


Report for: CYPS Scrutiny Panel: 4 February 2019
Item number:

Title: Support to Children from Refugee Families –Update since Scrutiny Review

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Authorised by: 
Lead Officer: Ann Graham, Director of Children's Services

Ward(s) affected: ALL

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** N/A

1 Describe the issue under consideration

To update Members on progress with the implementation of improvements identified by the Scrutiny review that was undertaken on the work of the NRPF team and the relevant voluntary sector organisations.

2 Recommendations

That Members receive this report.

3. Background Information

3.1 The review in 2017 / 18 considered evidence from officers and from local charities providing support to families with no recourse to public funds and to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, following which a response was submitted to Cabinet in July 2018.

3.2 In June 2018, 160 cases were audited and key areas of practice were examined to include the quality of Child in Need plans, the priority need for the family, supervision/management oversight and evidence of direct work with children.

3.3 The following actions have been taken to address the issues identified in the audit:

- cases that were earmarked for step-down have now been actioned and closed to Children's Social Care;
- consideration is now given for early help support at the point of closure when families have recourse to public funds;
- the 'no recourse to public funds' policy has been updated;

- regular Child in Need meetings have been scheduled on all open cases.
 - the new Head of Service for Children in Need is working on a project to reshape the existing resources allocated to NRPF team to improve service delivery.
- 3.4 An experienced NRPF social work practitioner has recently been recruited and has undertaken reviews of cases leading to a reduction in the number of NRPF cases. It has also been identified that greater support is needed at the point of entry to the service to ensure that the right questions and documents are being viewed and thus decisions are better informed.
- 3.5 There are a number of families that are from the European Economic Area (EEA) who are not exercising their treaty rights. Work will need to be completed with this group to ensure they do. We are continuing to work closely with the Home Office to progress applications in a timely manner.
- 3.6 Where there are disputes with other local authorities regarding allocation of responsibility for the support of specific families with NRPF, addressing and meeting the family's needs are prioritised and dealt with before such issues are addressed. The new Head of Service has already set up regular meetings with Head of Services of neighbouring boroughs including Enfield, Barnet and Waltham Forest to discuss disputed cases.
- 3.7 NRPF families are offered a list of local Immigration solicitors at the point of initial assessment undertaken by CSC.
- 3.8 Regular service meetings are held with NELMA and Project 17. Practice issues raised by them are closely monitored and reviewed by the Head of Service, and practitioners are advised to take on board learning from specific case reviews to improve their practice.

4 **Contribution to strategic outcomes**

Priory 1 of the Corporate Plan – “Enable every child and young person to have the best start in life, with high quality education”. It is particularly relevant to Objective 5: “Children and families who need extra help will get the right support at the right time to tackle issues before they escalate”.

4. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

- Report to Cabinet on 17 July 2018
https://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/haringeygovuk/files/appendix_3_response_to_scrutiny_recommendations.pdf