

Overview of Swansea Asylum Seeker and Refugee Advocacy Forum Meetings

Swansea Asylum Seeker and Refugee Advocacy Forum is facilitated by DPIA staff member based in Cardiff, together with volunteer Forum Champions from the community, under the Asylum Rights Programme, funded by Welsh Government. It is run by sanctuary seekers, for sanctuary seekers, with the aim to create a safe space for communicating questions, concerns, comments and suggestions on topics that the members feel are important to them. It is run on a monthly basis (except school holidays). Professionals from relevant sectors are invited to respond to input from members. Previous to the Asylum Rights programme it had been run under the Cities of Sanctuary project by DPIA staff based in Swansea for a year.

July 2018

Theme: Evaluation and review of Forum

Aim: To assess what has gone well, what could change, and what people would like to see in the future of the forum moving forward.

During this meeting, where 18 members attended, we asked three clear questions in a facilitated manner. Feedback was that the positive things about the forum has been meeting representatives from Right to Remain, Clearsprings and Fire Service. Members felt they were knowledgeable and that through sessions they had the chance to learn different things and meet new people in a positive space and live group. They felt it was good to be able to share their problems, express their feelings, and was helpful for integration.

Following on from this, some of the things members felt could change moving forward was the timing of the session to slightly later, to allow for travel from dropping children off at school, and that childcare for under-5s would be much appreciated by many. In addition, forum members communicated that they would like to see follow up with professionals after meetings, to check the progress of discussions and actions. It was agreed that in addition to this, and to help facilitate feedback and action, they would like a newsletter to be sent out to give an overview of what was covered in the meeting to be made available to the wider sector and public.

Moving forward members would like to raise issues/ learn about the following: education and volunteering opportunities for post 16's; developing new skills and transport in Swansea. It was also agreed that a Whatsapp group would be the most effective way of communicating further meetings and opportunities.

September 2018

Theme: Housing

Aim: Review points raised and responses given during May 2018 meeting with Simon Wall from Clearsprings Ready Homes, to see if any positive changes had come about, if there were any ongoing issues, and if any new issues had arisen.

This meeting invited Kathryn Williams from Swansea City of Sanctuary to co-facilitate a review of asylum housing, to be able to take outcomes to COMPASS meeting in October 2018. 13 members attended, including 5 new members, who have been dispersed to Swansea since May 2018.

