

Faster accommodation moves for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children

The transfer of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) from temporary hotels to long-term care will be sped up to help reduce the multi-million pound cost of accommodation to the UK taxpayer and ensure children get the care they need, the government has announced.

The changes, part of the New Plan for Immigration, will mean that UASC will spend less time in hotels and more time in long-term accommodation designed for their needs.

Currently the government spends more than £5million a day accommodating asylum seekers and Afghan refugees in hotels, including UASC.

The government is working at pace to end the use of hotels for asylum seekers and fix the broken asylum system. While there is no one single solution, the government's New Plan for Immigration is delivering a broad range of measures to tackle illegal migration and the pressures it has put on our asylum system, including through the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda, our new Borders Act, plans for asylum reception centres and a fairer asylum dispersal system.

Minister Kevin Foster, Minister for Safe and Legal Migration said:

The government cannot deal with the impact of the rise in dangerous and illegal small boat crossings alone which is why I welcome the support from councils to help us reduce the cost of hotels and quickly move unaccompanied asylum-seeking children so they receive the care they need.

Any council which moves a child from a hotel to their care under the new scheme will receive support funding of £6,000 per child for the first three months to give them the best possible start.

Today's announcement means once a referral is made under the National Transfer Scheme, councils will have five working days rather than 10, to transfer an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child from hotel accommodation to their care.

On top of the extra £20 million of government funding announced last year, councils will receive new funding to help them deliver the changes to the scheme.

Councils will receive an additional £2,000 per child per month for the first three months if they move a UASC from a hotel to a placement within five working days. Following this councils will continue to receive up to £143 a day to support any UASC and £270 per week for all former UASC care leavers in

their area.

The Home Office has made further changes which means councils have to work to create placements based on a minimum of 0.1% UASC as a percentage of their overall child population. The change will mean children are fairly distributed between councils.

The NTS, which was made mandatory in February 2022, has seen more than 1,730 children transferred to councils with children's services between January 2021 to March 2022.