

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

Profile and Demographic



Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

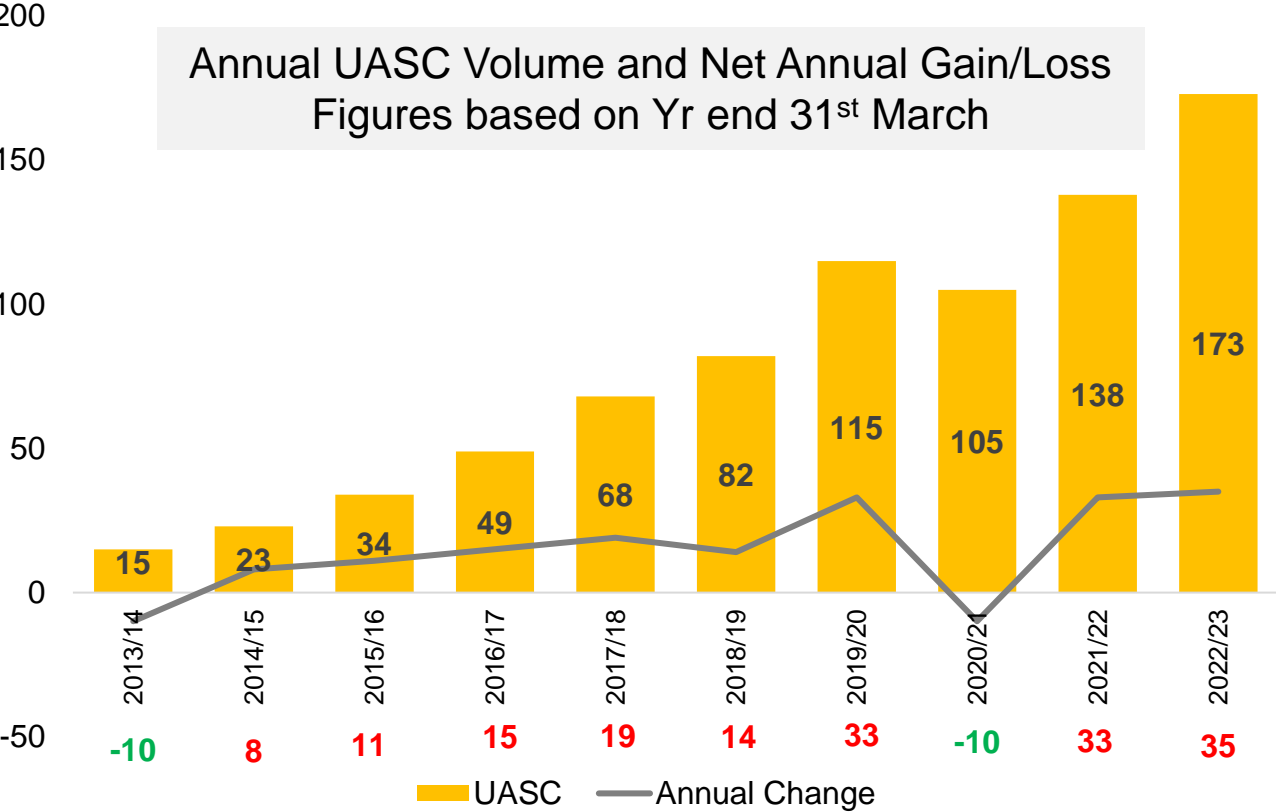
Report for Childrens Scrutiny June 2023

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Unaccompanied Asylum seeking children in Manchester

Annual UASC Volume and Net Annual Gain/Loss
Figures based on Yr end 31st March



Current position May 2023:

