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Safeguarding Children from Abroad

Inter-agency Practice Guidance



Nottinghamshire
SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN Board



NOTTINGHAM CITY
Safeguarding
Children BOARD

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FOREWORD

According to the National Register for Unaccompanied Children (NRUC) since the year 2000 over 15,000 unaccompanied children have entered the UK seeking asylum.

Local authorities have a duty to provide accommodation, education, health and other services as necessary.

However, the diverse and mobile nature of children supported by local government has hampered joined up care across authorities. This lack of coordination puts some of the most vulnerable people in society at risk.

The Legislative restrictions placed on adult asylum seekers and their families can create confusion for applicants and professionals alike. There may be some situations where adults claim to be children, or families encourage children to present themselves as unaccompanied.

On arrival these children often have:-

- no identification
- no information,
- no documentation
- no guardians.

The purpose of this guidance is to assist staff in all agencies to:

- understand the issues which can make children from abroad particularly vulnerable
- identify children from abroad who may be in need, including those who may be in need of protection
- know what action to take in accordance with their responsibilities.

Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board and Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board have produced this guidance. It is consistent with the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010

INTRODUCTION

Large numbers of children arrive into this country from overseas every day. Many of these children do so legally in the care of their parents and do not raise any concerns for statutory agencies. However, this practice guidance has been developed in light of our experience that many children are arriving into the UK:-

Accompanied

- In the care of adults who, whilst they may be their carers, have no parental responsibility for them
- In the care of adults who have no documents to demonstrate a relationship with the child
- In the control of traffickers or agents.

Unaccompanied

- Alone

More is known about unaccompanied children as most come to the attention of authorities when they claim asylum, although some “disappear” either prior to or following local authority assessment

Unaccompanied children or those accompanied by someone who is not their parent are particularly vulnerable. These children and many of their carers will need assistance to ensure that the child receives adequate care and accesses health and education services.

A small number of these children may be exposed to the additional risk of commercial, sexual or domestic exploitation.

There are additional considerations in assessment of children from abroad because of the complexities of their immigration status for example:-

- Children who overstay/ have no leave to remain
- Children with no recourse to public funds
- Age disputed minors

Immigration Legislation impacts significantly on work under the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people from abroad. This guidance reflects the current legal framework but it is important to note that regulation and legislation in this area of work is complex and subject to change through legal challenge etc. All practitioners need to be aware of this context to their contact with such families. Legal advice on individual cases will usually be required by Children’s Social Care.

PRINCIPLES

There are some key principles underpinning practice within all agencies in relation to unaccompanied children from abroad or those accompanied by someone who does not hold parental responsibility. These are:-

- For unaccompanied children the Local Authority in which they were first discovered will remain the responsible authority, irrespective of where the child actually resides.
- It is essential never to lose sight of the fact that children from abroad are children first.
- Children arriving from abroad who are unaccompanied or accompanied by someone who is not their parent should be assumed to be children in need and assessed in a setting where, as far as possible, they feel able to talk freely
- Assessing the needs of these children is only possible if their legal status, background experiences, culture, faith, political and social economic background are understood, including the culture shock of arrival in this country
- Children will be respected and treated fairly in accordance with the Convention of Children's Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights 1998

THE STATUS OF CHILDREN WHO ARRIVE FROM ABROAD AND LEGAL DUTIES TOWARDS THEM

Children who arrive in the UK alone or who are left at a port of entry by an agent have no right of entry and are unlawfully present. They are likely to be in a position to claim asylum and this should be arranged as soon as possible if appropriate. They are the responsibility of the Children's Social Care to support until they are 18 years of age. If their asylum claim is not resolved before they reach 18 years old, support after the age of 18 years is provided jointly by National Asylum Support Services (NASS) and Children's Social Care. Provided that a child has been provided with accommodation under section 20 of the Children Act 1989, they will be entitled to ongoing support from the local authority under the aftercare scheme introduced in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. However, if the person has exhausted all applications for an extension of leave to remain in the UK Children's Social Care should seek legal advice regarding how to proceed in such circumstances.

