

Report to: Cabinet

Subject: Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Capacity Building Grant 2017-18

Date of meeting: 16th March 2018

Report from: Alison Jeffery, Director of Children, Families and Education

Report by: Sarah Newman, Deputy Director Children & Families Services

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek agreement to allocate the recently announced Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) capacity building grant, to be paid in 2017-18, towards supporting the service provision for UASC in 2018-19.
- 1.2 The UASC grant funding allocated to Portsmouth is £188,126. It is not subject to any reporting requirements and will be paid via a S31 grant, Consequently it is unlikely that this will be ring fenced and therefore Cabinet approval is required in order to allocate this grant to the children's social care portfolio to support the continued development and delivery of care arrangements for UASC arriving in Portsmouth through the Port.
- 1.3 This funding will be used to continue to fund the additional staff help develop and maintain the service capacity required to fulfil our statutory duties to this cohort of children. This includes: social work support, placement costs, management oversight, independent review, and care leaver services.
- 1.4 Additional funding has been allocated to enable all local authorities to build their capacity to meet the additional demands of UASC. Portsmouth has been allocated £188,126 for this purpose. It is planned to use this to funding to maintain the statutory social care service to the increasing number of UASC coming through the Portsmouth port.

2. Recommendation

- **2.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the allocation of the UASC capacity building grant of £188,126 to the Children's Social Care portfolio for use in 2018-19.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Increasing numbers of UASC have been arriving in Portsmouth on ferries from both France and Spain. Between April 2016 and March 2017 we received 39 UASC into the city and into the care of local authority. Between April 2017 and December 2017 we received a further 60 UASC into the city and into the care of the Local Authority.
- 3.2 Local Authorities do receive some funding for the care of UASC, but these costs do not cover social work, management and business support, and independent reviewing officer time. We have estimated that we would have to spend an additional £1 million a year in meeting our statutory responsibilities for this cohort of children at the current level.
- 3.3. In July 2016 the government introduced a voluntary dispersal scheme to share the responsibility for UASC coming into the UK across local authorities. Each local authority was given a quota per 10,000 resident population dependent on size and the dispersal scheme was set up to assist when authorities were getting close to or going above this number.
- 3.4 In Portsmouth there are currently 411 children in care, 75 of whom are unaccompanied minors. Our quota per 10,000 is 30. To date the system hasn't worked well for Portsmouth and up until December 2017 we had only dispersed 15 children.
- 3.6 In February 2018, the government announced that there would be UASC capacity building grants allocated to all local authorities in r 2017-18, in recognition of the need to safeguard the wellbeing of UASC entering the UK.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 The capacity in the social care service to meet the additional needs of UASC is stretched, as is the budget.
- 4.2 Portsmouth City Council is expecting a full inspection of Children's Services imminently. This will include a review of the support we provide to UASC.

5. Equality impact assessment (EIA)

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment for the service has been updated to include the work with unaccompanied asylum seeking children and is attached as an appendix to the report.

6. Legal implications

6.1 The statutory duties of local authorities in relation to the support of UASC are the same as for other LAC. The local authority has no control over the numbers of children located at the Port and must provide the care and support detailed in the Care Planning Regulations 2010 and the Children Act 1989.

6.2 The grant funding identified is provided under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 and is to be expended for the purposes described in the respective grant determinations.

7. Director of Finance Comments

7.1 The purpose of the UASC capacity building grant is to support local authorities in developing their capacity in caring for UASC and UASC Care Leavers. The grant allocation to Portsmouth amounts to £188,126. It is to be paid in 2017-18 financial year but appears to have no time or reporting restrictions on its usage

7.2 Additional funding, has been provided through specific bids to the Migration Fund to also support services to UASC.

Signed by: Alison Jeffery, Director of Children, Families and Education

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Appendix 1 - Children's Services Equality Impact Assessment.

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by: