

<b>COUNCIL</b>		
<b>Report Title</b>	Motion 1 Unaccompanied Migrant Children Motion 1 in the name of Councillor Bonavia to be seconded by Councillor Gallagher	
<b>Key Decision</b>		Item No.
<b>Ward</b>		
<b>Contributors</b>	Chief Executive (Head of Business & Committee)	
<b>Class</b>	Part 1	Date: January 22 2020

### **Protecting the rights of unaccompanied children seeking family reunion**

This Council notes with great concern the Government's decision to abandon its commitment to ensure that unaccompanied children continue to have the right to family reunion with relatives already resident in the United Kingdom following the withdrawal from the European Union. No child should be surviving alone in camps and carparks in Europe when they have family here who can care for them, or local authorities like Lewisham who are ready to offer them a home.

This Council believes in creating a Borough of Sanctuary which welcomes and supports refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants fleeing conflict and persecution. In June 2019 the Council committed to welcoming an additional 100 unaccompanied child refugees under the charity Safe Passage International's "Our Turn" pledge. In addition, many Lewisham residents have welcomed children through current family reunion rules under the European Union Dublin III Regulation and there will be local families affected by this Government's decision.

We are dismayed at the prospect that any child who has a parent, sibling, uncle, aunt or grandparent in our borough may be prevented from joining them. Legal family reunion is one of the few safe and legal routes for children who would otherwise remain on their own thereby exposing themselves to danger and exploitation, or risk their lives in order to reach a place of safety with their family.

This Council resolves to:

- (1) Urge the Government to guarantee in law its existing obligation to ensure children have the same or improved rights to family reunification in the UK following Brexit
- (2) Invite the Government to work with the Council to deliver its commitment to welcome an additional 100 unaccompanied child refugees and so give more children a chance to rebuild their lives in a place of safety.