

**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC FOR ORAL REPLY**

**From Mr Richard Thompson to the Portfolio Holder for Care Services**

Many of us in Bromley see a stark moral obligation for our community to take in Syrian refugees. How and when will the Council move from doing nothing to mobilising community groups and its own resources, so that Bromley does play a full part in the government's refugee resettlement scheme?

**Reply**

A general letter to all Councils last year requested assistance on a voluntary basis. Given our own local pressures - number of homeless family units, the majority of them with children, approaching 1300, and an increasing number of Looked After Children (c290) - we were not, and are not, in a position to voluntarily offer accommodation to children in the mentioned camp.

However, Bromley is a member of the London wide arrangement which takes unaccompanied asylum seeking children on a regular basis. This is currently around 2/3 children/young people per month. On average we have 17/20 children/young people at any one time. This number is likely to increase to around 50 as Government has now introduced a national dispersal system which will subsume the London scheme mentioned earlier.

We all, I am sure, sympathise with the plight of the youngsters mentioned in the question but because of a lack of resources must look to national governments to effect a solution.

I am sure that any individual sufficiently motivated to help can do so via the relevant charities.

**Supplementary Question**

Mr Thompson indicated that he was aware of the arrangement for taking unaccompanied asylum seeking children. However, his question related to whether L B Bromley would accept children from refugee camps in Syria and he understood that Councils were to be involved in this.

**Reply**

The Portfolio Holder indicated that as part of the national dispersal scheme, L B Bromley would be part of (the response effort) and would take some 50 young people as indicated in his reply (above).

-----