

London Borough of Hillingdon

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

2009/10

REVIEW SCOPING REPORT

Child Trafficking: How does the Council work with partner agencies to provide safeguarding at Heathrow Airport as a port of entry?

Aim of Review

To review the statutory safeguarding duties of the Council and other agencies with regard to young people who arrive unaccompanied and to review current practice.

Terms of Reference/Key Tasks

1. To learn more about the world and dangers of Child Trafficking
2. To understand how we safeguard newly arrived vulnerable children and young people, including assessment and intervention
3. To understand the role of key agencies and seek assistance on the effectiveness of partnership working
4. To investigate if there are further developments to best practice which can enhance current services to promote safeguarding and reduce the risk of trafficking
5. To examine best practice elsewhere through case studies, policy ideas, witness sessions and visits
6. After due consideration of the above, to bring forward positive and practical policy recommendations to the Cabinet in relations to the Council's approach to Child Trafficking in Hillingdon.

Methodology

The Policy and Overview Committee is to receive reports, presentations and hear from witnesses, possibly including a site visit.

Documentation

- Information on the structure of services and the roles and responsibilities of partner agencies.
- Data on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and data on missing children
- Evidence of national and local policy and practice

Proposed Timeframe and Milestone (to be finalised once witnesses agree and dates set)

| Meeting Date | Action |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 22 nd Oct 2009 | Approve scoping report for the review |
| 27 th Jan 2010 | A detailed presentation from the Head of Service and key managers. Background and context of the Asylum Service and safeguarding arrangements. Description the issues, and practice from a local and national perspective. Witnesses / Evidence from: UK Border Agency Police |
| 11 th Feb 2010 | Consider recommendations. |
| 23 rd March 2010 | Consider and comment on draft report. |

Background Information

Overview of Children's Asylum Service and the role of the Referral and Assessment Team

Heathrow Airport is the world's busiest international airport and it is situated in the London Borough of Hillingdon. Hillingdon Children and Families service have to deal with the complexities of safeguarding significant numbers of children and young people who arrive at this port of entry every year. The Children and families service have developed a specialist intake service to address issues of child safeguarding and age disputes. Heathrow Airport is operational 24 hours a day and children and young people are can be referred at anytime of day or night. Indeed statistical evidence demonstrates that over 90% are referred outside of the hours of 9.00 am and 5.00 pm Monday to Friday. It is also clear that each new arrival must have, in order to maximise safeguarding, a rapid and skilled service that is delivered immediately on

referral. The dedicated airport intake team has enabled Hillingdon to provide such a response to contacts from UK Border Agency UKBA at Heathrow's five terminals and is a unique service.

Appendix A.

Safeguarding arrangements

Safeguarding of children arriving at Heathrow is a high priority for Hillingdon Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the Child Trafficking Sub Group. Staff in Children's Services work very closely with partners including the police and immigration service in relation to safeguarding young people who may be victims of trafficking and/or other forms of exploitation. Staff in teams across the service have developed specialist skills in safeguarding children and young people who arrive from abroad. Out of hours referrals are managed by standby staff who are on call. Cases are transferred into the appropriate team by the next working day. All USAC cases are dealt with by the Asylum Service, non USAC by the Referral and Assessment Team and 16+. Each are of service carries out all statutory and specialist assessments. This teams have developed skills in undertaking age assessments and assessments of children and young people who are believed to be the victims of trafficking.

The Asylum Service has contributed to the development of the Trafficking Toolkit and is currently involved in piloting its use.

Trafficking is a complex issue however over the last two years Hillingdon has been working closely with UKBA and the policing agencies to disrupt the trafficking of children through Heathrow and put in place strategies to discourage young people from leaving the care of Hillingdon children's services. This has led to a reduction of young people who have gone missing and the number who have been returned has increased.



The above graph represents referrals in relation to Heathrow for the past three years.

2006/07 251 total children, 70 went missing

2007/08 221 total children, 54 went missing

2008/09 160 total children, 20 went missing

Hillingdon faced a particular challenge in relation to Chinese young people going missing soon after arrival. Due to strategies implemented and intelligence employed this pattern has been severely disrupted and there has been a significant reduction in the arrival rate and numbers of Chinese young people going missing.

The ability to respond rapidly and identify potential victims of trafficking at the earliest possible opportunity after arrival has also had a positive effect in relation to our work in identifying vulnerable children/young people and the numbers going missing.

However, the profile of trafficked children and young people is subject to frequent change and does not apply to only one nationality. The increased communication between all services through the recently implemented fortnightly Trafficking Operational Group has led to rapid identification of common factors in the stories and profile of those presenting, sharing of information and intelligence and co-operation leading to both identifying potential victims and potentially disrupting organised crime.

