



## RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

Key Decision

✓

**SUBJECT: Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking & Refugee Children**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

This report seeks authority to receive and support placements of children in Rhondda Cynon Taf through the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children (UASC) scheme.

In accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, this report has been prepared to accompany the intended officer decision of the Group Director, Community & Children's Services as described below.

In view of the urgency and requirement to utilise registered settings, Cardiff Council will commission RCT to staff Treherbert Home as an emergency measure.

### **DELEGATED DECISION (Date): 20<sup>th</sup> October 2016**

That the Council joins the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children (UASC), and

The Council with its partners makes such arrangements as are necessary to provide accommodation and support for vulnerable children resettled through the national UASC scheme.

**Chief Officer Signature**

C. ISINCRIKI

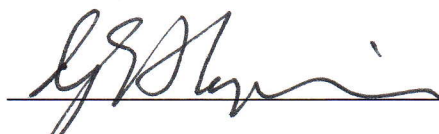
**Print Name**

20.10.16.

**Date**

The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution

**CONSULTATION**



**CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE**

20/10/16

**DATE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**CONSULTEE OFFICER SIGNATURE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

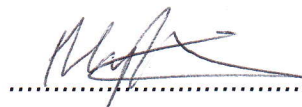
**CALL IN PROCEDURE RULES.**

***IS THE DECISION DEEMED URGENT AND NOT SUBJECT TO CALL-IN BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:***

**YES** ☒ **NO**

Reason for urgency: The imminent arrival of vulnerable children in the UK due to the closure of the refugee and asylum seeker camps in Calais, France and recent letter from Home Office suggesting that we could get as little as 24 hours notice!

*If deemed urgent* - signature of Mayor or Deputy Mayor or Head of Paid Service confirming agreement that the proposed decision is reasonable in all the circumstances for it being treated as a matter of urgency, in accordance with the overview and scrutiny procedure rule 17.2:

  
.....  
**(Mayor)**

20/10/2016  
.....  
**(Dated)**

**NB - If this is a reconsidered decision then the decision Cannot be Called In and the decision will take effect from the date the decision is signed.**

FOR CABINET OFFICE USE ONLY

## PUBLICATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATES

### PUBLICATION

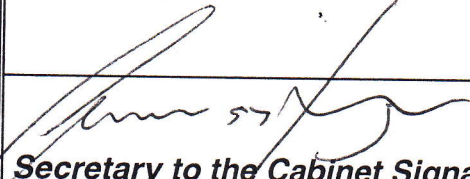
Publication on the Councils Website:- 20/10/2016

DATE

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

**Note:** This decision will not come into force and may not be implemented until the expiry of 5 clear working days after its publication to enable it to be the subject to the Call-In Procedure in Rule 17.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

Subject to Call In the implementation date will be \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

	CHRISTIAN SJ HANAGAN	20/10/16
Secretary to the Cabinet Signature	Print Name	Date

#### Further Information

Directorate:	Community & Children's Services
Contact Name:	Paul Mee
Designation:	Service Director, Public Health & Protection
Tel.No.	01443 425513

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO ACCOMPANY DECISION OF  
GROUP DIRECTOR COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**20<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2016**

**UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING AND REFUGEE CHILDREN**

**AUTHOR: Paul Mee (Tel: 01443 425513)**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1** This report seeks authority to receive and support placements of children in Rhondda Cynon Taf through the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children (UASC) scheme.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Council is instructed

- 2.1** to join the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children (UASC), and
- 2.2** with its partners make such arrangements as are necessary to provide accommodation and support for vulnerable children resettled through the national UASC scheme.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1** The crisis in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa has seen an unprecedented number of migrants and asylum seekers arriving in Europe. These include many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. The Government has committed to resettle a number of these vulnerable children. Many of these children stay in the care of the local authority where they claim asylum, resulting in a small number of local authorities looking after the majority of children, most notably Kent.
- 3.2** The Government has, therefore, introduced a national transfer scheme, underpinned by powers in the Immigration Act 2016, to ensure there is a more equitable distribution of unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children across the UK.

- 3.3 The majority of UASC are male (around 90%) and aged 16 or 17 (over 61%). Children under 16 are usually fostered; children aged 16 -17 may be placed in semi-independent living arrangements or be fostered.
- 3.4 The national transfer scheme has been in place since July 2016 and the Home Office has requested that local authorities across the UK join the scheme and arrange to receive placements.
- 3.5 More recently, the Government has confirmed that they are accelerating their work with partners on transferring unaccompanied children to the UK where it is in their best interests. An announcement to parliament on 10<sup>th</sup> October confirmed that the Government is cooperating with the French Government to bring unaccompanied children, particularly those in the Calais camps, to the UK over the next few weeks. Children will be reunited with family members or will need to be appropriately looked after under local authority care arrangements.
- 3.6 Where a child is to be reunited with family, the Home Office will notify the local authority in which the care giver resides with the earliest possible notice - and in any event with no less than 24 hours' notice of arrival into the local area - in order that the necessary checks can be quickly undertaken to confirm that the placement is appropriate and that accommodation is suitable. Where this is not possible before the child arrives in the UK it may be necessary to arrange short term care, for example in a temporary foster placement or for older children in supported accommodation. Local authorities have been asked to make such arrangements as the need arises.
- 3.7 Unaccompanied children who are not being reunited with relatives will be looked after children and the Government will use the National Transfer Scheme to place them with local authorities. Local authorities have been asked to bring forward any places they have so the government can quickly place children into long-term care arrangements.
- 3.8 The Home Office is urgently seeking to place a number of children from the Calais camp this week, initially through existing arrangements with Cardiff Council. Given the already significant commitment by Cardiff Council, they have asked for support from neighbouring local authorities with placements for the children.

#### **4. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 It has not been possible to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) due to the urgent nature of this request.

## **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The Council has consulted with both SW Police and Cwm Taf University Health Board on this proposal.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 6.1 The Government will provide funding to support unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children regardless of their route into the UK. An agreed schedule of rates has been in place since 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 7.1 The national transfer scheme operates in accordance with the requirements of the Immigration Act 2016. The placement of children and young people that are looked after are regulated under the Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003.

## **8. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ SIP**

- 8.1 This has clear links to the priorities set out in the Rhondda Cynon Taf Single Integrated Plan, specifically that children and adults at risk are protected from harm. The Council committed to supporting the resettlement of refugees through the Syrian Resettlement Scheme at its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The Government is accelerating its plans to receive vulnerable children under the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children scheme. The Government has requested that Local authorities across the UK place children either on a temporary or long-term basis. This request is even more pressing with the imminent closure of the camp in Calais, France and the necessity to make whatever arrangements are necessary to protect the safety and security of these vulnerable children.
- 9.2 The temporary arrangement to support Cardiff Council by allowing them to commission RCT and utilise Treherbert Children's Home as an emergency short-term measure in accordance with the Home Office requirements set out in Paragraph 3.6 above.
- 9.3 This will not impact on the previous Delegated Decision regarding the need to review Children's accommodation.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO ACCOMPANY A DECISION OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR,  
COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**20<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2016**

**UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING AND REFUGEE CHILDREN**

**Background Papers**

None

**Officer to contact: Paul Mee, Service Director,  
Tel. No. 01443 425513**