182 UASC

0.14% of under 18yr old population

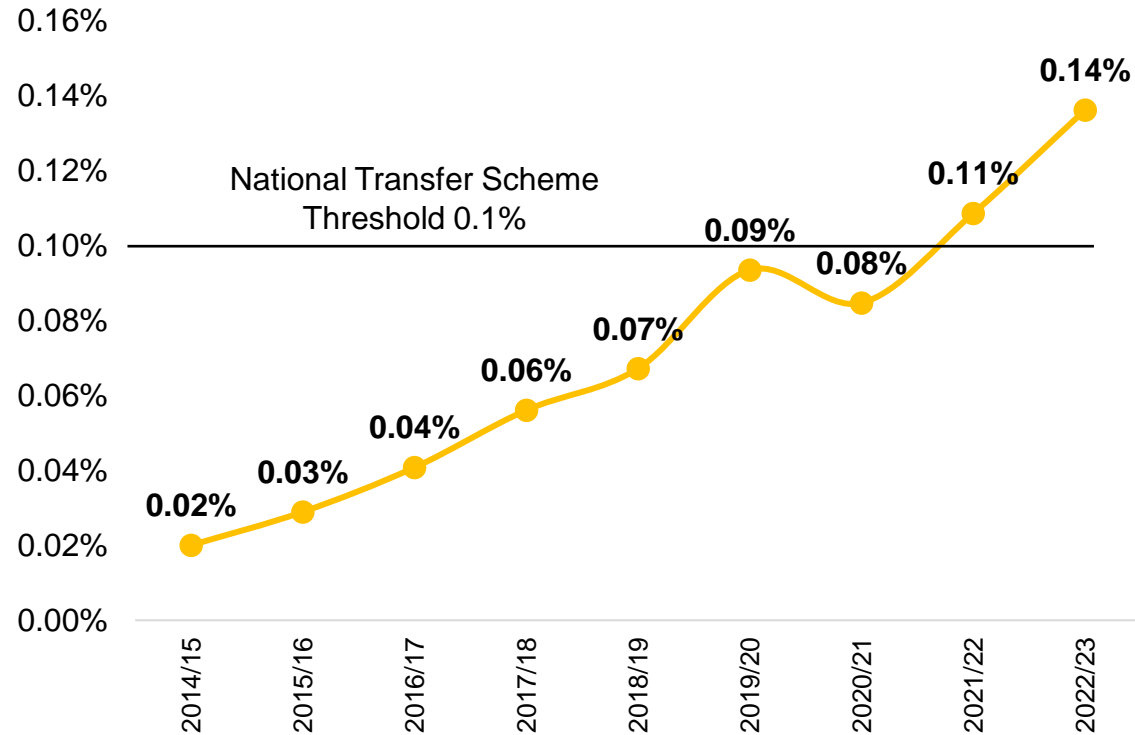
13.4% of Manchester's LAC population are UASC

for comparison purposes North West average was **4.5%** Q3 2022-23

Manchester has **3.3%** of all UASC nationally when compared to 31st

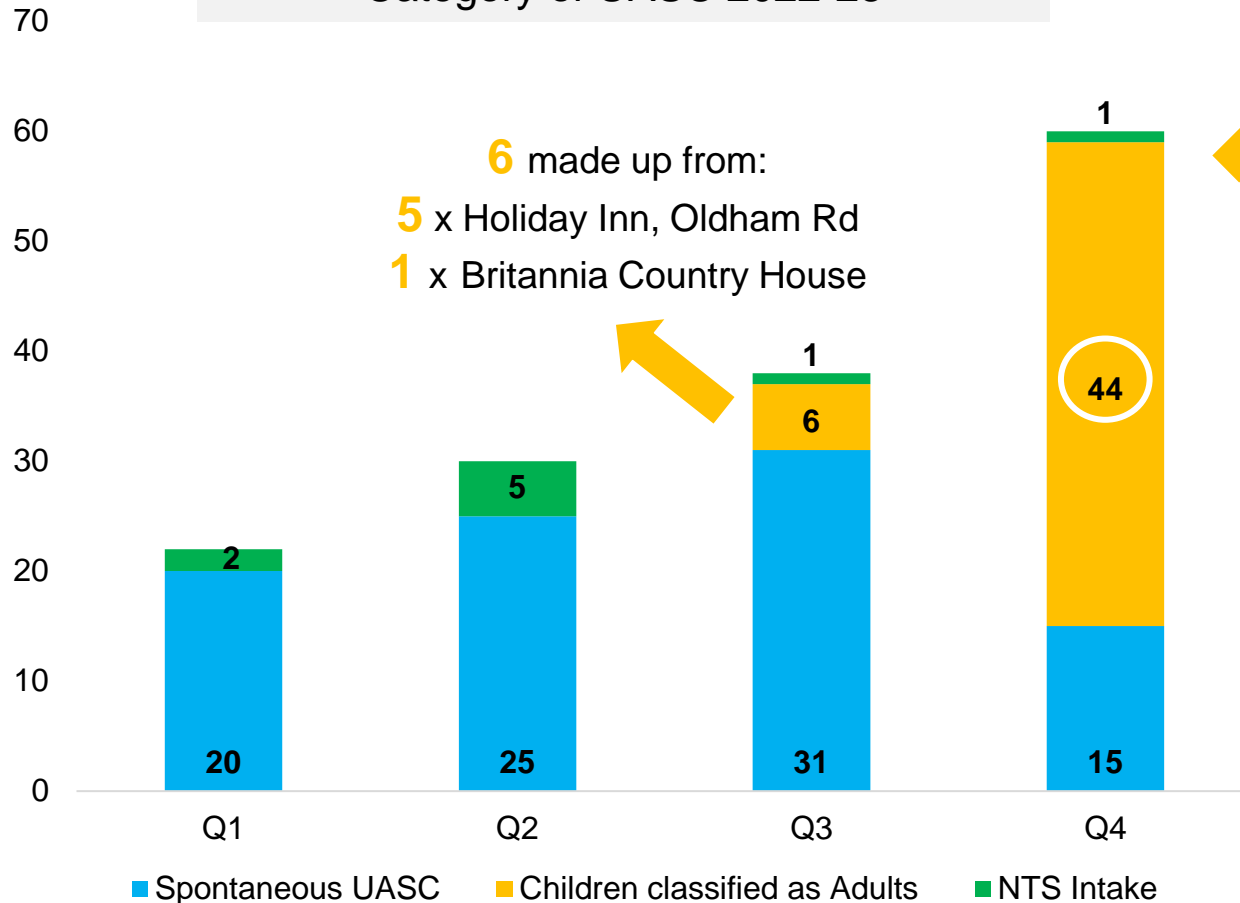
March 2022 national figure

Annual % of children under 18yrs old who
are UASC as at 31st March



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%

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

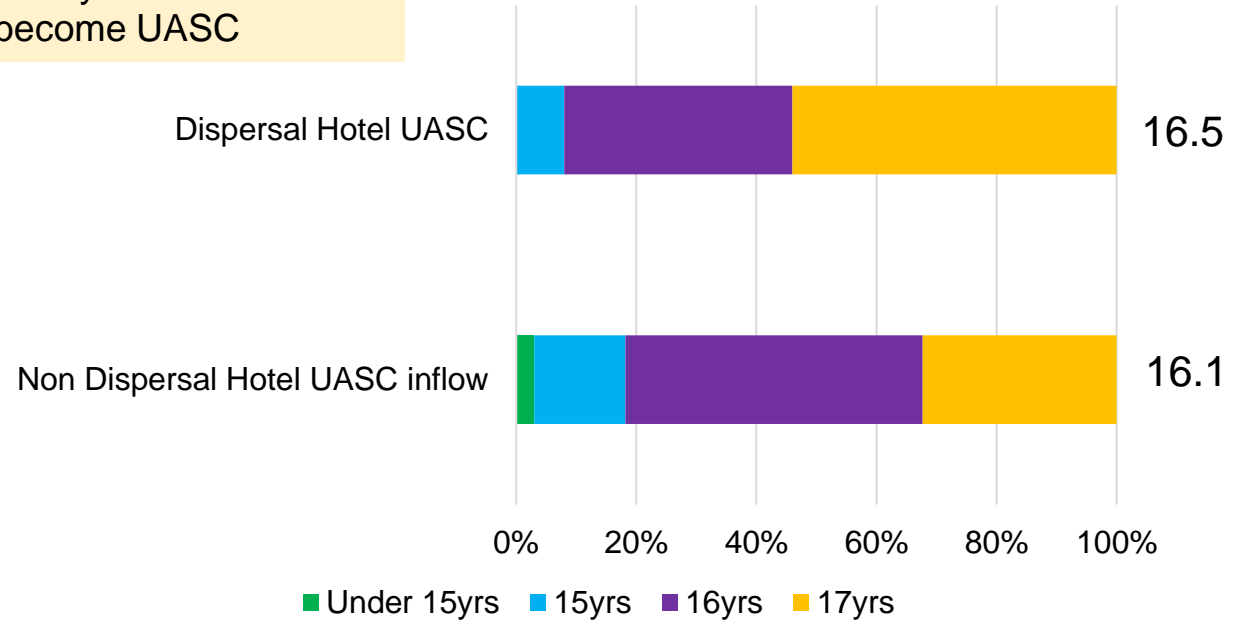
In terms of nationality nearly two thirds (63%) of those from dispersal hotels were **Afghan**, remainder **Sudanese** (18%), **Iranian** (13%) and 1 child each from Chad, Iraq and Syria

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

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

Age

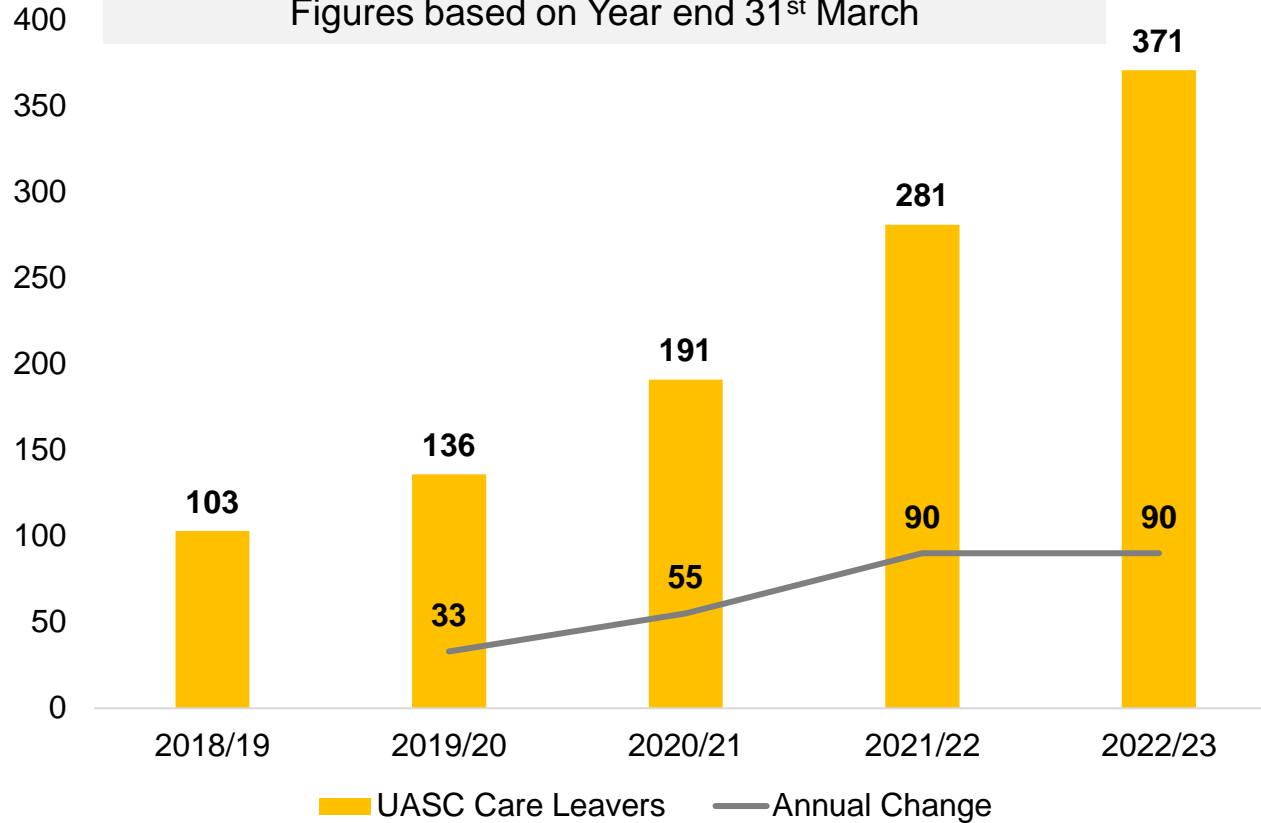
Average Age



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

UASC With Leaving Care Status

Annual UASC Care Leaver Volume and Net Annual gain.
Figures based on Year end 31st March



* 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:

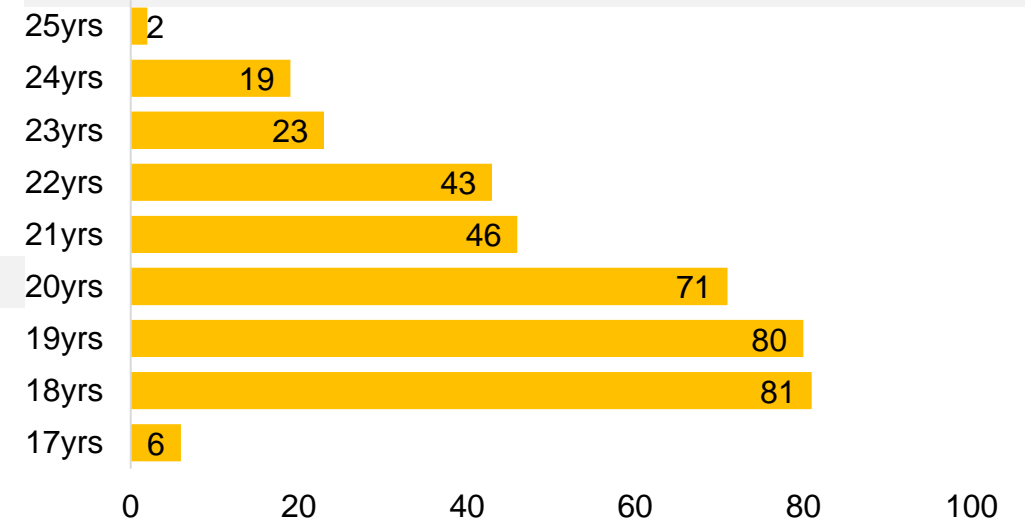
- 30 in 2023/24
- 15 in 2024/25
- 2 in 2025/26

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

Age profile of current UASC



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



12th May 2023

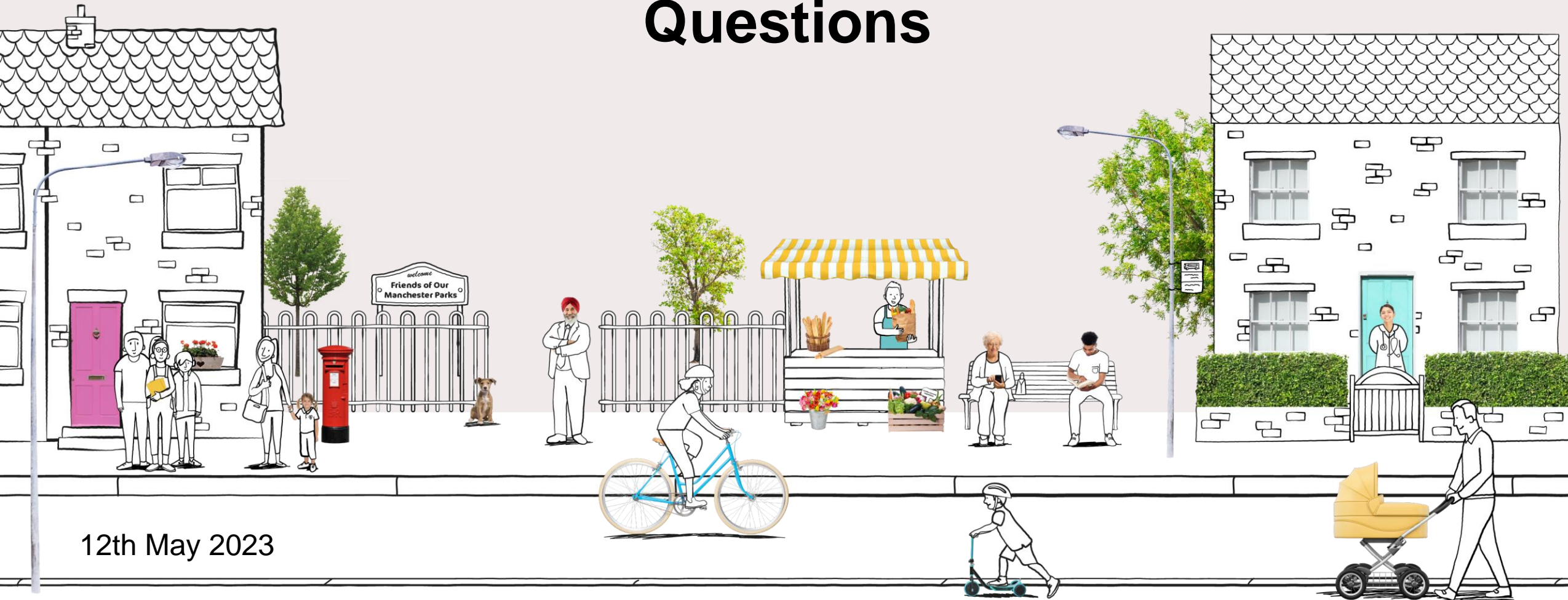
Service Response to Date

- **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



12th May 2023