Key Developments

- Hillingdon has developed unique local level, multi-agency operational protocols to combat Child Trafficking and prevent Missing Children at ports of entry. This Protocol includes fortnightly operational meetings held at the offices of UKBA to consider all children individually who have come to notice through the airport terminals. The terms of reference for this operational meeting stipulates core membership of the group, and includes all relevant key law enforcement agencies, such as the Metropolitan Police,[Paladin team], Borough Police and the Heathrow Intelligence Unit , as well as, UKBA and Children's Social Care. This operational work is the first of its kind, and a model of best practice. The terms of reference for this group and the Protocols are being sought by ports of entry throughout the UK. [Staff from Hillingdon have been to Manchester airport, Birmingham, Stansted and Gatwick to share best practice]
- The LCSB in Hillingdon has established a multi-agency sub group focused on Child-trafficking to lead policy and practice. Representation at this group includes not only local public and voluntary sector agencies as traditional, but also includes National NGO's; National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children (ECPAT), Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) and Children First, as well as the Private Sector; British Airports Authority (BAA) and the Group 4 Securicor (G4S). This demonstrates that Hillingdon is influential on a national level and is taking a national lead with policy issues which affect points of entry.
- Hillingdon Child Trafficking leaflets have been developed in 10 different languages and are being rolled out to Ports of Entry across Europe. One

Example being Denmark, as Copenhagen is a transition airport for many children trafficked into the UK. These leaflets will also be included in the National Trafficking Toolkit, which is linked to the national referral mechanism administered by the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC).

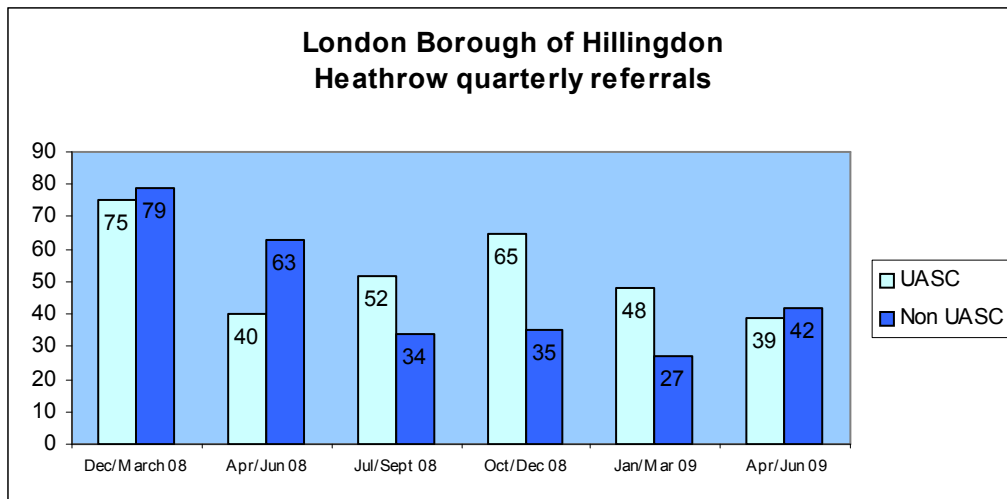
- Hillingdon has developed a bespoke Stand by Service to provide a flexible and skilled professional response at the Airport terminals. A virtual team set up from experienced 'day time' staff who are available between 5pm and 9am, and also includes weekends, provides this service.
- Hillingdon's strong partnership working with UKBA and Policing Agencies, such as the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) and Scotland Yard has disrupted the trafficking of children through Heathrow Airport. This has resulted in both a significant reduction in the number arriving at Heathrow and the number of young people who have gone missing (chart 1)
- Statistical information demonstrates that the joined up approach described in this document has impacted upon the numbers of children and young people arriving. The trends in terms of those that go missing has been greatly reduced and the opportunities for law enforcement agencies to capture intelligence and take action against offenders has gone up.
- The work has been recognised by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED), the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DSCF) and the Home Office as a model for best practice particularly in the area of child trafficking

