



Home Office

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CTS Reference: M7310/17

23 AUG 2017

Dear Julian,

Thank you for your letter of 21 July on behalf of your constituent Mrs Sara Trehwitt of [REDACTED]. I am sorry for the delay in my response.

Ms Trehwitt is a member of Ripon City of Sanctuary and together with other members has raised three questions with regard to Refugee Resettlement. I would like to begin by thanking Mrs Trehwitt and Ripon City of Sanctuary for their efforts in supporting refugee resettlement in their area. The response of the British public to the conflict in Syria has been one of overwhelming generosity, and many have been moved to make very kind offers of assistance. The first question is about refugee Integration.

The UK has a proud history of providing protection to those who need it, in accordance with our international obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and we are keen to ensure that all refugees in the UK are able to take positive steps to integrate and realise their potential.

The cross-Government lead for integration transferred from the Home Office to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in 2008. Since then, Home Office work on integration has largely focused on our resettlement programmes rather than wider integration programmes for refugees or other migrants. Responsibility for integration more generally is shared between the Home Office, DCLG, Devolved Administrations and local authorities.

Dame Louise Casey was commissioned to carry out a review into how to boost opportunity and integration in isolated communities by the then Prime Minister in July 2015.

The Review was published on 5 December 2016 and considers a number of issues, including population change; patterns of residential and school segregation; public attitudes and values; social and economic exclusion; and the equality impacts of cultural and religious practices. We will bring forward plans for tackling these issues in the coming months through a new integration strategy.

Your constituents also asked about the change from granting Humanitarian Protection to refugee status to those people coming in under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement (VPR) and Vulnerable Children's Resettlement (VCR) schemes. As the Home Secretary confirmed in her announcement on the 3 July, refugees arriving in the UK as part of the Syrian VPR and the VCR schemes will now be granted refugee status and five years' limited leave to remain (instead of Humanitarian Protection).

On 31 July, we implemented the final element of changes to our resettlement scheme that was announced on 3 July. This means that those that were resettled under one of our schemes before 3 July 2017 can now request to change their leave from HP to refugee leave if they so wish. Information on how to do this can be found at the following website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/request-to-change-humanitarian-protection-status-to-refugee-status>

Finally, your constituents have also asked about family reunification. Your constituent is correct that only children under the age of 18 and pre-flight spouses/partners can qualify to join settled refugees under the family reunion immigration rules.

However, if the Syrian families in Ripon have other family members based in one of the UK's resettlement host countries (these are Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt) and they wish to join their extended family in the UK under the resettlement scheme, this might be possible but it can't be guaranteed.

Families in the host countries will first need to be registered with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). If UNHCR decides that resettlement is the right solution for them and they meet the eligibility criteria for resettlement for the UK, they will be referred to the UK for consideration.

If the UK authorities agree that they qualify for resettlement, we will try to resettle them in the same area of the UK if that is what both families wish, but this may not be in the same town and could be several miles away depending on the availability of housing.



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