

## Sample letter to your County Councillor

Dear

As a local resident I feel very strongly that Devon County Council should do its bit to welcome, accommodate and support unaccompanied children fleeing war and persecution. I am writing to you to express my concern about Devon County Council's slow response to date to the resettlement of these vulnerable children seeking asylum. I urge you to raise this issue at Devon Council meetings and with those responsible for making arrangements for their transfer and care.

Under the Government's new National Resettlement and Transfer scheme (NTS) for unaccompanied asylum seeking children all councils were asked to urgently participate in the scheme and indicate how many children they could resettle in their area. I am disappointed that DCC has not yet made a public statement as to the numbers of children it could, or plans to, accept, including what provision would be needed to care for these children (e.g. foster placements). Meanwhile some councils, like Kent, are carrying a disproportionate level of responsibility and unable to cope. (Kent has almost 1,000 unaccompanied asylum seeking children accommodated, mostly in foster care.)

Children as young as six I believe are arriving without their parents at British ports to claim asylum, often after long and dangerous journeys by land and sea. Some have sadly died in their desperate efforts. Numbers arriving in the UK are increasing. It is vital I think that every city and council in the country does whatever it can to provide sanctuary and care for these children. The imminent closure of the camp at Calais adds a new level of urgency to the need for concrete plans and action from councils. As I'm sure you are aware the UK Government has also committed to bring over unaccompanied children from within Europe. This is set out in the Immigration Act 2016 (commonly known as 'the Dubs amendment').

I am a supporter of Exeter City of Sanctuary, a group whose existence is testament to the good will towards asylum seekers and refugees that there is in Exeter across all sections of the community. There is a strong desire to actively assist Devon County Council and Childrens Services in their efforts to meet the provision needed to safely care and support these children. (I'm aware that there are other similar community support groups outside of Exeter who would wish to assist too).

I feel strongly about this issue and it would be wonderful if you could support Exeter City of Sanctuary in their work, and join us in making sure Devon County Council does as much as it possibly can to help with this crisis.

Yours Sincerely