

Refugee questions and answers

Herefordshire Council agreed with the Home Office to support 60 Syrian refugees in Herefordshire from November 2016 onwards. These 60 refugees (14 households) have now resettled within the county. A further pledge was made in December 2017 to resettle an additional 35 refugees during 2018.

We've received a lot of questions and offers of assistance from members of the public, to find out more please take a look at our questions and answers.

Q: Where have the refugees come from?

A: The refugees, who have been identified under the government's Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme, have come from countries neighbouring Syria. Refugees resettled in 2018 may also be identified under the government's Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme and may come from other countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. All refugees have been identified by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) as being women and children at risk, people in severe need of medical care or survivors of torture and violence.

Q: Where are the refugees housed and will this affect local people on the housing register?

A: The refugee families have been housed in private sector rental properties within Herefordshire, so this shouldn't affect people on the waiting list for social housing.

Q: Who has the council appointed to manage the arrival of refugees, how will it be funded and will they work with existing faith groups?

A: [Refugee Action](#) has been selected to deliver the county's orientation and support service and is working with the council and a range of partner organisations, including community and faith groups, to build a broader package of voluntary support to help refugees settle into their local communities.

This service will provide support for the refugees first 12 months in the UK and will be paid for by the Home Office. This service is expected to provide assistance to refugees with settling into local communities, finding employment, enrolling children in schools, registering with GPs and meeting religious needs. It will also support with accessing interpreting and translation.

Q: How long will refugees be able to stay in Herefordshire / the UK?

A: Resettled refugees are being granted five years refugee status, under the government's Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme or Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme, after which time they can either return home if it's safe to do so or apply to settle here under the usual Home Office rules.

Q: What health services are available for refugees?

A: Under the government scheme, refugees have the same access to healthcare as any other local resident. They have undergone health and immunisation screening by the Home Office and registered with a GP on arrival in Herefordshire.

Q: What support will be provided for refugees suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and other trauma?

A: Refugee health needs may emerge some time after they have arrived in the UK and this has been particularly noted in connection with their emotional health. Refugees will receive appropriate support according to their individual needs, as any other Herefordshire resident

would.

Q: What skills will the Syrian adults have and will they be looking to work?

A: Evidence from other parts of the country and from the refugees who have settled in Herefordshire, suggest that refugees from Syria are very keen to find paid employment. A barrier to gaining employment in the UK is an individual's level of English.

The refugees in Herefordshire are being supported by the council, Refugee Action and Jobcentre Plus to develop their English and access appropriate volunteering and employment opportunities within the county.

Q: Do you need local employers to offer jobs?

A: If employment opportunities are needed, an appeal will be made to local businesses, once we understand the skills and requirements of the refugees.

Q: Are refugees able to claim benefits?

A: Yes, under the government scheme, refugees have access to the same benefits as any other local resident. Those resettled under the scheme arrive with refugee status which allows them to work in the UK and have access to benefits.

Q: What is the religious persuasion of the refugees and are they able to practice this in Herefordshire?

A: Different religions are already represented within the county, so there are opportunities for families to practice their religion. We continue to work with various faith groups across the county to ensure refugees have a smooth integration into Herefordshire's communities.

Q: What facilities / donations does the council need?

A: The needs of families arriving in the UK under the different resettlement schemes are met by Home Office funding. There are many families who have not been resettled and face an indefinite period of time living in destitution. If you have any items you would like to donate, please consider directing these donations to those who are destitute and there are a number of local organisations who can facilitate this for you, including [People in Motion](#) and [Ledbury Refugee Support](#).

Q: I speak Arabic and would like to help, what opportunities are there?

A: There are opportunities for both paid and volunteer interpreters and translators and anyone who speaks or writes a relevant language such as Arabic or Kurdish, will be very welcome to apply for these positions. Please visit www.herefordshire.gov.uk/language for more information and to make an application.

If you speak these languages, but would rather volunteer and help out instead of being an interpreter, please email diversity@herefordshire.gov.uk

Q: How can I volunteer to teach English to refugees?

A: An accredited English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision is in place. However, there are also opportunities for volunteers to support with English practice. If you would like to volunteer to help refugees improve their language skills, please visit the [Refugee Action website](#) for current volunteering opportunities.

Q: Will I be able to help refugee families?

A: If you'd like to help refugee families, please take a look at Refugee Action's '[what sort of help might a recently arrived refugee need](#)'