

Refugee resettlement guidance for local authorities

A photo showing Syrian refugees taking part in a workshop

Key information

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3. Glossary

ARAP: Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy

ACRS: Afghanistan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme

CCG: Clinical Commissioning Group

DWP: Department for Work and Pensions

DLUHC: Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

EAL: English as an Additional Language

ESOL: English for Speakers of Other Languages (this term covers both formal and informal or accredited and non-accredited ESOL teaching)

GLA: Greater London Authority

Hong Kong BN(O): Hong Kong British National Overseas visa

ILR: Indefinite Leave to Remain

IOM: International Organisation for Migration

LGA: Local Government Association

Local authority, council or borough: the terms are used interchangeably to cover local authority areas

LSMP: London Strategic Migration Partnership

Multilingual: the term is used to describe the use of several languages, and the use of two languages (bilingual)

PRS: Private Rented Sector

PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Refugee: Not everyone who comes to the UK on a resettlement scheme is granted refugee status and may have another immigration status. However, for ease of use, the term 'refugee' is used in the broadest sense to cover anyone who arrives in the UK seeking sanctuary under the resettlement schemes listed in the guidance

REN: Refugee Employment Network

SEND: Special Educational Needs and Disability

SESMP: South East Migration Partnership

UASC: Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

UKRS: UK Resettlement Scheme

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

VCSE: Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector organisations

4. Introduction

This guidance is for London local authorities involved in or considering becoming involved in supporting the resettlement of refugees through UK government refugee resettlement schemes. The guidance is based on the experiences shared by 18 London local authorities and partners who are implementing resettlement schemes, and the learning that has been identified from their work.

The guidance provides the background to refugee resettlement, what local authorities should consider when deciding to become involved in resettlement schemes and the practical aspects of implementation. It provides examples of different approaches to resettlement work, some of the challenges involved and suggests possible ways to overcome these.

In each section, there are questions and checklists along with links to other resources and information, many of which will be updated with the latest resettlement developments in that topic. Also included are some anonymised quotes from people who have been involved in delivering resettlement support in London.

The guidance is not definitive — all resettlement schemes are different, as is each local context. What is best or possible in one area will not be possible in another. Similarly, every refugee family will have common but also specific resettlement needs. Partnership opportunities with other organisations and providers will vary from area to area.

Furthermore, resettlement schemes evolve as government policy and local contexts change. However, some core principles remain constant, many of which will be familiar to local authorities in their broader work, such as inclusion, enabling the lived experience of the client group to inform the support provided, empowering independence and increasing the agency the person has over their life.

4.1 Resettlement overview

Through resettlement, refugees are formally moved from the country where they currently live (including host countries where they may temporarily be) to a country where they can resettle and rebuild their lives.

Usually, resettlement is a government-backed process conducted in conjunction with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)). In recent years, some resettlement schemes have been a cross government effort involving the Home Office, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), such as with the 2021 Afghanistan evacuations after the fall of Kabul, without UNHCR's involvement.

Currently, there are five resettlement schemes that allow people to relocate to the UK: [United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme](#) (UKRS), Mandate Resettlement Scheme, [Community Sponsorship Scheme](#), [Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy](#) (ARAP), and [Afghanistan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme](#) (ACRS). There are

people supported in the UK on other resettlement schemes (such as the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) and the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme (VCRS)), but these schemes closed in 2021.

The current schemes have some common characteristics, including:

- Strict criteria for who is eligible to resettle in the UK.
- The provision of central government funding for local authorities and others to support their work with resettled refugees.
- The refugees will be granted a long-term immigration status upon arrival (usually Refugee status, Humanitarian Protection, or Indefinite Leave to Remain), have permission to work and entitlement to mainstream statutory services and support.
- Ideally, there is adequate time available to fully prepare for the arrival of the resettled person into the UK, although this is not always possible. Sometimes people on resettlement schemes must be evacuated from a crisis, such as the people who were airlifted out of Afghanistan in the summer of 2021.
- Usually, the local authority is given a choice about participating in a resettlement scheme; it is not mandatory like the [National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children](#) (UASC). However, if there is a rapid arrival of refugees and temporary accommodation is needed, then local authorities may not have any control over the use of emergency accommodation in their area.
- There is coordination at a central and regional level regarding the allocation of resettled refugees into local authority areas. Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships, such as the [London Strategic Migration Partnership](#) (LSMP), play a key role in this respect. The partnerships are funded by central government but are independent, and their role is to facilitate and enable collaboration between central and local government, civil society and regional and local stakeholders for the benefit of both migrants and the wider community.
 - ***“Resettlement coordination is a conversation between local government and central government and the role of SMPs is vital in making that happen.” (London Local Authority Officer)***
- Refugees who arrive on resettlement schemes have a multiplicity of backgrounds and needs. They may be single or come as families, they can be any age, they may have specific health vulnerabilities, they can be professionals, they may speak English, or they may have no English language skills. In other words, they are as diverse as any other group of people. However, they have all had traumatic experiences due to forced displacement. The local authority needs to have the flexibility and capacity to be able to respond to the multiplicity of individual circumstances that they may be presented with.

Resettlement is not part of the [asylum process](#) — different policies and procedures apply to people seeking asylum in the UK. People seeking asylum can reach the UK in a variety of ways and will submit an application for asylum once in the UK. Their right to remain in the UK will be determined by the government upon assessing their claim for international protection. People seeking asylum receive limited support while their claim is being assessed.

The differences can be confusing, especially since there may be people seeking asylum in an area who are the same nationality as people who have come on resettlement schemes and who have similar needs. Although many aspects of service provision for resettled refugees would be helpful for people seeking asylum, there is less funding available to provide such support to that cohort.

In the past, the UK has been involved in several resettlement exercises that had similar characteristics to the current refugee resettlement schemes, albeit with variations. Variations included the type of immigration status granted, the housing and accommodation models, and the focus on specific groups or nationalities. Examples include:

- 2015-2021: [Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme](#) that focused on resettling refugees fleeing the Syrian conflict.
- 2016-2021: [Vulnerable Children Relocation Scheme](#) that supported refugee children at risk and their families in the Middle East & North Africa (MENA) region.
- 2004-2020: [Gateway Protection Programme](#) that focused on refugees in protracted situations (with no geographical restriction).
- 1999: Kosovan Evacuation Programme for those fleeing ethnic violence in former Yugoslavia.
- 1992-1996: Bosnian Evacuation Project (temporary protection only).
- 1979-1992: Vietnamese (including ethnic Chinese) in camps in Hong Kong, who had fled the Vietnam War.
- 1973-1979: Chileans fleeing the Pinochet regime.
- 1972-1974: Ugandan Asians expelled by Idi Amin government.
- 1957: Hungarians fleeing Soviet occupation.
- 1940-1950: Polish and other refugees fleeing World War II.

Although the terminology used was different, what all previous schemes have in common with the current schemes is that they provided protection to people whose lives are in danger. Hundreds of thousands of people were given the chance to rebuild their lives in a safe and secure environment. In doing so they have brought their skills and energy to contribute to the richness and diversity of the UK. Your involvement in future resettlement schemes will help others on that same journey.

Please see some examples of resettlement stories below:

- [Making Tyneside home](#)
- [Maysara's journey](#)
- [The Batous family](#)
- [UNHCR stories](#)

4.2 General reading materials and resources

- [British Red Cross](#)
- [London Councils: Refugee Resettlement](#)
- [Mayor of London: Helping the Resettlement of Refugees](#)
- [Migration Yorkshire: Resettlement Information](#)
- [Migration Yorkshire: Syrian Refugee Resettlement Guide for guide for local authorities](#)
- [Refugee Action](#)
- [Refugee Council](#)
- [RESET](#)
- [The UK's Syria Resettlement Programme: Looking Back, and Ahead](#)
- [UK Resettlement Scheme: Note for Local Authorities](#)
- [UNHCR](#)

Checklist

- Have you understood what refugee resettlement is?
- What are the main differences between resettlement schemes and the asylum process?
- Do you know where to find out more detailed information about refugee resettlement before you implement a scheme in your borough?

5. Deciding to participate in refugee resettlement

The circumstances in which UK government refugee resettlement schemes have been established have varied historically. There may be an urgent humanitarian need and political pressure on local authorities to make fast decisions, with minimal or incomplete information. At this point, there are many things that the local authority needs to consider.

Initially, you may find it useful to think about the timeline of the resettlement process as this will help you to plan and consider what you need to do.

The typical timeline of the resettlement process is:

1. Government invites local authorities to be involved in resettlement scheme.
2. Local authority considers participating in resettlement.
3. Local authority decides to participate.
4. Planning before refugees arrive, including financial planning, housing arrangements, deciding support model, coordination, etc.
5. Day of arrival and first weeks of support.
6. Support in the first year.
7. Longer-term support after the first year including ending support and developing links to promote the integration process.

5.1 Internal coordination and decision-making

To gather information about the resettlement scheme, maximise internal engagement and local community engagement, mitigate risks and embed ownership of decisions and commitments:

- Identify or appoint a lead officer with responsibility for liaising with the Home Office, the LSMP and gathering the relevant information. Consider seconding someone from an existing role if there is an urgent need.
 - ***“Our Family Support model didn’t work as the model was based on the needs of UK families; the refugee families were quite different to our normal clients. We needed to adapt the model.”***
(London Local Authority Officer)
- Identify (or create) an effective coordination, information-sharing and decision-making group for your local authority. In the early stages, if there are large numbers of people arriving in a short space of time, it may be helpful to consult colleagues who are part of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF). However, ultimately it will be better to establish bespoke coordination mechanisms for the resettlement schemes. It would also be helpful to have both a strategic group and an operational group. Include in these groups people who are senior enough to be able to make decisions.
 - ***“Safeguarding is key — they [the Safeguarding Team] need to be involved at the beginning, including in the housing.”*** ***(London Local Authority Officer)***
 - ***“Resettlement is a specialist need — it doesn’t fit into our usual definitions of client need.”***
(London Local Authority Officer)
- Include key internal departments and stakeholder organisations who have potential delivery roles and responsibilities. These may include, for example, health (Integrated Care Boards, Public Health, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)), Housing, Children’s and Families Services, Adult Social Care,

Education, Housing Benefit, Council Tax, Community Support Officers, DWP Job Centre Plus, Youth Services, local colleges, interpreting services, Communications department, Prevent, Police, local Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations, including Community Sponsorship groups.

- Share available information about the scheme with the group and jointly consider possible implications, benefits and risks of participation in resettlement for the local authority and the local communities.
- Ensure the group has representation of elected councillors, or a mechanism for reporting to councillors so that they have the information on which they can make a properly informed decision on involvement.
- It would be helpful if you could refer to current strategies or policies that may already exist in your borough. For example, inclusion or integration strategies, or commitments to being a [borough of sanctuary](#).
- *‘Having one overall strategy and plan for our refugee resettlement at the beginning was a great help.’ (London Local Authority Officer)*
- **Please find below some strategy examples:**
 - [Brighton & Hove Equality and Inclusion Strategy](#)
 - [City of Sanctuary local authority network](#)
 - [Lewisham Borough of Sanctuary Strategy](#)
 - [The Mayor of London’s Social Integration Strategy](#)
 - [Wandsworth pledge to become a Borough of Sanctuary](#)

5.2 Who is arriving on the resettlement scheme?

It is important to establish from central government who will qualify to come to the UK on the resettlement scheme. Relevant details include:

- Nationalities.
- The context: are the people escaping an immediate conflict or crisis, or have they lived as refugees in another country for years, possibly in a refugee camp?
- Families, single people or a mixture of both
- Age groups.
- Languages spoken.
- Potential ESOL needs: are people coming from a country where English is widely spoken?
- Cultural aspects: what religion or belief do they have, are there different ethnic groups?
- Vulnerability, including health; do people have chronic conditions or disabilities?
- Immigration status: will people have rights to family reunion for members of their family who were not able to come with them initially? Will they need to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) after five years?
- Rights and entitlements: will people be eligible for certain benefits?

You may not be able to find out all the above information about those at first, but you should be able to find out enough to inform how you may deliver some of the services that they will need.

5.3 Other considerations when deciding on resettlement scheme participation

- What is the funding arrangement for the scheme? (see [Finances: what you need to know and how to access funding](#))

- Is there a commitment in principle across the local authority to participate in the scheme?
- Is there a preference or necessity to prioritise families or individuals (for example, linked to housing availability)?
- How can participation be feasible, for example, by adapting your model to consider the housing availability and your capacity to provide support?
- How many arrivals could be housed and supported and over what period? Don't be discouraged if you think that the number of refugees you could resettle might be low — every offer to participate in resettlement provides a refugee with the opportunity to rebuild their lives.
- What would be the housing model for the accommodation of refugees in the local authority area? (see [Housing](#))
- What would be your core delivery model for the resettlement scheme? It is important to emphasise that there is not only one model of resettlement delivery, in the same way that all resettlement schemes are different. You must use one that you think will work in your area and with the resources that you have. In the current schemes, for example, there are different approaches, including:
 - The delivery of all services in-house by the local authority.
 - Commissioning VCSE sector organisations or other organisations, such as housing support agencies, to provide all casework support or only some services, for example, ESOL.
 - Collaborating with other local authorities to jointly commission some services.
- If subcontracting to a VCSE sector organisation or others, it is important to have a clear mutual understanding of what you are expecting from the organisation. Ensure there are defined roles and responsibilities between the local authority and the partner.
- It is important to note that whichever delivery model you decide to use, it may be possible to change it later in the implementation of the scheme.
- What would be the casework and integration support model in your area? This would be affected by the delivery model you choose (see [Different support models and structures](#)).
- What would the ESOL needs be and what existing provision is available in the borough? (see [Helping with English Language provision](#)).
- Is there adequate access to primary health care (GPs) and dentists? Is there access to specialist health care, if needed? (see [Health](#))
- What additional expertise and support might be needed and available (or not) in the area? What partnership opportunities or needs exist, for example, with VCSE sector organisations?
- Which local authority department would be best to lead on resettlement or to be involved in the coordination and the provision of support if you participate in the scheme?
- What are the risks and benefits of participation in the scheme?
- What would the communication strategy be for involving the local community and partner organisations? Can you use the communications to explain why people are coming on the scheme and the benefits for everyone in the community of the local authority participating?
- Is there already a community within your borough of the same nationality as the people who will arrive on the resettlement scheme? The existing community could be valuable in enabling integration and providing support. However, there could also be cultural or political sensitivities and tensions amongst people of the same nationality that you need to be mindful of; not all nationalities are homogenous.

Some of the points above are covered in more detail in the relevant sections of this guidance. At the outset though, it is important to stress that you won't be able to foresee or plan for everything. Resettlement is no different in that respect from other local authority services, it evolves to meet the needs of the client group and the context as they change. The skill and commitment of the staff implementing the scheme will ensure that is the case.

If you decide not to participate in resettlement, refugees on resettlement schemes relocated to other areas may nevertheless move to your borough of their own accord. Your local authority would not automatically receive

resettlement integration funding from the Home Office to support this family with any needs they may have, or statutory services they require. If your local authority decides they would like to participate in resettlement at this point, they may be able to pick up the remaining integration tariff from the previous local authority and/or the Home Office. In such a scenario it would have been valuable to have embraced resettlement at the beginning of a scheme and use the funding available to develop resources in your borough.

Quotes from London local authority officers working in resettlement:

- *“Our support worker said that this was the best job that they had ever had.”*
- *“People [refugees] will come anyway, so best to be part of this in a managed way where you can have access to resources to build up capacity in the borough.”*
- *“If you engage [in resettlement] as a local authority, you get plugged into what is going on, you find out more, not just in terms of resettlement, but other things in your community and area.”*
- *“Being involved with resettlement gave us an opportunity to engage with the communities in our borough as we consulted them about the schemes. That was really helpful.”*
- *“Meeting people off the plane was a deeply emotional experience. Everything we had prepared for became real and we were reminded that resettlement is about real people, it’s not theoretical.”*

Some resources to inform decision-making and planning include:

- [Syrian refugee resettlement: a guide for local authorities](#)
- [UK Government policy guidance on UK resettlement scheme.](#)

Checklist

- **Have you got enough information to decide to be involved in resettlement? If not, what else do you need to know and where can you find that information?**
- **Have you decided the core delivery model?**
- **Are people at a senior level in the local authority, including elected officers, committed and aware of the implications, opportunities and risks?**
- **Are the coordination structures (strategic and operational) established?**
- **Do you know where to find out more detailed information about refugee resettlement that will help you to design your involvement in the scheme?**

6. Finances: what you need and how to access funding

Resettlement schemes will be funded by central government (usually the Home Office) and the local authority can claim this support for their participation in the resettlement scheme. The funding amounts and the arrangements for claiming differ with each resettlement scheme.

There are usually common features in the funding arrangements, such as:

- There will be funding instructions for local authorities that describe what the funding can be used for, how the local authority can claim it and account for the expenditure.
- The funding instructions will identify items that are not eligible and for which funding cannot be used.

- Alongside the restrictions there may be a large degree of flexibility in how the local authority can use the funding, for example, using it to subsidise rent payments or to subcontract service provision to other organisations.
- Funding is usually allocated or calculated on a per person basis, therefore an amount based on the number of refugees who arrive (this is known as the integration tariff). Organising the funding in this way has a straightforwardness to it, but the cost associated with supporting individual refugees may vary depending on their needs. Therefore, the local authority needs to be flexible (where it can) in how it uses the funding. Another aspect of the per person approach is that the funding is dependent on refugees arriving. If people do not arrive at the expected rate, as experienced for example during the Covid pandemic when arrivals were halted, the flow of funding is disrupted.
- There may be explicit funding for the education elements associated with resettlement. Often the amount provided will be on a per capita basis (like the integration tariff) rather than for the actual cost incurred. The local authority will need an effective process for liaising with their education department about the costs involved and how to allocate expenditures.
- Similarly, health costs may be identified separately and doing so necessitates that the local authority has a mechanism to effectively liaise with the local CCG and NHS Trust about the costs involved and the process for claiming these.
- Often the funding is paid in arrears. The local authority must have mechanisms in place that can account for and claim the funding. The mechanisms usually involve having a named member of staff identified as being the lead contact who will have access to an online claim portal. The Home Office will grant the local authority staff member access to the platform, where they can submit claims.
- The funding and claims process is established at the outset of the scheme but may be subject to change and can be amended to reflect changes in policy. To date, integration tariff amounts have remained the same. There has been exceptional additional funding made available to support with housing (as seen on the ARAP and ACRS programmes in 2023).
- The funding will not necessarily cover all the costs associated with implementing the resettlement scheme. However, even though most of the funding is not ringfenced, the local authority should only cover expenses permitted by the funding instructions.
- There may be separate funding streams or resources that the resettlement work can draw upon, such as mainstream ESOL funding (see [Helping with English Language provision](#)). Resettlement funding could also be pooled to support resettled families with integration outcomes, such as bespoke ESOL classes.
- Although resettlement funding is aimed at supporting the resettled refugee cohort, the resources can help local authorities to enhance their capacity and capability to work on a range of migration and integration issues. Often, the funding can be used to complement funding and services for other schemes, such as those aimed at people from Ukraine. Many local authorities incorporate the resettlement staff in existing asylum and migration teams to provide a more coordinated and effective delivery of services.
- VCSE sector organisations may be able to access funding from trusts and funding bodies, which can support their work to complement the funding and resources made available to the local authority.
- Central and regional government may separately fund national resources that anyone involved in resettlement can access regardless of their location. For example, translated material on access to mental health and wellbeing support. [Some useful resources on mental health have been produced by Thrive London.](#)

The local authority will need to consider what it might need to spend the funding on. It will usually include the following:

- Coordination staff and lead staff.
- Administrative staff (including finance support).
- Casework staff for housing and integration support.

- Housing costs (voids, furnishings, welcome packs, adaptations to property, rent deposits, incentives to landlords).
- Cash for the family before the first Universal Credit payment has been received.
- Clothing grants where needed.
- Immediate health needs prior to GP registration, such as medicines or initial screenings.
- Social care needs (adults and children).
- ESOL (formal and informal).
- Education costs (school uniforms, transport, English as an Additional Language (EAL)).
- Production of information materials on the local area.
- Interpreting and translation costs.
- Costs for community development, for example, activities promoting inter-faith relationships and links with British society and culture.
- Social activities costs, for example, for events with refugees and the community.
- Sub-contracting for specialist health care, for example, mental health support.

The list is not exhaustive and there may be other things that the local authority might consider spending money on.

6.1 Integration tariff amounts example (UKRS)

Below are the current amounts of funding provided to local authorities who participate in the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS). Please note that other schemes such as ARAP and ACRS only provide funding for a maximum of three years, but the integration tariff per person remains the same:

Year 1 amounts (per person, including children):

Year 2-5 amounts (per person, including children):

Timeframe		Amount			
13-24 months		£5,000			
25-36 months		£3,700			
37-48 months		£2,300			
49-60 months		£1,000			
	Adult Benefit claimant	Other Adults	Children aged 5-18	Children aged 3-4	Children aged under 3
Local authority costs	£8,520	£8,520	£8,520	£8,520	£8,520
Education	£0	£0	£4,500	£2,250	£0
Total	£8,520	£8,520	£13,020	£10,770	£8,520

6.2 Current funding instructions for UKRS and ARAP/ACRS

The following are links to the current funding instructions available for UKRS and ARAP/ACRS:

- [UK resettlement programmes funding instructions for 2022-2023](#)
- [Afghan schemes \(ARAP/ACRS\) funding instructions for 2023-2024](#)

Checklist

- Have you understood the funding instructions for the resettlement scheme you are involved with? Do you know what is covered by the funding, what is not allowed and how to claim the money?
- Have you identified a lead officer in the borough who will be responsible for processing the funding claims?
- Do you have an idea of what the actual cost may be of resettling one family or setting up a resettlement team?
- Have you been able to identify any alternative or complementary sources of funding?

7. Pre-arrival planning

Once you have agreed to participate in the resettlement scheme, the next step is to plan on service delivery, what your role will be and how you will structure the provision of support. The points below suggest what you should consider. As mentioned elsewhere in this guidance, you may not receive a long period of notice before refugees arrive; however, you need to cover the points below in your pre-arrival planning whether you have days or months of notice.

- The core elements that you need to have ready include housing (or temporary accommodation if the property is not ready yet), health, casework support, interpreting, ESOL, education and access to food and other items needed to meet basic needs.
- It is assumed that you will have established the strategic and operational coordination and forums to ensure that the relevant services are engaged and prepared. Similarly, you should have identified the person who will be the lead officer for the scheme, that they are able to have operational control and can be the key link with central government and the LSMP.
 - *“The individual workers only knew one part of the puzzle you needed someone who could put that puzzle together to see the whole picture as it related to the refugee.” (London Local Authority Officer)*
 - *“The link between the local authority and central government in implementing the scheme was made effective by having single points of contact at both ends [the local authority and the Home Office/DLUHC].” (London Local Authority Officer)*
- You will have chosen your delivery model (see [Different support models and structures](#)). Depending on which model you have chosen, you need to have processes in place and roles and responsibilities clearly defined. This should include details on practical activities, such as who will be at the airport to greet arrivals, who will be able to provide interpretation if needed, how will people be transported to their accommodation, can partner organisations help you with the logistics?
- You need to have elements in your pre-arrival planning to deal with contingencies, such as flights being delayed, people arriving with mobility issues that you had not been informed about and logistical needs, such as car seats.
- You need to have the staff in place who will deliver the integration support.
- You will need interpreters as it is particularly important to be able to communicate effectively with refugees in the initial period following their arrival. This may also be a comfort to those arriving.

- You should consider the issues involved in working across different languages. One approach might involve including bilingual staff in your resettlement team, although there are pros and cons to this approach (See [Interpreting and translation](#)).
- It would be helpful to organise training for staff on a variety of topics that will help them in their roles supporting the refugees who will be coming. The training would be dependent on your support model, but useful topics include the following: training about resettlement, the cultural aspects of the people who are coming, safeguarding, trauma-informed care and working with interpreters.
- Establish ways to deal with in-kind donations (such as clothes or furniture) and inappropriate offers, for example, channelling enquiries and suggesting other ways people can support refugees.
- Have a communications strategy and mechanism in place ready to deal with press interest and public interest (positive and negative).
- Have local information in accessible formats for the people who are being resettled. These could include information about services, the area they are coming to live in, etc. The information could be made into videos or slide shows.

Please see some pre-arrival planning resources below:

- [British Red Cross: What do I need to know about life in the UK?](#)
- [IOM: Pre-departure and post-arrival support for local authorities](#)
- [Migration Yorkshire: Resettlement Guide](#)

Checklist

- Are the staff, structures and processes in place and does everyone understand them?
- Is the housing/accommodation ready (including food, necessary household items, property adjustments etc.)?
- Are the systems in place to address immediate health needs, including: access to pre-arrival medical forms produced by IOM, access to medication, informing the local GP practice of the arrivals, so appointments can be made quickly?
- Do you have interpreters and translated information ready?
- Have you established the routes that will be used to enable refugees to access education, particularly children? For instance, having a list of schools in the area that have places available.
- Do you have contingency arrangements in place to mitigate any changes in plan?

8. Housing

Suitable housing is key to successful refugee resettlement and is one of the main challenges that local authorities face when implementing the schemes. Unless a local authority has their own housing stock, can access social housing or affordable (and appropriate) private rented sector accommodation, preferably for the long term, then resettlement will not be possible.

The approach and models for the accommodation of refugees who come to the UK on resettlement schemes has varied across different schemes and between local authorities. Many factors impact on what is possible or best in relation to the provision of housing and accommodation. The needs of an individual refugee or family also vary greatly depending on ages, structure and health needs.

At the outset, the Home Office usually impose housing conditions on the local authority that it must fulfil to participate in resettlement schemes. Typical requirements include:

- Local authorities must provide suitably furnished accommodation that meets local authority standards.
- Tenancies must last for at least one year, although two or more years is highly recommended.

Other requirements include:

- Providing welcome packs of food that are culturally sensitive, for example, include Halal meat. Also, the food packs need nonperishable items such as tinned tomatoes, chickpeas and rice, along with fruit, vegetables, milk, bread and eggs.
- Providing items to meet initial hygiene needs, such as towels, shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes and sanitary items.
- Casework support to help refugees understand how utilities work, rent is paid, repairs organised, rubbish collected, how to manage relations with the neighbours, etc.

8.1 Considerations when establishing a housing model that enables longer-term integration

- Ensuring the best possible pre-arrival assessment of housing needs based upon information gathered from triage documents before the family or individual are allocated housing. Consequently, aim to prioritise needs-led housing allocation based on the information provided about the refugee family.
- Providing security of tenancy and affordability of rent.
- The location having proximity to schools, health provision (especially for those with complex health needs) and culturally sensitive food shops.
- Pick areas with good access to public transport and potential for building links with other migrant groups, families, communities and places of worship.
- The suitability of the local community — diversity, tolerance and no community tensions or possible activity of extreme right-wing groups.

Sometimes, the urgency of the need for resettlement results in the housing model being modified at short notice and hotels, reception centres or other emergency accommodation facilities must be used. Ultimately though, people will need long-term suitable secure accommodation that is based on the ideals and aims above.

8.2 Other factors to consider in relation to housing and accommodation

- At the outset, confirm agreement with colleagues in the housing department about the numbers of refugees that the council will commit to accommodating. The ‘buy-in’ of the housing department is a vital component of the council’s overall commitment to implement resettlement. That ‘buy-in’ will also ensure that the expertise and networks that housing departments have will be applied to this cohort.
- You may need to pay for voids to secure accommodation, as there can be uncertainty about when refugees will arrive if coming from abroad, and you don’t want to lose a property. The per capita integration tariffs usually include an element to cover void costs for a certain period. If the arrival of the family is delayed beyond that period, additional costs can be claimed from the Home Office, but prior arrangement may be needed. Currently, this is not a widespread issue with Afghan evacuees being resettled from bridging accommodation due to them being in country already.

- Don't assume that the refugees arriving will know the conventions for living in a typical British home, such as opening windows for air circulation or putting recycling in allocated bins. To help new arrivals get used to these conventions, they will need casework support and guidance.
- Some people will require a more intensive casework support than others, for example, older people or those with complex health needs. This needs to be factored in no matter who is providing the support.
- All tenancy documents and agreements should be verbally explained through an interpreter or translated into the family's first language.
- Some refugee households are large families and will need properties with the appropriate number of bedrooms or properties within close proximity if families are split up.
- Some refugees may be disappointed at the housing they are given as it may be very different to what they had been used to in their home country. They may also have unrealistic expectations of what housing in the UK is like for most people. Typically, many houses in London are smaller than properties in other parts of the country and often have a small (or no) garden. In that context, it is helpful to make people aware of the many parks in the capital.
- Having casework staff or volunteers who can walk people around the area where they are accommodated is a very effective way of helping people learn where amenities are, such as shops, services, transport, etc. Enabling this support as soon as possible will help a family begin to feel more comfortable in their new surroundings.
- When equipping properties, it can be efficient and cost effective to bulk buy from one provider.
- Although refugees will be eligible for the housing element of [Universal Credit](#), it will come as no surprise to local authorities in London that finding appropriate accommodation at a reasonable rent (within the [Local Housing Allowance](#) (LHA)) is a challenge, as well as the [benefit cap](#) that affects many families. An [analysis](#) commissioned by London Councils in 2022 covers this aspect in more detail.
- Be aware that certain family structures, such as intergenerational households or those composed of several adults who are entitled to housing costs, are likely to be able to afford higher rents. All eligible adults should be named on the tenancy agreement to ensure their entitlement to the housing allowance element of Universal Credit. Local authorities should consider different family compositions to maximise benefits and secure affordable properties. This is particularly relevant in a context of insufficient LHA rates, benefit cap restrictions and unaffordable rents in the Private Rented Sector (PRS).

8.3 Bridging hotels

The recent Afghan resettlement schemes have seen the use of 'bridging hotels' to temporarily accommodate evacuees who had been airlifted from Kabul at short notice. These hotels were stood up by the Home Office without prior consultation with the local authorities, on the basis that they were being used as emergency accommodation.

The use of bridging hotels was necessary given the urgency of the situation, but it has presented challenges, the main one being that hotels are not suitable environments for people to be living in for long periods of time. It is not clear what might happen in future resettlement schemes with regards to hotel or reception centre use, but if they are to be used again the points below might be useful to consider:

- Service providers can access a large group of people at the same time, for example, to provide health clinics or ESOL classes.
- Resettlement caseworkers have time to work with people to identify any issues that might affect their longer-term accommodation. For example, some people may have health needs that were not apparent until they arrived. Sometimes families are in the process of separating and should not be housed together

in the long term.

- If bridging hotels or reception centres are used on a temporary basis, then the follow-on settled housing should, if possible, be in the same area. People will begin to develop links in the area they are initially based, they may secure employment and children will attend local schools. It is a good idea to avoid people having to move to brand new areas as this can cause re-traumatisation and further challenges with integration. It is noted that this may not be in the control of the local authority if families are moved to secondary bridging accommodation elsewhere in the UK.
- When reception centres were used in previous resettlement schemes, it was recommended (and largely adhered to) that people stay in them for no longer than three months before moving into more permanent accommodation.

In April 2023 the government announced that all Afghan bridging hotels would close during 2023. However, there are lessons to be learnt from the use of bridging hotels that may inform future resettlement schemes.

8.4 Examples of addressing housing challenges

The following are examples of how local authorities elsewhere have addressed some of the housing challenges presented by resettlement:

- Sub-contract housing support to housing management companies or organisations such as [Beam](#) who have experience of providing casework support for other cohorts, such as vulnerable tenants.
- Pay bulk payments incentives upfront to landlords. The amount to be paid is usually based on the length of the tenancy offered, for example, six weeks rent for a year long tenancy.
- Make links with philanthropic individuals and sympathetic landlords who may offer accommodation at a lower rent.
- Use funding from the resettlement scheme to subsidise rent (although be mindful that this is difficult to sustain in the long run and may put people in a position where they are unable to afford the rent if the subsidy is withdrawn).
- If permitted within the funding instructions, use funding from the resettlement scheme to pay housing associations to refurbish derelict properties, some of which they can then be made available to resettled refugees.
- Use funding from the resettlement scheme to adapt properties if changes are needed to make them accessible for people with health or mobility conditions.
- Use funding from the resettlement scheme to pay rent deposits on PRS properties (this may be through a bespoke funding stream to develop housing options, as is the case with the current funding for the Afghan resettlement schemes where a specific amount has been earmarked to help Afghan refugees [move out of bridging hotels](#)).

8.5 Examples of accommodation and housing support

In one London borough, the resettlement team were aware that refugee families relocating to the area would need long term accommodation that was affordable, and which had secure tenancies. They understood that they would need properties that were able to accommodate larger families, as well as being able to cater for people with certain health conditions.

To address the challenge, the team worked closely with their colleagues in the housing department, drawing on that team's expertise, knowledge and experience of the housing in the borough. As a result, the council devised

a way to acquire suitable properties to rent to the refugee families, by utilising the [GLA Right to Buy-Back Negotiated funding](#). Approaching the accommodation issue in this way enabled the council to plan more efficiently, to tailor the properties to match the specific needs of the family and to have a staged move-on from the temporary bridging hotels.

A local authority in the South East commissioned a local VCSE sector organisation to manage the casework support for resettled refugees. Through developing links with local philanthropists and sympathetic landlords, they were able to find secure and affordable, long-term accommodation for the resettled refugees. The VCSE sector organisation has maintained the positive link with the landlords and has kept them involved in the longer-term work of supporting refugees who have come to the city. As a result, more properties have been secured for resettlement.

Beam is a social enterprise organisation that supports disadvantaged people into quality jobs and homes. It does this through an innovative crowdfunding platform and a 1-1 caseworker model. Some local authorities already worked with Beam in relation to other client groups and they commissioned the organisation to conduct housing support for resettled refugees.

The advantages of doing so included being able to draw upon Beam's knowledge of the Private Rented Sector (PRS) and its ability to secure tenancies quickly in a competitive market. Often you must be able to sign up and provide a deposit on the day of viewing to have a chance of securing the property. Beam had the experience and ability to work in this way, having a flexibility which local authority housing departments may not have. Also, the 1-to-1 caseworker model had Beam housing officers going to the bridging hotels to meet the refugee families, getting to know them and their housing needs.

Beam's tenancy support service included advice on gaining employment, maximising budgets and developing English language skills – an integrated approach that addressed a range of connected needs. Commissioning Beam enabled several London local authorities to successfully find long-term, secure accommodation for the refugees who came on the Afghan resettlement schemes.

You can also view an additional resource from Oxford City Council about [landlords supporting refugees](#).

Checklist

- Have you understood what the accommodation and housing requirements are?
- Have you thought about the best way to secure housing? Have you made links with private landlords or social housing organisations?
- How will you ensure that you are not competing for accommodation with sections in the local authority who are also looking for housing for their clients (for example, homeless people)?
- How will you provide housing casework support, is there an organisation or company that you can subcontract this role to?

9. Health

Refugees who arrive on resettlement schemes may have a wide range of health needs, many of which echo those in any section of the population. However, some common ailments may have been exacerbated by a lack of

access to health services prior to arriving and may require specialist treatment (and adaptations to accommodation). One of the criteria by which refugees are selected for resettlement is due to certain health conditions that cannot be treated in the country of first asylum, so some refugees may have to be resettled because of their health situation. The funding instructions for the current resettlement schemes include provision for exceptional costs under which some of the health needs can be addressed.

When considering how to meet the health needs of resettled refugees, it is helpful to consider the stages of resettlement. Some health issues will need to be addressed immediately, such as severe tooth pain or a known chronic condition that requires treatment or medication. Other health needs will be identified and responded to through the usual primary care and secondary care systems. The following points may help you as you consider the health elements of resettlement:

- Usually, a health assessment will have been conducted by [IOM](#) prior to the person's arrival and the details will be shared with the local authority (via the Home Office) through the [referral documentation](#).
- The health assessment may not cover everything as there are some issues that a person may not disclose prior to arriving, for example, mental health concerns. Also, there may be different interpretations of health conditions depending on how and where the initial assessment was conducted. It is important therefore that the local authority arranges for the health partners to conduct their own health screening soon after the person arrives.
- The resettlement team will need to liaise closely with the local health structures such as the CCG, the NHS Trust and Integrated Care Boards, to ensure that GPs have been identified where people can be registered soon after they arrive.
- Initial appointments at GPs, opticians and dentists, should be arranged within the first few days of arrival. It will be helpful to contact GP Practice Managers to avoid delays in registration and screenings, should the family have medical needs that require attention upon arrival.
- Shortly after arrival, health providers should check which immunisations refugees have had, as some will not have had access to a range of vaccinations that we have become used to, for example measles or tuberculosis.
- It is unlikely that any refugees arriving through resettlement would have an infectious disease as these are screened for prior to them departing for the UK and they would not be allowed to travel if identified as being infectious.
- It can be helpful to identify GP practices that have signed up to be a [Safe Surgery](#) and committed to the principles this entails. If a Safe Surgery GP is not available in the area, some other GP practices may already have the experience of working with refugees and if possible, it can help to refer new arrivals to them.
- The HC1 forms for claiming prescriptions and cost exemptions should be completed soon after arrival. It is also beneficial, where applicable, to help set up repeat prescriptions and liaise with the local pharmacy for prescription delivery.
- In some countries, medicines (such as antibiotics) are available at pharmacies without the need for prescription, however this may differ in the UK. It is useful to make families aware of the differences in healthcare systems: the role of the pharmacy for minor ailments and the role of the GP as first point of contact for concerning health issues and for secondary care referrals.

Dental health needs (bridging hotel) example

There can be challenges in finding dentists who will take on new cases. An innovative example in one London borough involved a group of local dentists who offered to see newly arrived refugees on a voluntary basis. The dentist held surgeries at the weekend in the bridging hotel where the refugees were temporarily accommodated and made follow up appointments for further treatment. The dentists also understood how important it was to use interpreters when talking to the refugees to properly assess the dental needs and explain the dental procedures

that they consequently provided.

9.1 Mental health and wellbeing

The experiences that refugees have gone through can lead to a range of mental health conditions, including anxiety, depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Research shows that there is a higher incidence of mental health conditions within the refugee population compared to the numbers in the general population. The Refugee Council estimate that refugees are five times more likely to have [mental health needs](#) than the UK population.

You may find it helpful to consider the points below when responding to mental health and wellbeing needs:

- Often symptoms do not become apparent until someone has been in the country for some time and feels able to disclose how they are feeling and coping.
- Stress and trauma can manifest physically within the body. It may be difficult for someone with limited understanding of mental health to understand that their physical symptoms may be due to this.
- Some refugees may have been tortured, suffered multiple bereavements, witnessed or experienced sexual and/or physical violence.
- There may be cultural outlooks that make it difficult for a person to talk about mental health.
- The refugee experience is described by some practitioners as being akin to that of a bereavement; a refugee has lost their country, their self-sufficiency, their social connections and their status in society.
- Child refugees may have specific mental health and wellbeing needs.
- Staff within NHS mental health services can sometimes face challenges when taking on refugee cases as they may not be familiar with the specific nature of the refugee experience. There are resources available to help raise the awareness and skills of statutory providers and VCSE sector organisations when working with refugees in a mental health context. Please see the [resource centre of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Portal for Refugees and Asylum Seekers](#), by the University of East London, as an example.
- Staff and volunteers working with resettled refugees can experience vicarious trauma and will need support themselves in such cases. Clinical supervision is one mechanism that can help frontline workers, including interpreters.

Just as the symptoms of poor mental health can be varied, so too are the possible responses to meeting these needs. They can include the following, although the list is not exhaustive:

- Referrals to provision within the NHS system, for example, [NHS Talking Therapies](#) (formerly known as IAPT).
- Peer support groups.
- Social prescribing and activity based groups, such as gardening, cycle repair, crafts, cooking and sports.
- Music and arts therapies.
- Specialist support provided by VCSE sector organisations, such as Barnardo's, Freedom from Torture, Refugee Council and Solace. However, please be aware that often their services are oversubscribed and the organisation delivering them may need to have the service paid for by the local authority.

