



Home Office

Funding to Local Authorities Financial Year 2021/22

Home Office Funding:
Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

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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 2021 to 31 March 2022. 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 has responsibility to do so, is separated from both parents and has applied for asylum in the United Kingdom in their 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 been granted British Citizenship.
 - b) Children 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 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 local authority care as at 31 March in the last funding year and compared this to the higher rate threshold (HRT). The HRT is calculated as 0.07% of the ONS 2020 Mid-Year Child Population Estimate for your borough, unitary authority or county council area. If a local authority's count of qualifying UASC at 31 March 2021 met or exceeded the HRT, the local authority will receive the higher nightly rate for UASC claimed for in this financial year (2021/22).

Category	£ per person per night
Local authorities at or above 0.07%	£143
Local authorities below 0.07%	£114
Individual children transferred from local authorities above 0.07% to local authorities below 0.07%	£143

- 3.4 At the end of 2021/22, funding rates will be reassessed.
- 3.5 If you have any queries about the rate you will receive during 2021/22 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 young person turns 18.
- 4.2 Payment will also cease in the following circumstances:
- a) When a child is absent or missing for more than 28 days consecutively. 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.

Exception - If the child is in hospital for more than 28 days and the local authority continues to be responsible, they will still be eligible for funding.

(b) If the child 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. Transport arrangements from the entry local authority's temporary placement to the receiving local authority placement will be coordinated between the two local authorities. The entry local authority will be responsible for payment of transport costs unless different arrangements are exceptionally agreed between the two local authorities and the Home Office.

6. Data Reconciliation and Payments

- 6.1 Local authorities are required to complete a 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, this is sent to local authorities at the beginning of the financial year – if you need to request the workbook please contact the Funding Team (see Section 9). 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 2021 Annex A application for payment shall be a new submission, and not simply a continuation of the last monthly submission in the 2020/21 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 15 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 2021/22 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 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 claimed age has been accepted by the Home Office.
- 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 21/22 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 year end.

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. 2021/2022 Timetable

For the 2021/2022 financial year the following timetable will apply:

Period	Annex A Submission Deadline	Payment Received by LA
April 2021	15 May 2021	31 June 2021
May 2021	15 June 2021	31 July 2021
June 2021	15 July 2021	31 August 2021
July 2021	15 August 2021	30 September 2021
August 2021	15 September 2021	31 October 2021
September 2021	15 October 2021	30 November 2021
October 2021	15 November 2021	31 December 2021
November 2021	15 December 2021	31 January 2022
December 2021	15 January 2022	28 February 2022
January 2022	15 February 2022	31 March 2022
February 2022	15 March 2022	30 April 2022
March 2022	15 April 2022	31 May 2022

11. Exceptional Costs

11.1 Bids can be made from 15 December 2021 to 15 March 2022 and payments will be made in April 2022. All local authorities supporting UASC and UASC care leavers are eligible to apply.

11.2 Exceptional Costs are additional expenses incurred by a local authority in supporting UASC and former UASC care leavers for which the Home Office may on a case-by-case basis, agree to reimburse. All local authorities that care for UASC and former UASC care leavers are eligible to apply for exceptions costs funding.

11.3 Payments may be made to cover additional exceptional costs incurred local authorities in the 2021/2022 financial year only, above and beyond what could reasonably be regarded as standard expenditure when caring for UASC and former UASC care leavers which are not available through other funding mechanisms. Funding from the Exceptional Costs fund may be used, amongst other things, to pay for:

- a contribution towards legal costs incurred by local authorities as a result of challenges to short form Merton compliant age assessment or full Merton compliant age assessments conducted by local authority or Home Office social workers
- where the needs of a particular child carry significant additional costs
- activities or initiatives that aim to build capacity and/or make improvements for UASC and UASC care leavers

11.4 All applications for funding from the Exceptional Costs fund will be assessed, and payments made, on a case-by-case basis.

- there is no minimum or maximum amount that can be claimed
- costs must be incurred in the 2021/2022 financial year only
- claims cannot be submitted where the 'exceptional cost' can already be met by available funding, such as the funding paid to local authorities in respect to their costs of supporting UASC by the Home Office, or through other funding mechanisms
- recipients must submit evidence of Exceptional Cost expenditure incurred (e.g. copy invoices) along with an Exceptional Costs claim form (Annex B) before claims can be considered for payment

Funding for exceptional costs is only available for costs incurred during the 2021/2022 financial year and cannot be claimed for previous periods. The funding will not continue for the 2022/2023 financial year.

The process for claiming exceptional costs is further explained in Annex B.

11.5 Guide to claiming exceptional costs

- Local Authority incurs an exceptional cost for the 2021/2022 financial year (1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022) only
- Local Authority gathers the relevant information regarding the exceptional cost
- Local Authority submits Exceptional Costs claim form (Annex B) to the Home Office (UASCLAFundingTeam@homeoffice.gov.uk) with information and proof of expenditure for the exceptional cost
- Reply sent to the local authority via email with decision regarding the exceptional cost request
- Further information may be requested by the Home Office in relation to the exceptional cost where needed.

11.6 Examples of supporting information

Legal costs relating to age assessment challenges

- Prognosis on the merits of the legal challenge
- Details of associated costs incurred, for example, drafting correspondence, reviewing information and quality assurance reviews

Significant additional costs for a particular child

- Information about the specific child's needs, supported by Education, Care and Health Assessment (ECHA), Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) report or similar
- Details and estimated costs of any specialist equipment, providing estimates to show best value for money
- Occupational therapy and medical assessments
- UASC initiatives/activities to build capacity and/or improvements
- Details any associated costs, providing estimates/receipts/quotes to show best value for money

11.7 Processing an exceptional cost claim

- Local Authority completes "Exceptional Costs" claim form and submits it to (team email address here) including all evidence of expenditure.
- Home Office reviews the information submitted by the local authority and makes a decision. The local authority will be notified 15 April 2022.
- If payment is approved, it will be made by 30 April 2022.
- Payments will be made by BACS using the account details already held by the Home Office. If the local authority's bank details change, it must immediately email the new information to: UASCLAFundingTeam@homeoffice.gov.uk

12. Supporting Documents

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

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

- **Annex B** – Exceptional Costs Claim Form