



Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Date: Wednesday, 21 June 2023

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Council Chamber, Level 2, Town Hall Extension

This is a **Second Supplementary Agenda** containing additional information about the business of the meeting that was not available when the agenda was published.

Access to the Public Gallery

Access to the Public Gallery is on Level 3 of the Town Hall Extension, using the lift or stairs in the lobby of the Mount Street entrance to the Extension. There is no public access from any other entrance.

Filming and broadcast of the meeting

Meetings of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee are 'webcast'. These meetings are filmed and broadcast live on the Internet. If you attend this meeting you should be aware that you might be filmed and included in that transmission.

Membership of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Councillors –

Reid (Chair), N Ali, Alijah, Amin, Bell, Cooley, Fletcher, Gartside, Hewitson, Judge, Lovecy, Ludford, McHale, Nunney and Sadler

Co-opted Members -

Mr G Cleworth, Miss S Iltaf, Ms K McDaid, Canon Susie Mapledoram, Mrs J Miles, Ms L Smith and Mr Yacob Yonis

Second Supplementary Agenda

7. **New Arrivals and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)** 3 - 24
Report and presentation of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services

This report and presentation highlight Children's Services' and partners' response to the step change increase of Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking Children and young people (UASC) coming into Manchester.

Further Information

For help, advice and information about this meeting please contact the Committee Officer:

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This supplementary agenda was issued on **Monday, 19 June 2023** by the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit, Manchester City Council, Level 2, Town Hall Extension (Library Walk Elevation), Manchester M60 2LA

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - 21 June 2023

Subject: New Arrivals and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

Report of: Strategic Director of Children and Education Services

Summary

Manchester as a diverse and economically successful city recognises and celebrates the contributions of all communities. One such community is those who are seeking asylum which have in recent years increased in part due to the Home Office establishment of Dispersal Hotels.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children have traditionally 'spontaneously' arrived in Manchester. However, attributed to the mandating of the 'National Transfer Scheme' (NTS) and identification of children through the wider offer to dispersal hotels the number has exponentially increased. This has required Manchester City Council Children Services to increase its capacity to provide a safe and effective offer to these particularly vulnerable children. Notwithstanding this working in partnership with other public and voluntary sector services Manchester Children Services offer a culturally sensitive and trauma informed bespoke offer that is both responsive to the needs of UASC and support them to be safe, healthy, happy and successful.

The slide set attached to this report highlights Childrens Services and partners response the step change increase of Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking children and young people (UASC) coming into Manchester.

Recommendations

Scrutiny Committee members are invited to:

- (1) Consider the impact of the increase in volume UASC coming into the city and the wider socio-economic impact.
 - (2) Endorse the decision that Manchester will 'opt out' of the National Transfer Scheme and will refer young people into the scheme as a response to our increase in number of UASC into the city, whilst acknowledging that this decision can be reviewed as young people naturally 'age out' of the system.
 - (3) Recognise the services response, whilst acknowledging the strength of the partnership work that has wrapped around our young people, in a 'child first' approach.
-

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments

The New Arrivals team alongside partners has delivered culturally attuned services to our unaccompanied children and young people. Priority is given to linking in our young people into established communities within Manchester as per an individual's needs. The service is responsive to ensuring communication aids are in place and use of interpreters is embedded to enable all young people to express their wishes and feelings.

Children and young people where possible are culturally matched to foster carers where possible or preferred providers of supported accommodation where there is proven experience in supporting young people from different cultures and where English isn't a young person's first spoken language.

Education partners have been responsive in supporting young people access ESOL in a timely way – whilst acknowledge pressures due to the high number requiring ESOL.

Health partners have a specialist UASC 'looked after' nurse who supports the physical, emotional and mental health of our children and young people. Initial health assessments are completed with all unaccompanied children and young people.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Effective support for vulnerable unaccompanied children and young people is critical so they can connect, support, contribute and access a thriving and sustainable City.
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Ensuring our vulnerable unaccompanied children and young people are given the opportunity to access immediate support enables a timely assessment of need to ensure the right support at the right time is provided.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Building a trusted relationship with children and young people helps builds their resilience, recover from trauma which is needed to enable their potential to be achieved.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Improving outcomes for unaccompanied children and young people dispersed across the city helps build and develop communities.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Children's Services and partners have responded to the increase in our Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking children and young people. As a partnership we constantly strive to deliver good outcomes for this vulnerable group, despite risk factors detailed in the wider slide set. We support young people to gain legal permanence in order to be able them to remain in their communities and contribute to the continuing growth in the city.