Children who arrive in the UK with, or to join, carers without parental responsibility may have leave to enter the country, or visas or may be in the UK unlawfully. Dependent on the young person's age and the nature of their relationship with the adult they may be privately fostered. If this is the case then Children's Social Care will have responsibilities towards them under the private fostering regulations.

Some children who arrive in the UK with their parents belong to families of European Economic Area nationals migrating to the UK. The children of such families may be children in need and eligible for support like any child who is a British citizen

EDUCATION

The law makes provision for free education for unaccompanied children claiming asylum and the children of asylum seekers up to the age of 18 provided that the child's education starts before the age of 16. Children who arrive in the UK at 16 or over may receive education at the discretion of the Local Authority. For young people aged 16 applications in the County should be made to Pupil and Parents Services and in the City to the Asylum/Refugee Strategy Manager (Connexions). See Appendix 2 for contact details.

HEALTH

Medical Primary Care

Eligibility to receive free medical treatment is determined by whether a person is ordinarily resident in the UK and is not related to the person's nationality, or the payment of national insurance contributions or taxes.

When overseas visitors (i.e. those not ordinarily resident in the UK) require the provision of emergency or immediately necessary medical treatment, they should be offered this free of charge.

There is no obligation to provide non-emergency medical treatment or medical treatment that is not immediately necessary to overseas visitors. When an overseas visitor from any country requests non emergency treatment or treatment that is not immediately necessary, it is for the GP to decide whether to accept that person onto his or her list for NHS treatment.

Information on local GP registration can be found on www.nhs.uk or by phoning NHS Direct 0845 4647

Pharmaceutical Services

A pharmacist or doctor providing pharmaceutical services may dispense any NHS prescription presented regardless of whether the patient is ordinarily resident or not. NHS charges will be payable in the normal way.

Dental Treatment

General Dental Practitioners (GDPs) have discretion over whether or not to admit a patient onto their lists for NHS treatment. There are no temporary resident provisions under the GDP regulations, only the discretion to accept patients on either a NHS or fee paying basis.

IDENTIFICATION AND INITIAL ACTION

First contact with the child and carers is crucial to the engagement with the family and the promotion of trust which underpins the future support, advice and services. Particular sensitivities which may be present include:

- Concerns around immigration status
- Fear of repatriation
- Lack of understanding of why an assessment needs to be carried out
- Past trauma
- Mistrust of authority as a result of abuse in their country of origin
- The journey itself
- Separation
- The shock of arrival
- The alien culture, system and language can cause shock and uncertainty, and can affect the mood, behaviour and presentation

In such circumstances reluctance to divulge information, fear, confusion or memory loss can easily be mistaken for lack of co-operation, deliberate withholding of information or untruthfulness.

The first task of the initial contact is therefore engagement. Open questions are most helpful, with a clear emphasis on reassurance and simple explanations of the role and reasons for assessment. If the “engagement” with the family is good there are more likely to be opportunities to expand on the initial contact, as trust is established.

All agencies that work with children and young people may be called upon to undertake an assessment of a child who has come to this country from abroad. For those children that are accompanied by adult the focus of the assessment will be dependent on the identified issues/concerns. In circumstances where the information available suggests that a child or children may be at risk of significant harm this should be referred to Children’s Social Care. In other circumstances it is likely that the Common Assessment Framework will be the most appropriate tool. In making the decision about what process to follow agencies should give regard to the Interagency Safeguarding Children Procedures and the following guidance

Pathway to Provision (County)

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/learningandwork/childrenstrust/pathwaytoprovision.htm>

The Integrated Support Strategy (Nottingham City)

www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=9579&p=0

Whenever any professional comes across a child who they believe has recently moved into this country the following basic information should be sought where possible:-

- The child's identity and immigration status
- The carer's relationship with the child and immigration status
- The child's health and education arrangements in this county.

