

“Make humanity your journey and you will arrive at God”

St Augustine

Spring 2016

Refugee Crisis Newsletter



The Diocese of
Arundel & Brighton

Foreword by Bishop Richard Moth



Our Diocesan Response

Our aim has been to enable the community of the diocese to respond effectively to the refugee and asylum situation. Although this is a global crisis, our primary intention is to meet local needs by supporting work with those already in the UK (specifically Surrey and Sussex), or by supporting other activity which will directly benefit those caught up in this crisis.

The charity Voices in Exile has been identified as the principal partner of the diocese in this endeavour. This was based on the charity's proven track record and expertise in the field. Of course, the diocese can and will work in partnership with other groups as appropriate and we are taking a long term approach.

I want to say a huge THANK YOU to all of you have offered us help and support to date. I am also well aware of the existing work, through numerous specialized projects, that currently assist Refugees and Asylum Seekers. I am therefore confident in our ability as a diocese to continue to increase the level of help to local authorities and agencies this year. With every Blessing.

+Richard

Welcoming the Stranger

As the international refugee crisis has unfolded through 2015 into 2016 we have been inspired to 'see, judge and act', a process, in the Christian tradition, of reading and responding to the signs of the times.

The global refugee crisis is chronic, but there is an unprecedented desire for all groups in society to assist. We have to recognise the place of the Church in the national response to this crisis. Pope Francis has urged all dioceses, indeed all parishes, to make special provision.

A Call to Action

Bishop Richard's 'Call to Action' last September resulted in a significant response, with offers of accommodation, financial donations and many other forms of practical help. The task of coordinating the response was given to Aidan Cantwell (Pastoral Adviser, Justice & Peace/Social Action) and Mary Jane Burkett (extensive background working with refugees and asylum seekers within a statutory, community and faith context). Given the nature of the challenge and the scale of the response to date a Steering Group was formed to coordinate the work.

The two leads are working closely with the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales through their Office for Migration Policy (OMP) chaired by Bishop Pat Lynch. In addition they are also in regular contact with other national bodies such as the Jesuit Refugee Service UK, the Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) and the National Justice & Peace Network.

Activities

Local authorities have been looking for partnerships with groups from civil society. By working both ecumenically and with secular groups our diocese recognises how well placed it is to respond generously to the call to action.

We have been exploring the potential of working with ecumenical partners and providing further opportunities to develop more inter-religious dialogue and co-operation.

Catholic Social Teaching

The Dignity of the Human Person

The focal point of CST is the human person, made in the image of God,

and so having fundamental freedom and dignity, the basis for human rights.

Each person possesses a basic dignity that comes from God, not from any human quality or accomplishment, not from race or gender, age or economic status.

The test of every institution or policy is whether it enhances or threatens human dignity and indeed human life itself.

Policies which treat people as only economic units, or policies which reduce people to a passive state of dependency on welfare, do not do justice to the dignity of the human person.

*(See Pacem in Terris
& Laborem Exercens)*

Our steering group is ensuring all donations and offers of assistance are used appropriately and effectively to support those directly affected by the crisis.

We also want to continue to raise awareness regarding the plight of those caught up in the crisis.

Since September a great deal of time has been spent on a response to the new Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Programme. Voices in Exile has been commissioned by Brighton & Hove City Council to host new arrivals and has been engaged in training for other local authorities.

A Prayer for Those who Work with Refugees

Father, we thank you for showing us your face in the faces of our homeless brothers and sisters. May we be a human face to them, and may we encourage them to hope, as they free us to love.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

JRS, East Africa

In order to enable the community of the diocese to engage in the response in the most effective way the diocese will continue to work jointly with Voices in Exile to deliver the following:-

- Offering practical solutions to help build a culture of hospitality and create safe environments for vulnerable people seeking sanctuary by sharing examples of good practice and collaborative working.
- Offering mentoring and befriending training.
- Developing a network and directory of agencies across the diocese who specialise in this work.

