

Regarding the 56 day period. This is something which has been discussed in the past as the 28 day move on period has always proved problematic but attempts to harmonise this with existing housing/homelessness legislation have not been fruitful. UKVI are considering this issue in the round while they are consulting with partners and developing their thinking around the new asylum accommodation and support contracts. We have this on the agenda for our next Dispersal Strategy Group meeting (April 6th) where we will discuss whether it is something we wish to ask the UKVI to consider.

Regarding the UASC Project. I used to run a Refugee Mentoring Project for SOVA, and we obtained funding to run a drop in centre for unaccompanied asylum seeking children called 'You are not alone'. The project has not been funded for some years now.

The project grew out of the adult refugee mentoring work. SOVA recruited and trained asylum seekers, refugees and host community people to become trained mentors to reduce isolation and promote access to services. It was identified that some UASC were totally isolated, having no family or friends, arriving in a new country, with a different culture and language. Sova, in partnership with Cardiff Children's Services, utilised a space at the Welsh Refugee Council, and set up a drop in centre to help integrate these young people into the local community so they could form friendships and gain peer support. The project provided peer mentors/befrienders from local ethnic minority groups and together they established a drop in centre with a welcoming, friendly atmosphere where the young people could feel safe and supported. The peer mentors came up with the name 'You are not alone'.

We made a film called 'A Place in Mind' -which is still used in training sessions for people working with UASC.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6loIP9Vi_4I

The drop in was attended by around 30 UASC at any one time mostly from the Cardiff area (numbers of UASC were higher at that time), and also provided ESOL training, educational and cultural trips, guest speakers, cooking, provision of computers, etc.