This should be done in a way which is as unthreatening to the child and carer as possible.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

At the first contact with the child and carer(s) it is however also vital not to presume that the child's views are the same as their carer, or that the views and needs of each child are the same. Seeing each child alone is crucial, particularly to check out the stated relationships with the person accompanying them. (Someone allegedly from the same place of origin should have a similar knowledge of the place, for example).

The ethnicity, culture, customs and identity of this child must be a focus whilst keeping this child central to the assessment. The pace of the interviewing of a child should aim to be at the pace appropriate to the child, although the need to ensure that the child is safe may become paramount in some circumstances. Some issues for staff undertaking assessments and key questions to be addressed are included in appendix 3.

Seeking Information From Abroad

Caution should be exercised when deciding on which is the most appropriate form of information gathering in order to ensure that the family's welfare is not jeopardised by the unwarranted disclosure of their whereabouts. Without such caution children and their families could be placed at risk.

Workers should also be mindful of the potential risk associated with using the community to provide and gain information. It is important that the views of the parent and child are ascertained to how, from whom, and what type of information is collected from identified sources. The safety of the child and family is paramount.

Having said this seeking information from abroad is an important part of assessments. Professionals from all key agencies – e.g. Health, Education, Children's Social Care and the Police – should all be prepared to request information from their equivalent agencies in the country(ies) in which a child has lived, in order to gain as full as possible a picture of the child's preceding circumstance.

Using the Common Assessment Framework

The assessment of children from abroad can be challenging. It is helpful to use the Common Assessment Framework, provided that it is recognised that the assessment has to address not only the barriers which arise from cultural, linguistic and religious differences, but also the particular sensitivities which come from the experiences of many such children and families.

Asylum Seeking Families

If this information indicates that the child has come from overseas and is being cared for by an unrelated adult or one whose relationship is uncertain, Children's Social Care should be notified in order that an assessment can be undertaken. If a child is accompanied by an adult, the child does not have immigration status. The child status will be determined by parents or main applicant.

An adult whose own immigration status is unresolved cannot apply for a residence order to secure a child for whom he/she is caring. Children's Social Care has statutory duties where the child is deemed to be privately fostered. All agencies and individuals have a duty to report such arrangements to Children's Social Care. Carers/parents are not eligible to claim benefits for their child unless they have both been granted some form of "leave to remain" in this country by the Home Office.

The UK Border Agency (UKBA) will liaise with Children's Social Care prior to any action being taken with families and always prior to any removal action. There is also consultation with police child protection officers. UKBA also has a Children's Champion Officer who examine whether removal is appropriate and, if so, that all appropriate actions are considered and work done before the family is removed.

Private Fostering

Private fostering refers to a situation in which a child or young person under the age of 16 lives for 28 days or longer with an adult who is not a close relative. It is a legal requirement that all such cases are referred to Children's Social Care who are required to formally assess, approve and monitor such arrangements. For more detail please refer to appendix 1.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

Assessments of unaccompanied asylum seeking children will be led by Children's Social Care. With very few exceptions (see below) unaccompanied asylum seeking children who have been age assessed will be accepted as looked after children and the local authority will have duties to them under Part 3 of the Children Act 1989. Such Children will be subject to the same placement planning and reviewing processes as all other looked after children. The responsibility for supporting such children rests with Children's Social Care and any agency who comes into contact with young people in this situation must notify Children's Social Care immediately.

The assessment process involves three stages:-

- Establishing the child's identity and age
- Assessing parental responsibility
- Seeking information from abroad

Establishing the Child's Identity and Age

Age is central to the assessment and affects the child's rights to services and the response by agencies. In addition it is important to establish age so that services are age and developmentally appropriate.

Citizens of European Union countries will have passport or ID card (usually both). Unaccompanied children very rarely have possession of any documents to confirm their identity or even to substantiate that they are a child. Their physical appearance may not necessarily reflect his/her age. Trauma impacts on appearance and emotional well being and affects the ageing process.

