

Exeter City of Sanctuary statement on 'Dubs' Scheme closure

Dear friends,

Exeter City of Sanctuary (ExCoS) fully supports the National City of Sanctuary (<https://cityofsanctuary.org>) movement's commitment to the resettlement within the UK of vulnerable unaccompanied children seeking asylum from Europe. ExCoS has strongly campaigned on this issue and welcomed Devon County Council's announcement last October that it would be participating in welcoming some of these children and young people to Devon as part of the national transfer programme and the Dubs scheme.

We are dismayed by the Government's recent decision to end the Dubs scheme in March and to limit the numbers of children resettled here from France, Italy and Greece at 350. We find it hard to understand how the Government can turn it's back on these desperate children, currently alone in temporary or makeshift camps which lack acceptable basic shelter, protection or services. Many more are sleeping outdoors, in forests and woodland (e.g. near Calais). Closing the door to these children at a time when the global refugee crisis is getting worse exposes them even further to increased risks from traffickers, drug dealers and sex exploitation. It was expected that several thousand children would be resettled here.

We support all the recent calls from NGO's, church leaders, citizens and politicians alike for the Dubs scheme to continue and for the wellbeing of these young people to be given priority.

There is a Parliamentary debate on Unaccompanied Children scheduled for Thursday 23rd February. We are asking our supporters to write to their MP, urging them to attend this debate in parliament and to seek the continuance of the Dubs scheme.

More information and news about the Dubs scheme can be found on our website <https://exeter.cityofsanctuary.org> and Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/exetercityofsanctuary>

Thanking you

ExCoS Campaigns Group