

SYRIAN VULNERABLE PERSONS RELOCATION SCHEME KEY INFORMATION FOR HEAD TEACHERS

Background

Since the current civil war in Syria began in 2011, over half the population (about 12 million people) have left their homes to escape the conflict. By June 2016 4.8 million Syrians were registered as refugees in neighbouring countries (mainly in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt) and 13.5 million needed humanitarian assistance (including 6 million children).

As part of its response to the situation in Syria, the Government set up the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPRS) in February 2014. This scheme involves taking particularly vulnerable refugees straight from the Middle East and resettling them in the UK.

On 7 September 2015 the Government announced that the SVPRS would be expanded so that 20,000 people will be assisted under the scheme by the end of the Parliament in 2020. The scheme is currently voluntary and dependent on local authorities agreeing to take part.

How the scheme works

The scheme is based on need. Working closely with the UNHCR, it prioritises those who cannot be supported effectively in their region of origin, including:

- 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

Individuals accepted onto the scheme are able to bring their immediate family with them.

Once cases have been assessed and referred from the UNHCR, the Home Office checks that the individual meets the eligibility criteria, carries out medical and thorough security checks and arranges the necessary visas. The cases are then passed to a local authority that has agreed to participate in the scheme. The referral will include details on family make up, age and specific needs, including a full medical health assessment report. If accepted, the local authority (both district and county in two-tier areas) will need to arrange housing, school places and any additional support that is required. An arrival date is agreed with the Home Office.

Status of the families coming to the UK under the scheme

The refugees are given five years Humanitarian Leave to Remain and as such are able to work and claim benefits and other public funds from day one.

The arrangements for accommodation and resettlement support

The Home Office has specified exactly what support needs to be in place for the families resettled under the scheme. The support provided will be intensive in the initial weeks following arrival. This will decrease as the family successfully integrate into their local community and settle into their new home. See next section for who is providing this in Kent.

Accommodation will be provided in the private rented sector. The families will be able to claim Housing Benefit for the costs. If they are able to take up employment this and other benefits will reduce, depending on levels of earnings.

Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme in Kent

Following a meeting of Kent Leaders on 23 September 2016 and Kent County Council on 22 October 2015 it was agreed that KCC would work with the twelve districts to determine the best way to set up the scheme in Kent.

Several meetings were held with district housing leads and other key partners and it was agreed that KCC should co-ordinate and commission a service in partnership with those districts that wished to take part. Most of the districts so far have opted to use the KCC scheme to provide the support to the families settling in their area, using commissioned providers (Migrant Help and Rethink so far but likely to include other providers in the future). The only exceptions so far are Ashford, which as an early participant, opted to provide the support themselves, using their own staff, and Canterbury who are following a similar model. In both cases, however, the councils are working closely with KCC to provide all the services and support that is required.

Overall Kent has indicated that we are prepared to accept about 130 families up to 2020. Most districts will be taking no more than 10 families, except Ashford, which will be taking about 50 families in total.

Support to communicate with the families

The resettlement support providers will accompany the families to pre-admission meetings and other meetings where necessary. When this is needed the services of an interpreter will be provided for the initial meetings.

Education funding for school age children

Funding has been made available to compensate for the fact that school funding is operated as a lagged system, based on the pupil count recorded in the preceding October Census. Although the Government has only provided this funding for one year for each child, KCC has decided that it should continue until the normal school funding (based on the census) reflects the additional child/children. This may be

longer than one year. For example a pupil attending a LA school with an admission date during December 2016, will receive funding for 16 months for the period December 2016 to March 2018. An Academy with the same admission date will receive funding for 21 months for the period December 2016 to August 2018.

The funding will be allocated to the LA School or Academy at the rate of £458 per month. This currently includes £83 for SEN even though the Government stopped paying this automatically from April. In the next school year (from September 2017) the £83 will no longer be paid but schools will, as now, be able to claim additional funding if the need can be evidenced (see below).

