

**Narrative and engagement on Syrian  
Vulnerable Person Resettlement  
Scheme;  
WALES**

# Who are WSMP?

- ▶ **The Wales Strategic Migration Partnership (WSMP) is funded by the Home Office to be an independent partnership**
- ▶ **Members include Local authority dispersal areas, UKVI, Welsh Government, Police, WLGA, British Red Cross, Welsh Refugee Council, elected members, City of Sanctuary**
- ▶ **Strategic lead, advisory and consultative role on migration in Wales**
- ▶ **All Wales remit – engagement at UK context**
- ▶ **Expertise on migration (asylum, refugee resettlement, unaccompanied asylum seeking children, EU migration)**

# What changed?



# Leadership

WLGA engaged with local authority Elected Members and Chief Executives, encouraging and garnering support

UK Strategic Migration Partnerships- asked to take a lead coordinating role

Welsh Government - *Minister applauds Welsh communities for help in settling Syrian refugees*



# Wales is 'preparing the ground' for refugees, says Carwyn Jones





# Leadership

“A clear message was coming from the community, and that gave me a very clear lead on how to act.”

Plaid Cllr. Alun Williams

# Leadership and engagement

- ▶ **SPR Contact Officers**
- ▶ **WELSH GOVERNMENT - Refugee Task Force, Operations Board, Communications Group=senior/expert oversight of the programme**
- ▶ **WLGA-Chief Execs and Politicians**
- ▶ **WSMP Local Authority Delivery Group**
- ▶ **Local Authority structures/task and finish groups (22)**

# Challenges

- ▶ **Complexities and vulnerabilities of refugees**
- ▶ **Scale**
- ▶ **Politics**
- ▶ **Capacity**
- ▶ **Synergy with and tensions about other schemes**
- ▶ **Working with host communities**



# Phobic narratives..

- ▶ *NWN Media - Far-right group plan anti-immigration rally on Anglesey*
- ▶ *A group calling itself Infidels of North Wales is due to march and stage public ... and the “islamification” of Britain,*
- ▶ *‘Refugees or Isis’?*
- ▶ *‘Calls to vet refugees after Paris atrocity’*

# Community Kitchen Abergavenny/Syrian night



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# WSMP SYRIAN RESETTLEMENT TOOLKIT; building engagement locally

- ▶ **Identify political and corporate leadership and named officer to take forward multi-agency discussions**
- ▶ **Which partners should be involved**
- ▶ **Which services should be scoped**
- ▶ **Links with asylum dispersal experts**
- ▶ **Developing a communications strategy**
- ▶ **Key contacts/peer support**



# LA Delivery Group-

- ▶ *Build support for the scheme and encourage Local Authorities to participate*
- ▶ All participating LAs, SRP Team, Welsh Government, WLGA, DWP, DCLG, education and health boards in Wales,
- ▶ Experience shared from established asylum dispersal areas, national specialists (Wales and UK)
- ▶ Initial resistance to wider narrative?



# Building engagement-what works

- ▶ National leadership
- ▶ **Resolving problems, help partners manage risks and make informed choices**
- ▶ **Enable all-Wales discussions/sharing info and best practice**
- ▶ **Honesty and transparency**
- ▶ **Understanding of the challenges LAs face**

# Knowns



# Unknowns

- ▶ **Asylum, SRP, UASC transfer, Children at Risk, ‘Dubb’s’ scheme, Community Sponsorship..**
- ▶ **How to build a coherent/progressive narrative ?**
- ▶ **Seismic shift ?**

▶ **There is something of the timeless and aspirational about challenging individuals, communities and nations to take extraordinary steps to practice *xenia* or hospitality.**

▶ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/annual-human-rights-lecture-explores-experiences-asylum-seekers-migrants-and-refugees>

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