

Additional information provided by the Welsh Local Government Association in relation to the inquiry into refugees and asylum seekers in Wales

During the meeting on 15 December 2016 the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) agreed to provide:

- information about the Home Office–run schemes for refugees and asylum seekers that local authorities in Wales can participate in, outside of the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Scheme;
- examples from regional community cohesion co–ordinators of local people in the community supporting refugees, such as “befriending” and providing language support.

The WLGA provided the following examples of community support and befriending schemes:

1. Ceredigion

There is a range of help and support from the host community. Aberystwyth University host a weekly coffee drop–in morning. This is for the refugees and the University community. The first part of the drop–in is in English and the second part in Arabic. This allows refugees and University Students and staff to practice English and Arabic respectively and sets a climate of a mature exchange of support. This example has been included as a case study on informal ESOL in the new HO Guidance on ESOL.

Aberaid have also been active in local support and help for the Ceredigion refugees.
<https://www.facebook.com/Aberaid-872829299461833/> and
<http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/aberaid/>

Community Sponsorship. Croeso Aberteifi and Aberaid are fundraising and putting together applications to the HO for CS.

2. Carmarthenshire

The SRP approach in Carmarthenshire may be seen as a three part model.

- i. The Local Authority Multi Agency SRP Task Group, Panel and Project Management
- ii. The caseworker service carried out by EYST.

- iii. Volunteer and community support from Syria Sir Gar,
<https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=syria%20sirgar>

Syria Sir Gar have been very active with host community preparation and community preparation meetings. They have welcomed refugees and provided welcome hampers. The group have been able to supply additional items that the Local Authority is unable to fund from the HO list, for example televisions, vacuum cleaners and lawn mowers. Syria Sir Gar carry out a befriending service. The group also hosts family social events and fundraising events, which the Syrian families also attend and enjoy greatly. Syria Sir Gar is looking to develop other support, for example a homework club and informal ESOL.

3. Powys

The main SRP approach in Powys for community support has through Powys Association for Voluntary Organisations, working closely with the caseworkers from EYST. PAVO have run a series of host community meetings in Ystradgynlais and in Newtown, (the two locations where refugees are being resettled). The meetings are attended by a range of voluntary organisations and interested individuals, where offers of support and donated items are co-ordinated. EYST have also supported the work of these meetings. There are also active groups of citizens who support refugees, located in Llanidloes, Knighton and Brecon and Talgarth and these have provided incoming families with personal computers and televisions.

4. Pembrokeshire

We are planning to welcome the first refugees in Pembrokeshire late winter / early spring. The Pembrokeshire Model that is developing is interesting due to the LA managed scheme and CS developing in tandem. Community Sponsors have joined the LA SRP Multi Agency Task Group. A family-centred partnership model is being developed between the LA, public services and Community Sponsors. The LA has approved the Resettlement Plans of Croeso Abergwaun and Croeso Arbeth to enable submission to the HO. There is a new CS group forming in Haverfordwest, Croeso Hwlfordd. The CS group come under Hiraeth Hope and are linked to Citizens UK.
<http://www.hiraethhope.org.uk/refugee-settlement>