

Town Clerk's Report to Policy & Resources Committee, Tuesday 2nd November 2021

Afghan Refugees

Further to the resolution of the Full Council on 21st September the Town Clerk can report the following:

Intelligence indicates that Trowbridge is either unlikely to receive any such refugees due to previous issues with integration or has not been allocated any. Councillor Piazza can report further on this and one those areas of activity (non-material) which are most likely to have a positive impact such as language lessons and advice on how to contact service providers.

Cllr Piazza further reported:

No Afghan evacuees will be resettled in Trowbridge at this time. Our ability to resettle Afghan families depends on the availability of private accommodation for rent where the property owners accept the Local Housing Allowance rate. If you know of a standalone property with its own front door that could be rented by an Afghan family in need of resettlement, please do get in touch.

Wiltshire Council reports:

Wiltshire Council is committed to do everything it can to help more Afghan refugees settle in Wiltshire. We were already in the process of welcoming three families to Wiltshire as part of the [Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy](#) (ARAP), which started in April, well before the recent crisis in Afghanistan made the situation more urgent.

We are working to provide accommodation and support for at least 20 more families under the Afghan resettlement scheme but we await further information from the Home Office to best assess how we can help.

We are grateful for the offers of accommodation from private landlords who have affordable properties and encourage more to send in details by completing a [survey](#) detailing types of property available or using the government [portal for housing offers](#).

We are also talking to the Ministry of Defence about how we could support them using the 1350 empty MOD houses in the county as another option.

Some people have kindly offered a room in their own homes, but the government has said that shared houses and general lodgings are not suitable for the main Afghan support scheme. However, we are encouraging people making such generous offers to consider signing up with our [fostering](#) or [supported lodgings](#) teams.

Meanwhile people have also been generously offering support and donations. Wiltshire Council is asking people to hold onto these goods for the moment and will say where and when they can be delivered. The government has also set up a [national link](#) for those wanting to offer help in this way. Offers of support can also be emailed to refugees@wiltshire.gov.uk.

BETHESDA BAPTIST CHURCH – Has been collecting clothes etc but it has been reported that there is not a significant need for goods such as clothes and food.

RUksak45218 - would be happy to help. We can just follow their referral system that is on their website: <https://www.ruksak45218.org.uk/>.