



We are also concerned with the measures in that they allow the Secretary of State to ask a third party to provide accommodation to children. This is a real risk when considered against the large numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children we know have gone missing from hotels. It also raises the risk of children being placed in detention accommodation, rather than under the care of a local authority, which is wholly inappropriate especially if these children have been trafficked to the UK.

There are potential workforce and health considerations that must be considered under these measures. As set out, there is a risk that migrant children are “consolidated” in certain areas of the country which will have workforce implications for paediatricians and other professionals.

There are also potentially serious health implications for children. If they are no longer looked after by local authorities, then they may not be entitled to the statutory initial health assessment. It is unclear for the Bill what health input they will be entitled to.

What assessment has the Minister made regarding the impacts of this Bill on healthcare provision for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children?

What consideration has the Home Office given to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in the development of this Bill?

What measures will the Home Office put in place to accurately identify and care for children who have been trafficked?

Can the Minister confirm the Home Office is able to provide suitable and safe accommodation for all children while they undergo the assessment process?

What will the impact of the Bill be on children who are trafficked into the country insofar as their rights in relation to future asylum claims?

The College is deeply concerned with this Bill from the perspective of children’s rights, the provision of healthcare and associated workforce implications.

No parent or guardian would send a child on such a dangerous journey without good reason, and we know that at least six out of ten (60%) of all those who made the dangerous channel crossing to the UK in small boats last year would be recognised as refugees through the asylum process.

It must also be considered that many unaccompanied children will have been trafficked to the UK.

Denying these people with an opportunity to seek safety from legitimate harm is inexcusable.

Seeking safety for you and your child should not be a crime nor should we abandon our obligations to protect children who have been exploited and trafficked.

We once again remind the Home Secretary that the rights of children and young people, as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), must be protected.

We call on the Government to reconsider this Bill and to s