

SUPPORTING FOSTER CARERS OF CHILD VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING & MODERN SLAVERY

CROYDON PILOT FOR ALBANIAN & VIETNAMESE UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN



OBJECTIVE

This project aims to pilot tools to build the capacity of foster carers to look after Albanian and Vietnamese unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) who are identified - or potential - victims of human trafficking and modern slavery. It also aims to inform these young people about foster care in their own language, thereby reducing their vulnerability to going missing from care and being trafficked.

The project will increase and enhance foster carers' confidence and expertise by providing them with training, online materials, and by giving them the opportunity to participate in both face-to-face and online forums. After a consultation with young people, Albanian and Vietnamese children will receive culturally sensitive information materials on foster care, to improve their placement experience.

The above tools will be piloted in partnership with the London Borough of Croydon, and with the support of Barnardo's.

The project was developed in response to the findings of a report produced by ECPAT UK and Missing People in 2016, *Heading Back to Harm*.

The year-long study revealed that an alarmingly high number of both unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and children who may have been trafficked go missing from care. You can read the full report [here](#).

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TIMELINE

The project will be implemented from March 2017 to March 2019.

RATIONALE

The UK's National Referral Mechanism (NRM) data for 2015, 2016 and 2017, shows Albanian and Vietnamese children as the top two nationalities of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children found to be potential victims of trafficking. A large proportion of looked after children in the London Borough of Croydon are unaccompanied, and a number of these young people have been affected by issues related to trafficking and modern slavery. The majority of UASC in Croydon come from Albania, with a smaller number coming from Vietnam.

The London Borough of Croydon noticed that unaccompanied children can find it challenging to settle into foster care placements, with difficulties arising some time into the placement and not always in the first few days. Alongside cultural and linguistic differences, the children may feel pressure from traffickers and/or family members to repay the debt they incurred in order to reach the UK, and thus feel the need to swiftly find work. These and other issues, such as their ability to build trust with unknown adults, mean that these children are at risk of going missing and being trafficked, or even re-trafficked. This is an issue that affects Croydon, other London Boroughs, and Councils across the UK.

ACTIVITIES

To achieve the project's objectives, the following activities will be undertaken:

- An initial stakeholder forum and consultations, to raise awareness and support content development for training and information materials.
- The development of an online resource hub containing introductory online briefings for foster carers, a handbook including cultural information.
- The development and delivery of training for foster carers, to increase their confidence in supporting young people who may be trafficked or at risk, in particular if from Albania or Vietnam.
- A series of forums for foster carers to provide them with regular opportunities for targeted expert and peer support on issues related to the project.
- An information leaflet for Albanian and Vietnamese young people placed in foster care in Croydon, guided by consultations with current or former Albanian and Vietnamese looked after children.
- A project evaluation report to be presented at a final stakeholder forum.

The project activities will be supported by Child Trafficking Experts from Barnardo's and IOM's Albania and Vietnam country offices, as well as a Monitoring and Evaluation Expert for IOM.

ABOUT IOM & THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON



IOM, the UN Migration Agency, is the leading organisation in the field of migration. Established in 1951, IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. IOM has been working in the area of human trafficking and modern slavery for over 20 years. In the UK, IOM works to strengthen the capacity of local authorities and other organisations to detect and respond to issues of trafficking and modern slavery and we seek to improve the support conditions for those who have been affected by these crimes by implementing projects that directly support survivors, as well as research to better understand vulnerabilities to trafficking. IOM has been working with Croydon since 2012, and in that time we have trained close to 2000 frontline professionals on trafficking and modern slavery.



The London Borough of Croydon is the largest London borough by population. The Home Office UK Visas and Immigration department has its headquarters in Lunar House in Central Croydon, and for this reason it has been one of the local authorities with highest numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and potential victims of trafficking and modern slavery being referred into care. The team working directly on the project for Croydon Council sits within the Safeguarding and Looked After Children Quality Assurance Service, with the Looked After Children and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Service, Fostering Service, and Croydon's Children's Safeguarding Board providing essential support for engagement with beneficiaries.

ABOUT BARNARDO'S



Barnardo's is the UK's largest children's charity. Founded in 1866 by Dr Thomas John Barnardo, the organisation now works directly with 248,000 children, young people, parents and carers every year. Barnardo's runs over 996 vital services across the UK, including those that support trafficked and exploited children, looked after children and care leavers. The organisation's work also focuses on early intervention and family support, as well improving the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people within all of its services. Every Barnardo's service is different, but each believes in the potential within every child and young person, no matter who they are, what they have done or what they have been through.