

Cumbrian Martyrs' Parish Syrian Refugee Family Sponsorship Group

Meeting of 26/2/19

Present: Fr Jim Allen, Joe McGarry (chair), Teresa Heath, David Carrick, Kathleen Carrick, Eleanor McGarry, Margaret Day, Donald Hitch, Andrew Heath (minutes), Ged Feeney, Peter Flisher, Mandy Howes, Gianni Minervini, Maureen Boyle, Mr Hussain (Carlisle Mosque representative)

Meeting started with prayers (led by Fr Jim) at about 7:45pm.

Apologies for absence

Zuzanna, Maureen Dickenson

A word from the secretary

Andrew requested that if possible, for each section of the meeting, one person (typically the team leader) deliver a report, without interruptions, with any questions/discussions to follow afterwards. This will make it easier for him to prepare the minutes.

Previous minutes

These were agreed as correct.

Accommodation

Andrew said that Maureen had e-mailed to him a long and detailed report about accommodation, covering not only the period since the previous meeting, but also December and January. Andrew offered to read this out, but it was felt that this would be too time consuming. Instead it was agreed that Joe would make a brief report.

Report (by Joe) There has had good progress from discussions with Cumbrian Properties and BPK. He has been told that there should be no problem sourcing a two-bedroom house, but a three-bedroom house would be more difficult. Maximum housing allowance for a two-bedroom house is £409 a month and for a three-bedroom £488.

Questions/Discussion Joe would like the Group to decide on the size of the house. It was agreed that we should seek a two- or three-bedroom. It was added that this could instead be a flat, but to have a garden would be desirable. It has been decided that the Plan will initially be submitted without details of a specific house being included.

Benefits/employment

Report Eleanor made a detailed report, a printed copy of which she passed to Andrew. Key findings are:

1. Carlisle Council grant a 100% discount on Council tax.
2. Under Universal Credit (UC), the monthly allowance for a couple is £395 if under the age of 25, and £498 if over.
3. Child benefit is payable for the first two children, but only for any subsequent children if they were born before April 2017 (though this restriction does not apply for disabled children).
4. UC is paid in arrears, so the first payment will not be until four or five weeks after the application.
5. The benefits cap is £20000 a year.

6. It should be possible to arrange voluntary work at the Food Bank.
7. Each member of the family will be provided with a 'biometric residence permit' (BRP), which are posted by the Home Office to the address specified in the Plan. *Fr Jim agreed that the presbytery can be nominated as the address.*

She also described monthly outgoings that the family will have to cover from UC, plus other 'start up' costs that our Group will pay from the capital fund - all as yet unquantified.

Welfare/Health

Report (by Mandy) Her four colleagues are still willing to help, and will attend meetings if the Group feel it is necessary. She has been in touch with GP surgeries and dentists to research places. The outcome is that places cannot be offered in advance. Also, the family must register in person, and provide photographic identification and proof of address. She will e-mail a copy of her report to Andrew.

Questions/Discussions Gianni asked how long it would be following submission of the Plan before we know about the family. The answer was that we don't know. Ged suggested that a detailed timetable covering the family's first week or two be prepared. Teresa will do this.

Education/ESOL/Interpretation

Report (by Ged) He has prepared answers for the questions in the Plan relating to education. He has identified four venues for ESOL classes, and intends to attend one with Teresa. It was mentioned that Gianni has an employee who is an Arabic speaker, and Teresa commented that Caritas will assist with training of interpreters. However, it is accepted that it is not reasonable to expect volunteers to provide a full interpretation service 24-hours a day, so research into paid interpreters is needed.

Questions/Discussions David asked about provision of faith-based schools. Ged replied that the Group will advise the family what is available, and then the family can choose.

Finance/Fundraising

Report David read from a written report (which he passed to Andrew afterwards for inclusion in the minutes) as follows:

<i>Donations received and banked to 26 Feb 2019</i>	<i>£8260.00</i>
<i>Gift Aid (£2100 X 25%)</i>	<i>£525.00</i>
<i>Pledges made</i>	<i>£290.00</i>
<i>Gift aid (£200 X 25%)</i>	<i>£50.00</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>£9125.00</i>

Outstanding issue Look into projected expenditure to determine if further funds will be required.

Project Management

Report (by Teresa) She has spent a lot of time researching Universal Credit.

Questions/Discussion Joe asked her how far off we are from submitting the Plan. Teresa does not know yet, and will review.

Safeguarding

Joe reminded the Group that we'll have to decide who has contact with the family, as all that do will be required to attend safeguarding courses.

Any Other Business

None.

Next meeting

There was some discussion about how often the meetings should be. Teresa suggested that the next one could be in about six weeks, then again six weeks after that. This was agreed, so the next meeting will be at 7:45pm on Tuesday 9th April.

Meeting ended with prayers at about 9pm.