

Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

Learning and Children's Services

Team Improvement Plan

2007-2008

Service: Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Team Manager: Alan Thorne



Service: Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Team

Lead Officer: Alan Thorne

Key Purpose of Service:

The provision of assessment, case work and support services (including accommodation) to unaccompanied asylum seeking children referred to the Royal Borough of Kingston. Statutory responsibilities apply under the Children Act 1989 and the Children Leaving Care Act 2000.

Evaluation of Effectiveness of the Team and Review of Progress on the Team Plan for 2006-2007:

- *Evaluate the effectiveness of the team overall, as very good, good, satisfactory or requires improvement to address weaknesses*
- *Use bullet points*
- *Refer to key objectives and targets and include evidence of progress and impact. Say what is better as a result.*
- *Include reference to key performance indicators, especially published Best Value Performance Indicators, and other benchmarks including APA and CPA indicators and measures.*

2006 - 2007 has been a period of change for the UASC Team. Several staffing changes have resulted in the team's function and practice being re-evaluated and restructured. This has been undertaken in the context of the business plan proposals drawn up in 2006, an internal audit of the team's processes and the need to ensure statutory functions and responsibilities are fulfilled.

With reference to 2006/07 Key objectives:

- A pro-active approach has been taken to reduce financial deficit. The Business Support Officer's role has been redefined to concentrate on reducing housing costs and recoup maximum housing benefit where appropriate.
- Work has started to increase the level of access to Local Authority Accommodation for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people who are care leavers and who have right to remain in the UK.

- Three members of staff are now undertaking Social Work Training via the employment based route. These staff members will be available to RBK as qualified social workers in summer 2008.
- The number of UASC and young people remaining in further education, training or gaining employment has remained high – 85%
- Work has begun to end high cost and poor value placements for UASC and YP. The Royal Borough of Kingston is now part of the London Asylum Seekers Consortium (LASC) and as such is now able to access accommodation via approved providers who can source good quality local community housing at an agreed (Pan London) cost. The impact here is that savings against accommodation budgets will begin to be made and complaints from young people about unsatisfactory housing have significantly reduced.

What Needs to Improve Further

Refer to key performance indicators, criteria in inspection/APA or other evaluation frameworks that you use to evaluate your service, and existing strategic plans.

- Access to services in an equitable way in line with Children' Act '89 and Children (Leaving Care) Act 200 and as highlighted in the Joint Area Review September 2006
- Improve and agree financial, health screening and accommodation arrangements across the UASC service in line with that provided for all care leavers (JAR Action, BH2 and AEW2 objectives)
- Finalise and agree the team structure and establishment.

Key Team Objectives for 2007-2008

Preferably no more than 5 or 6 key objectives that will be the focus for your improvement plan in the coming year. These should be taken from the Children and Young People's Plan and/or Cultural Strategy and/or Adult Learning Plan.

1. Give priority to the physical and mental health needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people. Ensuring all UASC and YP who are LAC or Care Leavers have where appropriate, access to CAMHS, health assessments, dental checks, immunisations and clear health plans, with clear outcomes and preventive actions identified. Develop local monitoring systems in the transition period of the full implementation of ICS. (BH2)
2. Ensure all UASC and YP are supported to access suitable good quality accommodation and those who are care leavers and are able to access permanent independent housing where their status allows this. (JAR action plan)
3. Improve access for all UASC and YP to leisure and community activities by ensuring inclusion in the Participation Strategy, LAC discount card scheme, LAC Forums and activity schemes. (MPC1)
4. Work with the LALC service to develop a clear financial strategy providing a fair and equitable access to financial support, life chances grants and transition to state benefits. (JAR action plan)
5. Continue to increase the number of UASC and YP who access and sustain education, employment or training opportunities. (AEW2)
6. Improve the links between the UASC Team and mainstream children's services within the Children's Trust, ensuring full inclusion in all areas around health, education, housing/accommodation, leisure and cultural activities etc.

