

Cllr. Hart,
Chairman, Devon County Council's Cabinet
County Hall
Topsham Road
Exeter
Devon EX2 4QD



Exeter City of Sanctuary
c/o CoLab
King William Street
Exeter
EX4 6PD

29th September '16

Dear Cllr. Hart

We wrote to you on August 20th requesting clarification of Devon County Council's current plans in relation to the resettlement of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). We also supplied some information about the overall work of our organisation Exeter City of Sanctuary.

As we have not to date received a reply to our letter we are again writing to you in the hope that you will respond to our queries and concerns about these vulnerable children urgently in need of care and protection.

With the establishment in July of a new National Resettlement and Transfer Scheme (NTS) for UASC we understand that Councils are now expected to actively participate in resettling unaccompanied children claiming asylum on arrival in UK. Additionally, in keeping with provisions in the Immigration Act 2016, the NTS will embrace the resettlement of some unaccompanied children in Europe. This would include those currently in Calais and other makeshift camps which lack acceptable basic shelter, protection or services.

We would be grateful if you could respond to the following queries we have:

1. Can you confirm that DCC is participating in the NTS and the number of children DCC plans to accept for resettlement?
2. We were pleased to hear that DCC had recently welcomed two UASC. Is our information accurate?
3. What progress has been made at national and county levels in terms of the transfer and resettlement of 'eligible' UASC in Europe-and others from the MENA areas?
4. When can we expect DCC to make a public statement on this matter? We believe there is much support and a desire to help among the public with regard to these children. A public statement would be welcomed.

Exeter City of Sanctuary would wish to assist in efforts to support and resettle unaccompanied children. With that aim in mind, we respectfully request that you respond to our queries above and also send us the contact details for the officers responsible for making arrangements for resettling UASC.

We are copying in your Cabinet colleagues Cllr. James McInnes, Cllr. Andrea Davis and Cllr. Andrew Leadbetter so as to keep them informed. We are also aware that Devon and Exeter's Children's Social Work Service would be a key part of any response by DCC to resettling unaccompanied asylum seeking children. For this reason we have also written to Rachel Gillott as we wish to understand what progress is being made for meeting the necessary provision for UASC.

Exeter City of Sanctuary is part of a National City of Sanctuary network of local groups (CoS). We are working to build a culture of welcome and hospitality towards asylum seekers and refugees among organisations and members of the Exeter community. You can find out more about our work at www.exeter.cityofsanctuary.org and www.cityofsanctuary.org

Your key contact for administration and reporting is Wendy Milne: info@exeter.cityofsanctuary.org
Exeter City of Sanctuary, C/o COLAB, King William St. Exeter EX4 6PD

We look forward to hearing from you

Signed: Wendy Milne on behalf of Exeter City of Sanctuary Campaigns Group

info@exeter.cityofsanctuary.org

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cc: Cllrs. James McInnes, Andrea Davis and Andrew Leadbetter