Include us: strengthening communication and involvement of asylum seeking and refugee parents in high school education in Leeds

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Aims

The study looks at the experiences of communication between refugee and asylum seeking parents and high school staff in Leeds to highlight areas of good practice and also identify learning points to inform and strengthen future practices.

Methodology

The study was carried out over a three month period and formed part of the Children’s Society Leading Edge Initiative at the LEAP

Programme, Leeds. A total of 16 parents/carers and 20 school staff, linked to 14 schools in Leeds, took part in the study. The parents/carers involved in the study had all arrived in the UK between 2006 and 2009 and were from a range of nationalities. The data was gathered using qualitative face to face interviews with parents [using professionally trained face to face interpreters where appropriate], and semi structured questionnaires to school staff.

Key issues

The report looks at five key areas:

- information on the education system made available to parents on their arrival in the UK
- experiences of school induction from both parents and school staff
- experiences of communication
- involving parents
- understanding the specific needs of asylum seekers and refugees

The report includes testimonies from parents and school staff, examples of good practice. It also identifies learning points for each of the five areas.

Recommendations

The report highlights ten practical recommendations to improve and strengthen practice in the future, including suggestions around information provision for parents, support, the induction process, inclusion, engagement and training for school staff.

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