

HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES TO VULNERABLE PEOPLE WORKING GROUP – 23 APRIL 2021

ACCESSING EDUCATION-ASYLUM SEEKER/REFUGEE CHILDREN OF SCHOOL AGE.

ASYLUM SEEKER CHILDREN WHO LIVE WITH THEIR FAMILIES

Once Sefton have been notified about children of Asylum Seekers moving into Sefton, we follow the children missing education processes to confirm they are here, and an admissions form is sent to the family to complete. There is a dedicated Children Missing Education Co-ordinator who will also arrange to engage a translator if required to complete the forms. If a home visit is needed it will be undertaken.

If the family are placed with an accommodation provider, for example SERCO, Sefton liaise directly with them, often this involves a home visit to complete the application form for a place at the school/education setting

The children are added to the agenda of the monitoring and placements group who monitor and track until the application form is received. The children missing education co-ordinator and Principal Admissions Officer liaise until the form is completed

When the form is completed the child will be discussed at the in year fair access panel. The School Admissions Code (updated December 2014) requires every local authority to have a Fair Access Protocol in place, developed in partnership with local schools. The fair access protocol must include asylum seekers and refugees in the cohort of children to protect this vulnerable group especially if there is difficulty in securing a school/education setting in areas where there is a possible shortage of places.

If the family are placed in SERCO provision, we also liaise directly with them, often this involves a referral to the Senior EHW requesting a visit to the provision, taking A1 forms with them for the families to complete.

UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKERS WHO ARE IN THE CARE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

When the application form for a school is received it is passed to the Principal Admissions Officer (PAO) to process. In Sefton the Principal Admissions Officer has specific responsibility to oversee the admission of looked after children into school. This function was added to the role to align to care planning and education processes.

Some of the cohort of children who are unaccompanied are placed with foster carers in Sefton who are employed by other Local authorities. If the children are looked after by Sefton or other Local authorities the principal admissions officer will liaise with the relevant social workers and virtual school.

Prior to any admission into school there will be a meeting to share information including any risks that may be identified. The meeting will include the Designated teacher for looked after children in the receiving school, the virtual school and the social worker and any other relevant professional.

If children are in their final year at school Career Connect will be involved in the meeting to look at the pathway for the child post school. Career Connect also become involved if it is felt more appropriate for a child to access an alternative education setting.

Asylum seeker and refugee children in Sefton who come into Sefton to be educated are placed very within 10 days after being discussed at the fair access panel.

Asylum Seeker/school age

- 19/20 academic year – Primary: 10 and Secondary: 6.
- 20/21 academic year – Primary: 11 and Secondary: 2.

Support for Refugee families under the UK's Resettlement Scheme

Children who come into Sefton through the scheme are allocated school places prior to their arrival. This is a partnership between Community Safety, School Admissions, VENUS (voluntary and community sector) and schools.

COVID 19- During the pandemic Sefton have continued to undertake home visits to secure school places for children who are missing education.