

BASW Abstract for IFSW European Conference, Reykjavík, Iceland

Theme: *Marginalization and Social Work in a Changing Society*

Presentation

Exploration of the Age Assessment Process used with Unaccompanied Minors: A Perspective from the United Kingdom

This presentation will explore the impact of age assessments on Asylum Seekers and Unaccompanied Minors. As a practitioner researcher I will draw on my research and will consider how age assessments are completed in the United Kingdom and explore the impact of undergoing this assessment on the individual.

Asylum Seekers, whether adults or children, are depicted as both 'deserving or undeserving'. Asylum Seekers are marginalised both politically and within society internationally. Globally, the media has represented the difficulties faced by Asylum Seekers, the effect this has on their well-being and the impact it can have on the country where they seek refuge.

This paper will present findings from a study involving freedom of information (FOI) requests to Local Authorities within the United Kingdom. Questions asked explored how assessments are completed, what policies are in place and what guidance is given to those completing the assessments. Recurring themes are presented identifying areas of good practice and providing potential recommendations for future practice and policy. This presentation will also be linked to my dissertation which explored the impact of age assessments on unaccompanied minors. I will argue that the voice of the child has been lost within literature adding to the marginalisation of this particular group of people.

In this presentation I aim to open up an International discourse to promote the potential for joint research to take place, sharing knowledge which can potentially transform the way Asylum Seekers are responded to internationally by social service organisations.

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