

# Supporting 16–19 year old newly arrived young people in Oxfordshire

## TOOLKIT FOR PRACTITIONERS

This toolkit was developed as part of the [Improving Education Outcomes for Displaced 16–19 year olds in Oxfordshire](#) research project and draws on the findings from this research, including the direct voices of young people and their families.

The toolkit aims to provide practical approaches and a checklist of things for practitioners and managers to think about in developing provision and support.

Young people told the researchers about the importance of being listened to, heard and supported throughout your work. This includes:

- Preparing for their arrival and ensuring there is support in place
- Understanding their hopes and aspirations for the future, including their education, career and personal plans
- Understanding their needs, personal circumstances, prior experiences and personal preferences
- Not making assumptions
- Offering to meet one-to-one in an environment where they feel comfortable, and providing an interpreter if they prefer
- Actively listening to them
- Agreeing an action plan together
- Following up on your promises and feeding back on what you have done
- Making sure they understand any information you share
- Helping them identify the long-term steps they need to take to reach their goal
- Involving young people in co-designing services, policy and guidance

### Before newly arrived young people move to your area

Local authorities need to ensure they are prepared for new arrivals from people on resettlement and humanitarian visa schemes and people seeking sanctuary and that partnership agreements and structures are in place to support newly arrived young people into education as soon as possible. This includes:

- **Mapping existing provision:** mapping existing services and schemes in place, including local college and school provision, independent schools' bursaries and scholarships, voluntary and community projects providing orientation to life in the UK, informal education provision, mentoring and youth groups
- **Setting up partnerships:**
  - Setting up partnership agreements with colleges and education providers to ensure there are referral pathways for young people to access education, particularly for mid-year entry, and ensure there is sufficient provision in place to meet the fluctuating need
  - Ensuring colleges are aware of any additional local authority funding available for students on resettlement and humanitarian visa schemes
  - Budgeting for and setting up partnerships for quality interim provision for young people who cannot access education immediately

- **Funding:** Consider pooling together central government funding (particularly across two-tier local authorities) to provide inclusive services for new arrivals
- **Data:**
  - Setting up data sharing agreements and case recording systems across the local authority to ensure education staff and resettlement staff across upper and lower-tier authorities can efficiently work together
  - Seeking in advance background information, where possible, on new arrivals (from resettlement programmes) from the Home Office or Ministry of Defence, including young people's prior education, levels of English and current need
- **Naming a Lead professional** and agreeing which professional/service will take a lead on supporting young people into education as they arrive and following up to ensure young people are not left in limbo
- **Developing resources for young people and families:**
  - Developing promotional materials translated in community languages to disseminate widely so professionals can refer young people and young people can self-refer for advice and guidance
  - Developing guides for young and parents on the UK education system, including both academic and vocational paths
- **Upskilling staff:**
  - Upskilling frontline practitioners and service managers on displaced young people's rights and entitlements including partnering with advice providers where appropriate in order to provide clear guidance to staff on these entitlements
  - Recruiting multilingual staff who speak relevant community languages and mapping and utilising the skills of existing multi-lingual staff

## When newly arrived young people move to your area

- **Needs assessment:**
  - Building on Oxfordshire's current model of undertaking EAL assessments with Afghan young people in transitional accommodation, undertake a needs assessment for all newly arrived young people, including gathering information on prior education and needs. Practitioners should ensure they have spoken one-to-one with young people to understand their aspirations, what they feel their needs are and learn more about their personal circumstances, familial responsibilities and personal preferences for education and training
  - Establish which other professionals/services are already working with the young person and how you can work with them, including nominating a lead professional
- **Identifying pathways:**
  - Ensure written information on courses and pathways is shared with young people (e.g.: flyers, course booklets, websites) and that they can access online content and understand their options in the UK
  - Identify specific courses as realistic pathways for progression with young people and help them choose which would be best suited for them
  - Ensure young people are aware of the costs involved, the stepping stones required including stop gap jobs and the core requirements for courses
- **Referrals and signposting to education and wider services:**
  - Identify which services they are already accessing and which services you can signpost or refer them to. If signposting, establishing who can help them access the services if they encounter gatekeeping
  - Agree which lead professional will ensure young people are enrolled and chasing up colleges where needed, keeping young people updated
  - Identify other holistic services that young people could benefit from: eg youth groups, cultural orientation, socialising with wider community, hobbies, mentoring schemes

- **Family support – key questions to ask:**
  - Do the family understand the UK education system – have they been provided with written information in their language?
  - Does the young person or their family have concerns about studying in a mixed environment? If so, have you discussed directly with the young person their personal preference and if so, what could help them feel able to take part?

### Whilst young people are waiting for college place

- **Interim provision:**
  - Explore what educational provision you can provide in the interim and if there are other informal but accredited schemes you can refer them to, including any additional adult provision they can access that may meet some of their needs
  - Ensure that any alternative provision is recognised by JobCentre Plus and not impacting their/their parents' benefits
- **Holistic support:** Explore what other services can you refer them to, including mentoring, conversation classes, youth groups, sports and leisure activities
- Check in with young people regularly so they do not feel in limbo and that they are clear on their current enrolment status and next steps

### When young people are enrolling at college

- Check with young people what supporting information and ID documents they need to present and ensure the local authority can provide supporting letter, if there are problems with their ID/Home Office document
- Explore whether they will need a bursary to cover travel or equipment costs and if so, identify who can help them apply for the bursary

### Once young people are in college

- Assess how they are finding the course and whether they need any adjustments
- Explore with the young person what they want to do next year, helping them identify what new course/job they could move onto and how can you help them to achieve this
- Establish whether they are connected to the welfare/pastoral adviser and student services
- Explore whether there are extra-curricular activities that they are interested in, including conversation classes, youth groups, sport and leisure activities and any other opportunities to meet other young people and socialise

### When young people are looking for employment

- Work with Jobcentre Plus to refer young people into employability schemes and support
- Explore whether young people can access third sector organisations' employability schemes and training
- If specialist provision is not available, support young people with putting together a CV, identify where to look for work, help them practice for interviews
- Establish if there are any risks of losing Universal Credit and ensuring they are aware of the impact and declare any employment to the jobcentre

## If young people are applying for university

- Refer young people into university widening participation schemes and specialist provision, where available
- If not, support young people with identifying courses and universities
- Explain student finance and ensure young people are able to access student finance, where possible, including clarifying residence and immigration rules on access to student finance and fees, including seeking specialist advice if needed
- Identify scholarships for displaced students including through the [Displaced Students UK](#)
- Clarify who is helping with the application including supporting documents
- Ensure young people know how to find and register for student accommodation
- Explore whether universities offer opportunities to meet or be matched with existing students for mentoring support

## As young people approach 19

- Identify who can help young people explore what they want to do next
- Ensure young people are aware of education funding changes at 19
- Ensure young people are in touch with their local Jobcentre and able to access support
- Refer young people to adult advice and guidance providers

## If young people are moving to a new local authority

- Provide information on new colleges in their area
- Establish whether you can help them apply for a college place in advance of the move
- Establish which local services you can refer them onto for support if their new area

## Useful links

- [Colleges of Sanctuary](#) offering resources, newsletters and [accreditation](#)
- [Advice for Sixth Forms and Colleges on supporting transitions to further education for refugee young people](#)
- [Advice for Sixth Forms and Colleges on supporting transition to higher education for refugee young people](#)
- Refugee Education (2025) [Make or break: Reflections on further education enrolment for refugee and asylum-seeking learners](#)
- [Access to Higher Education for Resettled Refugees in England: A Guide for Community Sponsorship Groups](#)
- Scholarships for displaced students – [Displaced Students UK](#)

## IMPROVING EDUCATION OUTCOMES FOR DISPLACED 16–19 YEAR OLDS IN OXFORDSHIRE

[Improving Education Outcomes for Displaced 16–19 year olds in Oxfordshire](#) (2024–2025) is a research and knowledge exchange programme, funded by Oxford Migration Partnership, exploring the educational and employment needs and aspirations of newly arrived 16–19 year olds arriving in the UK with their families on the three bespoke humanitarian schemes from Afghanistan, Ukraine and Hong Kong.

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