UASC Orientation Programme (OP)
Key2
by Charlotta Nuboer-Cope

Arrival

Image from The Telegraph
What does the OP provide?

1. English lessons

“Before I could not speak English at all – now I can understand.”
“It has helped me to communicate much better and learn new words.”
2. Information Sessions

- Asylum Process
- Education system
- The law; protection from exploitation
- Social life and friendships; Prevent agenda
- Basic first aid and Red Cross family tracing
- Sexual health
- Money management

- “I learned about fire safety and 999”
- “I’ve learned not to have contact with underage girls”
- “We learned not to judge others”
- “I know more how to be safe”
- “We learned to respect gay people – this is their right and in the UK gay marriage is legal”
- “I liked it because I learned equality exists between everyone and I felt more comfortable in the class”
Extra information sessions

- Respectful behaviour,
- FGM
- Internet safety
- Taking medicine safely

- Mental health and wellbeing
  - “It was helpful – we have been through so much in our travels – these sessions helped reflect back on feelings and emotions”
  - “Now we know what to do if we are feeling sad”
  - “I could forget about my past – I felt respect here”
3. Orientation to Oxford
4. A safe space

Statistics

• Started in January 2012
• 197 clients to date
• Eritrea, Sudan, Afghanistan, Albania, Iran, Iraq, Vietnam, Syria, Egypt, etc
• Funded by Social Services and the Virtual School
Next steps: progression from OP

If under 16 – school near their accommodation

16 or older -
• City of Oxford College
• EMBS (Ethnic Minority Business Service) College
• Oxford Spires Academy – First Steps or Second Steps programme
Poem: “Last Year, This Year”
by Waseem Sherzad

Last year I slept in the sweetcorn fields.
This year I sleep in my own room.
Last year, when the sun shone I searched for shade.
This year I look for the sun’s rays
Last year we tried to find food.
This year I can buy food.
Last year at sunset I had to find a place to sleep.
This year I sleep in my own bed.
Last year I had many people with me, but I was alone.
This year I have two or three friends.

Last year when the Serbian children went to school I thought in my heart how can it go; how can I learn?
This year I am in school and taking exams.
Last year I had a dream.
This year I’m completing that dream.
Last year my heart disappeared.
This year it is also not with me.
Maybe when I left my home my heart stayed in my home.

From Both Countries: Poems by the Second Steps Group at Oxford Spires Academy. Edited by Kate Clanchy, 2018.