

## UASC and Mental Health

### Childrens Social Work Service Good Practice Guide

This guide has been developed by staff working with UASC and former UASC within the CSWS. It aims to provide information and guidance about the various services available to young people in this group who may be in need of support with mental and emotional health needs. UASC are likely to have suffered trauma and serious disadvantage which may impact upon their emotional wellbeing. It can often present a challenge to staff to identify a need and to ensure access appropriate support is accessible to them. The guide is designed to identify the opportunities we have to talk to young people about mental health issues and the different ways that we may be able to meet any needs and the support services we can help the access.

#### Arrival

Many UASC will arrive in the UK under an approved programme such as the National Transfer Scheme where we will be notified of their arrival in advance and will have information about them which may help us identify a mental or emotional need before they arrive.

Other UASC may arrive sporadically and an age assessment may need to be completed.

In both cases the SW will complete a welfare assessment which should cover a child's emotional and mental health needs. This is also an opportunity to talk about general and mental health needs and identify issues such as a young person's thoughts and feelings, sleep patterns, eating habits and any history of trauma. Young people under 18 can be referred to the Refugee Council and Solace who offer a 12 week programme aimed to help ensure basic needs are met, building resilience and coping with their current situation. The programme can be extended or other more intensive therapy or support can be arranged.

#### Children Looked After

UASC who become looked after will have access to statutory services provided by the local authority. The processes also provides opportunities to identify and provide services to help meet needs arising from mental and emotional health. All looked after children will have a Looked After Child Care Reviews within 28 days subsequent 6 monthly reviews. The process provides opportunities to talk about mental health matters and this can be done during a Health Needs Assessment, SDQ, EHCP, PEP meeting, and Statutory Visits. These processes present opportunities for professionals to consider mental and emotional health needs. Where a need is identified an appropriate level of service needs to be considered.

### Informal Services

There are a range of informal support services to help young people engage and participate in positive activities which may address issues of isolation and loneliness that can have a negative impact upon their emotional wellbeing.

Looked After Children's Services have access to a range of groups, trips, sports and activities and the UASC coordinator can offer information about these.

### Formal Services

There are more formal therapy and counselling services available to UASC where a higher level of need is identified. This could include programmes offered by the Refugee Council and Solace. Where this is not available the Therapeutic Social Work Team can offer assessment and a programmes of therapy. Young people should also be supported to see their GP who can make an assessment and refer to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services where appropriate.

### Care Leavers

The mental and emotional needs of former UASC who are now care leavers also needs to be considered and provided for. This should be considered in each care leavers Pathway Plan. SWs and PAs should cover mental health and emotional needs and support young people to access services that are available. Services can be sought from their GP who can refer onto Community Mental Health Services where appropriate. SW and PAs can also refer to the Therapeutic Social Work Team who can offer assessment and therapy programmes. The TSWT are also available for advice and guidance.

### Useful Contacts

Looked After services UASC coordinator - Louise Sidibe: [Louise.Sidibe@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:Louise.Sidibe@leeds.gov.uk)

Therapeutic Social Work Team - Ben Ottaway: [Benjamin.Ottaway@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:Benjamin.Ottaway@leeds.gov.uk)

Leaving Care Service UASC Specialists - Warren Dillon: [warren.dillon@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:warren.dillon@leeds.gov.uk)

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