Full details are in the slide set, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences

Please see below

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Local Authorities have a legislative responsibility to protect and support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and as such are ascribed a 'looked after' status and are particularly vulnerable.
- 1.2 An unaccompanied child is entitled to the same local authority provision as any other looked after child, however, is likely to require help and support to lodge an asylum claim and access specialist legal advice in relation to their asylum claim.
- 1.3 Since February 2022 all Local Authorities with a Children's Service's Department were directed to participate in the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) and the threshold set for the number of children a local authority must accept increased to 0.1% of their total child population. In Manchester the figure of 0.1% equates to approximately 123 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
- 1.4 Presently there are 185 UASC children this makes up 13% of the looked after population in Manchester. Additionally, 507 (16 to 25) UASC children and former UASC children make up 28% of Manchester's' care leaving (16 to 25) population; the second highest nationally.
- 1.5 At the point a Local Authority reaches its threshold they are eligible to not participate in the NTS and enter the scheme as a 'referrer'. Up until recently Manchester has not done this. However, given the significantly increased numbers, capacity within the service and suitable accommodation the difficult decision to start referring children into the scheme was made in March 2023. Notwithstanding this, to date none have been accepted into the scheme by the Home Office.
- 1.6 Since 2019 the Home Office has developed the use of 'dispersal' hotels which have been adapted to respond to the growth in adult and families seeking asylum in the UK. Since December 2022 there have been 3 such hotels opened in Manchester, the most recent opening in May 2023. Whilst it is not anticipated children seeking asylum are placed by the home office in such arrangements, there has been an impact service each time a hotel has opened with increasing numbers claiming to be children who had been identified as adults by the home office when initially processed by the home office. Whilst 43 in total, it is noticeably since December 2022 there have been 30+ such claimants who have subsequently been identified and assessed to be children.
- 1.7 When UASC are identified the Home Office provide financial remuneration. However, this is not sufficient to cover the total cost and is being raised at national level via Association of Directors of Children Services, Local Government Association and Regional Strategic Migration Partners. The following table illustrates the direct and indirect financial implications.

Annualised Costs	Costs	Per UASC (£)	Per UASC Care Leaver (£)
Social Work	Staff salaries (Team Manager, Social Workers, Independent Reviewing Officers, administrators, agency staff etc.), Referral process, Age Assessment processes (including cases that do not lead to LA care), Travel, Business Support	£3,631	£2,703
Management and Oversight	Strategic Leads	£452	£452
Placements and Support (Allowances)	Placement finding services, placement costs (staffing, payments to foster carers, fostering panels, training), Miscellaneous payments (personal allowance, birthday and religious festival payments etc.), Admissions	£44,921	£25,493
Education	Virtual school support - therapy and summer school. PEP are funded from LAC Pupil Premium and not included in costing.	£808	
Health	Initial Health Assessments and Review Health Assessments, Public Health Nursing Services. (Notional currently). Costs incurred by LAs directly in support of UASC health, not including costs incurred by CCGs or NHS England	Costs could not be tracked	
Legal	Age assessment challenges, Judicial Reviews, Care proceedings	£902	
Miscellaneous	Interpreters, advocacy and children's rights, funding for VCS services and support	£184	£184
Risk	Young People Supported pending Home Office Approvals	£2,100	
Total Local Authority Costs		£52,997	£28,831
Income	Annual income for young person - Home Office	£52,195	£14,078
	LAC Pupil Premium - DfE	£808	
	Difference	£6	-£14,754

1.8 The supporting slide set will highlight how the service has responded to this increase and future projections.

2.0 Background

2.1 The New Arrivals Team was established by Children Services in Manchester to respond to UASC, to develop a specialist skill base and offer a bespoke support and intervention to UASC children and young people. The Social workers in this team are highly skilled in age assessment to ensure legal compliance is adhered to and understanding of the trauma and experiences of children seeking asylum.

2.2 There is a virtual team of public and voluntary sector organisations that link to the service and collectively offer a sensitive health, education and therapeutic service that is co-ordinated through assessments of the children's needs and their respective care plan, welcoming and settling children and young people into the city.

3.0 Service Offer

3.1 In response to the increasing numbers of UASC arriving in Manchester which predominantly appears to be via the Home Office National Transfer Scheme or identified via 'dispersal hotels' opposed to spontaneously arriving, Manchester City Council Children Services has increased the resource and capacity to ensure a safe and effective service offer.

3.2 Experience tells us, if our UASC needs are clearly identified, the right offer is put in place these children thrive and go on to be successful. Currently 16% of our former UASC make up our university care leaver population.

3.3 Manchester is one of few local authorities in the North West which is over its 'threshold' and overall has the highest number. Whilst this is a challenge responding and meeting the needs of UASC, it is positive that other GM and regional LA's look to Manchester for good practice and processes.

3.4 As 'looked after' children Manchester's UASC are integral to how we celebrate them and their counter-parts achievements. The next event is due to be held on 1st July 2023. In addition, we provide and include them in a series of bespoke activities such as;

- National Refugee week, where we will be celebrating and supporting our young people access events across the City.
- The service has co-ordinated a UASC Greater Manchester football tournament that is being hosted at Burnley FC.
- Supporting young people attend the Refugee Horizon's Festival where there is a range of activities and events, music, film, food and cultural workshops.

3.5 In addition, the service deliver learning events for the wider children services and recently included our first young person to secure British Citizenship (pre 18) will be speaking about their journey and experiences.

3.6 Education/learning Offer

3.6.1 During the 2022-23 school term period, the Virtual School has been overseeing the education, employment, and training of 250 unaccompanied young people. Of these, 41 are of school age, largely in Years 10 and 11 and of which 32 are settled into school places. The other nine young people, who are Year 11 and have come into our care during the summer term, have been provided with tuition and work has been undertaken to identify an appropriate Post 16 destination.

