

BRIEF GUIDE FOR THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN FROM ABROAD, INCLUDING UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN

LINKS TO HIPS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES - 'CHILDREN WHO ARE EXPLOITED'
- MODERN SLAVERY, TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION



An unaccompanied asylum seeking child is defined by the Immigration Rules as one who is under 18 years of age when the claim is submitted, claiming in their own right and has been separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who in law or by custom has responsibility to do so.

Being unaccompanied is not necessarily a permanent status and may change, particularly if the child has family members in the UK.

This guide should be used, alongside the procedure on the Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Partnership website – 3.1 children who are exploited.

This guide is concerned with children who arrived into the UK:

- in the care of adults who, whilst they were their carers, had no parental responsibility for them
- in the care of adults who had no documents to demonstrate a relationship with the child
- alone
- in the care of agents.

How Unaccompanied Migrant Children are referred to the local authority and what happens

Children will either be found having arrived in the area and be seeking asylum or their responsibility will transfer from another LA.

NEWLY-ARRIVED CHILDREN

- Will need to be referred to the LA through MASH in the usual way.
- A s47 investigation and trafficking assessment should be started by MASH to consider their safety.
- They will need a safe place to live and may speak little English.

CHILDREN TRANSFERRING FROM OTHER LA'S

- May have been in the country for days, weeks or months and are transferring to the LA due to high numbers in other LA's.
- Their placement is likely to remain the same but responsibility for the Social Work and payment will transfer to the new authority.

CHILDREN LIVING IN ONE AREA BUT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF OTHER LA'S

- Local Authorities sometimes place looked after children outside of their Local Authority Boundary due to a shortage of placements in their area.
- Some of the looked after children placed on the Island by other LA's are unaccompanied migrant children.
- The Isle of Wight is responsible for some unaccompanied children who we have placed in other parts of the UK, as placements could not be found for them on the Isle of Wight.

THOSE WORKING WITH UNACCOMPANIED MIGRANT CHILDREN

- All unaccompanied migrant children will have a social worker and will be looked after children.
- As looked after children they will all have an Independent Reviewing Officer and regular reviews.
- All unaccompanied migrant children will be part of the virtual school and will have a Personal Education Plan.
- All unaccompanied migrant children will need to have a LAC Health Assessment within the first few weeks of coming into the country and being looked after which will consider both physical and emotional wellbeing.



HEALTH AND WELLBEING NEEDS

- Asylum seekers face a large variety of physical, psychological and social challenges. These challenges have a considerable impact on unaccompanied migrant children's physical and mental health.
- Trauma experienced by may include conflict, starvation and limited access to health care in their home country, physical violence, trafficking, female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation and discrimination.
- This will require good access to primary and secondary care facilities including mental health services. Furthermore, a high need for immunisation catch up and screening for infectious diseases was identified.
- The health and wellbeing of unaccompanied migrant children will also depend upon wider determinants of health. Further areas of need were identified with regards to Accommodation, Education, Language and Social and Community Factors including leaving care legislation.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION AND ACTION — PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Consideration of the availability of primary care and dental health services for unaccompanied migrant children
- Identification of capacity and referral pathways for secondary, maternity, mental health and other specialist services
- Access to preventative treatments, health care guidance and support including immunisation, nutrition, culturally sensitive sexual advice and contraception
- Safeguarding procedures for victims of Trafficking, Child Sexual Exploitation and Torture
- Implementation of local protocols for FGM assessment setting out clear arrangements for how cases will be managed

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN WORKING WITH UNACCOMPANIED MIGRANT CHILDREN

- Consider the use of an interpreter especially for complex discussions.
- Ensure you understand a child's specific needs and ask them about their normal just as you would for all children – what would they usually eat for lunch, do they eat particular foods, would they like to attend a place of worship, do they pray etc.
- Be mindful of the trauma they have experienced and take discussions at their pace.
- Follow their cues, they may find some people more difficult to trust than others, due to their experience. For example some children are scared of uniformed police officers as the police in their own country may have been corrupt.

RISKS

- Unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery, including trafficking, can be some of the most vulnerable children in the country.
- Unaccompanied children are alone, in an unfamiliar country and may be surrounded by people unable to speak their first language. Modern slavery includes human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour.
- Exploitation takes a number of forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced criminality, begging, organ harvesting and domestic servitude and victims may come from all walks of life.
- Any safeguarding concerns should be referred to MASH or a child's Social Worker as for all other children.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Care of Unaccompanied Migrant Children and Child Victims of Modern Slavery: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, November 2017](#)

[Safeguarding Children who May Have Been Trafficked \(Home Office, 2011\)](#)

[Modern Slavery Helpline and Resource Centre - Unseen](#)

[NSPCC Child Trafficking Advice Centre \(CTAC\)](#)

[Duty to Notify the Home Office of Potential Victims of Modern Slavery](#)

[Home Office Circular - Modern Slavery Act 2015](#)

[Modern Slavery: Duty to Notify Factsheets \(GOV.UK, October 2016\)](#)

[Support for Victims of Modern Slavery \(Home Office, 2016\)](#)

[Victims of Modern Slavery - Guidance for Frontline Staff \(UK Visas and Immigration, March 2016\)](#)

[Guidance on Processing Children's Asylum Claims](#)

[Victims of Human Trafficking: Competent Authority Guidance](#)

[National Referral Mechanism: Guidance for Child First Responders](#)

[National Transfer Protocol for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children](#)

[Child Protection: Working with Foreign Authorities](#)

[Local Government Association - Council Support: Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Unaccompanied Children](#)

[Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking Children \(UASC\): Funding Instructions](#)

[Modern Slavery Act 2015](#)

[Modern Slavery Act 2015: Recent developments - Briefing Paper, July 2016](#)

[College of Policing - Modern Slavery](#)

[NSPCC - ICARUS leaflets](#)

[Modern Slavery Pocket Guide - Royal College of Nursing Guide for Nurses and Midwives](#)

[Refugee Council - Children's Panel](#)

[Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority](#)

<https://www.uaschealth.org/corams-young-citizens>

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