Access to education for asylum seeking and refugee children

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Author(s)
Richmond-Coggan, Michael

Aims

The report evaluates the work of a Children's Society LEAP pilot project to explore the impact of having a worker to support families in accessing education and related services and to identify additional barriers to children gaining access to education.

Methodology

The pilot project worked with 69 children aged 4-18. The evaluation provides data from the project on referrals and support offered.

Key issues

The report describes and evaluates the pilot project, referrals, support offered and interaction with other agencies. Findings are presented on asylum seeking families with specific needs who required little support, those with multiple needs who required significant support and unaccompanied asylum seeking children in the care of social services. This work is described in relation to support with contact with schools, negotiating transport, accessing entitlements, legal representation, health services, English classes, and making community links.

Conclusions

The LEAP project had a positive impact on Education Leeds Admissions' team's ability to deal efficiently with applications. There is a particular difficulty for unaccompanied asylum seeking children in gaining access to education.

Recommendations

Recommendations are aimed at Education Leeds, the local authority and the Home Office, and relate to improving liaison between agencies to meet the educational needs of asylum seeking children, improved understanding of the role of housing providers in orientation and induction, and further funding to continue support for children and families.

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