3.6.2 To date there have been 217 UASC aged 16 and 17 during this school year with additions to this number each week. Of these 217 young people, 88 have now turned 18. Of the 129 young people currently aged 16 and 17, 96 are in education or training provision. The majority of the remaining 33 young people, who have either come into our care most recently or who have complex support needs, have a confirmed Post 16 destination for September. The Virtual School continues to work with social workers and personal advisers to provide interim support and to identify appropriate destinations for any unaccompanied young people without an education or training provision. For example, some of our young people are accessing the Prince's Trust summer scheme to help them bridge the gap between now and September.

3.6.3 An emerging challenge across Greater Manchester during 2022-23 has been securing English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) educational provision. This is attributed to the providers being unable to sufficiently increase their capacity. As a result, Manchester's Virtual School, MCC Post 16 Lead and other Local Authority colleagues from across Greater Manchester are in close communication with Greater Manchester Providers about ESOL sufficiency planning for the coming year and beyond.

3.7 Health Offer

3.7.1 Manchester has an established and positive relationship with the specialist Looked After Children Nurses and provide a culturally sensitive and trauma-informed offer. As a result, 100% of our young people have a health assessment within timescales of them initially arriving in Manchester with 97% of young people accessing a dental check. This is positive as we know the older young people are generally more reluctant to access dental care, it is the partnership and support that the young person gets initially that means they consent to looking after their basic health needs on arrival.

3.8 3rd Sector Engagement

3.8.1 MCC currently commissions two non-profit, charitable organisations to accommodate and support our Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking (UASC) Children aged 16+. These 'block contracts' provide us with 80 cost-effective

placements. Young people reside in 1, 2 and 3-bed accommodations and receive floating support to help them develop independence skills, get registered with a GP and dentist, enrol at college and help with their asylum claims. Both providers deliver fantastic outcomes for our young people, ensuring they build the skills required for moving into their first tenancy once they get status. It has been good to see young people forming lasting friendships and going onto house share within social housing.

- 3.8.2 There are two new services currently out for tender which will help us strengthen the supported accommodation offer for our UASC population. The first is an additional block contract that will see our capacity increase by a further 40 units, similar to the two services detailed above.
- 3.8.3 The second is a new model referred to as the 'New Arrivals Hub', which will ensure young people receive the best possible start in Manchester. The Hub will provide accommodation and specialist support for up to 12 young people as they initially present in the city. This new approach will allow social care more time to care plan for our young people and eliminate the risk of us using out-of-area and often expensive emergency placements. After a period of around 6 weeks, children social care will have had the time needed to find the most suitable move-on placement which meets the young person's wishes and needs, and ensures our internal offer (The Lodge, Supported Lodgings, Beehive and UASC Block Contracts) is utilised.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 Scrutiny Committee members are invited to:

- (1) Consider the impact of the increase in volume UASC coming into the city and the wider socio-economic impact.
- (2) Endorse the decision that Manchester will 'opt out' of the National Transfer Scheme and will refer young people into the scheme as a response to our increase in number of UASC into the city, whilst acknowledging that this decision can be reviewed as young people naturally 'age out' of the system.
- (3) Recognise the services response, whilst acknowledging the strength of the partnership work that has wrapped around our young people, in a 'child first' approach.

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Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

Report for Childrens Scrutiny June 2023

The report outlines the increasing numbers of UASC, the impact across Children's Services and sets out a plan to mitigate and manage the associated risks



12th May 2023

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Appendix 11, Item 7

Profile and Demographic



Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

Report for Childrens Scrutiny June 2023

The report outlines the increasing numbers of UASC, the impact across Children's Services and sets out a plan to mitigate and manage the associated risks