The assessment of age is a complex task, which often relies on professional judgement and discretion. Such assessment may be compounded by issues of disability. Moreover, many societies do not place a high level of importance upon age and it may also be calculated in different ways. Some young people may genuinely not know their age and this can be misread as lack of co-operation. Levels of competence in some areas or tasks may exceed or fall short of our expectations of a child of the same age in this country. The advice of a paediatrician with experience in considering age may be needed to assist in this. The views and advice of relevant professionals and adults who are involved with supporting the child may be sought to assist with a comprehensive age assessment. This will need to be timely in consideration of the needs and support of the child.

However, the initial assessment of age may change when further information is obtained, whether through observation of behaviour, emotional and physical developments, or further documentation. The welfare of the child will remain the paramount consideration. In the event that there is a dispute as to the age of an individual who claims to be a child, that is a question of fact that the Court will ultimately be responsible for resolving. Children's Social Care should seek legal advice in such circumstances.

Exceptions to the provision of support under Section 20 of the Children's Act, could arise when an older Asylum Seeking Young Person refuses to be 'Looked After'. If such circumstances arise then Children's Social Care should seek legal advice

The majority of unaccompanied children and young people will be entitled to Leaving Care Services under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, unless barred from provision as "persons unlawfully in the UK". Legal advice should be sought before a decision is made to refuse or withdraw aftercare support

Parental Responsibility

The Children Act 1989 is built around the concept of "parental responsibility". This legal framework provides the starting point for considering who has established rights, responsibility and duties towards a child. In some cultures

child rearing is a shared responsibility between relatives and members of the community. Adults may bring children to this country that they have cared for most of their lives, but who may be unrelated or “distantly” related.

Children whose parents’ whereabouts are not known have no access to their parents for consent when making important choices about their life. Whilst their parents still have parental responsibility they have no way of exercising it. Children who do not have someone with parental responsibility caring for them can still attend school, and schools should be pragmatic in allowing the carer to make most decisions normally made by a parent. Such children are entitled to health care and have a right to be registered with a GP.

Emergency life-saving treatment would be given if required. However, should the child need medical treatment such as surgery or invasive treatment in a non life-threatening situation, the need for consent would become an issue and legal advice should be sought by the allocated social worker.

CHILDREN IN NEED OF PROTECTION

Where assessment indicates that a child may be in need of protection and child protection procedures apply, additional factors need to be taken into account by those involved in the process. These include such things as:

- Perceptions of authority, the role of the Police in particular, and the level of fear which may be generated.
- The additional implications for a family where deportation is a real threat.
- Balancing the impact of separation on a child with the likely history of separation/disruption.
- Judgements about child care practices in the context of such different cultural backgrounds and experiences.

The safeguarding of a child's welfare is paramount and child protection principles and thresholds should be adhered to. Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Boards have produced practice guidance covering Missing children and Child Sexual Exploitation which may be relevant dependant on the child's circumstances. These are available on the Boards' WebPages

www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/nscb

or

www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=591

All practitioners must be mindful of cultural practices that may require child protection enquiries for example, female genital mutilation, and fear of honour based violence, racial bullying and forced marriage. Concerns should be referred to Children's Social Care.

THE TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN

Article 3 of the Palermo Protocol To Prevent, Suppress And Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women And Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime to the UN Convention (2000) (ratified by the UK on 6 February 2006) defines trafficking as:

“Trafficking of persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat of or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

The trafficking of children is unquestionably a form of child abuse and should therefore be reported to children’s social care. It also raises unique issues. It can involve young people who do not recognise the coercive nature of their relationships or where they fear going to the authorities for help. It can also involve young people who have been groomed over months or years to not trust the authorities and to behave in a specific way, normalising the behaviour and believing that this is their fate. Often these children live on the margins of society with no education, little or no documentation, and no income of their own, dependent on adults for all their emotional and physical needs. These young people are not always recognised as victims of crime by the range of professionals who first come into contact with them (including police, social workers, immigration officials etc) and as a result their emotional and psychological needs often go unattended even if the professionals believe they are away from immediate harm.

