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## **AGE DISPUTED CHILDREN IN ADULT ACCOMMODATION: ADVICE FOR ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS**

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Unaccompanied children arriving in the UK often do not have documentary evidence of their age or identity. As a result they can end up being wrongfully placed outside of local authority care and into adult accommodation. The Refugee Council's Age Dispute Project has reported that 89% of the age-disputed young people they worked with in 2017/18 and 88% in 2018/19 who were deemed to be adults based on their appearance were subsequently accepted as children.<sup>1</sup>

Many of these children and young people will suffer greatly living in adult accommodation without any local authority or other support. Many will be unable to cook or manage basic daily living without this support having never lived independently before. There are serious safeguarding concerns about these children living in adult accommodation with unknown adults.

It is important that these young people are referred for legal advice and support as soon as possible.

We have prepared this information sheet with details of who to contact as accommodation providers are often the first to find out a young person is living in adult accommodation.

### **Who to contact**

If you have a person in your accommodation who tells you that they are under 18 the following organisations are useful to contact:

1. If you are in the North West contact GMIAU on 0161 740 7722 or [referrals@gmiau.org](mailto:referrals@gmiau.org)
2. If you are outside the North West of England find a local Public Law/Community Care solicitor using the Law Society "find a solicitor" page: 020 7320 5650, <https://solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk>
3. Refugee Council Age Disputes Project  
020 7346 1134  
[\*\*Age.Disputes@refugeecouncil.org.uk\*\*](mailto:Age.Disputes@refugeecouncil.org.uk)

**\*\*If you are concerned about the safety and well-being of a child in adult accommodation contact your local Children's Services to make an urgent referral for them to be taken into local authority care\*\***

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/ADP-Policy-Brief\\_June-2019.pdf](https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/ADP-Policy-Brief_June-2019.pdf)

