



Aberaid Annual Report 2019

Rhif Elusen / Charity no. 1174459

Aberaid Annual Report 2018 – 2019

In our last report from November 2018 we were in a transition period as the first family who we welcomed to Aberystwyth had decided to relocate to a city in England. We were sorry to see them leave but hoped that they would find a situation that was more suitable to their needs. They returned for a brief visit in December 2019 and we were glad to know that they had found suitable accommodation and schooling for their children although it had taken some time. They had also had a new baby.

In the meantime we decided to hold the accommodation for a new family which meant we had to pay rent for six months. The local community were again generous in their support as we needed to collect furniture and household goods to re-furnish the flat. The new family arrived from Jordan in late February 2019. The family appeared to settle into the town and the situation very well. The three boys aged between 4- 11 were very excited to be attending school and all the family greatly appreciated the support they had from the local school and the two specialised Arabic-speaking support teachers employed there. They continue to be very positive about Aberaid and the local community.

We re-organised our support team and brought in some new support volunteers although some of these have since moved away. In the early stages the support group met weekly to set up all the different aspects of re-settlement including Universal Credit which, in the initial stages, involved fortnightly meetings. Medical visits, eye tests and dentistry required support and advice. Both the father and the oldest boy had some useful basic English which was a great help and we only rarely needed to call on official telephone translators. Initially we had the help of Yasameen Bali who was paid as a translator and was a valued member of the support team. We were sorry when she returned to Iraq in late August 2019. Since then we have had the help of another Arabic-speaking woman who we pay on an occasional basis for more complex translation when it is not of a confidential nature.

At the start ESOL classes were offered to the parents but this became more complicated when the father was able to find good part-time work in a local restaurant. The mother was not happy to attend classes on her own. We have had some concerns about her relative isolation and the limited access to English language. However we have a volunteer ESOL teacher, Liz Mullan, who offered private English lessons to the parents although this is only one hour a week.

We continued to run a weekly lunch club in a local church hall which is a support meeting point for all the Syrian families in the town. Arising from this we have organised a number of special events from time to time including a Christmas party, Halloween party, Eid celebrations, and lunch club events to welcome new arrivals including two new families who settled in Lampeter in 2019.

Some Aberaid supporters also work with the weekly coffee morning English conversation club run at Aberystwyth Arts Centre. They also supported summer holiday outings, swimming classes, art classes and events which were organised by the Red Cross, the Arts Centre and others.

During 2019 the university also offered a short weekly course of Welsh for families and a number of families attended.

Two trustees, Michael Freeman and Sion Meredith, have given talks about the work of Aberaid to various community and church groups and this brings in a certain amount of additional funds but fundraising has become more challenging.

The Trustees of Aberaid work closely with the Red Cross and the Ceredigion Resettlement Group to support local Syrian refugees. We are very grateful for all the advice and information that they send round.

Lindsay Gilroy stood down as Chair of the Trustees and Moira Vincentelli, took on that role. Lindsay Cardwell and Julie Makin stood down as trustees in mid 2019 and Medi James joined as a new trustee in 2019.

In total, Aberaid Trustees and support volunteers have attended about 100 meetings over the last year, including:

- monthly Trustee meetings and, initially, weekly support volunteer meetings;
- meetings with various officials and others who support the Refugees - including the Home Office, the Red Cross, Local Authority and Citizens UK;
- four Local Authority Ceredigion Resettlement meetings.

Aberaid wishes to extend its huge thanks to all our members and supporters in the community especially our volunteers, trustees, interpreters, members of the local Arabic-speaking community and council officials, all of whom have worked together to welcome refugees to the area. Thank you, Diolch yn Fawr and Shukran to all.

Moira Vincentelli, Chair, Aberaid

Treasurer's report – 10 November 2018 – 9 November 2019

EXPENDITURE

Admin and expenses	892.10
Arabic language and culture classes for children	3,447.36
The flat, rent, deposit, council tax, furniture etc	7,334.60
For the family	3,102.18
Translation	2,757.30
Support for other refugees	695.00
Teaching Volunteers Arabic	180.00
	18,408.54
balance 10.11.2018	£13,086.94
Donations and membership	£6,648.63
total	£19,735.57
total expenditure	£18,408.54
Balance 8.11.2019	£1,327.03

Michael Freeman, Treasurer, Aberaid