

News story: Over 10,000 refugees resettled in the UK under flagship scheme

The latest quarterly Home Office immigration statistics today (22 February) show that 10,538 refugees have been resettled on the VPRS, one of the largest global resettlement programmes, since it began.

The VPRS is just one of the routes by which the UK is helping to resettle refugees. In 2017, a total of 6,212 people were resettled in the UK – a 19% increase on 2016 – with 4,832 of these people coming through the VPRS. 539 people arrived under the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) which will resettle up to 3,000 at-risk children and their families from the Middle East and North Africa region by 2020.

The latest figures take the total number of children that the UK has provided asylum or an alternative form of protection to since the start of 2010 to 28,000.

Earlier this week, the Home Secretary Amber Rudd visited a refugee camp in Lebanon, meeting families who have fled the war in Syria and speaking to officials from the UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, who work closely with the Home Office to resettle families to the UK.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

As a country we can be proud that we are over half way towards honouring our commitment of resettling 20,000 of the most vulnerable refugees who have fled Syria by 2020 so they can rebuild their lives here in safety. Nearly half are children and more people are arriving every month.

This week I went to Lebanon to see for myself the human impact of the Syrian conflict and talk to refugees about the challenges they face. I met a family who is due to be resettled in the UK and heard first hand how important the resettlement scheme is and how it helps individuals, who have fled danger and conflict, to rebuild their lives.

We are welcoming and supporting some of the most vulnerable refugees and I am grateful to all of the local authorities, charities and other organisations that have made it possible.

The VPRS is a joint scheme between the Home Office, the Department for International Development and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The UK works closely with UNHCR, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the UN Migration Agency and partners on the VPRS to provide life-saving solutions for the refugees most in need of protection, including people requiring urgent medical treatment, survivors of violence and torture, and women and children at risk.

Gonzalo Vargas Llosa, UNHCR's UK Representative said:

The UK has embarked on an impressive upscaling of the VPRS in a short period, setting in place structures to welcome highly vulnerable refugees and allowing them to gradually stand on their own feet again.

Collaboration between the central Government, local and devolved authorities and service providers has been commendable. I've been up and down the country meeting refugee families and local communities, and the strong support for this programme and refugee integration generally is something the UK should be proud of.

IOM facilitates the pre-departure health assessments, cultural orientation and the travel for refugees to the UK. IOM also supports national and local governments to develop integration programmes as part of a holistic migration management strategy.

Dipti Pardeshi, IOM UK Chief of Mission said:

The UK has achieved a significant milestone for the VPRS by resettling over half of the 20,000 committed to be resettled by 2020. The generosity and welcome shown by the UK government and the British people to those resettled is commendable.

Today, less than one per cent of refugees worldwide have been resettled and the need continues to be dire. Resettlement cannot be viewed as a one-off effort. Countries must step up to resettle more refugees and to view this as part of a holistic process to help vulnerable refugees rebuild their lives.

The UK's resettlement schemes are just one of the ways the Government is supporting vulnerable children and adults who have fled danger and conflict. The UK remains the second largest donor in humanitarian assistance and has pledged £2.46 billion in UK aid to Syria and the neighbouring countries, its largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis.

Since 2012, across Syria and the region, the UK has provided over 26 million food rations, over 9.8 million relief packages and over 10.3 million medical consultations and over 8.3 million vaccines.