

Brighton & Hove City Council

Extraordinary Council

Agenda Item 3

Subject: Urgent action to safeguard unaccompanied children seeking asylum

Date of meeting: 2 March 2023

Proposer: Councillor Sankey
Seconded: Councillor O'Quinn

Ward(s) affected: All

Notice of Motion

Labour Group

Council notes that:

1. At least 136 children, equivalent to five classrooms, have gone missing from Brighton & Hove since July 2021;
2. 76 of these children remain unaccounted for;
3. The national press have reported whistle-blower and child protection testimony stating that serious organised crime have targeted these children, kidnapping them from the hotel where they have been abandoned;
4. This catastrophic break-down in child safeguarding shames our great City and undermines our status as a City of Sanctuary.

Therefore, this Council calls for an urgent officer report to a Special P&R Committee meeting as soon as reasonably practicable, which addresses the following requests:

5. That the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services immediately instructs external legal counsel, expert in public, immigration, asylum and human rights law, on Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC)'s obligations under the Children Act 1989 and the legal options available to BHCC to ultimately:
 - 5.1 Close down the hotel to unaccompanied children seeking asylum;
 - 5.2 Prevent the Home Secretary moving any more unaccompanied children into the City outside of the statutory National Transfer Scheme;
 - 5.3 Achieve the immediate placement of children accommodated at the hotel into local authority care placements across the country through the NTS.
6. That this legal advice is made available, in confidence, to all Group Leaders within a week of this meeting taking place.
7. That the Chief Executive refers BHCC to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel to investigate the role of BHCC in the disappearances of these children, including all safeguarding acts and omissions.

