

GREEN GROUP AMENDMENT

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children abandoned in city's hotels

That the relevant changes are made to the recommendations as shown below in ~~strikethrough~~ and ***bold italics***:

Council notes:

1. In July 2021 the Home Office began contracting with hotel owners in Brighton & Hove and elsewhere to house ***unaccompanied*** asylum-seeking children ***(UASC) as well as adults and families with children in additional hotels;***
2. Alarming reports that at least 222 ~~unaccompanied children~~ ***UASC*** placed by the Home Office in hotels nationally – many in Brighton & Hove – have gone missing;
3. The Home Office has a mandatory statutory duty under section 55 of the Borders Act 2009 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK;
4. Local authorities have mandatory statutory duties under the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need within their area;
5. The mandatory National Transfer Scheme (***NTS***) is intended to promptly transfer ~~unaccompanied children~~ ***UASC***, on their arrival in the UK, to statutory local authority care ***and many local authorities are under their mandated quota of 0.1% of their child population***
6. ***There is a cost to the general fund for caring for UASC due to gaps in Government funding compared to cost***

Council requests:

- 6.7. The Chief Executive writes to the Home Secretary asking for:
 - ***A written*** explanation of the legal basis upon which they are moving unaccompanied asylum seeking children outside of the local authority area of their arrival in the UK into hotels in Brighton & Hove being used as “intake centers” , and provide legal clarity about whether the Home Office accepts responsibility of ‘corporate parent’ for the “children placed in those “intake centers”
 - ***A justification on why UASC who are wrongfully age assessed as adults and placed in an ‘adult’ hotel become the responsibility of the local authority until the NTS transfer takes place, which takes many weeks, sometimes months.***
 - ***A review of the funding rate for UASC children in care and care leavers and a review of the rate for councils who take spontaneous arrivals***
 - ***An amendment to the date which local authorities are judged to be at the higher threshold for the UASC funding rate***

7. ~~requesting an urgent meeting with the Home Office to discuss the welfare needs of and adequate funding for unaccompanied children~~
8. A report or briefing to the next CYPS meeting to clarify:
 - a. At what point in the process Brighton and Hove City Council is informed by the Home Office that a child is being transferred out of area to a hotel or “extension of an intake center” located by the HO in Brighton and Hove
 - b. What **challenge officers have put to the Home Office to ensure they** ~~specific steps are being taken to safeguard children once officers are made aware of~~ **upon their arrival in hotels as well as highlighting the specific areas of concern the council has ensured have been addressed over the last eighteen months**
 - c. **The care delivered by the city council for UASC in care and care leavers and the impact of the rise in quota from 0.07 to 0.1%**

Proposed by: Cllr Allbrooke

Seconded by: Cllr Powell

Recommendations to read if carried:

Council notes:

1. In July 2021 the Home Office began contracting with hotel owners in Brighton & Hove and elsewhere to house unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) as well as adults and families with children in additional hotels;
2. Alarming reports that at least 222 ~~unaccompanied children~~ UASC placed by the Home Office in hotels nationally – many in Brighton & Hove – have gone missing;
3. The Home Office has a mandatory statutory duty under section 55 of the Borders Act 2009 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK;
4. Local authorities have mandatory statutory duties under the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need within their area;
5. The mandatory National Transfer Scheme (NTS) is intended to promptly transfer UASC, on their arrival in the UK, to statutory local authority care and many local authorities are under their mandated quota of 0.1% of their child population
6. There is a cost to the general fund for caring for UASC due to gaps in Government funding compared to cost

Council requests:

7. The Chief Executive writes to the Home Secretary asking for:
 - A written explanation of the legal basis upon which they are moving unaccompanied asylum seeking children outside of the local authority area of their arrival in the UK into hotels in Brighton & Hove being used as “intake centers” , and provide legal clarity about whether the Home Office accepts responsibility of ‘corporate parent’ for the “children placed in those “intake centers”
 - A justification on why UASC who are wrongfully age assessed as adults and placed in an ‘adult’ hotel become the responsibility of the

local authority until the NTS transfer takes place, which takes many weeks, sometimes months.

- A review of the funding rate for UASC children in care and care leavers and a review of the rate for councils who take spontaneous arrivals
- An amendment to the date which local authorities are judged to be at the higher threshold for the UASC funding rate

8. A report or briefing to the next CYPS meeting to clarify:

- a. At what point in the process Brighton and Hove City Council is informed by the Home Office that a child is being transferred out of area to a hotel or “extension of an intake center” located by the HO in Brighton and Hove
- b. What challenge officers have put to the Home Office to ensure they safeguard children upon their arrival in hotels as well as highlighting the specific areas of concern the council has ensured have been addressed over the last eighteen months
- c. The care delivered by the city council for UASC in care and care leavers and the impact of the rise in quota from 0.07 to 0.1%