Resources, Budget and Staffing in 2007-2008

- *Brief statement about resources, including staffing numbers, staffing budget, non-staffing budget, income and total resource.*
- *Comment on how resources are being targeted to priorities, including support for professional development of staff*
- *Refer to use of capital assets to achieve best value*
- *Refer to any 'Gershon' efficiencies that are planned i.e. doing more with the same resources, doing the same with less resources or invest to save initiatives.*

Current Team Structure:

1 fte Team Manager
0.58 fte Social Worker
3 fte Personal Adviser
0.5 Business Support Officer
0.5 Administrative Assistant

The Team is also currently supporting three trainee Social Worker Posts.

The current structure is under review and in order to meet statutory requirements (CA '89 and Leaving Care Act 2000) and meet the JAR action plan and C and YPP objectives, a plan has been put forward to revise the structure of the team in the following way:

1 fte Team Manager
2 fte Social work Posts
3 fte Personal Adviser
0.5 Business Support Officer
0.5 Admin Officer

The trainee posts will be available to fill vacancies across CS&S teams not ring fenced to UASC.

The above proposals are being considered in light of the current casework but also the context of emerging legislation regarding LA and Home Office responsibilities towards UASC and YP. New legislation and guidelines which came into force April 1st may have the effect of reducing the number of UASC arriving and/or remaining in the UK. However the effect of this may not be seen immediately as all current cases are not affected. Planning services over the next two years will need to take the new legislation into account and the context of reducing numbers of referrals.

The UASC has taken the positive step of signing up to the London Asylum Seeking Consortium which has enabled access to accommodation services underwritten by the consortium (LASC). RBK have been invited to work closely with LASC on a post 18 pilot project which should bring areas of best practice and resource management closer to the service.

Budget 2007 – 2008

The budget for services for UASC is made up in the following way:

Grant funding from the Home Office dependent upon the number of UASC's referred and remaining as open cases

Under 16's	£721.49 per week.
16 - 17 years	£323.12 per week.
Over 18	dependent upon circumstances

Base budget from RBK of £ 280,000

Changes to the grant circumstances and the variance in referrals makes it difficult to predict overall spend. Regular budget review is maintained and cost and grant balance prediction is currently being worked on.

Contribution to Key Service Developments in the Children and Young People's Plan/Cultural Strategy/Adult Learning Plan

Brief statement about how your team will contribute to service developments to support children, young people and families. Include references to e.g. working in school clusters, extended schools and multi-disciplinary teams or services.

The UASC is committed to working in a multi disciplinary way and is working as part of Looked After Services to achieve this. Plans are being developed to ensure fair and appropriate access to health and education services for UASC.

The service is developing in line with mainstream children's services (JAR action) and is well represented through the children and young people's ECM sub Groups. There are clear objectives relating to UASC within the Children and Young Peoples Plan.

Medium Term Plan Shaping Principles

Say how your team plan objectives contribute to the shaping principles set out in Kingston's Medium Term Plan 'Changing Kingston – Choosing our Future'

- *Prevention:* The team are supporting prevention by ensuring assessed need is appropriately met and interventions are timely and appropriate.
- *Personalisation, choice and control:* Through consultation and empowerment UASC and YP are encouraged to be self determining and as independent as possible. Particularly through education employment and training.
- *Local settings:* Wherever possible UASC are encouraged to participate in local events and use local resources and contribute to their development.
- *Customer focus:* The team has already developed a user friendly Duty system which is well understood by UASC. This is due for review and expansion where necessary.
- *Working with Partners:* Engage and encourage work with the community and voluntary sector, especially relevant cultural and faith groups. The team also work with a range of partner agencies both within and outside of the Children's Trust.

Consultation with service users and opportunities for participation by users in deciding priorities and service developments

Brief statement about how you have consulted stakeholders and partners, and enabled participation by young people and adults in decisions about your priorities and new and existing service developments. Refer to any useful surveys or consultation exercises and how information from these has helped shape your team priorities for improvement

All UASC who are Looked after have regular consultation regarding their care plans prior to each statutory review. In addition UASC have access to the Looked After Children's Forum facilitated by the LAC Participation Officer. All UASC where appropriate are consulted regarding accommodation and housing issues. Interpreters are used to support the consultation process. Newsletters and flyers are used to notify UASC of particular events or groups which are of interest.

