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Leaders and Domestic Abuse Statement

Community leaders and members of several new and emerging communities in Dudley sent a strong message to potential perpetrators of domestic abuse within their own communities at a meeting in Dudley on Monday 6th March.

Under the umbrella of the Emerging Communities Family Safety Project leaders representing Syrians, Zimbabwean met and agreed to a draft declaration.

This is the first time different leaders from several communities have stood together to acknowledge there is a problem of domestic abuse within society and pledge to do something about it.

Henry representing the Nigerian community said "the declaration is important because in all communities in Britain right now domestic abuse is being committed unseen and unreported. What the declaration says to the perpetrators is that we as leaders will not tolerate it nor remain silent about it.

Samantha Billingham from Survivors of Domestic Abuse (SODA) said that "violence against women is a human problem. Leaders in every community have the potential to be part of the solution."

In the declaration leaders pledge to listen and ensure that those affected by domestic abuse are offered adequate support and that they will seek to create a supportive community in which all feel comfortable in discussing issues of domestic abuse against women.

The Emerging Family Safety Project is funded by the Office of Public Health and is being delivered in partnership with Stourbridge based organisation Survivors of Domestic Abuse.

Refugees forced to wait up to two years for English lessons

New research by Refugee Action (2nd March 2017) finds refugees are being forced to wait up to two years to access English language lessons. The charity believes this is a waste of the talents of refugees and the majority of Brits agree the Government should take action. Learning English unlocks people's potential to find work, volunteer and make friends with their new neighbours.

Refugee Action surveyed seven providers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes across England in areas with high populations of refugees.

Key findings include:

- **Many providers reported refugees are waiting over a year for English lessons. For one provider the average wait is 20 months, with some learners waiting two years.**
- **For the majority of providers waiting lists for lessons stretch to almost 1,000 people. Two colleges have closed their lists to new students to cope with the backlog.**
- **Providers say the situation is getting worse, with a huge reduction in Government funding making it impossible to meet growing demand**
- **Colleges are being forced to increase class sizes and reduce the number of ESOL hours offered to learners.**
- **A lack of childcare is regularly cited as a barrier to women being able to attend classes**

The charity's Let Refugees Learn campaign is calling on the Government to provide full and equal access to English language lessons for all refugees. The importance of English language lessons can't be overstated. Here are two mini case studies.

Machozzi, who was forced to flee her home in the Democratic Republic of Congo after her husband was killed, arrived in Britain last February. She had to wait nearly a year to start English lessons at her local college. "Everything is difficult when you don't understand English," she says. "It's a problem everywhere, when I'm trying to talk to neighbours, when I go to the hospital; I cannot express myself to anyone. It's difficult all of the time. Sometimes I feel lonely and it's hard to make friends."

Kheiro 40, who arrived in Dudley with his family last year as part of the Government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement scheme, knows the benefits of timely access to ESOL lessons. He has been attending classes at Dudley College 2 days per week and a morning session at CfED. Attending ESOL and other classes have helped Kheiro in learning English and being able to communicate with neighbours. "When you can speak English it means you can get a job and make your dreams come true," Kheiro adds.



Dudley Community Advisory Group (CAG)

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Dudley Police are seeking expressions of interest from community members interested in forming part of our Dudley Police CAG.

What is an CAG?

A CAG is a self governing group, made up of people from our community who provide independent advice to the police with the aim of improving the quality of policing services to all communities.

Who?

We are asking for people who reflect the composition of our communities, and have an interest in Dudley. Consultation from communities can be in many forms. Individuals represent themselves, however better understanding of the issues affecting communities and community members will come from those involved with and part of the communities groups and associations. Membership is voluntary. This is not a job and members will not get paid.

When?

Once formed we anticipate that all members of the group will meet quarterly. As well as this there may be times when a few members of the group will come together to provide advice on a specific issue. This will only be done if required.

Where?

The scope of the group and all meetings will be based within Dudley Local Policing area.

How?

Any interested parties should express their interest via email or letter to

Julie Mason - Partnership Team Inspector
or

Amanda Taylor - Engagement & Consultation Officer

Partnership Team, Dudley NPU
Brierley Hill Police Station
Bank Street, Brierley Hill
DY5 3DH

Email –

dy_partnerships_team@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

Or for more information please

Phone – 101 ex 851 3089

Interested parties should provide

- a summary of their background
- community links
- reason for interest in becoming an CAG member.

English Learners at CfED

Images from our trip to Jasmine Road Community Gardens



Undaunted by the usual British weather the CfED learners visited the Jasmine Road Community Gardens to learn about growing their own food. Funded by the British Science Association the community gardens held a Science Day on Friday and Saturday 18th and 19th of March. Thanks to Janet Hicken and other volunteers our learners had an amazing time.



Laxmi

Leila



Janet

Pierre



Ray

Pierre

There were a number of things to like from making a broom to looking at the amazing ways in which plants grow and are affected by science and seeing how rainbows are formed by light refraction. Seeing some of the local varieties of fossils was also an eye opening experience.



Wonder what makes plants grow?



Yes! Science is in everything!



A great day of learning and adventure



Soil Analysis

In their words...

On the 17th of March we went to the Community Gardens as a group. The weather was raining and cold. When we arrived there, we visited a lovely lady who was a volunteer there. She showed and introduced us to everything that was there. Herbs like Oregano, vegetables that included lettuce, cabbage, carrots and some more. It was an amazing place for me. I saw the beautiful tandoor that had a gorgeous fire, it is used for barbecues. There was a nice stage for celebrating dancing, singing and playing music and a lot more. It was a lovely trip for me and my classmates.

-Leila

Thanks to the wonderful team at Jasmine Road Community Gardens

Syrians to get refugee status

The government has announced that from this summer Syrians brought to the UK will be granted refugee status following a campaign initiated by STAR (Student Action for Refugees).

This means they will be given previously denied access to university places and other rights such as overseas travel documents.

Up until now resettled Syrians escaping the six year old conflict in their country were given a special form of leave to remain. This is known as Humanitarian Protection – a status which stopped short of the rights of people with full refugee status.

One of the consequences of this meant that resettled Syrians faced waiting three years before they were eligible for student finance. In short that put university out of reach for the vast majority of these people.

Close to 6000 Syrian refugees have been resettled to the UK since the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) began in March 2014 – with a quota of 20,000 places.

Under the Vulnerable Children at Risk Scheme (VCRS) the government also committed itself to resettling up to 3,000 refugees from the Middle East and North Africa – with a focus on children.

The move – announced in a written statement by the government (22nd March 2017) – comes after pressure from STAR and other agencies, including Refugee Council and NUS.

STAR's Chief Executive, Emma Williams, said: "This is something we have been calling for over the past two years and we welcome this step by the government. "It's great that our important campaign has been recognised and we thank the many MPs, Peers and a coalition of partners who have been there in support.

"As a result of this change in policy many people will directly benefit, as will wider society as we see Syrian refugees achieving and thriving here."

STAR will continue to fight for equal access to higher education for all people in the UK seeking refugee protection.

The written statement by the Home Secretary - Amber Rudd – said that from 1 July 2017, the Government would be granting those admitted under the VPRS and the VCRS refugee status and five years' limited leave.

Those who are already resettled under these programmes will be given the opportunity to make a request to change their status from Humanitarian Protection to refugee status.

The 'white working class' label is harming the white working class

Using the label "white working class" is distracting policy-makers from solutions that will actually help the white working class, according to the Runnymede Trust and CLASS.

The label also ignores the ethnic minority working class, whose economic circumstances and voice have been similarly ignored by policymakers for decades.

The two think tanks have joined forces to publish a new report (*'Minority Report: Race and Class in post-Brexit Britain'*), launched on Tuesday 21st March.

The key to improving the economic condition of the white working class is for Government to take action to help all deprived communities according to the authors of the report.

"The 'left-behind' are the white working class and ethnic minority working class – and even though they voted differently on Brexit these communities have close shared interests and would benefit equally from policies aimed at all low income groups."

Both Think Tanks are calling on the Home Secretary Amber Rudd to bring in the 'socio-economic duty' – which is included in the 2010 Equality Act but which ministers have refused to implement.

This duty would force all 34,000 public authorities to tackle poverty and help low-income families.

The new report – a collection of essays from academics – includes the demand to recognise the shared experiences of ethnic minorities and white working class. "Lack of access to jobs and opportunities binds poor white and BME people together, while the white working and white middle classes are culturally further apart."

In the essay by Dr Faiza Shaheen she states that:

- Racism and discrimination based on class are overlapping experiences, yet they are never discussed together. Indeed the white and ethnic minority working class are often set against each other, even though they share many interests, such as the need for jobs, equality and housing.
- The middle class often make wrong assumptions about both racism and the working class. They seek to define and lead the debate despite knowing little of the experiences of being working class.

PROJECT HOPE COMMUNITY HUB

The Community Hub provides advice and assistance to new and emerging communities in accessing mainstream services including:

- ❖ Education (*children & adults*)
- ❖ Housing & Accommodation
- ❖ Social learning activities
- ❖ Health & Well – being activities

We also offer:

- English language classes (*Friday 9:30am – 11:30am*)
- A warm welcome
- Food bank vouchers
- Interpreters
- Free tea, coffee & snacks



Helping vulnerable people integrate

The Community Hub is opened:	Tuesday	9:30am – 4:00pm
	Wednesday	9:30am – 4:00pm
	Thursday	9:30am – 4:00pm

16a Stone Street, Dudley, West Midlands, DY11NS
Tel: 01384 456166, Email: admin@cfed.org.uk
Charity Register: 1114824 Registered Company: 5745005

We welcome any articles, news, events, views and opinions that you would like to share with the wider community and see included in our newsletter.

Please send

them to: **Centre for Equality & Diversity, 16a Stone Street, Dudley, DY1 1NS.**



TEL: 01384 456166 WEBSITE: www.cfed.org.uk

E-MAIL: admin@cfed.org.uk

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