

Welsh Action on Refugees

Urgent Action:

This is the biggest refugee crisis since the Second World War with nearly 60 million¹ people forcibly displaced from their homes due to conflict or persecution. There are over four million refugees² forced to flee Syria, most people living in camps in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Many refugees continue to take hazardous journeys to seek sanctuary.

The numbers of people reaching Wales are small; the numbers of people dying in the Mediterranean are large. In April-June 2015 there were just 2,355 people seeking asylum in Wales this is under 0.1% of the population.³ The International Organization for Migration recorded the deaths of over 2,600⁴ people crossing the Mediterranean Sea in 2015.

UK Action

While we welcome the UK Government's commitment to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees by 2020⁵, it is not nearly enough. We need larger-scale actions to happen faster and a Europe-wide humanitarian response to ensure that people do not continue to die on the shores or on the move in our continent.

1. **SAFE PASSAGE:** The Welsh Government must make it clear to the UK Government that we need to resettle more refugees, act more immediately and respond to the humanitarian crisis in Europe. We must resettle 20,000 refugees from Syria as soon as possible and agree a European co-ordinated response to ensure the safety of people travelling in Europe.
2. **HUMANE ASYLUM:** The Welsh Government needs to put pressure on the UK Government to deliver a fair and humane asylum system and to stop the proposed changes to asylum support⁶. This could see the end of payments to refused asylum seekers and other migrants, leaving adults and children destitute and at risk of exploitation. It undermines the Welsh Government's commitment to the UNCRC and continues to put additional pressure on Welsh Local Authorities.

Welsh Action

Wales has a proud history of providing sanctuary for refugees and other migrants but we can and should do more. The Welsh Government, Welsh Local Authorities and Welsh Charities need to work together to deliver a fully resourced and coordinated programme of support for refugees relocated to Wales.

3. **REFUGEES RESETTLED:** Welsh Government and Welsh Local Authorities need to demonstrate their long-term commitment to refugee resettlement whether through the UK Gateway scheme, the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme or the new Syrian Scheme currently proposed by the UK Government. Welsh Local Authorities need to be ready to deliver the relocation scheme by Christmas 2015.
4. **FUNDING SUPPORT SERVICES:** A £1 Million fund⁷ for the co-ordination, co-production and delivery of support services for refugees in Wales should be set up. Currently there are very limited support services for asylum seekers in Wales with no specialist asylum support service for children⁸, limited support to asylum seekers outside of Cardiff and local drop-in centres struggling with a lack of funding.
5. **NO DESTITUTION:** A destitution fund to be set up so that no person is left destitute in Wales, regardless of their nationality or migration status. This is already in place in Northern Ireland and can be resourced through the Discretionary Assistance Fund. The Welsh Government needs to look at ways to mitigate the impact of the Immigration Act 2014 in order to ensure no individuals, especially children are exploited or end up with nowhere to live.

¹ UNHCR's annual [Global Trends Report: World at War](#), released on Thursday (June 18)

² [UNHCR data](#) on the 6th September 2015 reported that 4,088,099 people are registered Syrian refugees.

³ [Home Office](#) figures of the number of people across Wales seeking asylum in May 2015

⁴ [International Organisation for Migration](#), as of 7th September 2015.

⁵ [Prime Minister, David Cameron, made a statement in the House of Commons on Monday 7 September 2015 on Syria: refugees and counter terrorism.](#)

⁶ [UK Government, Reforming support for failed asylum seekers and other illegal migrants](#)

⁷ [A similar fund has already been agreed by the Scottish Executive](#)

⁸ Tros Gynnal Plant do deliver an advocacy and participation programme to asylum seeker children in Wales but unlike England's Children's Panel and Scotland's Guardianship programme there is no specialist asylum support service for children in Wales.

Signatories:



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