Mental health and wellbeing example

The resettlement team in one London borough knew that many refugees arriving to their area would need mental health and wellbeing support. To help meet these needs the council adopted the following approach:

- The team underwent training in providing [trauma-informed care](#).
- They developed a close working relationship with Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust who provided specialist mental health support through the [Op Courage Warm Welcome Afghan Service](#).
- The council commissioned a VCSE sector organisation to run activities with women and children in the bridging hotels, which contributed to improving their wellbeing.
- Some of the learning that the team gained from this aspect of resettlement work included how to provide early interventions in mental health and wellbeing support, which helped avoid the need for crisis interventions later.
- Building a rapport with refugees helps create an environment where people feel more able to express mental health needs.
- Providing activities, for example, cooking and conversational ESOL, can have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing, albeit that those activities are not labelled as health interventions.

Please see some additional mental health resources below:

- [Barnardos](#)
- [Children and Families Wellbeing Project](#)
- [City of Sanctuary Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Doctors of the World](#)
- [Freedom from Torture](#)
- [Solace](#)
- [University of East London - The Mental Health and Wellbeing Portal](#)

10. Education

Children who arrive on refugee resettlement schemes are entitled to the same educational support that is available to all children in the UK. Prior to children arriving, you should start looking for schools that will potentially have places. However, the application to attend the school needs to be done by the parents or responsible adults with the support of their caseworker after arrival. Colleagues in the school admissions teams should be involved in planning and help you identify suitable schools. Some aspects of education support for refugee children that you may find it helpful to consider are the following:

- Children may have little or no English and you will need to arrange for English as Additional Language (EAL) support. The resettlement schemes provide additional funding for schools to address the children's language needs.
- There may have been gaps in the education that the children received prior to arriving and they might be behind in their learning relative to local children of the same age. Generally, children will be placed in the year group for their age, not their ability.
- The curriculum that the children might have followed prior to coming will usually be different to that of the school they are coming to.
- Refugee children may arrive at any time of the school year and it is important that they are able to access a school place quickly rather than having to wait for the next term. Councils may publish weekly lists of the places available in each school in the borough. This can provide an indication of which schools are likely to accept the children, especially if they need to submit an in-year school application (if they arrive during the school year).
- Families may have different cultural approaches to schooling, for example, not being comfortable with classes that include mixed genders. In such cases you will need to explain to the family how the education system works and the legal requirement for a child to be in school.

- Children may struggle with their mental health because of the trauma that they and/or their parents have experienced. Children may consequently display challenging behaviour that can be misinterpreted. It is important that you prepare the school for potential issues such as this and explore ways to address them, including the pastoral care the school offers. You could explore developing specific mental health and wellbeing support, such as the [model](#) developed in Yorkshire and Humber.
- Children may have [Special Educational Needs and Disability](#) (SEND) that have not been identified previously. SEND may not be considered the same in other cultural contexts. It is important for children identified with SEND to be provided with additional support. It would be a good idea to conduct some training or awareness-raising sessions for school staff about refugee children and refugee resettlement. The school may want to consider becoming a [school of sanctuary](#). There are many resources available to support schools, including the [IRC Healing classrooms programme](#).
- Some schools may have pupils who are from asylum-seeking backgrounds. These children will have support structures and living conditions that are different (and often less) than those provided to resettled refugee children. You will need to be mindful of any differences and manage any misunderstandings that may arise.
- Maintaining good links with the school welfare and liaison officers are crucial to enhancing the educational support to refugee children.
- The funding for resettlement will normally contain amounts to go towards the costs of the children's education, as seen above with the EAL costs. Amounts may be specified or left to the local authorities to decide how to allocate them. There may also be additional central government funding that can be applied for in relation to educational needs, for example for children who will soon turn eighteen upon arrival and miss out on a college place, or children with SEND.

Please see some examples of resources and specialist organisations below:

- [Kazzum](#)
- [Refugee Council](#)
- [Young Roots](#)

Checklist

- Have you lined up school and nursery places for the children who will be coming?
- Do you have material about the education system to brief the parents and children with?
- Are the school and education departments part of your planning and operational coordinating groups?
- Is there specialist support that you can provide to the refugee children and the schools that they will be attending?

11. Interpreting and translation

Many refugees may not be able to read or speak English, so planning for interpreting is essential. There are a variety of ways in which you may want to approach this element of resettlement and the following points may help you in your planning.

- Interpretation costs are normally part of the funding (the integration tariff) provided for resettlement. It will be important that you factor interpreting and translation costs into your budget planning.
- Procure translation services through the company that you normally use in your borough.
- There can be a pressure or presumption to use family members (including children) to interpret for other family members. Although this may seem practical it is often not appropriate to use family members in

this way, especially in sensitive contexts, such as health appointments. It is best to use professional interpreters where possible.

- Use the interpreting services that you normally use in your borough, forewarning them that you will be needing their services and which languages will be required.
- You may need to set up an account with an interpreting and translating company that your local authority already uses. Using the same company may be easier given the existing relationship of the company with the local authority.
- Train or employ (use) community interpreters. They may be based in existing VCSE sector organisations and will have experience of working with refugees, often from the same country. However, be aware that refugees do not always feel comfortable speaking about personal issues to a member of their own community. It will be important to check first with the person that they are comfortable with the arrangement and not assume that they want someone from their community to interpret for them.
- Consider employing multilingual caseworkers, although be aware that the caseworkers need to have a combination of suitable skills, not only language ability. Also, multilingual workers can face additional stresses to those experienced by non-multilingual staff. People may share distressing details with multilingual staff in a way that they would not with other staff. Similarly, clients may make requests to multilingual staff or have unrealistic expectations of what someone from their own country of culture should be able to do for them. None of these potential challenges are unsurmountable, they just need to be considered when setting up the structure and model of your support.
- Include in your budget amounts for interpreting and for training interpreters in your own and other organisations. The latter helps to build capacity within the community, increase a resource that can be used by others and upskills the individuals who are trained.
- Subcontract the interpreting to VCSE sector organisations or community organisations have experience in working with migrants.
- There are advantages to using interpreters (in any setting) who have experience in interpreting for migrant groups as opposed to generalist interpreters who have no direct experience of working with these client groups. There may also be advantages to using the same interpreter where possible, especially when the family first arrive in UK, to help with building trust and rapport.
- Ensure that where appropriate, women and girls have access to female interpreters.
- Ensure that however you provide interpreting, that the interpreters receive appropriate support. Like all staff working with people from refugee backgrounds, interpreters can also experience vicarious trauma.
- Mainstream services should have access to interpreting services facilities, for example, within the NHS systems there are numbers that practitioners can call for phone interpreting. It is important to specify what language and dialect the person speaks (such as Sudanese Arabic differs from Syrian Arabic etc). However, sometimes mainstream providers do not call upon these services and expect the client to provide their own interpreter. You will need to work closely with mainstream providers to check how they envisage accessing interpreting. It may be that in the early stages of resettlement it is appropriate to rely on interpreting provided through the resettlement scheme, but in the long run the mainstream provider should also draw upon what is available to them.
- It is important to note that there may be many different languages or dialects spoken by refugees arriving from the same country or region. It is also important to check with families about what dialect they understand when using different interpreters.

Checklist

- Do you know which languages will be needed for interpretation and translation needs amongst the refugees who will be coming?
- Have you decided how you are going to provide interpreting and translation, for example using existing local authority contractors or adopting a variety of methods (in-house, community resources, commissioning)?

- Have you identified risks associated with the methods you choose to provide interpreting and how will you mitigate these (for example, ensuring confidentiality boundaries are maintained, or cultural differences are considered)?
- Have you understood the pros and cons of having bilingual staff in your team and how you would address these?
- Can you access training for your team on the topic of working with interpreters?

12. Helping with English Language provision

Refugees' ability to communicate in English is a key component of successful integration and is often used as an indicator to measure outcomes of the schemes (see [Capturing achievements, recording and monitoring your work](#)). Refugees who arrive to the UK on resettlement schemes will have varying levels of ability to communicate in English when they first arrive.

Many will have no, or minimal, English language skills. Others may have studied or used English in their work, education or social contexts (the Afghan resettlement schemes included people who had worked as interpreters for the British military, and many have good levels of English). Making sure that refugees who need support can access English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision will be the responsibility of the local authority. The funding provided by central government includes amounts for ESOL, although they may not cover all the costs involved. You should consider the following points when designing and delivering your ESOL support for resettled refugees:

- Some refugees on resettlement schemes may have low or basic levels of literacy in their own first language.
- Motivation and ability to begin learning English in the weeks and months after arriving in the UK often varies from person to person. Many may not have studied or attended classes in any form of educational context, and they may find the prospect of learning a new language daunting.
- Disorientation, trauma, physical and emotional exhaustion associated with their experiences in war zones, refugee camps or protracted displacement situations, can affect the readiness and ability of some newly arrived refugees to begin learning English.
- Conversely, some people can be extremely keen to start learning or improving their English. Many refugees feel capable of learning English once they arrive, and they prioritise accessing ESOL.
- Good command of English is an important skill needed to help someone rebuild their independence and achieve personal integration goals, including employment or study.
- In different local authority areas, the range, level and amount of ESOL provision may be limited, which presents challenges for newly arrived refugees and support agencies when trying to match learner needs to availability. ESOL provision can vary widely even between neighbouring London boroughs.
- It is easier to organise the provision of ESOL support for resettled refugees if there is a local authority [ESOL single point of contact](#) which can help (such bodies exist in some boroughs and have proved to be enormously helpful in organising the ESOL support).
- ESOL provision should range from accredited classes to informal conversation clubs (the latter often provide a vehicle for volunteers to help support resettlement).
- The range and accessibility of ESOL provision within an area can be inconsistent and there may be gaps in provision. What is on offer may not match the needs of resettled refugees who are at different stages of learning. Consequently, you may need to establish something that is bespoke for your resettlement scheme.