Consultation with a particular group of UASC has resulted in the provision of more suitable accommodation as a priority action for the service.

Equalities

- *Identify where your team is in meeting the Equality Standards and actions to achieve level 3.*
- *Comment on completed equality impact assessments in 2005-2006 and plans to carry out assessments in 2006-2007 on new policies or service developments*
- *Identify team plan objectives which will impact on Equalities*

2007/08

EQIA Assessments will be carried out on:

- LASC Arrangements for Post 18 services
- Accommodation strategy
- Financial policy and process

Team Plan objectives which impact upon equality:

All 2007/08 Team Objectives impact upon equality issues due to the diverse nature of the client group and the current structures local and national which have an effect upon access to services. Equality and fair access to services are central to the issue of aligning UASC Team more closely with the mainstream children's services across the Children's Trust.

Risk Assessments and Business Continuity

- *Identify key risks which could affect delivery of priorities and service quality, and actions to minimise these. Refer to Corporate Risk Register circulated with team planning guidance:*
Risks would include the ability to recruit and retain suitably qualified and competent staff. This is a complex service area and does not attract a large response to recruitment campaigns.
Shortage of good quality accommodation in the local area and a market which drives up costs. Temporary accommodation hard to access and often unsuitable.
Changing government priorities which effect numbers of entrants and the grant funding.
Tracking young people and ensuring compliance in claiming benefits remains a challenge.
- *Set out actions to ensure that services can continue in the event of major disruption or emergency, e.g. flooding, IT system failure, fire etc.*
In the event of catastrophic failure of local systems a duty system would be re provided in a local outstation. Providing global communications infrastructure still available contact of clients would be via mobile ICT. Cascade of staff contact information held by team and central administration.
Current and incoming casework would be prioritised by using traffic light system and risk assessment signed of by senior member of staff available.0.
- *Identify actions to ensure internal control requirements are fulfilled.*
Review of staffing function undertaken by Team Manager and Strategic Manager via supervision process.
Financial arrangements monitored monthly.
Case records and complaints scrutinised by Team Manager.

Children and Young People's Plan Objective	Give priority to the physical and mental health needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people. Ensuring all UASC and YP who are LAC or Care Leavers have where appropriate, access to CAMHS, health assessments, dental checks, immunisations and clear health plans, with clear outcomes and preventive actions identified. Develop local monitoring systems in the transition period of the full implementation of ICS.
Cultural Strategy/Adult Learning Plan Objective	
Lead Officer	Alan Thorne
Monitoring and Evaluation	Monitored by lead officer, with team in team meetings, and with lead officer and line manager in supervision. This objective will also be monitored through the Health Matters Strategy Group
Resources and Staffing	Resources and staffing as section above

What are we going to do?	How are we going to achieve it?	By when	By whom	How will we know we are successful in achieving the objective?
<i>Complete one of these action plan pages for each objective</i>	<i>key tasks and milestones</i>	<i>month, year</i>		<i>Performance Indicators/outcomes. Express these as measurable outcomes. Use existing key PIs where appropriate</i>
Ensure all new referrals have timely access to health assessment	Social workers and PAs use UASC Health Screening tool to identify health need. New arrivals registered with GP	July 2007 On going	Alan Thorne/LAC Nurse	% of newly arrived UASC having access to a comprehensive health check
Ensure Annual Medicals and dental checks are up to date.	Agree role and remit of LAC Nurse in respect of UASC service. Implement local tracking and alert system to monitor due dates. Review progress at Health Matters Strategy Group.	July 2007 Sept 2007	Tim Wells/John Budden/Alan Thorne	

Children and Young People's Plan Objective	Ensure all UASC and YP are supported to access suitable good quality accommodation and those who are care leavers and are able to access permanent independent housing where their status allows this.
Cultural Strategy/Adult Learning Plan Objective	
Lead Officer	Alan Thorne
Monitoring and Evaluation	Monitored by lead officer, with team in team meetings, and with lead officer and line manager in supervision
Resources and Staffing	Resources and staffing as section above

What are we going to do?	How are we going to achieve it?	By when	By whom	How will we know we are successful in achieving the objective?
<i>Complete one of these action plan pages for each objective</i>	<i>key tasks and milestones</i>	<i>month, year</i>		<i>Performance Indicators/outcomes. Express these as measurable outcomes. Use existing key PIs where appropriate</i>
Ensure adequacy of housing and independent support	Partnership arrangements through London Asylum Seeking Consortium (LASC) Pathway plans reflect all areas of need and measures to address this. Representation at Young Peoples Accommodation Panel.	On going	Alan Thorne/ Catherine Pickering	All young people live in suitable housing
UASC with right to remain have access to permanent housing options	Strategic Manager to authorise nominations. Audit current and future demand. Develop clear protocol regarding accommodation issues with Housing	On going	Tim Wells Catherine Pickering Alan Thorne/Tim Wells	% of successful nominations Protocol in place

Children and Young People's Plan Objective	Improve access for all UASC and YP to leisure and community activities by ensuring inclusion in the Participation Strategy, LAC discount card scheme, LAC Forums and activity schemes.
Cultural Strategy/Adult Learning Plan Objective	
Lead Officer	Alan Thorne
Monitoring and Evaluation	Monitored by lead officer, with team in team meetings, and with lead officer and line manager in supervision
Resources and Staffing	Resources and staffing as section above

What are we going to do?	How are we going to achieve it?	By when	By whom	How will we know we are successful in achieving the objective?
<i>Complete one of these action plan pages for each objective</i>	<i>key tasks and milestones</i>	<i>month, year</i>		<i>Performance Indicators/outcomes. Express these as measurable outcomes. Use existing key PIs where appropriate</i>
Ensure maximum attendance at statutory reviews for all LAC who are UASC	Audit current performance. Review and revise material and information used for consultation and participation Raise awareness with Social Workers.	July 2007 On going	Alan Thorne LAC Participation Officer	Number of young people participation in their statutory reviews.
Implement and raise awareness of the LAC Discount Card "Re: Active"	Agree criteria for issue. Plan and stage a launch event.	July 2007 August 2007	Participation Officer	Number of cards issued Groups implemented, numbers attending, evaluation and feedback Improve access to Leisure and Out Of School activities.

Children and Young People's Plan Objective	Work with the LALC service to develop a clear financial strategy providing a fair and equitable access to financial support, life chances grants and transition to state benefits.
Cultural Strategy/Adult Learning Plan Objective	
Lead Officer	Alan Thorne
Monitoring and Evaluation	Monitored by lead officer, with team in team meetings, and with lead officer and line manager in supervision
Resources and Staffing	Resources and staffing as section above

What are we going to do?	How are we going to achieve it?	By when	By whom	How will we know we are successful in achieving the objective?
<i>Complete one of these action plan pages for each objective</i>	<i>key tasks and milestones</i>	<i>month, year</i>		<i>Performance Indicators/outcomes. Express these as measurable outcomes. Use existing key PIs where appropriate</i>
Agree clear process for financial support for all Care Leavers to include UASC	Audit current arrangement for financial support across UASC & LALC Team	September 2007	Alan Thorne/John Budden UASC Business Support	Financial procedures agreed and implemented. % of UASC care leavers accessing LC Grant and Life Chances Grants Number of UASC care leavers in supported housing. % of UASC claiming appropriate benefits.
Apportion Leaving Care Budgets and Life Chances Budgets and Supported Housing Budgets to enable access by all Care Leavers (inc. UASC).	Realign relevant budgets to cost centre managed by Strategic Manager. Monitor spend across UASC service and LALC service and review	May 2007	Tim Wells	
Ensure where relevant all UASC claim appropriate benefits.	Review all current cases to ensure maximum benefit reclaim. Monitor and track claims.	July 2007	UASC Business Support	

Children and Young People's Plan Objective	Continue to increase the number of UASC and YP who access and sustain education, employment or training opportunities. <i>(Cross reference to LALC Team Plan objective)</i>
Cultural Strategy/Adult Learning Plan Objective	
Lead Officer	Alan Thorne
Monitoring and Evaluation	Monitored by lead officer, with team in team meetings, and with lead officer and line manager in supervision. Evaluated through Education Matters Strategy Group.
Resources and Staffing	Resources and staffing as section above

