

ACCESS TO SERVICES RESEARCH: CALL FOR PROPOSALS

TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE RIGHT TO A GOOD QUALITY EDUCATION REALISED FOR REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN IN THE UK?

RATIONALE

A priority ask of the Unicef Uprooted campaign is to “Help uprooted children stay in school and stay healthy.” This research piece would build upon Unicef UK’s report from 2010, *Levelling the Playing Field* and the 2016 UNICEF report “The Legal Entitlements of Refugee and Migrant Children in 33 European Countries”. The literature review that we commissioned in early 2017 has shown that the domestic context for unaccompanied children has significantly changed since 2010 which warrants a fresh look at this area.

PURPOSE

This research aims to quantify the scale of the problem facing children, and build a qualitative and quantitative evidence base to uncover existing barriers to access (in its broadest sense). This will enable Unicef UK to define measures that UK and devolved governments can take to better support asylum-seeking and refugee children (hereafter referred to collectively as refugee children). The planned research has a dual purpose: first, to identify what main challenges and barriers are faced by refugee children in accessing quality education (e.g. language, school admissions procedures); and second, to obtain data and examples of best practice that will enable us to put forward policy recommendations for a national approach.

The research will have a strong qualitative aspect – case studies and children’s views will form part of it. However, as far as possible the research should identify the nature and scale of challenges and barriers faced by refugee children. We anticipate that this will be done using Freedom of Information requests and Parliamentary Question among other methods. We are able to support the researchers in this process to some extent. In your submission, please indicate what support you think would be required from Unicef UK.

SCOPE

Focus

The main topic to explore will be access to mainstream education. All three levels of education will be included (primary, secondary and tertiary) and all age groups, i.e. until the age of 18.

Geography

The research will be GB wide, covering England, Scotland and Wales.

We would like the research to uncover the scale of any barriers to access across as much of these three nations as possible, focusing on children’s access to learning and development, and where this is impacted by their status and circumstances. However, for the more in-depth, qualitative research, we would recommend selecting a small number of local authorities to get a full insight into their policy and practice in order to find out the examples of best practice. Ideally, these will be spread across England, Scotland and Wales. Unicef UK has some contacts with local authorities and may be able to support access in some places.

Demographics

The research should include all children seeking international protection, including Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and children in asylum seeking or refugee families. We understand that availability of data

will be different for these two groups. Please address in your submission any different methods you would propose to ensure that both of these groups are included.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research is intended to address the four broad questions below.

1. *Are refugee and asylum-seeking children accessing education in the UK? To what extent is their entitlement to education not being fulfilled (e.g. number of days not in receipt of education)? [Primarily a quantitative measure]*
2. *What are the barriers to accessing education, including: finding a school placement; sustaining a school placement; accessing support to remain in school? Are any particular groups affected more than others? How effective are existing support measures? [mixture of quantitative and qualitative data]*
3. *How does the situation vary across and within the three nations? [mixture of quantitative and qualitative data]*
4. *What solutions are proposed or in place at a local and national level to reduce or overcome these barriers and how far are these effective in increasing access to education? [predominantly qualitative data]*

METHODOLOGY

Researchers should state their intended methods and the reasons for choosing these. Below are our suggestions for the kind of data we would anticipate for this project.

1. *National figures on asylum seeking and refugee children's access to education*

Primarily through literature review and Freedom of Information requests to all local authorities and/or central government departments.

Freedom of Information (Fol) requests have the potential to provide the answer to the "scale" question but they will have to be well-defined and precise. Unicef UK and its external advisors can support and advise on this process as required.

As stated above, we may also be able to support through seeking Parliamentary Questions.

2. *Barriers to education for asylum seeking and refugee children*

Brief literature review to collate what is already known.

Triangulated qualitative data from multiple sources, including (but not limited to):

- asylum seeking/refugee children and their parents;
- schools providing places to asylum seeking/refugee children;
- local authorities/LEAs/Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships;
- local NGOs supporting asylum seeking or refugee families;
- Virtual School Heads

We would ideally like to see data collected within a small number (minimum 3) of local authority regions to allow an understanding of the local situation from more than one perspective.

3. *Differences in local practice and outcomes for children, and examples of best practice*

Through combination of FOI data and qualitative data identified above.

ETHICAL STANDARDS AND SAFEGUARDING

Since this research potentially includes direct data gathered from children and adults in vulnerable situations, it is essential that the research is carried out to high ethical standards and in keeping with our Safeguarding policies and procedures. We require all consultants to adhere to ethical research standards and to sign up to Unicef UK's safeguarding statement and procedures.

In your submission, please highlight any expected ethical challenges posed through your proposed methods and how you expect to deal with these. Please also give reference where appropriate to relevant governance and ethical standards which guide your work.

DELIVERABLES

The research will build on existing documentation (*Levelling the Playing Field*, literature review, UNICEF report on entitlements) and use these and new qualitative information and data to develop concrete recommendations on the future strategy for fully realising refugee children's right to education.

The research should result in two main outputs:

1. a short initial findings paper to be submitted by the end of December 2017
2. a report addressing the questions outlined above and providing recommendation for ensuring good quality education for refugee and asylum-seeking children that will be used as part of a campaign planned for 2018.

BUDGET

The total available budget for this project is £8,000. In your submission, please provide a breakdown of costs, to include any direct costs required to collect data.

CONSULTANT PROFILE

Essential

- Familiarity with field research methods and practice in the GB context, including with questionnaire preparation, key informant and group interview techniques and basic qualitative and quantitative methods
- Proven ability on literature/documentation reviews, analysis and synthesis
- Demonstrated ability in producing reports to a high standard
- Proven knowledge of the education system in GB
- Good inter-personal and communication skills and self-sufficiency in contacting officials and civil society

Desirable

- Significant experience with authorities and civil society in Scotland and Wales
- Direct experience of research and programme work with refugee children
- Previous experience of using Freedom of Information requests to gather data

TIMELINE

The broad, expected timeframe for this project is set out below. In your submission, please provide a more detailed indication of key milestones in relation to data collection activities.

Interview	w/c 25 th September 2017
Kick of meeting	By end of September
Project start	w/c 2 nd October
Data collection	October – December
Interim findings report due	w/c 18 th December
Feedback on interim report provided	w/c 8 th January 2018
Final report due	w/c 19 th February

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Researcher will report to Dragan Nastic as the policy lead on this area. The research will be overseen by an internal advisory group, to include the Head of Policy and Advocacy, the Research, Evaluation and Participation Manager and the Senior Government Relations Advisor.

There will also be an External Advisory Board of experts from other organisations who will be drawn on at key stages to provide advice and support.

YOUR PROPOSAL

Please submit a brief proposal under the following headings:

About the researcher (please refer to the consultant profile above)

Our understanding of your needs

Proposed methods and approach

Ethical considerations

Risk assessment (to include key risks to the project and ways to mitigate this, including what you would need from Unicef UK to support the project)

Detailed timescales

Budget