- Whatever ESOL support you provide, it is good to encourage people to access this support at educational settings or community organisations. This will help people to make links with other people outside of their household and promote social connections.
- It is possible to provide ESOL online, although this will detract from the socialising aspects of learning in other settings. However, it can complement location-based learning, but it will require that people have access to digital equipment and an understanding how to use it.
- Some refugees will have caring responsibilities and it is important that childcare facilities are made available as part of ESOL provision. The resettlement schemes and other migration programmes may provide bespoke funding to support access to ESOL for refugees with [childcare responsibilities](#).
- It may also be possible to use DWP funding for ESOL support and it would be useful to involve your local Job Centre Plus leads in the planning of your ESOL and employment support.
- In diverse urban areas such as most parts of Greater London, the number of providers, range of courses and better transport links often makes ESOL learning pathways more feasible for resettled refugees.

Substantial experience and expertise in supporting refugees to learn English has been developed by a range of organisations and projects that support refugee integration both within Greater London and in other areas of the UK. Many have developed and keep updated learning resources and methods that are specifically tailored to the needs of refugees. These resources can form the basis for both formal and informal language classes and language support activities. To stay up to date with the latest information and resources in London, please [subscribe to the GLA's ESOL Newsletter](#).

ESOL support example

The Resettlement team in one London borough realised that some of the refugees on the scheme would not be able access or fit onto accredited ESOL provision, such as college courses. Several refugees had never had any formal education in their own country, and had basic literacy in their own language. Additionally, their lack of English was increasing a feeling of isolation amongst many of the female refugees.

The team organised group sessions for the women, teaching English themed around everyday situations, such as medical appointments, completion of forms and banking. The support helped these refugees to improve their English and acted as a stepping stone to more formal ESOL provision. The support also enabled the women to develop social connections, build friendships and obtain peer support. For example, some within the group were first time mothers who received encouragement and help from older women in the group.

12.1 GLA's ESOL for Resettlement Guidance

The GLA has produced and maintains a comprehensive resource entitled '[English Language \(ESOL\) for Resettlement](#)'. It provides useful background information and guidance relating to refugees and ESOL needs, and information on courses that are available in London. Similar ESOL initiatives and networks have been developed by organisations in other areas of the UK, many of whom have also developed and adapted ESOL resources specifically to support resettled refugees. Some of these organisations are listed at the bottom of this section.

The guidance offers the following suggestions and useful follow up links for prospective or new delivery refugee resettlement organisations in London:

1. Understand [Home Office ESOL funding requirements](#).
2. Understand [key ESOL terms](#).
3. Identify [map existing resources](#) in the local area.
4. Identify the [needs](#) of the learner.

5. Arrange an ESOL [initial assessment](#).
6. [Commission](#) ESOL provision, where needed.
7. Cater for learners' [additional needs](#), including [childcare](#).
8. Prepare [for progression](#).
9. Support [children](#) with English language needs.

You may also find useful the [Migration Yorkshire guide](#) that was developed for the Syrian resettlement scheme.

Checklist

- Have you signed up to the [GLA's ESOL Newsletter](#) to stay up to date on ESOL opportunities and resources?
- Have you used [mapping resources](#) to identify ESOL providers, a Single Point of Contact (SPOCs) for ESOL and networks in your borough?
- If there is no immediate availability of ESOL or sufficient hours, have you read the guidance on [how to commission ESOL provision](#)?
- How will you ensure that ESOL is accessible to all the refugees, including those with caring responsibilities, or who learn at different rates?

13. Supporting the resettlement of refugees

The goal of each of the refugee resettlement schemes in general terms, is to welcome and support individuals and families as they arrive and begin to build new lives and integrate in the UK. The scope and duration of funding made available by the government for resettlement support is specific to each resettlement scheme.

Resettlement schemes offer a support package that tapers down after the first year with the capacity to provide some support for up to 3-5 years (scheme dependent). While there is a need for flexibility in the level and duration of support that you will need to provide to resettled refugees, the general requirement and shared goal of all schemes, is for most refugees to become increasingly self-sufficient through the course of their first two years of living in the UK, after which the level of support is expected to scale down.

Families and individuals with complex needs or vulnerabilities may need to be supported for a longer period through the resources of a resettlement scheme, but there should be a support plan in place that progressively tapers down and eventually transfers longer-term support (if needed) into mainstream provision and services.

13.1 Different support models and structures

Variations of approach and delivery models for supporting newly arrived refugees have been adopted and modified for different schemes. There are common elements to most of the support models that have been used and good practice has been built upon as resettlement has evolved over the last decades. There is not one single support model that works for every area or each family. Variations are understandable and acceptable within the same resettlement scheme. For example, lead roles and location with management structures for providing refugee resettlement support in Greater London varies across different boroughs.

“The work goes beyond enabling, you also need someone who can advocate for the clients, put their cases to other service providers, even within the same local authority.” (London Local Authority Officer)

A significant factor leading to different support models and delivery arrangements is the number of refugee arrivals that a borough receives (initially based on their original commitment). Where numbers are low, rather than creating stand-alone support teams there is logic in locating refugee support functions within the existing structures and departments that have the most relevant skills, knowledge, capacity and referral capability to address support and integration needs. For some boroughs it has been practical to embed roles within their housing teams whilst elsewhere, roles and responsibility have been effectively incorporated within the remit of social work teams. Similarly, whilst some boroughs have opted to provide resettled families with integration support directly through their own teams and services, others have subcontracted out all or some aspects of the role to third party organisations based in the community.

When refugee numbers (or commitments to accepting higher numbers) are larger, increasing both the size of the caseload but also the level of government funding support available to an organisation, it may make sense to create a small, dedicated team alongside coordination and specialist roles.

Finally, an increasing number of boroughs are creating a single unit to cover their response to Ukrainian, asylum-seeking and resettled refugee populations. Some councils have found this to be an effective way to pool resources.

Experience and learning to date suggest that there is no single, right or wrong way to structure the integration support role. The projected numbers and needs of arrivals, local context, scope for partnership working and existing structure of local services will all have a bearing on what is possible and likely to be most effective in providing resettlement and integration support.

13.2 Identifying and addressing priority issues and needs after arrival

Effective resettlement scheme support during the first days and weeks after arrival in the UK requires early completion of several priority tasks and processes. These include:

- Making sure that the new arrivals have everything they initially need and know how to use the facilities in their new home, that they are familiar with UK currency and that they know where to shop, how to get around the area and know how to get help in an emergency.
- Priority tasks also include making sure that key documents have been issued (for example biometrics cards (BRP) with National Insurance numbers) and that GP, dental surgery registrations, Universal Credit applications and school registrations have been completed.
- Most resettlement support teams involved in resettlement schemes in Greater London (and in other UK regions), have developed their own checklists of the key tasks and processes that need to be addressed in the pre-arrival and post arrival weeks after refugees come to the UK. Whilst the tools are often tailored or formatted differently from one resettlement organisation or local authority and resettlement scheme to the next, the main tasks and priorities are very similar.
- Many resettlement support agencies involve volunteers to assist in the completion of specific tasks. Volunteers and faith groups can play useful roles in helping the orientation of new arrivals to find their way around new communities, for example, getting used to using public transport and finding popular local shops. Nonetheless, it is important that the volunteers' role is clarified and differentiated from the local authority officer's role of providing casework support and advice. The support provided by volunteers should not be in lieu of the responsibilities that need to be undertaken by the officers, but a way

of complementing the officer's work.

While several of the tasks need to be completed as quickly as possible to ensure that new arrivals have their basic needs met, learning from all resettlement schemes has emphasised the need to be realistic and sensitive in how much is asked of people in the days following their arrival. Many are physically and emotionally exhausted, often disorientated and understandably the provision of too much information, too quickly, can feel overwhelming. Information provided during the arrival phase will need to be provided and explained again in the weeks following arrival.

Boroughs have found it helpful for local police officers to come in the early weeks and chat to families to help reassure them about the role of the police in the UK, which may be very different from their experience of police and law enforcement in their own country and/or host country prior to resettlement. Similarly, representatives of the Emergency Fire and Rescue Services (EFRS) can be requested to speak to resettled refugees about their role and what people need to do in an emergency.

Some examples of priority needs and actions from the day of arrival and over the course of the first one to two weeks are given below. Depending on the local resettlement model, support agencies or the relevant team may lead in responding to the needs below or be responsible for ensuring that they are being addressed by relevant agencies or partners.

13.3 Potential priority needs and actions

- Meeting and greeting new arrivals.
- Assistance moving into prepared accommodation - explaining heating, oven use, smoke/fire alarms, different rubbish bins and collection days etc (as needed).
- Help with opening a bank account. Please note, a [Biometric Residence Permit](#) (BRP) card and proof of address are often required to do so. Often the most accessible acceptable proof of address will be the Council Tax bill that can be issued on the day of arrival by colleagues in the Council Tax department. Some banks may be more experienced with working with migrants and refugees and may accept other proof of address documents, such as tenancy agreements.
- Ensuring accounts have been set up correctly with utility services (bank account may be needed prior).
- Completion of priority benefit applications (Universal Credit and other entitlements). Note that this should be done on day one as a priority, to avoid delays with people receiving this support.
- Ensuring access to cash or cards as needed.
- Ensuring access to SIM cards, mobile phones and Oyster cards. Most people have a phone but if the budget allows, having a low-cost credit phone for the family can be useful in case of an emergency before they have acquired a UK sim card.
- Information and advice on using emergency services (i.e. dialling 999 and 111). Please note that these emergency services should provide interpreting services.
- Information about the local area provided (location of shops, parks, schools, faith related venues and contacts etc).
- Orientation activities, such as showing people how to use public transport, and walking through the experience with them on a few occasions until they can demonstrate they can do it without assistance.
- GP registration and follow-up appointments (as necessary).
- Dentist registration and follow-up appointments (as necessary).
- Job Centre Plus (JCP) appointments.
- Linking into other specialist services if and as needed.

Checklist

- Have you understood the options of different support models?
- Do you have tools and checklists in place that will help you organise the practical tasks that you need to complete?
- Are there people from other services and organisations who you can involve in the initial orientation and information provision? Who are they and can you organise a way for them to be involved?
- How have you planned to provide support to people beyond the first one to two years? Can you establish a system that has the flexibility to respond to people who may need more intensive support as well as those who are more independent at that stage?

14. Supporting longer-term integration goals and action planning

'Integration' and 'social integration' are commonly used terms in the context of resettlement schemes, but they often mean something different and involves different goals and challenges from one person to the next.

The Home Office's [Indicators of Integration](#) framework provide a useful structure to consider what resettlement is trying to achieve. Integration has been demonstrated by families and individuals who have arrived on the various resettlement schemes spanning many years and who have shown a determination and ability to become self-sufficient and to achieve their personal integration goals as active members of their new communities.

The process of beginning to explore and identify resettlement or integration goals for individuals and family members follows on from the completion of the more immediate and necessary 'post arrival' tasks that ensure the family is comfortable, safe and orientated in their new homes and communities. In the immediate post arrival period, a range of assessment, planning and follow up tools have been developed and used by resettlement support organisations for the purposes of helping individuals and family members to set goals and create action plans for achieving them. Whilst the terms of reference and support structures vary between resettlement schemes and boroughs, their overall purpose and content is often very similar.

Many of the tasks listed below are relevant for most refugees who come to the UK on resettlement schemes. As such, they may be included as required deliverables within the scheme's funding contracts. Consequently, they are often incorporated into locally developed and tailored needs assessments, integration planning tools and checklists (either arranged chronologically or thematically).

Suggested tasks:

- Provision of information and assistance in finding and accessing ESOL provision.
- Provision or sourcing of information about the British education system and the ability for parents or carers to engage with their children's schools and colleges.
- Help with finding and registering children with new schools.
- Basic explanation of benefits and support entitlements and the ability to manage Universal Credit accounts.
- Confidence building.
- Support to book GP and dentist appointments independently.
- Further support with budgeting and debt management (if needed).
- Understanding how to manage the tenancy and requirements to look after the property.
- Provision of basic information and explanation of the UK employment system.
- Referral and signposting to employment support providers and resources.

- Linking into job search, job application skills development.
- Provision of information about volunteering in the UK and possible opportunities.
- Provision or sourcing of information and advice on converting qualifications and accessing vocational training.
- Provision of information and advice on further education options and access.
- Provision of information and help with contacting migrant community organisations.
- Provision of information and help with accessing local community groups, activities, sport and leisure facilities.
- Provision of information and advice on reporting harassment and hate crime.
- Explanation/understanding of their current immigration status and future steps to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain and/or British Citizenship.
- Information and support relating to travel and documentation needs.
- Information and support relating to family reunion rights and applications.

Resettlement support teams might take the lead in addressing the above tasks and needs directly. Alternatively, their role might be to coordinate and ensure that the identified needs for everyone are met by other partners or subcontracted organisations (depending on the local model of support).

The Mayor's Social Integration Strategy

In the [Mayor of London's Social Integration strategy](#), it outlines social integration as, “...*the extent to which people positively interact and connect with others who are different to themselves. It is determined by the level of equality between people, the nature of their relationships, and their degree of participation in the communities in which they live.*”

The Mayor has developed a [Social Integration Measurement Toolkit](#) that provides a useful framework for local authorities and partners to collect evidence and gather insight on the experiences of Londoners and their communities. This can help with tailoring services and interventions in your borough.

14.1 Suggested approaches to casework support

- Be clear from the onset, that resettlement support is time and task limited. The goal is to help the refugee gain the knowledge, skills and confidence to live in the UK without resettlement support. This could be provided in a written (and translated) agreement between the family and the caseworker so that both parties know what is expected with the support going forward.
- Develop an assessment and planning tool for the purposes of identifying needs and goals for individuals and family members.
- Work through the assessment tool jointly with individuals to ensure that is tailored to their needs and goals. Good practice is for caseworkers and families to jointly write personal integration plans.
- Ensure that the assessment and personal planning tools cover relevant areas for the individuals such as ESOL, training, employment, education, wellbeing and community participation. These are areas identified by the Home Office as [Indicators of Integration](#).
- Agree a work plan with individuals that has clear and achievable actions within realistic time frames, which is also explicit about the scaling back of resettlement support.
- Progressively, over time, adopt an 'empowerment' approach in problem solving by initially dealing jointly with issues that arise but increasingly encourages and supports individuals to do things for themselves. For example, reporting housing repairs, addressing Universal Credit issues, communicating with schools,

filling in application forms etc.

- Consider the establishment of volunteer roles within your delivery model (or accessed through a partner agency) to provide additional support. This could be in relation to local orientation, finding clubs, community groups and activities. This approach can help build cross-community links, awareness and support local community cohesion.
- Consider maintaining or establishing links with people who are further along in their UK resettlement journey and who may be able and willing to share their lived experience with newly arrived refugees. The prospect of having to build a new life, learn a new language and in many respects to 'start again' can seem daunting. Meeting people who have been through a similar experience and who are doing well can be both reassuring and motivational. Additionally, some people may not want to connect with anyone from the same background, culture or country as them and this is to be respected. Always seek consent from the refugee first.

Below are some examples of planning tools and approaches used by local authority resettlement teams and VCSE organisations.

14.2 Casework integration planning tool examples

Local authority example

Working closely with families during the course of the scheme, both directly and through partner organisations, enabled a local authority resettlement team to build trust and rapport with the families. In doing so, the team gained a better and more accurate insight into the challenges that the families were facing, what the family enjoyed doing and what support they needed with integration and achieving their own goals.

Working with the families in this way made it easier to identify those who were more independent. At the same time, the team were able to assess which families required more support. Integration plans were developed and co-produced with the families to ensure that improvements were made with intentionality. The idea was to ensure that the families were clear about the integration outcomes that they were committed to achieving and to have a mechanism for mutually measuring their progress.

Below are some learnings that the team gained from this aspect of resettlement work:

- It was important to co-produce the integration plan with the family. Co-production ensures that the family have a level of ownership and accountability, as they are committing to doing things that they are happy to do. This helps give families a greater sense of responsibility towards reaching their personal goals.
- Although the plans cover elements suggested in the [Indicators of Integration](#) developed by the Home Office, there had to be flexibility about what was in the integration plan, it could not be too prescriptive as the families had a wide variety of needs and capacity. For example, it was not realistic to suggest that everyone would need to reach a certain ESOL level within the same period of time.
- The integration plans could evolve over time and needed modifying as the families were presented with new challenges or took longer to meet some of the outcomes envisaged, for example, due to illness.
- The team was conscious that resettlement programmes come to an end and that the capacity of the local authority to provide support will taper down over time. The ethos behind the integration plans was for clients to feel empowered and be less dependent on the resettlement team.

VCSE sector example

In one London borough, the council commissioned the Refugee Council to provide the casework support to resettled refugees coming to that area. To help them to manage their casework and to report back to the council, the Refugee Council use an Integration Plan based on the Outcomes Star format. This tool is designed specifically for work with refugees and links with their casework recording systems. Furthermore, the tool enables them to work closely with the refugee family to mutually develop goals and indicators, to check on progress and adapt support as people become more independent and develop more agency in their lives.

Outcomes Star can be tailored to most client groups and a wide range of organisations and bodies use them to help in their casework. The [Outcomes Star](#) methodology is licensed, so you will need permission to use this format. [Find out more](#).

VCSE sector example 2

The integration plan below is an example of a framework that can be used when assessing and developing a family or individual's progression towards self-sufficiency. The assessment includes key integration headings as target areas, with more detailed questions underneath.

Progress and change under each heading and against key tasks or goals are jointly reviewed and updated by the family and their caseworker at agreed intervals. Under each section, both parties score their progress from 1-10. These scores can be compared and further discussed with follow-up actions. Additionally, there is a section at the end of the tool to identify three personal goals. This additional tool can be used for personal integration goals that the family or individual may aspire to, such as learning a new hobby or visiting a new city.

- [Download the VCSE integration tool example](#)

The above integration plans are adapted in year 5 for UKRS, or year 3 for ARAP/ACRS, to create 'exit interviews'. These are done jointly with the family or individual and their caseworker to ensure the refugees are self-sufficient enough to leave the scheme, and where they aren't, links are made with other organisations to support the families going forward.

Included in the exit interviews are additional questions linked to British Citizenship and Indefinite Leave to Remain applications (if applicable), and a resettlement scheme evaluation questionnaire section to gather feedback and support improvements in service delivery.

- [Download the VCSE exit interview example](#)

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) casework tool example

Several local authorities use existing care plan formats or outcomes tools that they use with other client groups and apply these to their work with refugees. For example, the standard form used by local authorities working with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). There are advantages to using existing formats: the staff are familiar with them, they are usually incorporated into the council's recording and reporting mechanism, and there is no need to go to the expense of developing a new format. However, there may be indicators for refugees that you need to record that aren't in existing forms used for other client groups.

You should contact your Looked After Children's team for examples of their Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) care plan formats.

Checklist

- Have you considered the different needs of people? For example, women, Deaf and disabled people, survivors of sexual violence or domestic abuse, older people, people who identify as LGBTQ+?
- Do you have assessment or case planning tools that you can adapt to use for resettled refugees? If so, will they cover everything that you need to consider?
- How will you involve the refugees in developing their integration goals?

15. Employment

On all resettlement schemes, people are allowed to work from the day they arrive in the country, unlike people seeking asylum. Many refugees arrive in the UK having previously achieved educational or vocational qualifications, with valuable experience of working or running businesses and of having lived for most of their life without the need for state support or assistance. Finding a job, resuming their career development, starting a business or continuing an interrupted education is often a priority goal; or it quickly becomes one when they (and their families) have started to settle in and adjust to their new lives and environment.

In contrast, there are other refugees who have often experienced extreme hardship, uncertainty, stress and trauma and are showing signs of being overwhelmed when they find safety in the UK. They will need more time to recover before they are ready and able to enter the employment market or study. Using [Maslow's hierarchy of need](#) can be a useful way to understand and approach the prioritisation of which needs to address and how those needs are related.

Employment is very important to integration, but it is also crucial to allow people the time to learn English (where applicable) and settle into their communities. If people are pushed into insecure or unsuitable employment, it may hinder their progression in their careers or in other areas of integration (such as learning English).