As soon as suspicions are raised that a child is being trafficked, immediate action to safeguard the child is required. This includes urgent liaison with the Sexual Exploitation Investigation Unit in the police. Planning of the investigations should be within a strategy meeting, in order to ensure that both the safety of this individual child and the investigation of organised criminal activity are addressed.

Working with children who have experienced exploitation and trafficking requires a long-term commitment by professionals to help these young people rebuild their lives. This reaches far beyond basic care to include protection plans that recognise their vulnerability to further abuse and pathway plans that support young people through the maze of services they need to access for

safe accommodation, education, employment, parenting, building appropriate relationships, life skills and legal support.

A number of factors identified by the assessment may indicate that a child has been trafficked:

- The child may present as unaccompanied or semi accompanied
- The child may go missing.
- The multiple use of the same address may indicate that it is an “unsafe house” or that the house is being used as a sorting house.
- Contracts, consent and financial inducement with parents may become apparent.
- The child may not cooperate with agencies, based on fear of threats and harm to friends and family in their home country.
- There may be talk of financial bonds and the withholding of documents.
- Befriending of the vulnerable child.
- False hopes of improvement in their lives (escaping war, famine, poverty or discrimination).

If it is identified that a child may be being trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation the Sexual Exploitation Practice guidance should be followed. Children are also trafficked for the purpose of domestic labour. These children may be less obvious, and their use to the family may be more likely to be identified during a private fostering assessment, or because someone notices that they are living at a house, but not in school etc. Children who enter the country apparently as part of re-unification arrangements can be particularly vulnerable to domestic exploitation.

If any agency comes into contact with a child who they believe may be a victim of trafficking then they should report the matter to Social Care, who will lead on referring this matter to the Competent Authority based in the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC). Further details regarding the role of UKHTC can be accessed at

www.soca.gov.uk/about-soca/about-the-ukhtc

Trafficking threat to Roma children and families

During the course of 2010 information came to light which indicated a particular issue with regard to the trafficking of children from, and within, the Roma community. In 2007 the Romanian National Police opened an investigation into the trafficking from Romania of Roma children for forced criminality and other forms of exploitation across Europe. They identified that the gang responsible and the child victims all originated from a single town in south-east Romania.

The Romanian police identified that over 4 years the gang moved 1,107 children from this town into Western Europe. The government found evidence that most of these children were exploited by being forced to beg or steal in a

number of European countries. It was established that the proceeds of this criminality were then being routed back into Romania to benefit a few crime bosses, also from the Roma community

Within the UK a number of the child victims have been found living in a variety of domestic circumstances - some with parents, some with extended family and others placed with 'families' to which they are not related. It is known that Traffickers move child victims between exploitative situations and addresses within the local authority or between local authorities

National guidance regarding the response to trafficked children is available at

<http://publications.education.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=HMG-00994-2007>

Further information can also be obtained at

www.londonscb.gov.uk/trafficking

APPENDIX 1 – PRIVATE FOSTERING

Under section 67 of the Children Act 1989 a local authority is under a duty to satisfy itself that the welfare of children who are privately fostered within their area is being satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted and to secure that such advice is given to those caring for them as appears to the authority to be needed.

‘A privately fostered child’ means a child who is under the age of sixteen (eighteen if disabled) and who is cared for, and provided with accommodation in their own home by, someone other than:

- (i) a parent of his;
- (ii) a person who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him; or
- (iii) a relative of his.

A child is not a privately fostered child if the person caring for and accommodating him:

- (a) has done so for a period of less than 28 days; and
- (b) does not intend to do so for any longer period.

In this context close relative means grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt whether full blood or half-blood or by marriage or step-parent

For further information regarding Private Fostering please see

www.baaf.org.uk/info/private-fostering

APPENDIX 2 – SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- 1. Documentation held by the child/family**
The child/family may have documentation from their previous country such as benefit letter, ID cards, GP or hospital letters, letters from other Social Care departments.
- 2. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 020-7008 1500**
- 3. The Appropriate Embassy or Consulate**
The London Diplomatic List, ISBN 0 11 591772 1 can be obtained from the Stationery Office on 0870 – 600 –5522 or from FCO website www.fco.gov.uk. It contains information about all the Embassies based in London.
- 4. International directory enquires dial 155.** Ask for main Town Hall number as they will have details of local offices. This can be useful where an address in a town abroad is known.
- 5. International Social Service of the UK**
Cranmer House, (3rd Floor), 39 Brixton Road, London SW9 6DD
Tel No 020-7735 8941/4. Fax 020-7582 0696

USEFUL CONTACTS

Further advice on matters concerning asylum seeking families who have gone missing can be obtained from the Asylum Seeker/Refugee Support Team in Children's Services in the City (Tel: 0115 9150787 or 9157846). The team are designated as a Single Point of Contact in respect of unaccompanied asylum seeker children (UASC). They can be contacted on 0115 9159681/2/3/4.

In Nottinghamshire the lead for services for unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people is the Service Manager (After Care) Nottinghamshire Children and Young People Services Children's Social Care, Meadow House, Littleworth, Mansfield Nottinghamshire NG18 2TB 01623 433433

Nottinghamshire Children and Young People Services Ethnicity Culture & Achievement Service: New Arrivals Team; The service can be accessed by making a referral to the Manager of New Arrivals,

For further information or to make a referral, visit

www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/learningandwork/extrahelp/supportforethnicminoritychildren,

email ecas@nottscc.gov.uk or telephone (0115) 854 6440.

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum, The Square, Alfred Street North, Nottingham. Tel (0115) 941 5599 info@nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk

Refugee Action, Castle Court, 59, Castle Boulevard, Nottingham, NG7 1ED, Tel: (0115) 941 8552

Refugee Housing, 68-84 Alfreton Road, Nottingham, NG7 3NN, Tel: (0115) 988 7107

City Achievement Team, Schools and Learning, Inclusive Learning, Nottingham City Council, LH Box 7, Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG, 0115 87 64684

Pupil and Patient Services (County) telephone 01623 433433

Asylum/Refugee Strategy Manager (Connexions) telephone 0115 9159694

UK Human Trafficking Centre, Telephone: 0114 252 3891

APPENDIX 3 – FURTHER GUIDANCE FOR STAFF UNDERTAKING ASSESSMENTS

When Assessing a Child's developmental needs the following should be taken into account

- Health, behaviour and social presentation can be affected by trauma and loss. Famine and poverty can have an impact upon development.
- Wider health needs may need to be considered, including HIV, Hepatitis B and C and TB. (this applies to the parent/carer also)
- Education. What has school meant to this child?
- Self care skills. Not to judge competence by comparing with a child of the same age in this country. This child may have had to be very competent in looking after themselves on the journey but unable to do other basic tasks. In some countries some children will have been working or have been involved in armed conflict. Loss of a parent can enhance or deprive a child of certain skills. Having had to overcome extreme adversity can result in a child who is either deeply troubled or both resourceful and resilient.
- Identity, who is this child? What is their sense of themselves, their family, community, tribe, race, history, faith,
- Talking about parents/ family can be stressful and painful
- Physical appearance. Life experience and trauma can affect this. Lack of nourishment may make the child present as younger or older.
- Perceptions of what constitutes disability are relative and attitudes towards disabled children may be very different.
- The impact of racism on the child's self image and the particular issues currently faced by asylum seeking children and their families.
- The child's health needs, basic health assessments such as eye tests and dental checks are also important.
- All health checks should be undertaken at the earliest opportunity.

When assessing Parenting Capacity the following should be taken into account

- War, famine and persecution can make a family mobile. The family may have moved frequently in order to keep safe. The stability of the family unit might be more important to the child than stability of place.

- Judgements that mobility may equate with inability to provide secure parenting may be entirely wrong. In some countries regular migration to deal with exhaustion of the land is part of the culture.
- The fact that a child seems to have been given up by a parent may not imply rejection, as the motive may have been to keep the child safe or seek better life chances for him/her.
- Importance of the extended family/community rather than a narrow view of parenting.
- Not to presume that you cannot contact a parent who is living abroad unless you have established that it is not safe or appropriate to do so.
- Lack of toys for a child may indicate poverty or different cultural norms rather than poor parenting capacity to provide stimulation.
- The corrosive impact on parenting capacity of racism against asylum seekers.
- The additional issues of parenting a child conceived through rape, having to deal with the negative responses and the stresses of keeping it a secret.
- The uncertainty of their legal status.
- Loss of social economic and cultural status.
- The impact of separation and loss.
- The potential impact of reunification with family and peers.
- The impact of mobility under NASS scheme resulting in having to move school, accommodation and having to start over again.
- Sensitivity needs to be given towards gender issues, trauma suffered, and how information is recorded.

When assessing Family and Environmental Factors the impact of economic and social hardship is likely to be apparent. In addition there may be issues such as:-

- Family history and functioning may include the loss of previous high status as well as periods of destitution.
- Access, or lack of this, to public funds.
- Different concepts of who are/have been important family members and what responsibility is normally assumed by the whole community, e.g. who a child should reasonably be left with.
- Communities may not readily accept visitors from abroad, based on suspicion, prejudices, predetermined views and misinformation. International and national events and the economic situation can influence the dynamics of community relationships.
- Racism in the UK and country of origin.

Key questions

It is important that the questions are phrased sensitively for each interview and that the interview does not become interrogatory in tone.

Whoever undertakes the interview:-

- Would also need to speak to child on their own **(with an interpreter if required)** in order to establish child's own views and consistency between child and adult's account of circumstances.
 - Establish carers ID and immigration status.
 - Establish any previous contact with this or other local authorities/ agencies in UK and abroad.
1. How do you know the child? Friend/relative
 2. What is your relationship and through which parent are you related to the child?
 3. How long have you personally known the child/family?
 4. Please give details/names about individual family members?
 5. Which town or city does the child in your care come from?
 6. Please describe their family home/surroundings/environment?
 7. If you have never seen this child before – how do you know this child belongs to your relative?
 8. Can you tell me why the child has come to this country?
 9. Did the child have any contact with you prior to their arrival in this country?
 10. Has the child stayed with anyone else, or in another area in this country, or on the way to Britain?
 11. Are the child's parents alive or dead?
 12. If alive, where are the child's parents?
 13. Do you know why the parents sent their child to Britain and to you?
 14. Did the parents ask you to look after the child and do you have anything in writing?
 15. Are the parents aware that the child is with you?
 16. Are you in contact with the child's parents and if so by what means?

17. Would it be possible for us to contact the child's parents?
18. Who brought the child into the country?
19. Who paid for their passage?
20. By which route/transport did they arrive?
21. Do they have any other friends or relatives in this country?
22. Are you in contact with other friends or relative, if yes please provide their details?
23. If yes, why did they not stay with them?
24. Which documentation does the child have pertaining to their identity and nationality?
25. Do you have a letter from Home Office stating that you are the carer/guardian?
26. How did the Home Office decide that you should be the guardian/carer?
27. Do you have a partner/husband/wife? If yes, is he/she happy to continue to care for this child?
28. Do you have any children? If yes what are their ages and gender?
29. How do you think caring for another child for will impact on your own family/finances?
30. Does the child have his own bedroom?
31. What responsibility are you willing to take for the child - i.e. basic essentials/ carer's role/legal responsibility?
32. How long are you able to commit yourself to this responsibility?

APPENDIX 4 – SERVICE PROVISION FLOW CHART