We are aware of many local groups and initiatives working hard on developing outreach projects. Please do let us know of any group or initiative in your area that we could include in a network.

- Raising awareness of the plight of immigrants, migrants, refugees and people on the move.

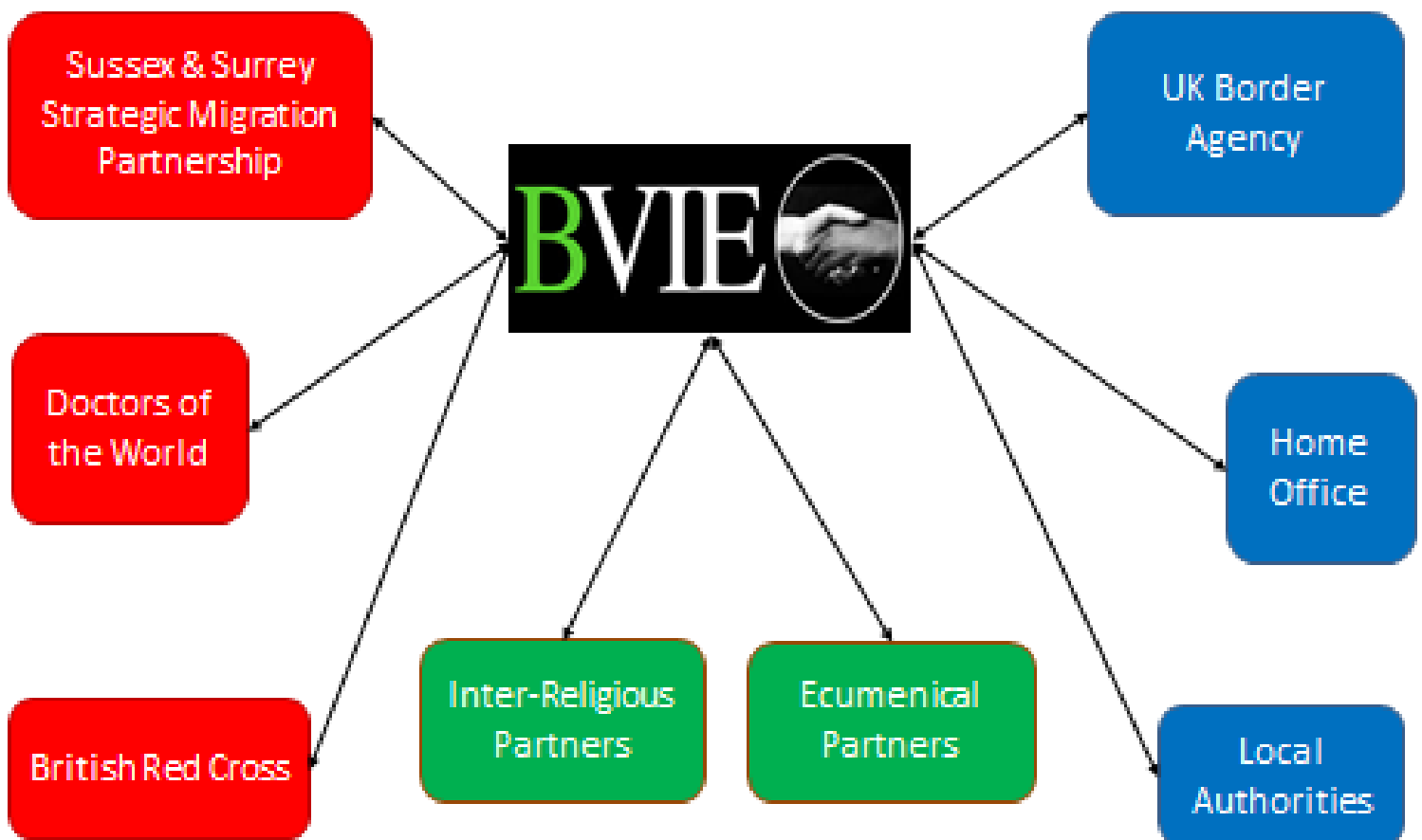
If you would like to book a presentation in your parish please contact us.

