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UK Border Agency

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28 August 2008

Dear Chief Executive

UASC Reform Programme – Becoming a Specialist Authority

I am writing to you following the recent communication by John Ransford of the Local Government Association (LGA) encouraging local authorities to become fully engaged with the UASC Reform Programme and in particular the establishment of Specialist Authorities.

It has always been our intention as part of the Programme to seek to establish a number of Specialist Authorities around the UK who could build expertise in the care and support of UASC and I hope that the recent agreement between UKBA and Local Government settling the 'prior claims' issue has gone some way to mitigating the main concern local authorities had about becoming involved, eg post 18 funding. UKBA is setting up a Working Group involving LGA and Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) to deal further with this issue. In the meantime we want to make progress on the establishment of Specialist Authorities.

In moving forward we would like to determine who would be interested in becoming a Specialist Authority. We are open to suggestions surrounding establishing regional specialist authorities and are writing to all local authorities to determine interest. We would be happy to discuss with you how a regional specialist authority structure might work and whether you would wish to be part of any new arrangements.

Our outline process moving forward is:

- To meet by mid-October (see table) with all interested local authorities in each UKBA region to discuss how a grouping might be structured and who would be interested in becoming a Specialist Authority, either individually or as part of a consortium.
- Following that meeting to invite all interested local authorities to submit proposals as to how services will be provided, costs, capacity and implementation process. To facilitate this we will issue a pack, "Information for Proposals" which will set out what we would need included in the proposals along with guidance on how to construct them.

- To explore the possibility of setting up regional "need and age" assessment centres that would route UASC to specialist authorities once the assessment process was complete.
- To finalise discussions with those authorities selected as Specialist Authorities and introduce new grant arrangements based on the agreement reached.

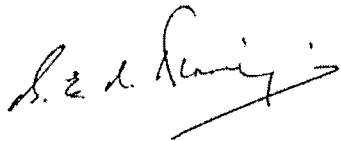
As LGA have said it is in all of our interests to improve the working relationships and the processes moving forward so that proper care and support can be provided to UASC, local authorities are properly funded and UKBA can fulfil its obligations regarding immigration.

The holding of regional workshops will be an important first step in moving the UASC Reform Programme forward so can I ask that you let me know of your interest and whether or not you will be sending someone (preferably your Director of Children's Services) to the meeting. We would be grateful for the name(s) of your representatives by Friday 19 September so that I can book a suitably sized venue. Names please to Jerry Harland (details below).

In the meantime if there is anything you need to discuss please do not hesitate to contact me or my colleague Jerry Harland (0208-760-3826 or jerry.harland2@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk).

A copy of this letter is enclosed for your Director of Children's Services.

Yours sincerely



Brian Kinney
Director
UASC Reform Programme

UASC Reform – Regional Workshops

	Date and Time	Venue
Yorkshire and Humberside	1 October 2008 13.30 to 16.30	To be confirmed
North East	3 October 2008 09.30 to 13.30	To be confirmed
North West	6 October 2008 13.30 to 16.30	To be confirmed
East Midlands/ West Midlands/East of England	8 October 2008 13.30 to 16.30	To be confirmed
West and Wales	20 October 2008 13.30 to 16.30	To be confirmed

(File UASC)

Agenda

Wednesday 12 November

Lime Venues, Millennium Stadium

13:00	Arrival	
	Sandwich Lunch	
13:30	Workshop - Administration	Jerry Harland
13:35	Introductions	
13:40	UASC Reform - The Context	Brian Kinney
14:00	The Reforms	Jerry Harland
14:20	Discussion	All
14:40	Tea/Coffee	All
15:00	The Specialist Authority Model	Brian Kinney
	Discussions	
16:10	Close	Brian Kinney