

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice Services
to Leadership Panel (Special)
of 1 March 2022**

**Subject: South Ayrshire Proposal to Support Unaccompanied
and Asylum-Seeking Children**

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Leadership Panel in relation to the previous proposal on 22 November 2021 in relation to receiving Unaccompanied and Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) to South Ayrshire.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Panel:

- 2.1.1 notes the progress that has been made to date in relation to the activity that has taken place surrounding the identification of foster carers for unaccompanied and asylum-seeking children and the provision of support for young people, where applicable from 16-17 years of age, within Housing Support Services;**
- 2.1.2 notes the change in the National Transfer Scheme and the mandating now applicable to the Local Authority;**
- 2.1.3 notes the Short Life Working Group now operates as a Settlement Hub when UASC are identified to come to South Ayrshire and the creation of a Strategic Oversight Group; and**
- 2.1.4 requests that further updates are provided via the Members' Bulletin.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Following the initial paper to Leadership Panel in October 2020 by the Head of Service for Children's Health Care and Justice in regards to our approach to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), A Short Life Working Group (SLWG) was established made up of multi-agency partners to take forward the commitment from South Ayrshire Council. There has also been on going engagement with COSLA and the United Nations Refugee Agency, to ensure that South Ayrshire were as informed as possible as to the receiving of UASC and had the appropriate infrastructure to support children/ young people who were nominated to come.

3.2 Following the previous report to Leadership Panel on 22 November 2021, there has been the implementation of the National Transfer Scheme, mandating Local Authorities to provide care for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. For South Ayrshire this equates to receiving two children/young people per cycle over the year of 2022, which could result in between 6 and 8 young people per year coming to South Ayrshire.

4. Proposals

4.1 The Voluntary National Transfer Scheme was introduced to Scotland in July 2021 and subsequently was mandated in the United Kingdom on 23 November 2021. Officially, this started on 14 December 2021.

4.2 The Mandating of the NTS introduced a Scotland wide rota. Scotland has been allocated a total of 44 young people out of 650 arrivals in the UK. South Ayrshire will be allocated 2 young people at each turn of the rota. The rota operates on a 2/3 monthly basis. COSLA have advised that the number and pattern of new UASC arrivals has currently slowed down. However, it could be the South Ayrshire may be initially asked to take between 6 to 8 Children Young people through the scheme for the year of 2022, however this could be continued beyond into 2023.

4.3 Through ongoing recruitment and development of resources, two in-house Foster Carers have been identified to provide care to UASC. Additionally, Quarriers Housing Support Accommodation in Ayr has been identified for young people who are assessed and able to live in semi-supported independent living being supported by the Young People Support and Transition Team (YPST).

4.4 The original South Ayrshire Short Life Working Group has now been made into a Settlement Hub for UASC. The Hub provides a practical multi-service approach to welcoming young people arriving in South Ayrshire and to ensure appropriate support and resources are identified to meet their needs. The Settlement Hub is multi-disciplinary led and membership includes representation across South Ayrshire Council Services and the Health and Social Care Partnership.

4.5 Given the introduction of the National Transfer Scheme and future resource implications for South Ayrshire Council, there will also be the creation of a Strategic Over Sight Group for UASC. This group will be made up of Health and Social Care, Health, Housing and Education to over-see the short, medium and long term planning for those Children and young people who come to South Ayrshire seeking Asylum. This group will link directly with the South Ayrshire Settlement Hub described above.

4.6 In January 2022, 2 UASC had been identified to arrive in South Ayrshire. One young person has remained with the Entry Authority in London due to her personal and familial connections in the surrounding area. A further referral was received for a 15 year old male from Afghanistan who arrived on 31 January 2022 and will be living with in-house Foster Carers in South Ayrshire and will attend a local High School.

4.7 The Panel is requested to consider the following:

4.7.1 take note of the contents of this report and acknowledge the work of the Settlement Hub;

4.7.2 note the procurement of resources through in-house Foster Care and Housing Support Services;

4.7.3 note the mandatory nature of the National Transfer Scheme necessitates that South Ayrshire Council will receive further referrals for UASC as per cycles of transition (see 4.6 above); and

4.7.4 requests that further updates are provided via the Members' Bulletin.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

5.1 This report reflects that South Ayrshire Council are compliant with the mandated National Transfer Scheme which came into effect on 23 November 2021 from the UK Government.