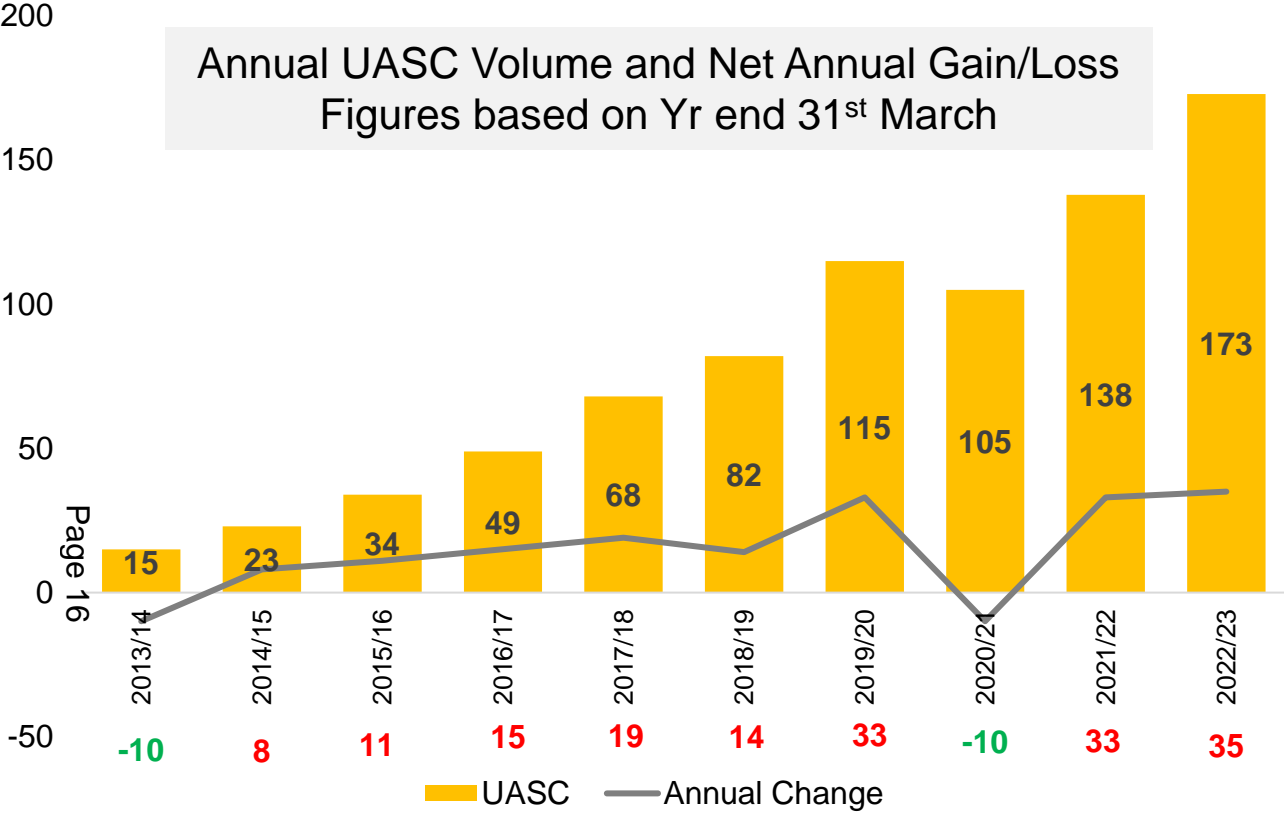


12th May 2023

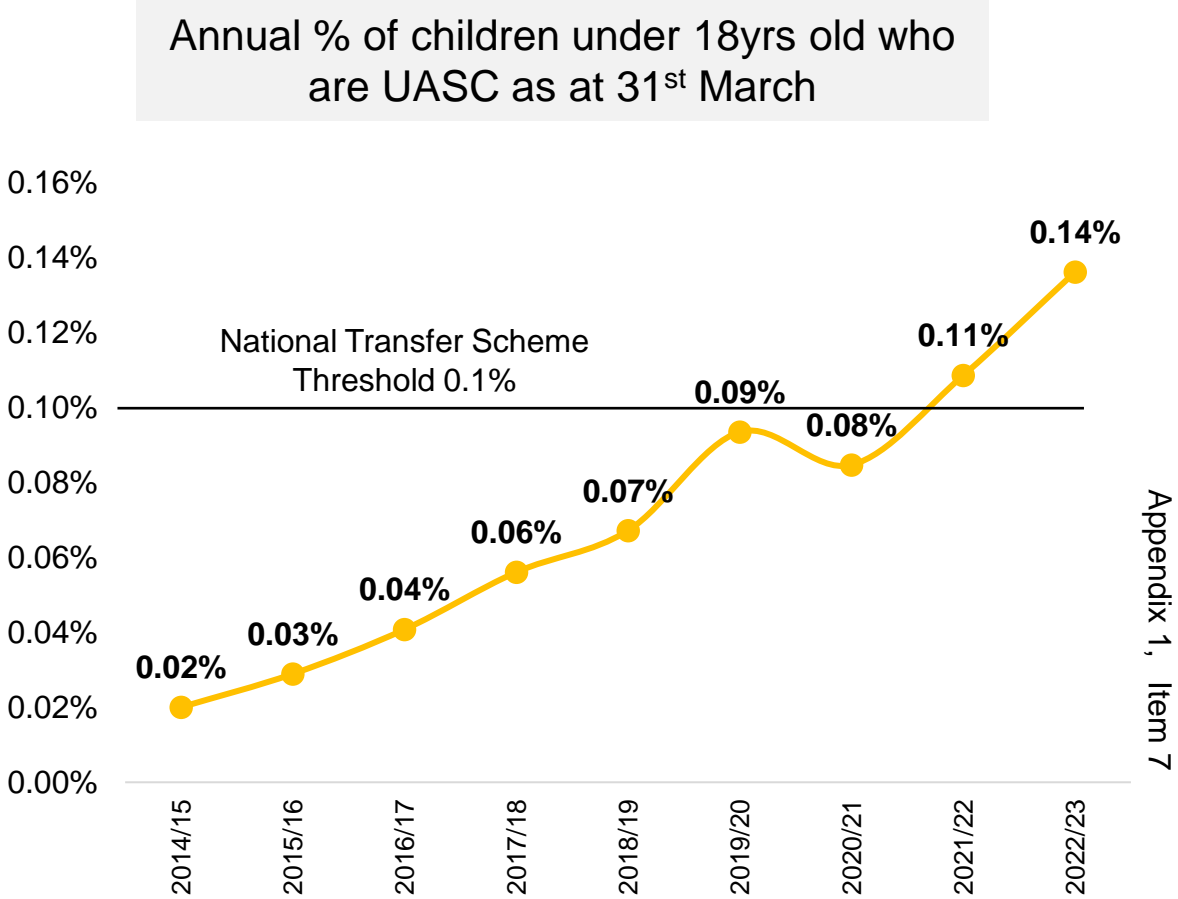
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Unaccompanied Asylum seeking children in Manchester

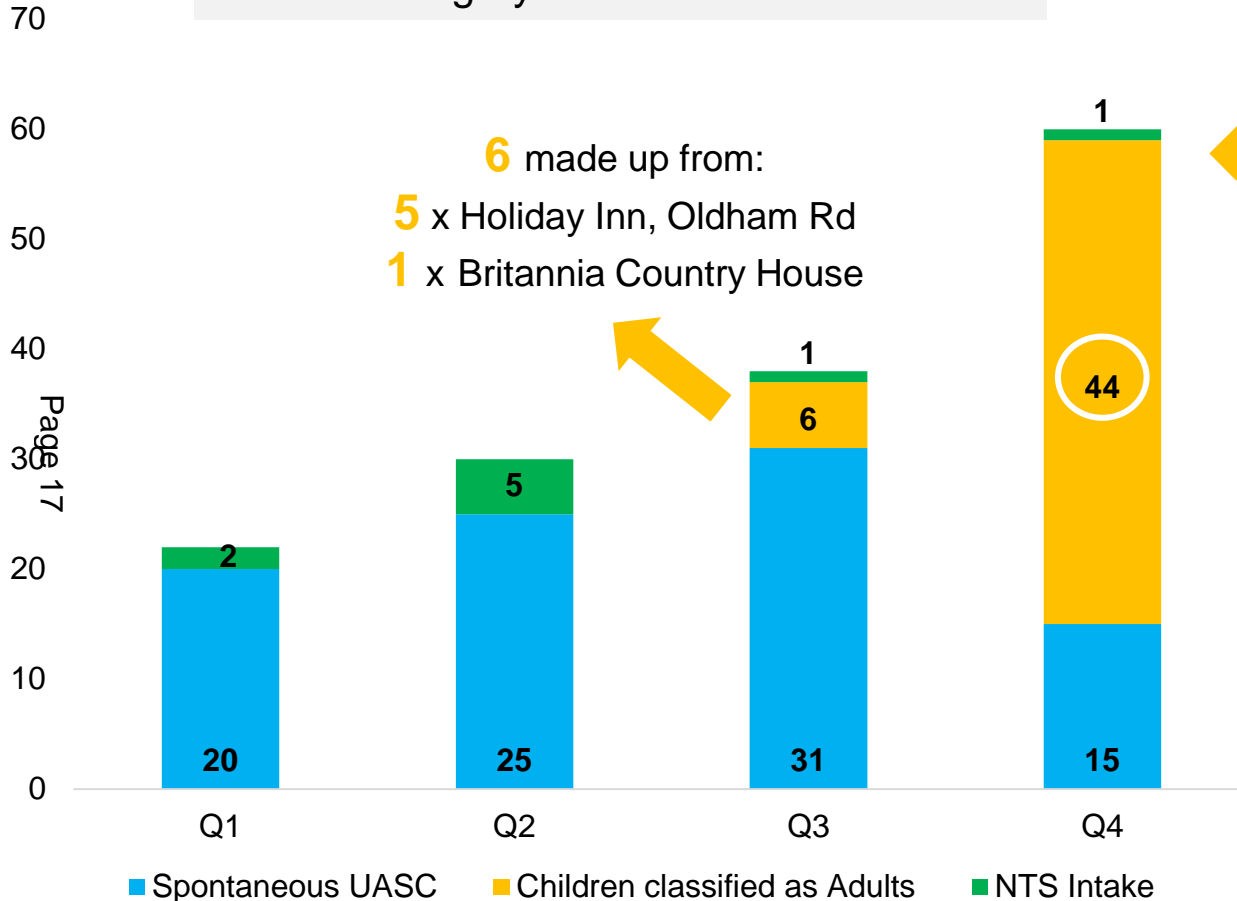


Current position May 2023:
182 UASC
0.14% of under 18yr old population
13.4% of Manchester's LAC population are UASC
 for comparison purposes North West average was **4.5%** Q3 2022-23
 Manchester has **3.3%** of all UASC nationally when compared to 31st March 2022 national figure



Presentation routes

Category of UASC 2022-23



6 made up from:
 5 x Holiday Inn, Oldham Rd
 1 x Britannia Country House

44 Made up from:
 ■ 14 in Jan-23
 ■ 20 in Feb-23
 ■ 10 in Mar-23

All children placed at **Stay City Apartment Hotel** as adults

- Prior to Q4 **spontaneous UASC** made up **93%** of UASC inflow into the city - presenting at Town Hall, British Transport Police, Police stations or found sleeping rough
- Over 2022-23 there have only been 9 UASC **National Transfer Scheme** cases recorded
- Whereas **73% (44)** of all UASC in Q4 were children who had been placed in the Stay City Apartment hotel classified as adults
- Children had either had no age assessment carried out on arrival by the Home Office or been classified as adults
- Referrals to carry out brief age assessments for these children came from a number of sources: self referral from child, Police, Serco, Health, GMIAU and Refugee council
- Over Q3 & 4 - 4 children have since been assessed by MCC as 15yrs old and 19 x 16yrs old. The remainder 17yrs old
- Without the dispersal hotel Q3 UASC inflow would have reduced from 38 to 32 and Q4 from 60 to just 16.
- Estimated current no. of UASC without dispersal hotels = **129**

Category of UASC taken from additional section in Care Plan added in Feb-22. Some recording issues in terms of how social workers record dispersal hotel cases – where children have been classified as adult. Therefore all records in Q3 and Q4 checked manually

* Reliant on this being accurately recorded on Care Plans

Demographics

Comparing demographics for UASC in flow 2022/23 excluding dispersal hotel against dispersal hotel in flow. Age at intake

Gender



8%



92%

The Strategic Migrant Partnership suggests that nationally when a new adult dispersal hotel opens approximately **20%** of the occupants could actually be children and potentially become UASC

Non dispersal hotel UASC gender split as above. Whereas dispersal hotel UASC were all male with the exception of 1 female

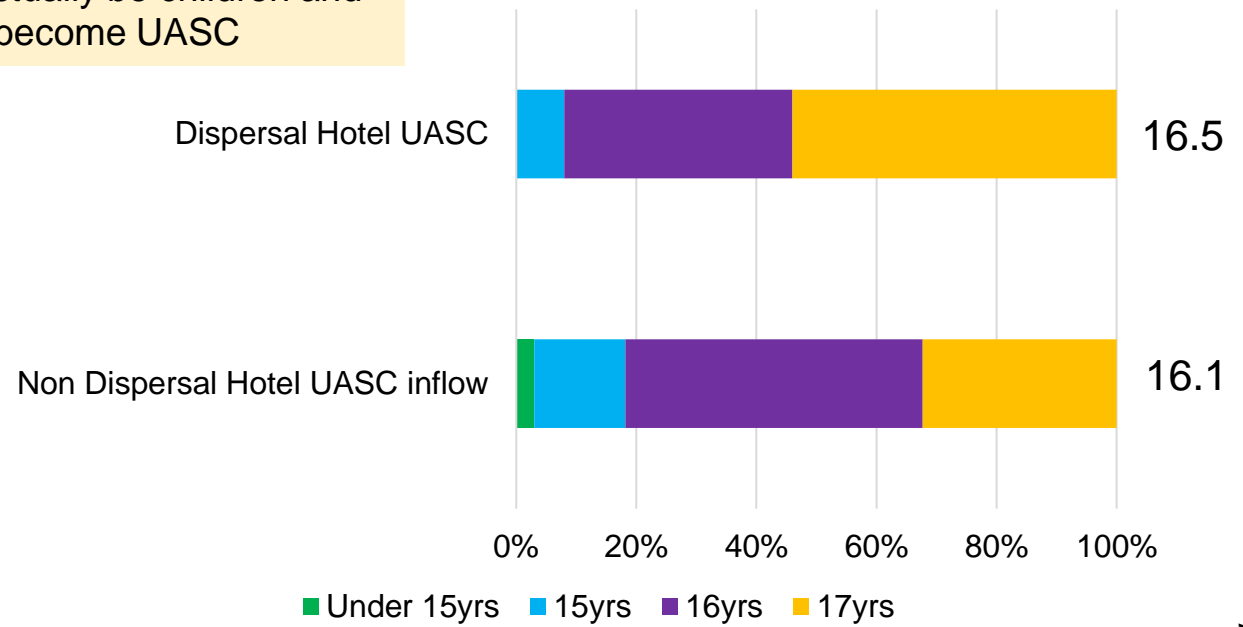
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In terms of nationality nearly two thirds (63%) of those from dispersal hotels were **Afghan**, remainder **Sudanese** (18%), **Iranian** (13%) and 1 child each from Chad, Iraq and Syria

Whereas non dispersal hotel inflow was more diverse with 32% **Sudanese**, 22% **Afghan**, 16% **Eritrean**, 9% **Ethiopian**, 5% **Iranian** and smaller %s from an additional 9 countries

Age

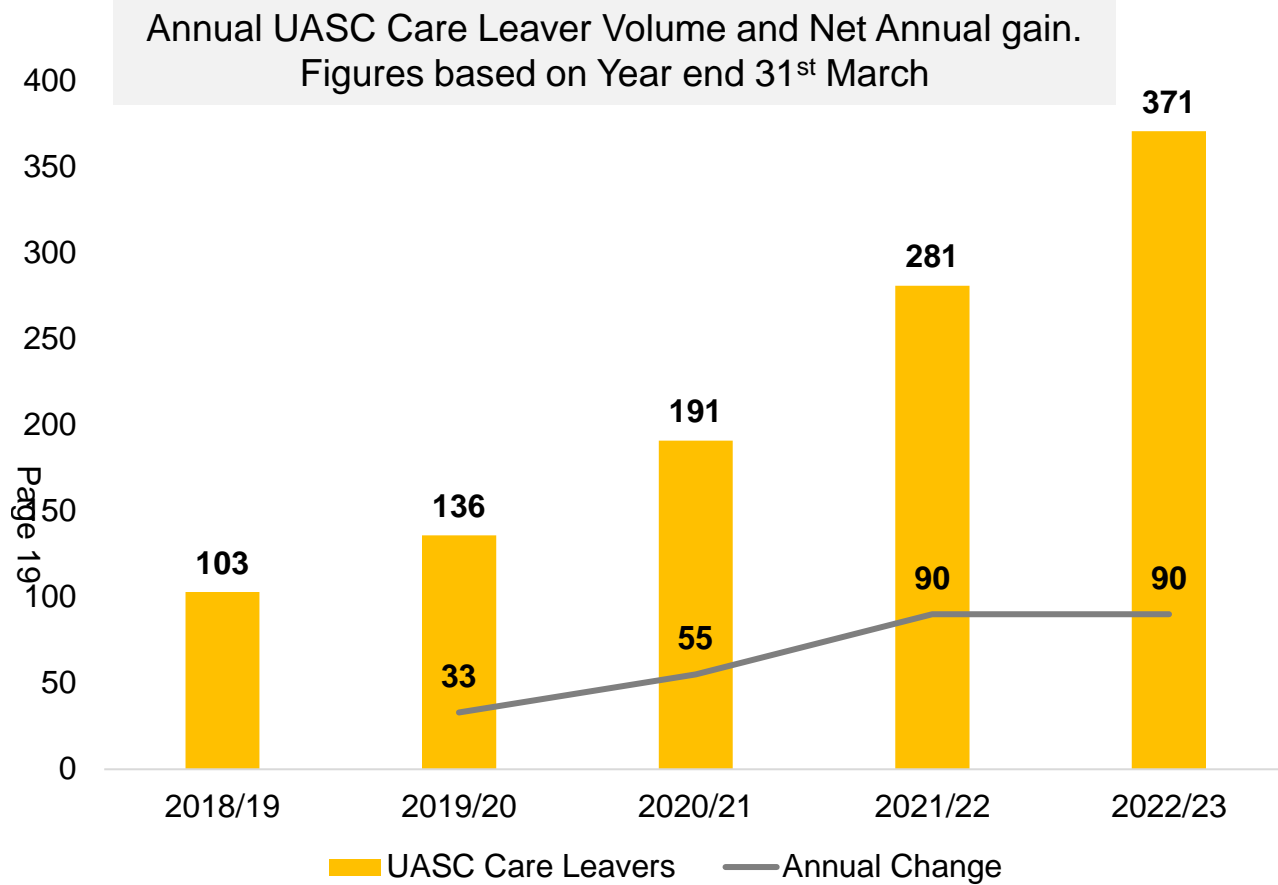
Average Age



Over half (54%) of the Inflow from dispersal hotels are aged 17yrs old. Whereas only a third of other UASC inflow are aged 17yrs at intake

Appendix 1, Item 7

UASC With Leaving Care Status



* 2 of original 50 young people from dispersal hotels total have moved Lancashire and 1 is already a Care Leaver

The average number of Care Leavers by age band (18-20) currently is: 227
There are 122 young people due to turn 18 in the next 6mths. 58 of these are UASC. This equates to a 10% increase ahead of a potential further increase from the 2 new dispersal hotels due to open

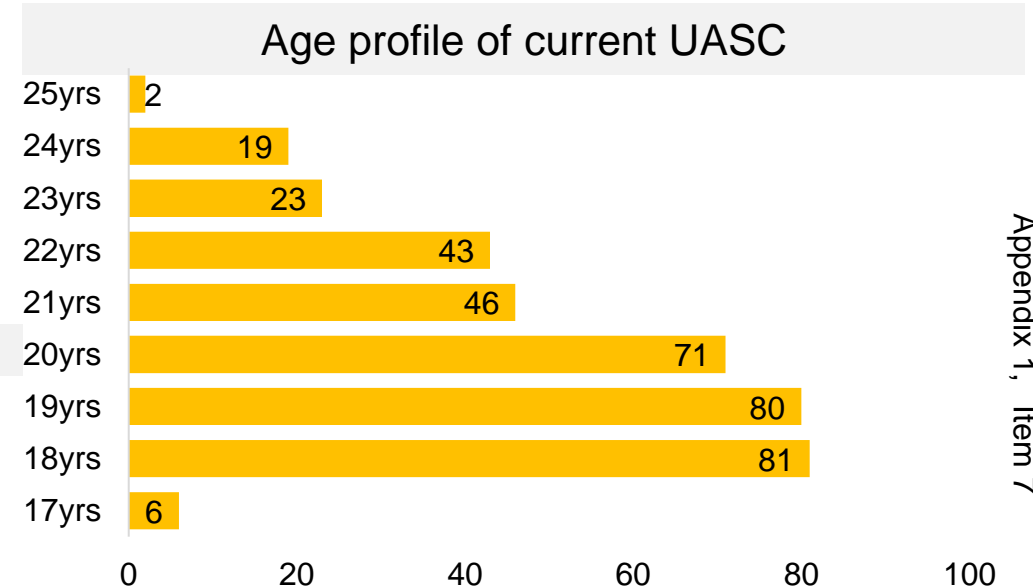
The additional 47* UASC current LAC from dispersal hotels will move to Care Leaver status as follows:

- 30 in 2023/24
- 15 in 2024/25
- 2 in 2025/26

Based on the date of their 18 birthday

In addition to an anticipated 90 net gain following recent annual trends

The figures above only include current UASC from dispersal hotels and do not include anticipated further UASC from the 2 newly opened hotels



Summary Overview

Manchester currently account for 24% of North-West and 48% of Greater Manchester's UASC population.

In Q4 of 2022/23 there has been the highest number of UASC presentations in Manchester, these are linked to the opening of 'Dispersal Hotels' a national issue and most likely to continue to increase (without these presentations Manchester would be at its projected and resourced levels/capacity). It is projected in 2023/24 the number of UASC will increase by between 47 – 73 against a current total of 173 as at 31/3/23.

Many presentations are male and 16-17 years of age. This means they quickly accrue 'leaving care' status and entitlements. It is projected the pressure in the Leaving Care will increase by 90 young people in 2023/24.

At all levels activity, systems and processes have been strengthened to respond at a local level to the increased number of New Arrivals in Manchester. All indicators locally and nationally suggest this is not likely to lessen in the foreseeable future and most likely increase with the pending Immigration Bill and changes in Home Office Policy. Therefore, presenting a risk for Manchester in respect of regulatory activity and judicial review should 'age assessments' not be completed timely and of sufficient quality. In addition, avoidable financial costs due to delays in children securing legal settled status.

This work has been a strategic priority for the Directorate, partnership and region with progress tracked and supported at all levels. As a result, Manchester has regional support from North-West Regional Strategic Migration Partnership to challenge and unblock obstacles presented to us via the Home Office.

National work will continue to be engaged with to challenge the Home Office regarding unfunded support for New Arrivals and former New Arrivals. This has been ongoing for some time with limited change in policy.

The combination of new arrivals (UASC) and 'looked after children' 'aging out' is increasingly becoming unmanageable despite a remodelling of existing resource allocation.

The financial burden is estimated to be £1.3m without mitigation; of which £315k account for additional capacity within the Leaving Care Service.

Despite challenges the partnership around young people remains committed and passionate around securing the best outcomes for these vulnerable children and young people.

Responding and Meeting the Needs of Manchester's UASC



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Service Response to Date

- **Maximised existing and increased social work and leaving care personal advisors** - This includes in 2022/23 increasing capacity in the New Arrivals Team by releasing 1 Leaving Care PA, 1 social worker and 1 team manager to support the core staff team and provide an 'earlier' wrap around young people and facilitate transition to Leaving Care Service whilst supporting them;
- **System and Processes** – Improved systems and process with the local hotels, Home Office, GMIAU and NTA, whilst increasing day to day management and oversight in respect of 'new arrivals'. This has resulted in establishing a multi purpose and agency tracker to ensure young peoples outcomes and journey to permanence is followed and timely especially with regard to legal permanence.
 - **legal permanence**, following a change in regulation young people who are 'looked after' can apply to become British Citizens at no cost following a 'leave to remain' status. One young person who has achieved this is speaking at Refugee week about his journey and the joy he has felt at gaining British Citizenship.
 - **Safety** - close relationships with Freedom from Torture/Barnardo's Independent Child Trafficking and The Red Cross.
- **Inclusion** – Engagement of wider community (Mosques and voluntary sector) in local community and access to universal services. In addition, organised walking and football group activities run by the service. A Greater Manchester, football tournament will be hosted by Manchester New Arrivals Team in celebration of Refugee week. The service is now linked into Lancashire Cricket program which has proved popular with young people.
- **Culture** – New Arrivals cultural and religious needs are identified and linked into established cultural appropriate communities as soon as possible at their request. We have a number of young people who are actively supported by local mosques. During Ramadan this year the service supported another successful Iftar attended by our young people.
- **Independence** – New Arrivals are supported in gaining skills around cooking, shopping on a budget and preparation for independence. Young People are linked into community resources for example food banks, supper clubs etc.
- **Family links** - The service proudly work with young people to try and establish family contact and ultimately reunification. One of our young people was reunited with his brother after losing him during their journey over one year ago.
- All young people are supported to link into the Red Cross to ensure communication is in place with family members at 'home'. This has been particularly important recently for our Sudanese young people.

Wider Service Engagement and Influence

- **Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit (GMIAU) and North-West Regional Strategic Migration Partnership (NWRSMPP).** Working to influence national policy and share good practice. This has involved supporting and influencing Northwest Association of Director for Children Services (NWADCS) to collectively commission legal advocacy to support and expedite young people secure settled status and citizenship
- **North-West Regional Strategic Migration Partnership** – improved systems and tracking to maximise the Home Office 'fast track' scheme and the new Preliminary Information meeting for 'legacy cases' from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Sudan, Syria and Vietnam, in Manchester this applies to 26 young people. So far 4 young people have secured status
- **Reviewed and strengthened local partnerships to develop a 'new arrivals network' which inc;**
 - Bespoke health offer- specialist looked after children nurse, paediatrics,
 - Commissioners/housing to provide suitable accommodation
 - Virtual school identifying and working with schools and colleagues
 - Children Social Care Placement Sufficiency has been reviewed to respond to the increase in numbers of young people, for example targeted recruitment is taking place for additional capacity within supported lodgings, initial exploration around an 'assessment/welcome' centre for new arrivals in the region to be sited in Manchester
- **Influencing local, regional and national policy** - Manchester is actively represented in the national UASC Taskforce, ADCS Immigration sub-group to influence and shape policy as best is possible and continue to raise unfunded support, capacity and accommodation as issues.

Questions

