



Home Office

# **Funding to Local Authorities Financial Year 2023/24**

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 England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in respect to their costs of supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) during the financial year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. This funding is in addition to money for children's social care that local authorities receive through the Local Government Finance Settlement and finance arrangements which apply to the Devolved Administrations. The Home Office provides additional funding contributions to the costs incurred by local authorities in looking after unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
- 1.2 This document should be read in conjunction with the UASC & leaving care Funding Excel workbook, which contains the funding submission sheet and notes for completion.
- 1.3 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 their 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.
- 1.4 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 children supported under other mechanisms. If there are any difficulties with ceasing asylum support local authorities should contact the UASC Payments 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 calculated as 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 calculate how many qualifying UASC were in local authority care as at 31 March in the last funding year and compare 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 on 31 March 2023 met or exceeded the HRT, the local authority will receive the higher nightly rate for UASC claimed for in this financial year (2023/24).

Category	£ per person per night
Local authorities at or above 0.07% on 31 March 2023	£143
Local authorities below 0.07% on 31 March 2023	£114
Individual children transferred via the National Transfer Scheme from local authorities above 0.07% to local authorities below 0.07%	£143

- 3.4 The rates for individual local authorities will be confirmed once all claims for FY 2022/23 have been received and processed – we anticipate this to be concluded by the end of June. Meanwhile if you have any queries about the rate you will receive during FY 2023/24 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 reflect the date the child went missing on the funding submission sheet. If the child returns to the local authority the funding submission sheet 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 reflect this on the funding submission sheet. If the child returns to the local authority the funding submission sheet 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 15<sup>th</sup> of each monthly period, for payment in the form set out in the funding submission sheet, 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 the funding submission sheet 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 Payments Team (see Section 9). The funding submission sheet should only be submitted to the UASC LA Payments 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 UASC 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 2023 funding submission sheet application for payment shall be a new submission, and not simply a continuation of the last monthly submission in the 2022/23 financial year. Subsequent funding submission sheets must clearly highlight any additions and updates to the previous month's application. The UASC LA Payments team will reconcile this data against Home Office records.

- 6.5 The monthly funding submission sheet for payment must be received by the Home Office by no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> 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 funding submission sheet applications are not submitted by the specified date within the 2023/24 payment table for that period.
- 6.6 Once the information on the funding submission sheet has been reconciled, local authorities will be advised of the children 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 children are, in fact, eligible. Any evidence to resolve anomalies must be forwarded by local authorities to the UASC LA Payments 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 Payments 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 person 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. The proforma should be sent to the individual's asylum team.
- 6.9 Payments beyond the maximum 28 days 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. Local authorities claiming funding for age disputed UASC where the age has not been resolved will be paid the 28 days funding initially and marked as Under Review before being finalised at year end.
- 6.10 At the end of the financial year claims for age disputed UASC will be processed as follows: where the age disputed UASC's age has not been resolved i.e. evidence has not been submitted to the relevant asylum team and the individual's date of birth is that of an adult on home office systems – payment for the previous year will be made on the proviso that age dispute paperwork will be submitted in a timely way in the following financial year (2024 – 2025). Where the local authority assesses the individual to be an adult, any monies paid over the 28 day maximum will be clawed back. Where the local authority

concludes the claimed UASC is a child and that is accepted by the Home Office the funding will not be clawed back.

- 6.11 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:  
[UASCLAPaymentsTeam@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:UASCLAPaymentsTeam@homeoffice.gov.uk)
- 6.12 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 23/24 POA Mth 9'. Local authorities should advise their Cashiers' department accordingly.
- 6.13 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 Payments team within a month of the funding submission sheet response being sent, following reconciliation against Home Office records. Back payments for individuals not promptly included in the funding submission sheet 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 Payments 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: [UASCLAPaymentsTeam@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:UASCLAPaymentsTeam@homeoffice.gov.uk)

## 10. 2023/2024 Timetable

For the 2023/2024 financial year the following timetable will apply:

Period	Funding submission sheet Submission Deadline	Payment Received by LA
April 2023	15 May 2023	31 June 2023
May 2023	15 June 2023	31 July 2023
June 2023	15 July 2023	31 August 2023
July 2023	15 August 2023	30 September 2023
August 2023	15 September 2023	31 October 2023
September 2023	15 October 2023	30 November 2023
October 2023	15 November 2023	31 December 2023
November 2023	15 December 2023	31 January 2024
December 2023	15 January 2024	28 February 2024
January 2024	15 February 2024	31 March 2024
February 2024	15 March 2024	30 April 2024
March 2024	15 April 2024	31 May 2024

## 11. Supporting Documents

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

- Tab 1 Setup & Notes – funding submission sheet
- Tab 2 Funding submission sheet (previously known as the Annex A)
- Tab 3 Codes