5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 The National Transfer Scheme has been introduced to provide funding for UASC dependent on their age, for under 18's funding of £52,195 per year is provided and for over 18's funding of £14,040 per year is provided. The cost of supporting the children will be met from the funding received; based on current costs of foster care and care leavers supports, the funding will be adequate to meet any care provision.

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 There is ongoing recruitment of additional Foster Carers specifically to care for UASC in South Ayrshire.

8. Risk

8.1 Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations

8.2.1 Rejecting the recommendations may impact on the reputation of the Council, and could result in legal action should the Local Authority not comply with the National Transfer Scheme without just cause.

9. Equalities

9.1 The proposals in this report were recently equality impact assessed and, as the completed Equalities Impact Assessment still applies, it is attached as [Appendix 1](#).

10. Sustainable Development Implications

10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

11.1 An options appraisal has been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report. [Details are contained in [Appendix 1](#)].

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Commitment 2 and 3 of the Council Plan: Closing the Gap/ Reduce poverty and disadvantage; and Grow Well, Live Well, Age Well/Health and Care systems that meet people's needs.

13. Results of Consultation

13.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.

13.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor William Grant, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, and also members of the Short Life Working Group (which includes the Champions Board and other significant stakeholders, all of whom are supportive of the proposals), and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

14. Next Steps for Decision Tracking Purposes

14.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice Services will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the Leadership Panel in the 'Council and Leadership Panel Decision Log' at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

<i>Implementation</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Managed by</i>
Further update to be provided via the Members' Bulletin	31 March 2023	Head of Children's Health Care and Justice

Background Papers **Report to Leadership Panel of 27 October 2020 - [South Ayrshire's Proposal to Support Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children](#)**

Report to Leadership Panel of 23 November 2021 – [South Ayrshire's Proposal to Support Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children](#)

Person to Contact **Mark Inglis, Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice Services**
Elgin House, Dalmellington Road, Ayr, KA6 6AB
Phone 01292 294308
E-mail: Mark.Inglis@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Date: 23 February 2022

South Ayrshire Council Equality Impact Assessment Scoping

1. Proposal details

Proposal Title South Ayrshire's proposal to support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children	Lead Officer Mark Inglis, Head of Children's Health and Care Services
---	---

2. Which communities, groups of people, employees or thematic groups do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this proposal? Please indicate whether these would be positive or negative impacts

Community, Groups of People or Themes	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
The whole community of South Ayrshire		X
People from different racial groups, ethnic or national origin.		X
Women and/or men (boys and girls)		X
People with disabilities		X
People from particular age groups for example Older people, children and young people		X
Lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual people		X
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process to change sex		X
Pregnant women and new mothers		X
People who are married or in a civil partnership		X
People who share a particular religion or belief		X
Thematic Groups: Health, Human Rights, Rurality and Deprivation.		X

3. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that the proposal will support the Council to:

General Duty and other Equality Themes	Level of Negative and/or Positive Impact (high, medium or low)
Eliminate discrimination and harassment faced by particular communities or groups	Medium
Promote equality of opportunity between particular communities or groups	High
Foster good relations between particular communities or groups	Medium
Promote positive attitudes towards different communities or groups	High
Increase participation of particular communities or groups in public life	Medium
Improve the health and wellbeing of particular communities or groups	High
Promote the human rights of particular communities or groups	High
Tackle deprivation faced by particular communities or groups	Medium

4. Summary Assessment

Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required? (A full EIA must be carried out on all high and medium impact proposals)		YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Rationale for decision: A full EIA is required to be carried out because there will be medium/high impacts on unaccompanied asylum seeking children, the workforce and wider community.			
Signed : Mark Inglis, Head of Service for Children's Health, Care and Justice Services			
Date: 30/09/2020		Copy to equalities@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	

**SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Section One: Proposal Details*

Name of Proposal	South Ayrshire’s proposal to support Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
Lead Officer (Name/Position)	Mark Inglis, Head of Children’s Health, Care and Justice Services
Proposal Development Team (Names/Positions)	Danielle Rae, Strategy, Policy and Planning Officer
Critical friend (s)	Billy Fisher, Learning Officer

*This could include strategy, project or application: see guidance attached.

