by Head of Children Services and Criminal Justice (Chief Social Work Officer)

National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and the Ukrainian Resettlement Scheme

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This report is intended to update the Integration Joint Board on two areas of support that the Partnership is currently providing to people seeking asylum within the UK. These are the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), and the Ukrainian Resettlement Scheme which has placed individuals and families within East Renfrewshire as a safe destination away from the Ukrainian war.
2. The report will inform the Integration Joint Board of the impact of the National Transfer Scheme particularly as regards financial pressures created by the scheme. Projections will also be shown as to the likelihood of increased pressures as this scheme progresses beyond the financial year.
3. The report also seeks to inform the Integration Joint Board of the operation of the Ukrainian Resettlement Scheme, which involves the Health and Social Care Partnership and other Services from East Renfrewshire Council working to support Ukrainian Refugees within East Renfrewshire.

RECOMMENDATION

4. The Board is asked to:-
 - a) Note the arrangements set out in the report which allow the partnership to meet its statutory responsibilities to vulnerable young people under the National Transfer Scheme.
 - b) Note the impact of the National Transfer Scheme on our current service provision within Children's Services and other supporting services and the projected financial costs and other pressures arising from this.
 - c) Note the information regarding with the Ukrainian Resettlement Scheme.

BACKGROUND

5. Through the Immigration Act 2016, the UK Government introduced the ability for local authorities to transfer legal responsibility for unaccompanied children in their care to another local authority. This was intended to address the significant pressure faced by a small number of local authorities that had very high numbers of spontaneous arrivals of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children for whom they became legally responsible under the relevant children's legislation. The Act also gave the UK Government powers to introduce a mandatory transfer scheme.

6. A voluntary National Transfer Scheme was initially established to facilitate transfers across the UK and the National Transfer Scheme rota was introduced in 2021. The UK Government Minister for Immigration, Compliance and Justice, wrote to all Scottish local authorities in July 2021 asking them to commit to participate in the new rota.
7. COSLA consulted with Councils and brought a recommendation to Leaders in August 2021 that Scottish Local Government should participate in the scheme. This resulted in a commitment for Scottish Councils to take 45 children per cycle of 650 children being transferred to local authorities through the National Transfer Scheme across the UK. This position was agreed and Scottish local authorities commenced their participation in the rota from October 2021.
8. This became a mandatory scheme in November 2021 and since then 3,432 children have been transferred under the National Transfer Scheme, of whom 233 have been welcomed into Scottish local authority care. The mandatory scheme was put in place as a result of the scale of arrivals of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children via small boats across the English Channel.
9. The Integration Joint Board members will be aware that a scheme also exists for refugees from the war in Ukraine to resettle in the UK. East Renfrewshire Council has set up a Resettlement Team which co-ordinates service provision to Ukrainians living within the council area. At the time of writing, there are 93 Ukrainians that have been supported to resettle within East Renfrewshire.

REPORT

Ukrainian Resettlement Scheme

10. Within East Renfrewshire there are 93 Ukrainian guests and the East Renfrewshire Council Resettlement Team have a caseload of 66 Ukrainians, with two unaccompanied Ukrainian minors living with hosts as a private arrangement. The Resettlement team also have a few families from other areas who have presented to East Renfrewshire Council as homeless, and they continue to engage with a few guests who have recently left the area to ensure that they have settled in their new council area.
11. The role of children's services with the Ukrainians is clearly defined and limited. Prior to a family moving to live with their identified host, a social worker from the Request for Assistance in Children Services team visits the hosts' home to undertake checks which ensures that there are no concerns around children living with the identified host. To date following initial checks there has been no specific work for the Request for Assistance team to follow up on.
12. The Request for Assistance Team have visited 25 Ukrainian families who have been matched with host families or identified hosts themselves through the Homes for Ukrainian Visa Scheme. This work is carried out alongside East Renfrewshire Council Resettlement Officer who provides the family with financial support and contact information for all local services and support agencies.
13. The involvement of the Request for Assistance Service has been absorbed within the current workload of the team and is viewed as part of the frontline Children's Services response to the local community.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

14. Since the start of the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) East Renfrewshire have received a total of twelve unaccompanied asylum-seeking children through the mandatory National Transfer Scheme rota. In addition, East Renfrewshire, like all other local authorities is required to provide care to any unaccompanied asylum-seeking children spontaneously arriving within the local authority area. Currently there are four unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who have presented spontaneously within East Renfrewshire dating back to 2017. In total East Renfrewshire is supporting sixteen unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people.
15. East Renfrewshire HSCP Children's Services uses a variety of accommodation and supports to assist unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, including housing options from East Renfrewshire Housing, foster care and residential care placements. All young people are supported by Social Workers, Support Workers and the Scottish Guardianship Service provided by Aberlour, Scotland's Children's Charity.
16. The National Transfer Scheme operates on cycles of dispersal. For each cycle of 650 children arriving, 45 of these will be transferred to Scottish local authorities. At present there is a new cycle of case allocations every three to four weeks. Shorter cycles may occur given the numbers of arrivals at our coast as the weather improves. This means that at current rates of allocation, we should project to receive approximately seventeen young people in East Renfrewshire within the next twelve month period.
17. The rota does not allow local authorities to be selective on the profile of young people they are allocated. The assumption will be that any local authority can support any child or young person in need.
18. Children who present spontaneously into local authority care still require accommodation and make no difference to the allocations made through the rota. Therefore, local authorities are still required to take their placements as per the mandated rota, further increasing pressure on accommodation and services. There is a five day turnaround from notification of a child to the local authority to the child arriving in the area.
19. The unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in our care hold the legal status of Looked After Child. As a result they are entitled to continuing care up to age 21 allowing them to remain in their care placements and aftercare up to age 26 allowing them to receive advice and support.
20. On arrival the young person require daily support to orientate the local area, register with community services, set up their accommodation and link in with legal services around their asylum status and progressing their legal rights. Our experience so far is that the young person has little or no English language skills, and tasks are being undertaken through the use of translators. This incurs translation services costs in order to carry out all the essential work that is required for resettlement.
21. There is no specific single resource that can be utilised to accommodate unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. It is worth noting that some foster carers are reluctant to offer placements to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children as they arrive with no personal history or documentation, although we know they are likely to have experienced trauma in their lives and / or during their journey to the UK.
22. An Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child Taskforce was established by UK Government in December 2022. This has been tasked to address the challenges presented by the increase in the number of children arriving, and to ensure the National Transfer Scheme runs as efficiently as possible.

23. The Integration Joint Board members may be aware of reports in the national media of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the care of local authorities going missing. To date this is not something that has happened within East Renfrewshire.
24. By contrast with the Ukrainian Resettlement Scheme, the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children is placing considerable pressure on the resources of the HSCP. All of the children involved require to be placed and supported as looked after children, many with the additional challenges of experiencing trauma. While this is currently being met, it is placing considerable pressure on the service and projections show that this is likely to grow over the next year.

Finance

25. All mandatory National Transfer Scheme children and young people are funded through the Home Office at the rate of £114 per night while they remain looked after children. The rate for all formerly looked after (over 18 years) unaccompanied asylum-seeking children care leavers is £270 per person per week. This corresponds to annual funding of £41,610 per unaccompanied asylum-seeking child under 18 years, and £14,040 for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young adults 18 years and over.
26. Income from the daily / weekly rate and the lump sum payments where applicable is projected to total **£266,766** for 2022/23. Projections have also been carried out based on the same group of young people remaining in our care in 2023/24, this indicates funding totalling **£344,346** is projected to be received. However, this needs to be considered against actual and projected costs which are shown below.
27. The following figures are costings so far for 2022/23 and projected costings for 2023/24 based on no increase in young people and distribution of placement type remaining the same. This information is broken down by expenditure type:

Area of Expenditure	Costings 2022/2023	Projected Costings 2023/2024
ERC foster placement	£21,885	£26,570.96
Agency foster placements	£54,014.33	£139,081.17
Kinship Care	£4,720	£10,627.76
Residential	£117,661.02	£207,528.57
ERC accommodation	£26,480	£36,500
Weekly Maintenance	£24,029.88	£23,725 (drops due to change in rate post COVID)
Travel	£8,798.66	£18,223.93
Miscellaneous expenditure, clothing essentials, digital equipment, cooking equipment, etc.	£33,523	£10,000
Translators	£6,000	£6,000
Support Worker	£12,631	£26,498
Total	£309,743	£504,756

28. When considering the figures above there is a short fall of £42,977 in 2022/23 between funding and costs, and a much larger shortfall of £160,410 projected for 2023/24. However, this assumes no change in the numbers of young people placed in East Renfrewshire and given that young people are arriving on three to four weekly cycles the numbers looked after are almost certain to increase significantly. As the current

group become older their funding will reduce significantly and as this moves beyond 2023/24 funding shortfalls will become increasingly large as funding decreases while placement costs remain high due to continuing care.

29. COSLA states that it will continue to make representations regarding the significant shortfall in funding that currently exists, particularly in relation to Scottish Councils' statutory responsibilities towards care leavers up to the age of 26.
30. The figures within the above table show support worker hours dedicated to assisting this specific group of young people, but do not include staff costs for time taken in assessment and planning, writing reports, communicating with the Home Office and COSLA which are absorbed within the Children & Families Youth Intensive Support Service.
31. The Youth Intensive Support Service support all sixteen of our unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people as well as manage their case load of 122 young people. Currently unaccompanied asylum-seeking children form 13% of the Youth Intensive Support Service case load and if young people continue to arrive at the same rate on the National Transfer Scheme it is likely that this will form 27% of the Youth Intensive Support Service case load in twelve months' time.
32. Current financial projections are based on the need to support the existing group of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children over 2023/24. It is also recognised that this group is likely to increase by approximately seventeen young people. There is no way to accurately project the costs of this because it is unclear what type of placements may be available or required. It is likely that as every local authority has increasing numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, that demand for placements will grow and all local authorities will be pushed to purchase or compete for more expensive placement options due to market forces.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

33. There is no current budget allocation for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children within Children's Services. All costs have to be met through existing resources and funding provided by the Home Office referred to above. The short falls indicated above are rising and are likely to rise beyond the projected levels as more young people arrive on the National Transfer Scheme.
34. The numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children we are mandated to accommodate in the coming months is unclear, however the last cycle saw arrivals being mandated on a three to four weekly basis.

CONCLUSIONS

35. The above report indicates some of the significant challenges facing Children's Services as a result of the National Transfer Scheme for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. It also discusses the Ukrainian resettlement scheme which has added a small amount of work to the work of the Request for Assistance Team in Children's Services but which is being well managed through links with the Resettlement Team.
36. There are three particular areas of risk arising from the ongoing mandated National Transfer Scheme. Firstly Children's Services budgets are impacted given the shortfall in funding and the likelihood of rising numbers of young people arriving over the next year. The second area of concern regards the workload of the operational social work team supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. This currently forms 13% of

the workload and is likely to rise to a much higher proportion. This will create pressures around provision of services to the range of young people that the social work teams require to work with. Lastly the overall children's services partnership will face challenges. The increasing numbers of young people coming on the National Transfer Scheme will place greater pressures on partner services such as housing, education, health and social work services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

37. The Board is asked to:

- a) Note the arrangements set out in the report which allow the partnership to meet its statutory responsibilities to vulnerable young people under the National Transfer Scheme.
- b) Note the impact of the National Transfer Scheme on our current service provision within Children's Services and other supporting services and the projected financial costs and other pressures arising from this.
- c) Note the information regarding with the Ukrainian Resettlement Scheme.

REPORT AUTHOR AND PERSON TO CONTACT

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Chief Officer, IJB: Julie Murray

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None