

Moray Council

Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme
(SVPRS) Moray: Frequently Asked Questions

Where have the refugees come from?

The refugees in Moray have come from Syria.

Syria is the world's largest source country of both internally displaced people (6.6million) and refugees (4.6million at the end of 2015).

Afghanistan (2.7million) and Somalia (1.1million) are the next biggest refugee source countries. This is followed by South Sudan (800,000).

What is the UK Home Office Syrian Vulnerable Person Relocation Scheme?

The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation (VPR) Scheme is one of three resettlement routes on which the UK Government works closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It was launched in 2014.

The VPR scheme is helping those who are in the greatest need who cannot be supported effectively in the region by giving them protection and support in the UK – the scheme prioritises people requiring urgent medical treatment, survivors of torture and violence, and women and children at risk.

As at the end of March 2016, 1,845 people from Syria have been resettled in the UK through the SVPRS.

The terms of the VPR scheme grant five years' Humanitarian Protection, which grants individuals immediate access to the labour market as well as some welfare benefits.

How does the process for selection work?

The UK sets the criteria and then UNHCR identifies and submits potential cases for consideration. Cases are screened and considered on the papers and the UK Government retains the right to reject on security, war crimes or other grounds.

Once the screening process has been completed, a full medical assessment is conducted by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in the host country. Full details of the case and medical history are sent to the local authority for assessment of need, including whether suitable accommodation and care are available locally.

The local authority then provides details of requirements, accommodation and health service capacity. Eligibility is then confirmed, and IOM start the visa application process.

UK Visas and Immigration International issue UK visas (three months leave outside of the rules) and on arrival, arrangements are made for Biometric Residence Permits to be issued with five years humanitarian protection.

Refugees are not economic migrants

Refugees come here not because they seek a better life, they come here because they are in real, well-founded fear of their lives. Indeed, many of them will have lost

close relatives. The definition of a refugee is internationally agreed in the 1951 Refugee Convention. The convention was drafted shortly after World War II which, when it came to an end, saw 40 million refugees in Europe.

Why do we house refugees when there are people in Moray who are in need of accommodation?

The Scottish Government has made a commitment to taking 2,000 Syrian refugees. It is working closely with all Scottish local governments to ensure that this is done as effectively as possible. Moray has accepted its responsibility for assisting with these efforts in what is the biggest humanitarian emergency of our generation.

Working in consultation with their partner organisations the Community Planning Partnership have taken the decision to house these refugees within close proximity of each other. This decision was primarily based on the spaces available within schools, housing stock within the area and for practical support needs. As a result, Forres has been identified as the best location for housing the refugee families.

How many people are here or expected ?

Moray has 4 small families who arrived in early 2016. A fifth family is expected in the summer. This number has been allocated by the Scottish Government, based on the size and available resources in Moray.

Who pays for it?

The Home Office and Department for International Development have indicated that the full cost of assisting refugees in their first full year will be met.

The Home Office has also indicated that additional funding will be provided to assist with costs incurred in future years.

What can I do to help?

The Community Planning Partnership has provided a co-ordinated approach across all strands such as the NHS, Police Scotland, Moray Council Social Care and Education. The families need time and space to adjust so if you would like to help in a practical way it is important that this is done in a similarly co-ordinated way through the Moray Support Refugees who will suggest ways you can help. For example, they may want to make new friends in Moray so let Moray Support Refugees know if you can speak Arabic and might help supplement our formal interpreters. You can visit their facebook page on www.facebook.com/MorayCalAid/ .

How are they selected?

The refugees arriving in the UK under the SVP scheme will have been through a thorough two-stage vetting process involving the UNHCR and Home Office. This includes the taking of biometric information, documentary evidence and interviews.

When potential cases are submitted by the UNHCR for consideration for resettlement they are screened and considered by the Home Office for suitability for

entry to the UK. This includes the taking of further biometric data and the Home Office retains the right to reject individuals on security, war crimes or other grounds, including where there is insufficient information to undertake effective screening.

How are they selected for Moray?

Following the screening process conducted by the Home Office, the local authority provides details of requirements, accommodation and health service capacity. Eligibility is then confirmed, and IOM start the visa application process.

How long will they stay here?

Under the UK Government scheme they will be granted five years humanitarian protection after which they can decide to either return home if it is safe or apply to settle here under the usual Home Office rules.

Will Syrian refugees be able to claim benefits?

Those resettled under the Government scheme will be granted humanitarian protection status allowing them to work and have access to some benefits.

How much will they get?

We will not know this until we can assess their individual needs and circumstances. Exact sums will be confidential, however this will be assessed in the same way as is done for British citizens.

Is it not better to accommodate them nearer their homes?

Countries immediately next to Syria are struggling with the influx of refugees.

Are we not exposing ourselves to the risk of terrorists?

The Home Office operates a strict screening process in two stages. This is to identify those that are in greatest need and to ensure that they don't pose a security risk. The Home Office also retains the right to reject individuals if there is insufficient information to complete the screening. It is unlikely that those with terrorist links would expose themselves to such scrutiny.

How will we tackle different customs?

Britain is a multi-cultural society, however the Community Planning Partnership has briefed both the refugees and for staff who may come into contact with the refugees.

How many interpreters are you needing, who is paying for them and where are they coming from?

the Community Planning Partnership has a timetable to ensure that the Syrian refugees can settle as smoothly as possible and have their needs met. This involves ensuring that they meet with all relevant agencies, where necessary with the support of an interpreter. The CPP is working closely with agencies providing interpretation to determine when interpreters are needed and how much this will cost.

The costs will be covered by the Home Office.

Who is paying to furnish their homes?

The Home Office will cover these costs

Are they paying rent/council tax?

They are liable to pay rent and council tax. However they will also be able to apply for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction. How much each family will pay is decided on individual circumstances in the same way as this is done for British citizens.