



Home Office

Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP
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Julian Smith MP
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05 JAN 2018

Dear Julian,

Thank you for your letter of 11 September regarding refugee integration on behalf of Ms Sara Trehwitt of [REDACTED]. I am sorry for the delay in my response.

Ms Trehwitt asked three main questions that I will address in turn. The Government has considered the Report "Refugees Welcome?" and it was the subject of a Parliamentary debate in the House of Lords on 19 July when Baroness Williams responded on behalf of the Government. The Government has also committed to bring forward a new integration strategy in the autumn. This will be widely based as it will address the needs of some existing communities as well as newcomers. The content of the strategy will be applicable to all refugees in the UK.

There is already a cross-departmental arrangement for overseeing how the range of services needed to support refugees is co-ordinated. At a high level, we have in place a tri-lateral group led by Ministers from the Department of Communities and Local Government, the Department for International Development and the Home Office, supported by officials from those departments, that works to ensure that the various services needed are being delivered to refugees.

We are confident that where there are issues that affect refugees accessing relevant services we are willing and able to identify the causes and how they might be addressed.

Ms Trehwitt's second point relates to our decision to allow people brought to the United Kingdom under the Vulnerable Persons and Vulnerable Children's resettlement schemes prior to July 2017 to request to change from the Humanitarian Protection status they were granted when they arrived to refugee status. Some individuals will want to retain their Humanitarian Protection status, which is why we did not make the change automatically.

In respect to Ms Trewhitt's third point, the Government supports the principle of family unity and there are several routes for families to be reunited safely. Our family reunion policy allows a spouse or partner and children under the age of 18 of those granted protection in the UK to join them here, if they formed part of the family unit before the sponsor fled their country. Other extended family members can benefit from the policy in exceptional circumstances. Over 23,000 family reunion visas have been granted over the last five years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brandon Lewis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP