

Syrian Refugee Resettlement FAQs

Q) Why are we taking in Syrian refugees?

A) The Civil War in Syria has resulted in one of the worst humanitarian crises of the 21st century. The Prime Minister announced in September 2015 that Britain should resettle up to 20,000 Syrian refugees by 2020. These are some of the most vulnerable people affected by the conflict in Syria.

Councils across the country were asked by the Home Office to bid to take part in the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme by agreeing to resettle a number of refugees in their area. We agreed to take part in the scheme and play our part in helping those who are most in need.

How many will be arriving here?

We have agreed with the Home Office to take 84 refugees under their scheme by 2020. We expect the first families to be arriving at the end of September 2016.

We are also participating in a separate scheme to help support vulnerable unaccompanied refugee children. A small number of these children have already arrived and are being cared for in South Gloucestershire.

How much is this going to cost?

The refugees arriving under this scheme are funded by the Government from the International Development Fund. This will cover costs for providing caseworkers, securing housing, social care, health, education and support to integrate into the community. Each case will be different as each family will have different needs, different skills and be from different backgrounds. We are working with one of our Housing Associations, Knightstone, who will be providing and arranging the day to day support for the refugees. Knightstone Housing Association has a lot of experience in supporting refugees and asylum seekers and are well placed to ensure that families are supported to integrate into the local community as soon as possible.

The refugees will be encouraged and supported to find employment as soon as they can.

Where are they going to live?

We are looking at all of the possible options for housing refugees. Housing Association properties will only be made available if the refugees meet the 'eligibility and qualification' criteria for Housing Allocation Schemes. We are also seeking support from private landlords (See 'How can I help?' below). In order to protect the families' privacy we will not be sharing information about where they will be living once they arrive.

How do you know these people will be genuine refugees, not economic migrants?

In order to qualify for this scheme, people must be within the refugee camps in the region, register with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- women and girls at risk
- survivors of violence and/or torture
- refugees with legal and/or physical protection needs
- refugees with medical needs or disabilities
- children and adolescents at risk
- persons at risk due to their sexual orientation or gender identity
- refugees with family links in resettlement countries.

Once registered the UNHCR undertake biometric testing, health assessments and case history gathering to confirm that the people who are nominated to come to the UK meet at least one of the criteria.

All refugees to be resettled in the UK will have had to satisfy Home Office screening processes.

Where are the refugees coming from?

The refugees arriving under the Home Office scheme have been displaced from their homes as a result of the conflict in Syria. Refugees or asylum seekers that have made their way across Europe are not part of this scheme and so none will be coming from France, Greece or any other European Union country.

How long will refugees stay here?

When the resettled refugees arrive, they are granted a five year humanitarian protection visa. At the end of this period individuals can apply for permanent settlement in the UK or, if they choose to, return to Syria.

How can I help?

How do I donate money or other items to refugees?

The Government advises the best way to help refugees is to donate money to humanitarian organisations or charities who are already working with refugees. The information on the ['Syrian refugees: what you can do to help'](#) web page on the Government's website lists the main charities taking donations. For people offering clothes, bedding, books, toys and other items, the website suggests donating them to charity shops, including those run by the British Red Cross, Save the Children and Oxfam, which accept good quality items. The items themselves are not sent to refugees but the money raised from sales will be directed to helping refugees. More advice on donating funds or items can be found on the ['Syrian refugees: what you can do to help'](#) web page on the Government's website.

How do I offer a property to house refugees?

Properties must be self-contained and the rent must be able to be covered by housing benefit. The whole of the property must be available for a refugee family. We are not currently looking for empty rooms in owner occupied homes or in houses of multiple occupation. If you have a property that you are willing to offer to us as part of this scheme please contact The Home Choice team on 01454 868005 or e-

mail accommodation.team@southglos.gov.uk in the first instance to discuss next steps.

Where can I volunteer to help refugees?

The Government is advising people who want to find out how to volunteer to help refugees to contact one of the national charities and organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers across the UK. More information on these organisations is available on the '[Syrian refugees: what you can do to help](#)' web page on the Government's website. If you want to find out about local volunteering opportunities in South Gloucestershire to support refugees, please visit the <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/community-and-living/voluntary-organisations/volunteering-in-south-gloucestershire/> webpage on the South Gloucestershire Council website or contact Knightstone Housing Association on 08458 729729.