- Developing prayer resources for parishes.

With support from the diocese, **Voices in Exile** is now expanding its outreach in Sussex and Surrey in the following areas:-

- Syrian Vulnerable Persons Programme
- Casework support for Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- Immigration legal service
- Mentoring scheme
- Language classes

Visit the website brightonvoicesinexile.co.uk
or Facebook page facebook.com/brightonvoicesinexile



Voices in Exile's aims are to provide specialized, holistic, tailored, person centred support and advocacy to refugee clients through individual casework and group training and support.

Staff and volunteers work with people throughout the immigration process providing people with crisis support, helping them to stabilise their situations and supporting them with long term integration. They also work with other organisations through national networks as well as strategic partnerships, to be able to share good practice and advocate policy change.

In 2015 Voices In Exile supported 117 destitute people on 969 occasions through funding provided by the British Red Cross. This figure does not include all those who accessed the weekly foodbank or were provided with other destitution support in kind. Voices in Exile casework supported 232 people with non-immigration advice as well as 303 people through their immigration legal project.

What is ASYLUM?

Asylum is the protection granted by a country to someone who has left their own country to find safety. If a country gives such protection that person becomes a refugee.

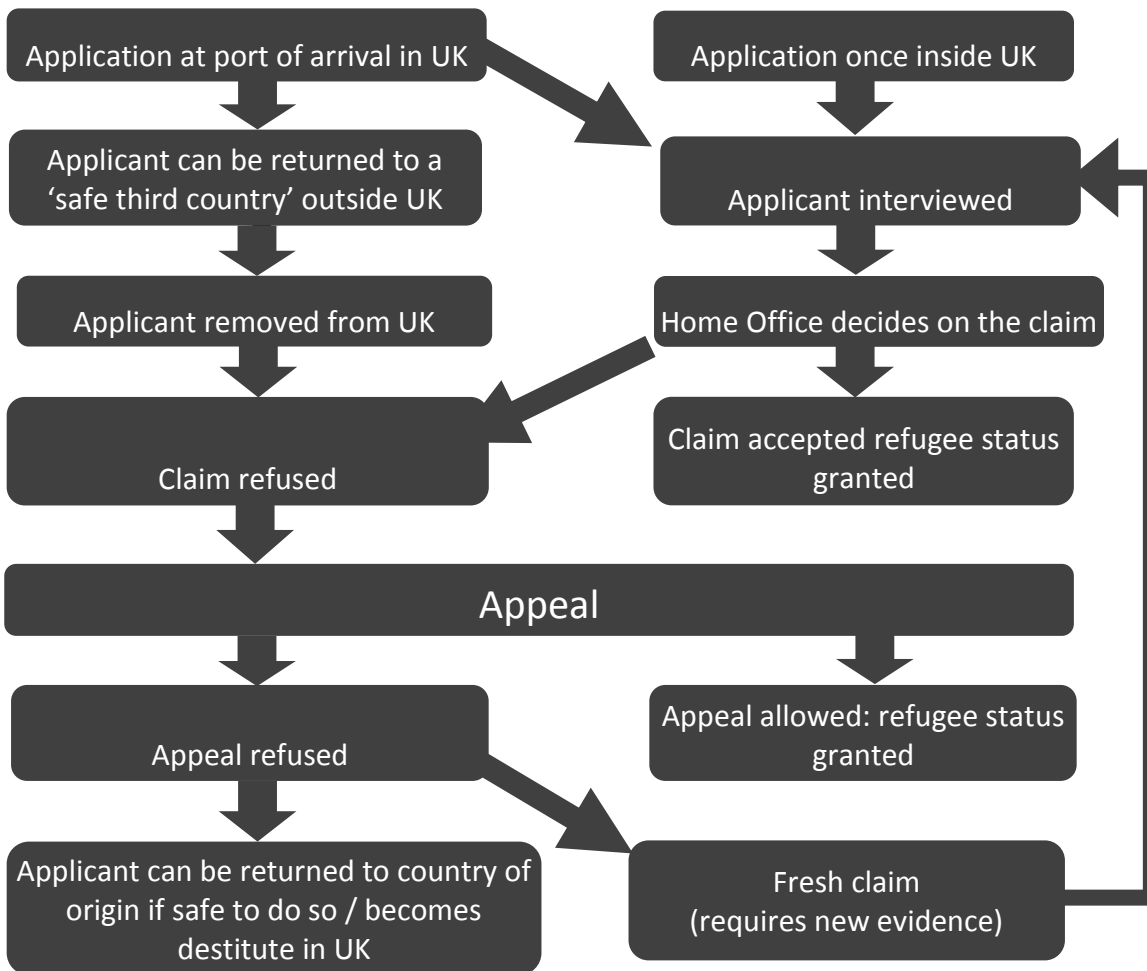
Who is an ASYLUM SEEKER?

