

# Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement (VPR) programme

In January 2014, the UK government established the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement programme in response to the Syrian refugee crisis. The programme was scaled up in September 2015 when the then Prime Minister announced that 20,000 of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees from Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt and Turkey would be resettled in the UK by May 2020. The programme became the joint responsibility of the Home Office, the Department for International Development and the Department for Communities and Local Government.

READ REPORT

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## The Syrian conflict

The civil war in Syria began in 2011 and over half the Syrian population have left their homes to escape the conflict, representing the largest refugee population in the world



**470,000**  
lives claimed by the civil war up to 2015



**4.8 million**  
Syrians were registered refugees in neighbouring countries, at 1 June 2016



**13.5 million**  
Syrians need humanitarian assistance, which includes 6 million children

According to UNHCR **10%**



of Syrian refugees in the Middle East and Northern Africa region need resettling

## UK's response to the Syrian refugee crisis

In 2014, the then Prime Minister announced the Syrian VPR programme. Following the expansion of the programme in September 2015, this became the UK's first resettlement programme to provide funding to support refugees after their first year in the UK



**1,000**  
The UK successfully met its interim target to resettle 1,000 refugees between September and December 2015

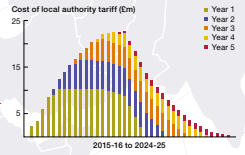
**2,659**  
Syrian refugees resettled to the end of June 2016

**0.4%**  
The UK target to resettle 20,000 represents 0.4% of Syrian refugees in the region around Syria

The UK plans to resettle **20,000** Syrian refugees by May 2020



Up to **£1,112 million**  
NAO estimate of the total cost of the programme to the UK government to the end of 2019-20



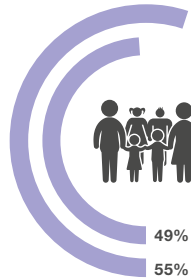
The local tariff provides **£20,520** per refugee over their 5 years in the programme

## Local authorities have volunteered to resettle refugees

Over 100 local authorities have volunteered to resettle refugees, many of whom are families with young children



118 local authorities participating in the programme at the end of June 2016, up from 3 at January 2014



Out of 2,659 resettled refugees, the majority are family groups of **4-6 members**

**49%** are children under the age of 18

**55%** are survivors of torture and/or violence

## Future delivery risks need to be understood and managed

The **greatest risk** to the participation of local authorities is their capacity to secure enough suitable **accommodation** and **school places**



**10,664**



**4,930**

An estimated 4,930 houses/flats will be required based on average family size resettled to date

An estimated 10,664 childcare and school places will be required. This is equivalent to **0.1%** of the total number of school aged children in the UK

The local authority tariff has specifically not been ring-fenced to allow the authorities to tailor their services to meet the needs of refugees but some local authorities expressed concerns over the lack of clarity



The programme currently has enough indicative pledges from local authorities to meet the 20,000 target, but these need to materialise into firm offers



## Recommendations

The programme team needs to:

- Make it clear to local authorities that there are no set requirements for what local authorities need to provide during refugees' second to fifth years in the UK so as to encourage local authorities to tailor services to refugees' needs.
- Clarify what refugees are entitled to in respect of travelling within and outside the UK, family reunion and their status after the fifth year of the programme. The departments should disseminate this information to all local authorities and providers involved in the programme.
- Ensure other government departments and local authorities understand the risks to the wider success of the programme and have plans in place to manage these risks, for example finding suitable housing and school places and capacity to meet longer-term, uncertain costs. This could include encouraging local authorities not yet participating in the programme to join.
- Ensure refugees' characteristics are collected and used to adapt programme budgets in light of any changes to initial assumptions, so no organisation taking part in the programme struggles to participate effectively due to cost pressures.
- Ensure a full monitoring and evaluation framework is operational as soon as possible. This includes defining what success looks like beyond meeting the 20,000 target.
- Engage with international partners and local authorities and their service providers to ensure refugees' opinions are listened to and factored in to new developments, such as community sponsorship, to enhance refugees' experiences of the programme and life in the UK.