What are the main aims of the proposal?	To brief the Leadership Panel of the Health and Social Care’s present capacity and ability to offer appropriate care for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and to propose enhancing foster care services to enable South Ayrshire to offer to care for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
What are the intended outcomes of the proposal?	<p>The intended outcomes are for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to receive the support and care they require when they come to South Ayrshire and for as long as they need it, thereafter.</p> <p>This is an initial proposal to increase the number of foster carers in South Ayrshire. A more detailed report and Equality Impact Assessment will be presented to Leadership Panel by November 2021.</p>

Section Two: What are the Likely Impacts of the Proposal?

Will the proposal impact upon the whole population of South Ayrshire or particular groups within the population (please specify)	The proposed numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are very low (5 over 2 years) but there may be a significant impact on services in the areas that they will live e.g. education, health, social work.
--	---

Considering the following Protected Characteristics and themes, what likely impacts or issues does the proposal have for the group or community.

List any likely positive and/or negative impacts

Protected Characteristics	Positive and/or Negative Impacts
<p>Race: Issues relating to people of any racial group, ethnic or national origin, including gypsy travellers and migrant workers</p>	<p>Further work and research are required to ensure that there is an awareness and understanding of the racial and ethnic identity of the children who will be living in South Ayrshire. Cultural awareness training and translation requirements will be essential across services. Foster carers will require specific support and cultural awareness training to ensure they are able to care for the children to the best of their ability.</p> <p>In the recruitment drive for foster carers, we will ensure that we are encouraging people from any race or ethnic origin to apply.</p>
<p>Sex: Issues specific to women or men</p>	<p>As South Ayrshire is at a very early stage of this process, we do not know the sex of the children who will live here. Once this information is known, we will ensure that services are sensitive to the needs of the child.</p> <p>Potential foster carers of either sex will be encouraged to apply to become carers.</p>
<p>Disability: Issues relating to disabled people</p>	<p>As South Ayrshire is at a very early stage of this process, we do not know if the children who will live here have any disabilities. Once this information is known, we will ensure that the carers and services are equipped to respond to the needs of the child.</p> <p>Recruitment of new foster carers will be inclusive to ensure that potential carers with disabilities are supported to apply, if successful, receive the appropriate support throughout the process.</p>
<p>Age: Issues relating to a particular age group e.g. older people or children and young people</p>	<p>As South Ayrshire is at a very early stage of this process, we do not know the exact ages of the children who will live here. Once this information is known, we will ensure that services are appropriate to the needs of the child. The proposal is that the 5 children will be under 10 years old.</p> <p>Age assessments may be required for the children to equip services with the information to provide the most appropriate services. Cognisance must be given not only to the age but also the stage of development of the children.</p>

	Potential carers, of all ages, will be encouraged to apply to become foster carers.
Religion or Belief: issues relating to a person's religion or belief (including non-belief)	As South Ayrshire is at a very early stage of this process, we do not know the religions or belief systems of the children who will live here. Once this information is known, we will ensure that services are sensitive to the requirements of the child. Training may be required to ensure staff and carers have adequate knowledge. The recruitment of new foster carers will be sensitive and inclusive to people of all religions.
Sexual Orientation: Issues relating to a person's sexual orientation i.e. lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, heterosexual	The recruitment of new foster carers will be sensitive and inclusive to people of all religions.

<p>Marriage and Civil Partnership: Issues relating to people who are married or are in a civil partnership.</p>	<p>The recruitment of new foster carers will be sensitive and inclusive to people of any marital status.</p>
<p>Gender Reassignment: Issues relating to people who have proposed, started or completed a process to change his or her sex.</p>	<p>The recruitment of new foster carers will be sensitive and inclusive to people who have proposed, started or completed a process to change his or her sex.</p>
<p>Pregnancy and Maternity: Issues relating to the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby and the period after the birth.</p>	<p>The recruitment of new foster carers will be sensitive and inclusive to women who are pregnant or who have recently given birth.</p>
<p>Multiple / Cross Cutting Equality Issues Issues relating to multiple protected characteristics.</p>	<p>There are multiple and cross cutting equality issues. Specific considerations will need to be given to the language and cultural needs of the children. The children may also have a disability requiring specialist support.</p>
<p>Equality and Diversity Themes Particularly Relevant to South Ayrshire Council</p>	
<p>Health Issues and impacts affecting people's health</p>	<p>The health needs of the children will be required to be met by South Ayrshire. The children will be entitled to health assessments. Consideration will need to be given to ensure that the mental wellbeing of the children is also being supported. Ongoing wellbeing support needs to be considered for the foster carers.</p>
<p>Human Rights: Issues and impacts affecting people's human rights such as being treated with dignity and respect, the right to education, the right to respect for private and family life, and the right to free elections.</p>	<p>This proposal supports the human rights of the children to have family relationships, to have an education and to not experience discrimination. The rights of the children will also be upheld through South Ayrshire's incorporation of the incorporation of the UNCRC specifically Articles 3, 6, 20, 22 and 30.</p>
<p>Rurality Impacts relating to living and working in a rural community</p>	<p>Consideration will have to be given to the areas in which the children will live in terms of access to specific services and the potential of developing relationships with their peers.</p>
<p>Deprivation Issues relating to poverty and social exclusion, and the disadvantage that results from it.</p>	<p>Issues relating to poverty will be considered with carers being paid appropriately to care for the children. Mitigations for wider social exclusion will have to be considered for the children.</p>