An asylum seeker is someone who has made application for protection. A person applies for asylum on the grounds of having a well-founded fear of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, political belief or membership of a particular social group.

Who is a REFUSED or FAILED Asylum Seeker?

Once an asylum seeker has their request for asylum officially refused they no longer have any lawful right to remain in the United Kingdom. They no longer receive any entitlements and some voluntarily return home. Others are forcibly sent home but some go missing and stay illegally. Without any means of support, or accommodation, destitution often results.

THE ASYLUM SEEKING PROCESS



Syrian Refugee Resettlement Scheme

To date Voices in Exile has received and supported 14 people through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Project in Brighton & Hove, and provided consultancy and indirect support for families arriving in other areas in Sussex.

- The Prime Minister announced on 7 September 2015 that the scheme would be expanded to resettle up to **20,000** Syrians in need of protection during this Parliament.
- Appointed Richard Harrington MP Minister for Syrian Refugees.
- The PM also pledged to resettle **1,000** refugees before Christmas. *(Achieved)*
- Government is working closely with UNHCR to identify more vulnerable Syrians that they deem in need of resettlement and whose particular needs can only be met in countries like the UK.
- This is in addition to those we resettle under the Gateway and Mandate schemes and the thousands who receive protection in the UK under normal asylum procedures.

Mentoring Scheme

To be able to meet the increased demands upon Voices in Exile, due to the increased numbers of people (destitution was up by a third last year and is set to increase), organizational capacity has been increased. As a result the amount of practical support available for refugees has grown. Voices in Exile are now looking to increase the number of volunteering opportunities available. This will enhance the care and support provided for asylum seekers and refugees.

A team of experienced caseworkers who provide individual casework are looking to extend their outreach through volunteer mentors. Mentors will be specifically matched with mentees depending upon the skills & support needed. Mentors work closely with the Voices in Exile Casework team who will provide oversight, guidance and support.

A pilot mentoring scheme is now underway. Mentors will be encouraged to meet their mentee for a one hour session once a week, over the period of at least 6 months.

They will meet at a mutually convenient, public place, with the purpose of supporting the person within agreed objectives set by the main caseworker. If you would like to learn more and/or apply please contact Voices in Exile directly at

bvie@hotmail.co.uk

You can also contact Voices in Exile if you want to donate any of the following directly:

- *Food*
- *Shopping vouchers (clothes)*
- *Vouchers for local amenities including attractions*
- *Toiletries*
- *Travel permits*

“And remember always to welcome strangers, for by doing this, some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Hebrews 13:2

Others ways we can help?

- *Self-contained accommodation (Landlords)*

There is a housing crisis in the UK and the cost of housing is particularly high in the South East. Local authorities are desperate to hear from anyone who has property they are able to let at an affordable price.

- *Financial Support:*

Cheques should be made payable to 'Diocese of Arundel & Brighton Christian Education Centre' or DABCEC and sent to Aidan Cantwell at DABCEC, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley West Sussex, RH10 6RP. Alternatively our bank details are DABCEC, Sort code: 40-05-20, a/c: 71078151 HSBC, Pall Mall (Reference: 'MIGRANT FUND'). To Gift Aid donations please request a dedicated form from DABCEC.

- *Campaign/Lobby/Advocacy:*

Organise a parish event that will raise awareness of the causes of this crisis and debunk many of the myths we hear. The Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) has up to date suggestions for contacting your MP.

There are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female but all of you are one in Christ Jesus

(Galatians 3:28)

In January the Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) and CAFOD, alongside leading refugee organisations, wrote to the Prime Minister. They endorsed the following four refugee principles believing that, as a matter of urgency:

- The UK should take a fair and proportionate share of refugees, both those already within the European Union and those still outside it.
- Safe and legal routes to the UK, as well as to the European Union, need to be established.
- Safe and legal routes within the European Union, including the UK, should be established.
- There should be access to fair and thorough procedures to determine eligibility for international protection wherever it is sought.

"I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me." **Matthew 25:40**

Not all offers can be used

Many groups offering support are still in a 'fledgling' state whilst existing charities have often struggled with capacity issues. Local authorities and agencies have not been able to utilise many of the offers of help received.

Citizens UK, an organisation that organises communities to act together, have been engaged with many of our local communities in setting up a practical response. The network of 'City of Sanctuary' groups that build a culture of welcome and hospitality is expanding rapidly too. **We'd like to hear from groups across the diocese and share good practice and experiences as well as build up a useful network.**

At the moment local authorities are saying temporary accommodation cannot be used for housing people through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Scheme due to safeguarding requirements for vulnerable people and potential issues regarding incompatibility and sustainability. They are also struggling to match countless offers of voluntary help to date.

Offers of employment also cannot be considered due to expectations of language, qualifications and lack of own transport.

Local authorities are not able to deal with other offers of goods including food due to the relatively slow intake of the resettlement programme to date and the uncertain timescales of future arrivals.

The Year of Mercy

“It is my burning desire that, during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty.

And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God’s mercy.

Jesus introduces us to these works of mercy in his preaching so that we can know whether or not we are living as his disciples.

Let us rediscover these corporal works of mercy:

*to feed the hungry,
give drink to the thirsty,
clothe the naked,
welcome the stranger,
heal the sick,
visit the imprisoned,
and bury the dead.”*



Pope Francis

Useful Local Authority Links regarding the Syrian Refugee Crisis

The diocese and Voices in Exile continue to work closely with the local authorities and the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration.

South East Strategic Partnership for Migration

secouncils.gov.uk/about-us/about-sespm

Brighton and Hove

brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/community-and-life-events/migrants-asylum-seekers-and-refugees

East Sussex

new.eastsussex.gov.uk/community/syria

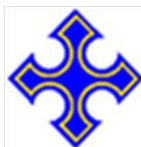
Surrey

surreycc.gov.uk/environment-housing-and-planning/housing/syrian-refugee-arrangements-in-surrey

West Sussex

westsussex.gov.uk/campaigns/syrian-refugee-crisis

Aidan Cantwell / Mary-Jane Burkett
Diocesan Refugee Response Coordinators
Email: aidan.cantwell@dabnet.org (01293
651154)
or director@stcuthmans.org



“I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full.”

John 10: 10



Voices in Exile

Response to the Refugee Crisis

Speakers :

Rt. Rev. Richard Moth,
R.C. Bishop of Arundel & Brighton, plus others.

Wednesday 18th May, 2016

7.30pm

Brighthelm Centre

North Road, Brighton BN1 1YD

To include updates on Voices In Exile's
service provision, projects and testimonies

ALL WELCOME!

If you would like to book an event for your parish
or local community, please contact either:

Aidan Cantwell/Mary-Jane Burkett

Diocesan Refugee Response Coordinators

Email: aidan.cantwell@dabnet.org 01293 651154

Catherine Brown – Voices In Exile 01273 328598

bvie@hotmail.co.uk