Asylum Service

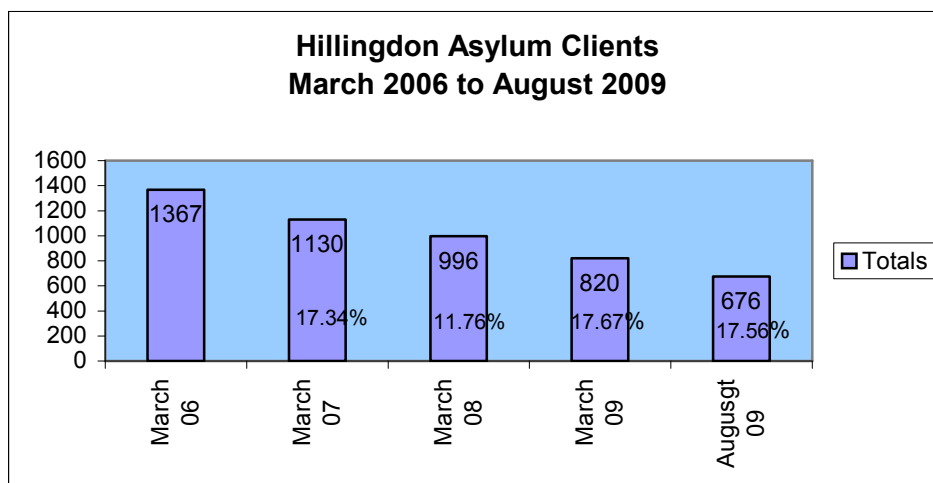
Missing Clients

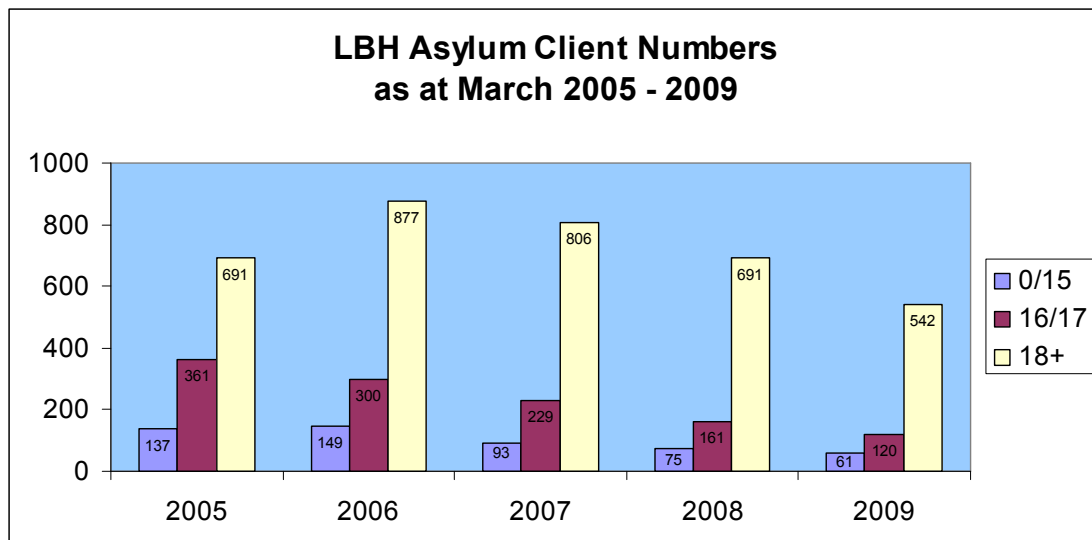
| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Afghani | 1 | 8 | 5 |
| Albanian | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Chinese | 63 | 32 | 4 |
| Congolese | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Indian | 1 | 6 | 6 |
| Iranian | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Iraqi | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Nigerian | 0 | 3 | 2 |
| Palestinian | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Somalian | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Syrian | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Vietnamese | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 70 | 54 | 20 |

B. Children's Asylum Service



The Asylum Service currently supports just under 700 children and young people 155 who are Looked After Children and 540 Care Leavers





All Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children under 16 on arrival are placed in foster care with a few placed in our specialist residential unit.

Accommodation

The Service provides a range of semi-independent and shared accommodation for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. All accommodation is of a high standard and in addition to young people having allocated workers the service commissions a range of outreach support via Notting Hill Housing Group and a voluntary organisation Asphaleia.

16-18 year olds

A 47 room supported unit providing self-contained units and including 3 emergency rooms for newly arrived young people.
A 26 rooms and 1 disability room.

Both units are staffed and of a very high specification and standard.

Mother & Baby Accommodation

20 flats/bed sits for sole occupancy
5 shared houses

18+ Accommodation

90 shared houses (350 rooms)

The Asylum Service has low numbers of NEET (Not in Education Training or Employment) with the majority (85%) of children and young people in education, training or employment.

As at 1st March 2009 of 695 young people **101(15%)** are NEET. Included in the NEET figures are very newly arrived young people (9); Missing (10); Prison/ Detained (4)

121 (24%) of our 18+ care leavers (**total 514**) are in Higher Education.

Well-being Project (WBP)

A mainly Department of Health funded project which for the past 4 years has provided specialist mental health assessment and treatment including individual and group work and creative therapies for UASCs. For example the Orientation Memory Box offers newly arrived young people support in relation to emotional and physiological needs and assists their successful orientation and integration into the UK.

The WBP also offers consultation, training and support to staff carers and interpreters.