Section Three: Evidence Used in Developing the Proposal

<p>Involvement and Consultation In assessing the impact(s) set out above what evidence has been collected from involvement, engagement or consultation? Who did you involve, when and how?</p>	<p>This is an initial proposal to increase the number of foster carers in South Ayrshire. A more detailed report and Equality Impact Assessment will be presented to Leadership Panel by November 2021 which will reflect the consultation and involvement of other services and community planning partners.</p>
<p>Data and Research In assessing the impact set out above what evidence has been collected from research or other data. Please specify <i>what</i> research was carried out or data collected, <i>when</i> and <i>how</i> this was done.</p>	<p>This is an initial proposal to increase the number of foster carers in South Ayrshire. A more detailed report and Equality Impact Assessment will be presented to Leadership Panel by November 2021 which will encompass the data and research used to develop the specific South Ayrshire response.</p>
<p>Partners data and research In assessing the impact set out above what evidence has been provided by partners. Please specify partners</p>	<p>This is an initial proposal to increase the number of foster carers in South Ayrshire. A more detailed report and Equality Impact Assessment will be presented to Leadership Panel by November 2021 which will encompass the data and research used to develop the specific South Ayrshire response.</p>
<p>Gaps and Uncertainties Have you identified any gaps or uncertainties in your understanding of the issues or impacts that need to be explored further?</p>	<p>As this is an initial proposal to increase the number of foster carers in South Ayrshire, there are many gaps and uncertainties about the details of caring for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. A more detailed report and Equality Impact Assessment will be presented to Leadership Panel by November 2021.</p>

Section Four: Detailed Action Plan to address identified gaps in:

a) evidence and

b) to mitigate negative impacts

No	Action	Lead Officer(s)	Timescale
1	A Report and Equality Impact Assessment will be presented to Leadership Panel by November 2021 providing a detailed response from South Ayrshire' community planning partners on how we are going to care for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.	Mark Inglis	November 2021
2			
3			
4			
5			

Note: Please add more rows as required.

Section Five - Performance monitoring and reporting

Considering the proposal as a whole, including its equality and diversity implications:

When is the proposal intended to come into effect?	
When will the proposal be reviewed?	
Which Scrutiny Panel will have oversight of the proposal?	Leadership Panel

Summary Equality Impact Assessment Implications & Mitigating Actions

Name of Proposal: South Ayrshire's proposal to support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

This proposal will assist or inhibit the Council's ability to eliminate discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations as follows:

Eliminate discrimination

This is an initial proposal to increase the number of foster carers in South Ayrshire. A more detailed Equality Impact Assessment will be produced in November 2021 to consider the equality impacts on unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

The assessment will need to consider the reasonable adjustments that may be required for the children and that less favourable treatment may be experienced by other groups to prioritise the needs of the unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Advance equality of opportunity

This is an initial proposal to increase the number of foster carers in South Ayrshire. A more detailed Equality Impact Assessment will be produced in November 2021 to consider the equality impacts on unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

The assessment will need to consider how equality of opportunity will be advanced by minimising disadvantage for the children and encouraging their participation.

Foster good relations

This is an initial proposal to increase the number of foster carers in South Ayrshire. A more detailed Equality Impact Assessment will be produced in November 2021 to consider the equality impacts on unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

The assessment will need to consider how prejudice will be tackled and how understanding will be promoted.

Summary of Action Plan to Mitigate Negative Impacts

Actions	Timescale
A Report and Equality Impact Assessment will be presented to Leadership Panel by November 2021 providing a detailed response from South Ayrshire' community planning partners on how we are going to care for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.	November 2021

Signed: Mark Inglis, Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice Services

Date: