



Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk

English Classes for Refugees ('Let Refugees Learn' Campaign)

Thank you for contacting me about the provision of English language tuition for refugees.

I completely agree that the ability to speak English is hugely important for integration, and to enable refugees to feel at home in our country. As soon as adults are granted refugee status or humanitarian protection, they become eligible for skills funding, including for full-funded English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses. The funding for ESOL is not ring-fenced, but rather forms a part of the Adult Education Budget. Providers will use their allocation of this budget to put on appropriate provision based on their judgement of the economic and social needs of their local area. I would expect this provision to include ESOL where there is significant demand.

I am encouraged that in 2015/16 over £90m was drawn from the Adult Education budget to support all types of ESOL funding. In December 2016 an additional £3 million was distributed to colleges and other providers in the areas that have the greatest ESOL need.

I very much welcome the fact that all local authorities resettling Syrian families through the resettlement scheme must offer English language provision within a month of their arrival, and substantial funding has been available to support this, including an additional £10m of ESOL funding. I believe that this will go a long way in helping those coming to our country as refugees to play a full and active part in British society.

More widely, I am pleased that the foreign aid budget will be used to finance refugees for the first year they are here, and help local councils with issues such as housing.

Unfortunately, due to longstanding diary commitments which took up the whole day, I was unable to attend the Westminster Hall debate on English language teaching for refugees. However, I will continue to follow this matter with great interest.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP