

ECYE28. Support for Children Seeking Asylum or Fleeing War in Ukraine

The Education, Children and Young People Executive considered a report by the Interim Director of Children's Services which provided an update on children and young people whom the Council is supporting, that were seeking asylum or fleeing the war in Ukraine.

The report highlights the financial challenges associated with fulfilling the statutory duties to these children and young people. There was a projected shortfall of £353k for 2023/24 between the income received from the Home Office and the costs of caring for children seeking asylum.

Through the mandated National Transfer Scheme, Falkirk Council currently had 13 young people in its care. After an age assessment by registered Social Workers, a further 4 young people who had been placed in adult dispersal accommodation were deemed to be below 18 years of age, and, as such, Falkirk Council had a duty to regard them as looked after children and provide them with a care placement.

The current allocation of young people from the National Transfer Scheme was 2 per rota cycle, however, this was under review with the potential for this to increase.

Falkirk Council continued to support and assist families fleeing the conflict in Ukraine and to date, had received 97 young people with their carer(s). Seven had since left the Falkirk area. There were currently 5 children in our Early Years establishments and 85 children in our Primary/Secondary schools.

Funding of £412,756 had been received from the UK Home Office to provide education support to these pupils and their families. However, this funding was one-off with no indication of any further financial support being provided.

Two Social Work Assistants had been recruited, with the aim to build up specialist skills and knowledge to help support these young people, and to alleviate some of the workload pressures on both the Locality and Initial Response Teams.

Decision

The Education, Children and Young People Executive:-

- (1) noted the report and progress made to support these children and young people, and**
- (2) recognised the continued financial pressures on Children's Services to provide accommodation to children seeking asylum in the absence of family based foster placement.**