Working with pupils who are refugees

Asylum seeker and refugee pupils aged 5-16 have exactly the same entitlement to full-time education as other UK pupils and economic migrants. This rule applies equally across Local Authority schools, academies and free schools.

Refugee and asylum-seeker children / young people can find it harder to access education compared with other groups. Some children have been left without school places for long periods of time. Refugee children joining your school may well have experienced trauma and have disturbing memories of leaving home and the journey that followed. They are now likely to be confronted with classes without a single familiar face and no-one speaking their own language. The goal is to make them feel welcome, provide support, encourage friendships, and make sensitive assessments about language needs, learning needs and wellbeing.

The NUT document ‘WELCOMING REFUGEE CHILDREN TO YOUR SCHOOL’ provides clear, practical advice on how to work in school with pupils who are refugees. 
www.teachers.org.uk/equality/equality-matters/refugee-teaching-resources

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking and refugee children

An unaccompanied asylum seeking child is defined as an individual who is:
• under 18 years of age when the claim is submitted
• applying for asylum in their own right
• separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who in law or by custom has responsibility to do so.

As of 31 March 2017, 78% of unaccompanied asylum seeking children were aged 16 years of age and over, with 22% aged under 16 years.

In November 2017 the Department for Education and the Home Office jointly published a new safeguarding strategy for unaccompanied asylum-seeking refugee children, acknowledging them as a vulnerable group in need of safe guarding (see link below).

Children who enter care may have had months or years of being completely independent while they travelled to the UK, and may be unaware of what it means to be, or how to respond to being “looked after”.

In addition, when these children reach 18 years of age they may be returned to their home country (depending on a variety of factors). This uncertainty regarding their future can have an impact on their mental well-being and ability to engage in the education system.
Explore the following links to find out more.

- **SecEd** – article focusing on Syrian refuges and how to work with them in Secondary School. Useful information and links contain transferable good practice and therefore relevant reading regardless of Key Stage focus.  

- **NEC-NUT Section** – teaching resources, including Refugee Week resources for Key Stages 2, 3 and 4.  

- **Refugee Council** – advice and information covering a variety of issues facing refugee children.  
  [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/what_we_do/childrens_services](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/what_we_do/childrens_services)
  
The Refugee Council adviser for Brighton:  
Andrea Ruiz: [andrea.ruiz@refugeecouncil.org.uk](mailto:andrea.ruiz@refugeecouncil.org.uk) / 07387090811  
Youth Advice Centre (YAC), 11 St Georges Place, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 4GB (see map).

- **Unicef** – resources for Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 regarding refugees.  

- **YouTube** – A small selection of personal stories and advice from refugees regarding education in the UK.  
  [www.youtube.com/watch?v=BwwznkCTauI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BwwznkCTauI) - learning English KS3&4  
  [www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxQqsYqfQPQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxQqsYqfQPQ) - school and Beyond KS3&4  
  [www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cLgl0OQjxA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cLgl0OQjxA) - a school for refugees under 18  
  [www.youtube.com/watch?v=zES1v3xBFOQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zES1v3xBFOQ) – Mariam, age 13, refugee and school girl in uk

Teachers TV have a large selection entitled Refugees in the UK which are all very interesting.

- **The Children’s Society** – information and links to issues regarding refugees, including personal stories.  

For a copy of the government strategy for unaccompanied asylum-seeking and refugee children, including revised statutory guidance for local authorities visit:  