If there are likely to be costs incurred that are greater than the funding allocated, there is a possibility that additional funds may be claimed from the Home Office. KCC has now agreed the following procedure for claiming the extra funding:

1. As soon as a school identifies the need for some extra funding they should contact Katherine Barry on 03000 410511. Email: katherine.barry@kent.gov.uk
2. Katherine will then phone the designated officer in the Home Office to discuss whether the particular item is something that they would consider funding – i.e. an agreement in principle.
3. Katherine will then contact the school to either confirm they can go ahead or explain their request is unlikely to be accepted.
4. KCC Finance then processes the additional claim.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Funding

For pupils who are new to this country (or after having being identified in Year 1) 3 years extra funding is available. This kicks in at the start of the financial year following the pupil's inclusion on the school census.

- Secondary - £3,343.99 per year for 3 years
- Primary - £884.94 per year for 3 years.

Funding is triggered when a child is registered as EAL in the **October** Census. This happens when their *language code is given as a language other than English*. For the first 3 years after an EAL child is allocated with their UPN number, this child is eligible to funding. The funding follows the child. Funding is available for children in Year 1 to 11. If a child is entered as EAL in Reception, then the funding will start in the April of Year 1 and continue for 3 years.

Inclusion Support Service in Kent

The Inclusion Support Service in Kent supports schools to raise the achievement and inclusion of Minority Ethnic communities including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller pupils, those with English as an Additional Language and other vulnerable learners. They are now a fully traded service working within the School Improvement team in Kent. Examples of the bespoke support on offer includes:

- “ Consultations with SMT regarding inclusion
- “ EAL pedagogy training for Teachers/TAs
- “ Pupil observation and assessments
- “ Academic Literacy for advanced EAL learners
- “ Strategies to remove barriers to learning for GRT/EAL pupils
- “ SMSC, Prevent and British Values curriculum development
- “ Modelling and sharing strategies to ensure increased access to the curriculum
- “ Advice on complying with the schools duties under the Equality Act
- “ Supporting schools to meet the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender pupils and combat bullying.

The service can be bought back in 3 ways:

1) Entering into a service level agreement @ £1500. This is the preferred option for most schools providing: 18 hours bespoke work (to include an initial audit of need, consultation and ongoing reviews of impact).

The school will also be entitled to:

- Attendance at core training on CPD online for two members of staff (currently worth in excess of £900)
- Attendance at local Network and Update Meetings
- Unlimited phone and email advice
- Access to resource library

2) Using School Improvement credits (½ day 5 credits, 1 day 10 credits).

3) Adhoc bespoke work (½ day £300, 1 day £600)

NB: 2 & 3 do not entitle purchasers to any of the fringe benefits available through the £1500 core package.

If smaller schools, would like to share a package, support would be divided between them e.g. 9 hours per school.

Further information, advice and support is available from:

Gillie Heath gillie.heath@kent.gov.uk 03000 417 093

Support from Educational Psychology

All of the families coming to the UK under this scheme will have spent significant periods living away from their homes in the countries surrounding Syria. Most have experienced traumatic events associated with the conflict, including bombs and aerial shelling. Relevant information of this sort will be shared with the school.

If this is thought to be appropriate, extra help in assessing and dealing with the impact of the above events and the fact that the children are in a completely new (in some ways alien) environment can be provided by the Kent Educational Psychology

Service (KEPS) within KCC. Please discuss this with the Resettlement Support Provider.

Free access to advice on trauma reactions and care is available to schools by phoning 03000 410100. Duty Crisis Support co-ordinators who respond (who are all qualified Educational Psychologists) can speak to a receiving school about trauma reactions commonly seen in children and provide consultation advice on the telephone about support that school might provide. Supporting information and advice can be sent by e-mail.

In addition schools can commission from KEPS a range of psychological support including group based CBA approaches for trauma, Video Interaction Guidance or other interventions aimed at reducing anxiety or stress reactions. The school could also commission additional EP consultations with staff who are supporting the children in school. For further details contact: educational.psychology@kent.gov.uk

Further information

If you feel further information on the scheme is required in this briefing or would like to discuss any of its contents please contact:

Christine Grosskopf in KCC on:

Email: Chris.grosskopf@kent.gov.uk

Phone: 03000 416181

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