



Home Office

Funding to Local Authorities Financial Year 2020/21

Home Office Funding: Unaccompanied
Asylum-
Seeking Children

Date of Issue: 10 June 2020

Version: 1

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1. Scope and Definition

1.1 This document sets out the terms under which the Home Office will make funding available to local authorities in respect to their costs of supporting unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) during the financial year 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. This should be read in conjunction with the UASC & LC Funding Excel workbook, which contains the Annex A and notes for completion.

1.2 A UASC is defined as an individual, who is under 18 when the asylum application is submitted, is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so, is separated from both parents and has applied for asylum in the United Kingdom in his/her own right. All children in local authority care and being accommodated by the local authority who satisfy these criteria may be included in an application for funding unless they fall into one or more of the exclusion categories listed below.

1.3 For the purposes of this funding agreement an unaccompanied child who transferred to the UK under the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme, section 67 Immigration Act ('Dubs amendment') and Dublin Regulation articles 8.1 & 8.2 children (those who are being looked after by local authorities) will also be included within the definition of UASC within this instruction. Additionally, this funding agreement extends to children who are the dependant of an asylum seeker if they temporarily become a looked after child.

2. Exclusions

2.1 The following children are excluded:

- (a) Children who have the nationality of an EEA State – including those who have been granted British Citizenship.
- (b) Applicants who are receiving asylum support from the Home Office are not eligible under this funding agreement. Local authorities are expected to ensure that they do not claim the UASC funding for individuals supported under other mechanisms. If there are any difficulties with ceasing asylum support local authorities should contact the UASC Funding Team (contact details in section 8).

3. Funding Levels

3.1 Payments for each eligible UASC will be at the rate set out in the table below. Those local authorities looking after volumes of UASC at or above the 0.07% threshold will be paid a higher rate. Those local authorities looking after UASC which amount to less than 0.07% threshold will be paid the lower rate.

3.2. The 0.07% threshold ('Higher Rate Threshold', HRT) is an indication of the availability of UASC places that local authorities may have for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children based on their child population. It is calculated by finding 0.07% of the child population according to the ONS Mid-2019 Population estimate. The 0.07% threshold will not be recalculated when new statistics are released by ONS if this happens part way through the financial year.

3.3 We calculated how many qualifying UASC were in your care as at 31 March in the last funding year and compared this to the higher rate threshold (HRT) for your authority. The HRT is calculated as 0.07% of the ONS 2019 Mid-Year Child Population Estimate for your borough, unitary authority or county council area. If your count of qualifying UASC at 31 March 2020 met or exceeded the HRT, you will receive the higher nightly rate for UASC claimed for in this financial year (2020/21).

Category	£ per person per night
Local authorities at or above 0.07%	£143
Local authorities below 0.07%	£114

3.4 At the end of 2020/21, funding rates will be reassessed.

3.5 If you have any queries about the rate you will receive during 2020/21 please contact the team, contact details provided below at section 9.

4. Cessation of Payment

4.1 The Home Office will automatically cease payments under this Funding Instruction the day before the UASC turns 18.

4.2 Payment will also cease in the following circumstances:

- (a) When a child is absent or in long term care (e.g. missing from local authority care or in hospital) for more than 28 days consecutively. In these circumstances the local authority must promptly inform relevant contact(s) immediately and reflect this on the application for payment form (Annex A). If the child returns to the local authority the Annex A should be updated. When the child is absent for a short period of time,

that is for 28 days or less, the funding may be payable during the absence period. If a UASC is absent for a consecutive period of 28 days funding will automatically cease.

- (b) If the UASC is placed in a Young Offenders Institute (YOI), the local authority must promptly inform relevant contact(s) and reflect this on the application for payment form (Annex A). If the child returns to the local authority the Annex A should be updated. When the child is in a YOI for a short period of time, that is for 28 days or less, the funding may be payable during the absence period.

5. UASC transferred under the National Transfer Scheme

5.1 Where responsibility for a UASC is transferred between local authorities through the National Transfer Scheme, funding eligibility passes from the entry local authority to the receiving local authority from the day the UASC transfers into the care of the receiving authority. The costs of the transfer will, unless mutually agreed between the authorities, and evidenced to the Home Office, be treated as borne by the receiving local authority.

6. Data Reconciliation and Payments

6.1 Local authorities are required to complete a bi-monthly application, by the 15th of each monthly period, for payment in the form set out in Annex A, which includes up to date accurate details of each supported child and the support days applied for.

6.2 Specific instructions for the completion of an Annex A are included in UASC & LC Funding Excel workbook. The Annex A should only be submitted to the UASC LA Funding team via the Home Office's secure data transfer portal, "MoveIT DMZ" to ensure compliance with 1998 Data Protection Legislation and GDPR.

6.3 To be eligible for payment the local authority should ensure that all asylum claims from children are registered as soon as possible. Where there is a gap of more than twelve weeks between the dates on which a local authority claims to be looking after a child and the date on which the child registers his/her asylum claim, the local authority must provide evidence of the steps taken to register the child's asylum application and provide a narrative of any subsequent delays in having the asylum claim registered.