What are we going to do?	How are we going to achieve it?	By when	By whom	How will we know we are successful in achieving the objective?
<i>Complete one of these action plan pages for each objective</i>	<i>key tasks and milestones</i>	<i>month, year</i>		<i>Performance Indicators/outcomes. Express these as measurable outcomes. Use existing key PIs where appropriate</i>
Increase the numbers of UASC who are care leavers in further education, employment and training.	Target those who are NEET – develop action plans with the help of Connexions, and housing providers and carers. Ensure all UASC who are care leavers have a Pathway Plan that is high quality and effective. Work in cooperation with LALC Team	On going	Alan Thorne Education Matters Strategy Group	Proportion of Care Leavers in EET
Develop work experience options for UASC Care Leavers within the council and with partner agencies	Establish high level support and develop cross council awareness and co-operation for work experience. (With LALC Team) Identify cost implications, confirm funding. Establish project protocols and guidelines.	October 2007	Alan Thorne Education Matters Strategy Group	Protocol established Number of work experience places available.

Children and Young People's Plan Objective	Improve the links between the UASC Team and mainstream children's services within the Children's Trust, ensuring full inclusion in all areas around health, education, housing/accommodation, leisure and cultural activities etc.
Cultural Strategy/Adult Learning Plan Objective	
Lead Officer	Alan Thorne
Monitoring and Evaluation	Monitored by lead officer, with team in team meetings, and with lead officer and line manager in supervision
Resources and Staffing	Resources and staffing as section above

What are we going to do?	How are we going to achieve it?	By when	By whom	How will we know we are successful in achieving the objective?
<i>Complete one of these action plan pages for each objective</i>	<i>key tasks and milestones</i>	<i>month, year</i>		<i>Performance Indicators/outcomes. Express these as measurable outcomes. Use existing key PIs where appropriate</i>
Ensure UASC issues are included and addressed in relevant planning and development forums across the Children's Trust	UASC Team Manager to join and participate in The Education and Health Matters Strategy Groups. UASC issues addressed through corporate parenting.	On going On going	Alan Thorne Alan Thorne/LAC Participation	Representation and attendance
Best practice in with UASC is followed.	Team Training, attendance at LASC workshops, Conference material used to inform and develop practice.	July 2007 and on going	Alan Thorne/Catherine Pickering	. Attendance at Training and seminars
Ensure statutory requirements under CA'89 and 2000 are fulfilled for UASC	Pathway planning reflects multi agency involvement and inclusion access issues are addressed. Pathway plans are regularly reviewed and updated	On going	Alan Thorne	All young people have an up to date pathway plan

Professional and Workforce Development, and Training

Evaluation of the Impact of Training and Professional Development Last Year

The team has gone through a change in personnel and management arrangements during the last year 2006/07. Training opportunities have therefore been minimal. However the new arrangements have led to the identification of clear training need and this will be addressed in the current year's training initiatives.

The implementation of ICS in late 2006 has had an impact and all staff have received training on the new system.

Key priorities for professional and workforce development and training of the team in 2007-2008

1. Professional Practice and Team Development - (Training specification agreed & planned for June 2007)
2. Effective Pathway planning and Leaving Care Support.
3. Planning Better Outcomes and Support for UASC – New Govt. Guidance.
4. Further and refresher ICS.
5. Participation and consultation.

Training and Professional Development Plan 2007/08

Priority for Training and Development	Professional practice and development which includes the understanding and application of relevant legislation. Children Act 1989 and 2000, Safeguarding issues, Immigration issues, current and new govt. guidance.
Lead Officer	Alan Thorne
Staff Involved	All
Resources/Costs	L&CS Training Budget, UASC resources for local and specialist training

Key Activities	Training Method	Expected Impact
Develop and agree training programme	2 day whole team training	All staff have clear knowledge of their role and statutory responsibility
Appraisal and awareness of new initiatives and practice around UASC	Conferences, Workshops and Local Networking	Good practice is disseminated throughout the team and good knowledge base is built upon.
Individual specialisms developed	Identification of knowledge gaps and specific targeted training	Advice and in house specialist roles developed