

## Corporate Parenting Panel

26 January 2024

### Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Team



---

## Report of Rachel Farnham, Head of Children's Social Care, Durham County Council

### Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

### Purpose of the Report

- 1 To update on the progress of the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) team.

Including:

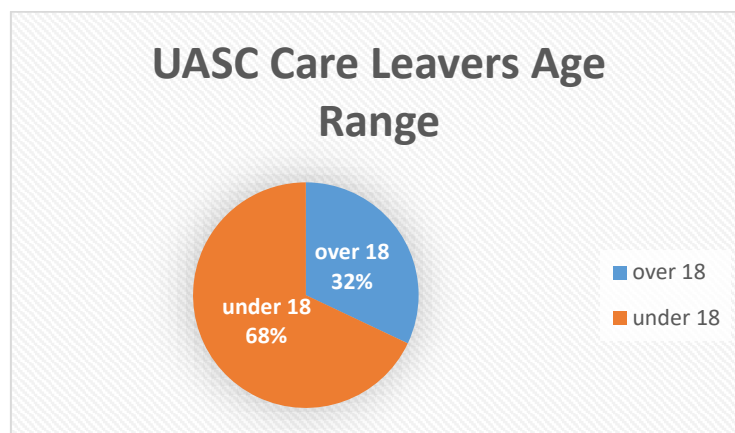
- The Home Office Transfer Scheme;
- The structure of the team;
- Young people's involvement in service development;
- Multi agency development;
- Events.

### Recommendation(s)

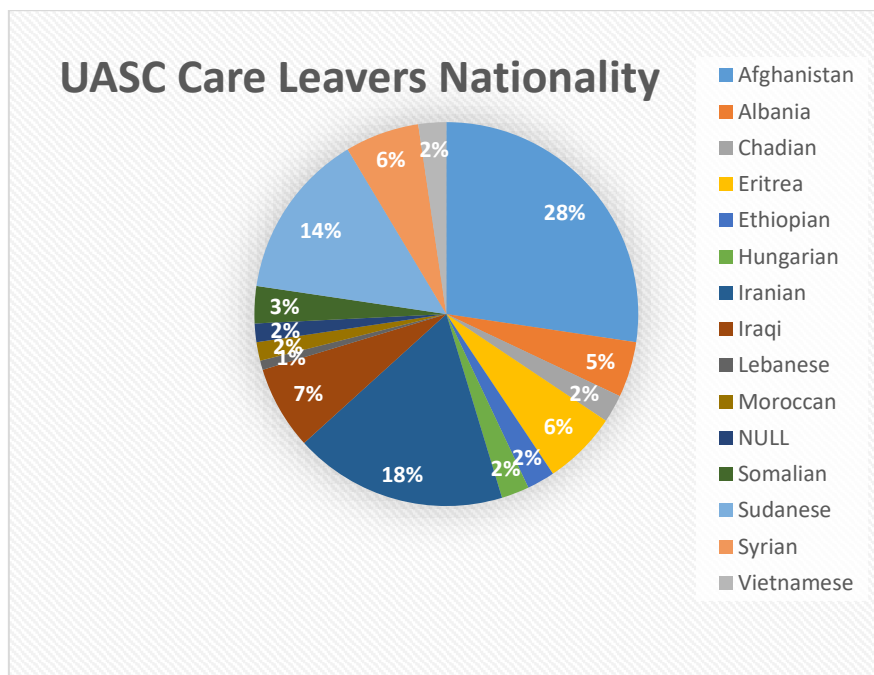
- 2 Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to:
  - (a) note the contents of this report.

## Background

- 3 The UASC Team was established in February 2022 due to the increased demand for social work capacity and caring provisions for UASC referred to Durham by the Home Office Asylum Scheme. Until this point UASC had been allocated social workers throughout the Children Looked After Service.
- 4 Team Manager Nathan Head was appointed in February 2022 and the team was set up as part of the Care Leaver Service.
- 5 There are currently 87 UASC in our care and 41 Care Leavers.



- 6 We are working with young people across 14 Nationalities, the most predominant being Afghanistan, Iranian and Sudanese.



## **Structure of the team**

- 7 The team consists of: One team manager, three and half social workers and four young people's advisors.

## **Developments**

- 8 Having a focussed team allows training and development to take place, some areas this has been achieved in are:
- Age Assessment Training;
  - UASC/Care Leavers, care planning training;
  - Development session on the voice of the UASC and what support they would like;
  - Improving practise and assessments for UASC;
  - Refugee Family Reunion;
  - Legal Frameworks with regards to UASC.
- 9 We receive developmental and training opportunities from the North East Migration Partnership.
- 10 We have focussed on trauma informed training.
- 11 Nathan Head is the team manager, he attends the regional group where we learn from the experience of other authorities, including Redcar and Cleveland who also have a UASC focussed team.
- 12 Sharon Davey, strategic manager attends the refugee and resettlement meeting to support in partnership working to provide support and services for our young people.
- 13 The UASC multi agency group meets monthly. This allows multi agency information to be shared and consideration to be given to how we work together, including health, education and the voluntary sector to meet this group of young people's needs and support both physical and mental health recovery.
- 14 We have opened a new Care Leavers Hub in Stanley with a focus on UASC and an area for solicitor appointments with our young people. Two UASC young people have helped us with the development of this Hub from the beginning of the project.

- 15 We have welcome packs established and are thankful of the support from Corporate Parenting to make this possible.
- 16 We have young people represented on the Children in Care Council.
- 17 Community and celebration events continue including for Ede, Cricket days and weekly football sessions.



## Challenges

- 18 It is difficult to find a foster home for young people under 16 in the North East of England. We have young people in foster homes in the South of England and employ an agency social worker in London to be accessible for these young people.
- 19 Durham continues to take a high percentage of UASC young people in comparison to our regional neighbours. We are seeking to build capacity within the team and continue to work with local supported housing providers to develop provisions.
- 20 There has been a delay in the Home Office processing Asylum claims which means that we continue to fund young people's accommodation and daily living costs beyond being 18.

## Conclusion

- 21 The team has had a positive quarter with good community links form and stable homes for our young people.
- 22 There are developments for the future for our UASC team such as building on our placement options for our young people.

## Authors

Lesley Baldry, Service Manager  
Sharon Davey, Strategic Manager

Tel: 03000 265363  
Tel: 03000 266214

---

## **Appendix 1: Implications**

---

### **Legal Implications**

We are working within the National Transfer Scheme.

### **Finance**

This is regularly tracked within Finance clinic.

### **Consultation**

This report is for update and celebration of successes. Therefore, there are no implications within this report.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

The team and service have a direct focus on supporting and enabling our young people to champion their cultural and diversity needs.

### **Climate Change**

This report is for update and celebration of successes. Therefore, there are no implications within this report.

### **Human Rights**

This report is for update and celebration of successes. Therefore, there are no implications within this report.

### **Crime and Disorder**

This report is for update and celebration of successes. Therefore, there are no implications within this report.

### **Staffing**

This is reviewed within Sufficiency Board.

### **Accommodation**

This is reviewed within Sufficiency Board.

### **Risk**

This report is for update and celebration of successes. Therefore, there are no implications within this report.

### **Procurement**

This report is for update and celebration of successes. Therefore, there are no implications within this report.