6.4 The April 2020 Annex A application for payment shall be a new submission, and not simply a continuation of the last monthly submission in the 2019/20 financial year. Subsequent Annex As must clearly highlight any additions and updates to the previous month's application. The UASC LA Funding team will reconcile this data against Home Office records.

6.5 The monthly Annex A for payment must be received by the Home Office by no later than the 15th of the month following the month to which the application relates; late returns will result in payment being delayed. The submission must contain the data for the latest period, e.g. data received on 15 June must contain May data. Payments will be withheld if Annex A applications are not submitted by the specified date within the 2020/21 payment table for that period.

6.6 Once the information on the Annex A has been reconciled, local authorities will be advised of the individuals that will be paid for and the number of days. In some cases, it will be necessary to seek further information from local authorities. Where this happens, local authorities will be notified that these cases are ‘under review’ until it has been clarified that the claim made is eligible or for funding under the terms of this Funding Instruction. Payments will reflect the number of children agreed for support for the relevant period, with adjustments made at a later stage for those cases which are ‘under review’, if the further information submitted shows that the individuals are, in fact, eligible. Any evidence to resolve anomalies, including relevant pages of the Merton-compliant age assessments, must be forwarded by local authorities to the UASC LA Funding team within two weeks of that month’s payment being received. Failure to provide information within this timescale will result in future payments being delayed. The UASC LA Funding team will aim to conclude all under review cases within 30 days.

6.7 A maximum of 28 days' funding will be payable (i.e. from the start of care) where a prompt Merton-compliant age assessment is conducted and the person claiming to be a child is found to be over the age of 18.

6.8 Local authorities are required to submit relevant pages of a local authority age assessment report or an 'Age Assessment Information Sharing Proforma' for confirmation of all age assessments (this is on the Association of Directors of Children's Services website - [ADCS Link](#)). The proforma sets out the minimum information required to inform the Home Office of the outcome of the age assessment and to ensure that it is Merton and case law compliant. Payments cannot be made by the Home Office to local authorities until the age assessment has been completed and the required information has been received.

6.9 Payments will be made by BACS using the account details already held by the Home Office for payments in previous years. If the local authority's bank details change, it must immediately email the new information to: UASCLAFundingTeam@homeoffice.gov.uk

6.10 Payments will be referenced "unique regional code/regions name/year/work stream/POA/month/LA Name". For example, the payment made for the period 1 April – 31 December will be referenced as 'UASC Asylum 20/21 POA Mth 9'. Local authorities should advise their Cashiers' department accordingly.

6.11 At the end of the financial year, final checks will be carried out to ensure that the payments already made accurately reflect the number of agreed support days.

7. Disputes

7.1. Local authorities can make representations if they believe that they have not received the funding to which they are entitled to under the terms of this Funding Instruction. Any discrepancies regarding the amounts paid must be notified by the relevant local authority to the UASC LA Funding team within a month of the Annex A response being sent, following reconciliation against Home Office records. Back payments for individuals not promptly included in the Annex A will only be agreed in exceptional circumstances.

8. Audits

8.1 Local authorities should record expenditure in their accounting records under generally accepted accounting standards in a way that the relevant costs can be simply extracted if required. Throughout the year, the UASC LA Funding team will work with local authorities to ensure the accuracy of claims, thereby reducing the need for audits at yearend.

8.2 Visits may be made from time to time by the Home Office or its appointed representatives, including National Audit Office, where HO feels it necessary to conduct a visit we will provide advanced notification of who will be visiting. Whilst there is no requirement for submission of detailed costings, Local authorities must be able to provide the costs for individual cases, if required, and will be expected to justify and explain costs, where necessary.

9. Contact Details

9.1 For queries relating to this Funding Instruction or the submission of applications please email: UASCLAFundingTeam@homeoffice.gov.uk

10. 2020/2021 Timetable

For the 2019/2020 financial year the following timetable will apply:

Period	Annex A Submission Deadline	Payment Received by LA
April 2020	15 May 2020	31 June 2020
May 2020	15 June 2020	31 July 2020
June 2020	15 July 2020	31 August 2020
July 2020	15 August 2020	30 September 2020
August 2020	15 September 2020	31 October 2020
September 2020	15 October 2020	30 November 2020
October 2020	15 November 2020	31 December 2020
November 2020	15 December 2020	31 January 2020
December 2020	15 January 2021	28 February 2021
January 2021	15 February 2021	31 March 2021
February 2021	15 March 2021	30 April 2021
March 2021	15 April 2021	31 May 2021*

*To allow for final claim to be submitted.

11. Supporting Documents

The annexes to these instructions are within the UASC & LC Funding Excel workbook with the following contents:

- Tab 1 Setup & Notes - Annex A
- Tab 2 Annex A Claim Form
- Tab 3 Codes