

# Central Bedfordshire Council

Corporate Parenting Panel

20 December 2018

## Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young person as LAC – Spotlight Report

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### Purpose of this report

The report provides a spotlight report on the way the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young people become Looked After children in Central Bedfordshire.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Panel is asked to note the content of the report

### Issues

1. Appendix 1 contains a detailed report relating to the way in which Central Bedfordshire Council support young people who arrive in the UK as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

### Council Priorities

2. Leaving care support is a key statutory service to Looked After Children between the ages of 16 and 25 including those young people who are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. The efficient and effective delivery of this service is aligned with the Council’s priorities to offer great resident services, to improve education and skills of young people leaving care, to protect the vulnerable; improving wellbeing whilst at the same time creating stronger communities and being a more efficient and responsive Council.

## **Corporate Implications**

### **Risk Management:**

3. Regulatory Risks: The provision of suitable support for Care Leavers is a key activity monitored by Ofsted during inspections, forming part of their judgement about services for Looked after Children.
4. Child Protection Risks: Failure to effectively support young people is a child protection risk.
5. Reputational Risk: Good support and good outcomes for young people leaving care has a positive impact in the way the council delivers its statutory duties as Corporate Parent for children looked after.
6. Financial Risk: there is a financial implication to delivering support to young people leaving care. Should young people not have access to timely support and their issues escalate then there is a far greater financial risk for example if a young person enters the criminal justice system.

### **Legal Implications**

7. National regulations and legislation outline the way in which the council delivers statutory duties for young people leaving care.

### **Financial and Risk Implications**

8. This report provides information to support financial decisions / implications.

### **Equalities Implications**

9. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
10. Looked After Children are not a protected group under the Equality Act, however the effective support of looked after children requires consideration of a range of issues related to their protected characteristics. Consideration of mental health and wellbeing can be particularly important and has been highlighted by the Office of the Children's Commissioner. Children who have been in care:

- are between four and five times more likely to attempt suicide in adulthood
- have a fivefold increased risk of all childhood mental, emotional and behavioural problems
- have a six to sevenfold increased risk of conduct disorders
- 60% of Looked After Young People have some level of mental health problem

11. The Office of the Children's Commissioner has highlighted that Asylum-seeking children and young people face inequality in experience in many aspects of their lives. Asylum-seeking children may have experienced persecution for their beliefs, or because of their ethnic or social group. Some may have seen adults they loved murdered, beaten, tortured or raped; others may have had members of their family 'disappear' with no warning or explanation. Some may have come from a country where they would have been forced to fight as a child soldier if they remained. Many unaccompanied children seeking asylum will have particular emotional, practical, language and cultural needs that require support.

12. This report sets out how asylum-seeking children are supported, and the steps taken to promote their equality of opportunity.

## **Conclusion and next Steps**

13. The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to note the content of this report

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young person as LAC**

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