Regardless of energy levels, motivation, prior experience and qualifications, people who arrive on a resettlement scheme are often not immediately or easily able to find secure work or access study in the UK. A few examples of some of the most common employability challenges and barriers that can be experienced by refugees include:

- A need for personal recovery and adjustment time after arriving in the UK having recently survived conflict, persecution, bereavement, separation, upheaval, relocation and hardships.
- Limited English language needs - making it difficult to find or apply for a job, to study or be able to communicate as needed in most work and study environments.
- Existing qualifications (gained in another country) not being recognised in the UK (and high costs involved in converting qualifications).
- Limited experience in the UK compared to other job applicants.
- Learning and understanding UK employment laws and workplace culture.
- Limited experience, understanding and skills for successful job search, completion of applications and interviews in the UK context.
- Loss of confidence due to long-term unemployment or insecure employment.
- Employer caution, discrimination or confusion about employing refugees, including being unaware of the legal right of refugees to work in the UK.

- Gender norms that position female family members as caretakers and set expectations on the type of employment they can undertake or discourage their employment and study.

Several organisations and projects across the UK have substantial experience, expertise and excellent resources that can inform refugees and advisors about obtaining employment and accessing training. These include:

- [ENIC](#)
- [GLA Employment Rights Hub](#)
- [UK Government advice on employing people from Afghanistan and Ukraine](#)
- [Health and Care Professions Council](#)
- [Learning and Work Institute](#)
- [NHS guidance to overseas health professionals](#)
- [Refugee Action: Pathways to work](#)
- [Refugee Council: Employment Support](#)
- [Refugee Council: Guide to Employing Refugees](#)
- [Renaishi](#)
- [South East Migration Partnership: employability for Hongkongers](#)
- [Welcome guidance: Hong Kong BN\(O\) route](#)

General suggestions on approach and practices for supporting the employability of refugees include:

- Reviewing the employment support approach and learning of previous resettlement schemes and specialist refugee employability support projects in London and the wider UK.
- Partner with organisations that provide support to learn English and vocational skills.
- Identify pathways for the possible comparison and use of professional qualifications, for example, healthcare regulators such as the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and ENIC. Also, be aware that in the medical professions people will have to undertake a [IELTS](#) test for most roles.
- The South East Strategic Migration Partnership (SESMP) has also developed materials around [conversions of qualifications](#) specifically to Hongkongers that may be useful for resettled cohorts.
- Early establishment of lead contact arrangements and dialogue with local DWP and Job Centre Plus managers. This dialogue needs to include the adjustment of benefit commitments to be suitable to an individual's situation.
- Find opportunities that include both 'on the job' skills development, alongside learning English.
- Sharing information with local Job Centre Plus teams to raise awareness of the experiences of refugee resettlement and the needs of individual refugees and families. This can help ensure a supportive and realistic approach in relation to job search.
- Identification of personal work and education goals and pathways with refugees as part of longer-term integration planning and support. This should be completed collaboratively by caseworkers, individuals and Job Centre Plus teams.
- Encouraging and supporting development of English language to improve employability, including language that is specifically relevant for job search and employment contexts.
- Provision and explanation of background information to raise awareness of the job market, job search, career development and education provision in the UK. For example, where to find opportunities, [how to get help in writing CVs, completing applications, interview techniques](#), workplace culture and expectations etc.
- Accessing or jointly organising workshops and opportunities for refugees to practice and develop skills.
- Provision of information about the possible benefits of volunteering and opportunities to do so locally for example to build experience, English language, confidence, employability, etc. Volunteering can often be a new and unusual concept for people from different countries.

- Liaison with local employers and businesses to raise awareness of the legal right of refugees to work in the UK, of the motivation, skills and experience that many can offer.
- Proactive liaison with employers and businesses regarding the possibility of them offering volunteer and work-based placements to refugees to help them build experience of UK workplace culture, develop their CVs and rebuild confidence.
- Participation in refugee employment networks at regional or national level to keep abreast of relevant services and opportunities that may be of interest to resettled individuals. Examples of this are Central London Employment Integration Network, hosted by the [Central London Integration Hub](#), and the [Refugee Employment Network](#) (REN).

Checklist

- Are there relevant employment support organisations in your area that can support refugees into training and employment?
- Are there any ESOL providers who include vocational training as part of their service?
- Does your local authority have employment support schemes that you could incorporate into the resettlement scheme?
- Have you linked up with the DWP to help them to ensure their services are attuned to the needs of the refugee cohort? For example, does the local Job Centre Plus (JCP) understand that some refugees will need to improve their English language skills before being able to take up job offers, and therefore, benefit commitments will need to be adjusted?
- Are there volunteering opportunities that you can help resettled refugees access? Possibly within local community and voluntary organisations?

16. Community Sponsorship

In 2016 the government introduced community sponsorship, for local communities to provide support to people fleeing conflict. Community sponsorship works alongside other resettlement schemes and usually involve fewer numbers of refugees. The support provided to refugees through community sponsorship is organised differently to that provided in other schemes and the community sponsorship group will be expected to source accommodation. There will be some crossover between schemes and refugees who arrive via the community sponsorship route will be entitled to statutory services in the same way as other resettled refugees.

The Home Office establishes that the local authority must [consent](#) to an application by a community sponsorship group before they can welcome families in their area. The needs of refugees coming by the community sponsorship route are similar to those who come by other schemes, and it is helpful for the local authority and the community sponsorship group to work in a complementary way. Doing so will avoid duplication of effort and ensure that the refugees are receiving appropriate support.

Please see some useful resources below:

- [Citizens UK](#)
- [Community Sponsorship application form](#)
- [Community Sponsorship in the UK : Global Compact on Refugees](#)
- [RESET](#)
- [Salvation Army](#)
- [UNHCR](#)
- [University of Birmingham: Reflections on the UK's Community Sponsorship Scheme](#)

Checklist

- Are you aware of community sponsorship groups (or potential community sponsorship groups) in your area who may be involved in resettlement?
- Do you have a mechanism for working with the community sponsorship groups to ensure that service provision is not duplicated?

17. Cultural and other considerations

Local authorities need to be aware of the culture and diversity of people being welcomed to the UK - this understanding will help in the design and delivery of the support provided. It will also make it easier to tackle problems and misunderstandings that may arise in the implementation of the schemes. Initially it should be stressed that, as with other aspects of resettlement, while there are common factors, resettlement schemes are different as are the refugees who come on them. Below there are general points that can help guide your approach and understanding to this aspect of resettlement.

- The information that you receive (for example, from the Home Office) about people before they arrive may have inaccuracies or omissions. It is not uncommon for there to be variations of the spelling of people's names or the recording of dates of birth. Also, people understandably do not always disclose everything about themselves before they arrive, for example their sexual orientation, gender identity, or tensions in their family. There can be a perception that disclosing such details to the organisations working with them prior to coming (for example, UNHCR) will jeopardise them being accepted for resettlement. At the same time, those organisations often have limited capacity to conduct more in-depth casework.
- Not all nationalities or ethnic groups are homogenous. While understanding broad cultural aspects of a group is helpful, you need to be flexible enough to respond to differences within the group and be mindful of any tensions between ethnic groups.
- Language, religion, food, art, and social norms play an important part in people's sense of identity, especially when they find themselves living in a culture different to their own. Respecting and responding positively to the differences in cultural approaches will help integration and successful resettlement.
- People may be able to cope better with living in a different culture when they feel more secure in their own identity. Support to community groups and cultural activities is one way of enhancing people's sense of identity.
- Refugees can experience [ambiguous loss](#); they may have fled without adequate closure on aspects of their lives and not know what has happened to loved ones who they have left behind.
- Although the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) provides resettled refugees with information prior to departure, it is not uncommon for refugees who arrive on resettlement schemes to have unrealistic expectations of what life in the UK will be like, for example, the size of housing. To address these expectations, it will help to have clear information about what life in the UK and in your borough is like, including what people's rights and responsibilities are. This information needs to be shared with people in a variety of formats (written, verbal, translated, films, through casework, etc.). It is also likely that you will need to share the information multiple times with families as there is often a limit to the amount of information anyone can take in at one time.
- Employing multilingual staff on your project (see [Different support models and structures](#) for the pros and cons) and working in partnership with community organisations from the same culture as the refugees, can be an effective tool in bridging different cultural understandings and approaches.
- In some cultures, there are different attitudes to roles within a family, marriage, to gender, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), disciplining children, honour-based violence, safeguarding, domestic abuse and

gender-based violence. These may be at odds with what would be both culturally and legally acceptable in the UK. It will be important, where appropriate, to discuss these issues with families so that they understand the legal and social implications of infringing the law in these situations.

- There may be different approaches to what can seem less important matters, such as smoking in public places, spitting, littering or sitting in cafés for long periods without ordering much.
- Talking about health (including mental health) can be different across cultures which means that people may not disclose aspects of their condition. People may have a different understanding of what mental health is, for example, they may regard symptoms such as headaches as only a physical health issue. Cultural constraints may impact on the willingness of someone to receive mental health support due to community perceptions. In turn, not accessing support can have a detrimental effect on the person's overall health needs, but people have the dignity to choose what support they receive.

17.1 Ways to address cultural impacts on resettlement

There are various ways in which a local authority can address the impact that cultural elements have on resettlement, including:

- Undertaking awareness training about the culture (or cultures) and countries from which refugees are from, preferably before people arrive. For example, training has been provided by the LSMP in relation to Afghan resettlement and IOM have provided training on previous refugee cohorts.
- Work closely with community organisations who have knowledge and experience (often the lived experience) of the culture from which the refugees are coming.
 - ***“Use the cultural knowledge of the community group to help you work with refugees from that country.” (London Local Authority Officer)***
- Deliver group training to resettled refugees on topics such as childcare and healthy adult relationships. The latter would cover issues such as domestic abuse and contraception and should be available to women only groups as well as a mixed cohort.
- As part of the induction for newly arrived refugees, walk people through situations, such as shopping, how to use public transport, how to access places of worship, etc.
- Identify local shops that sell food from the relevant culture.
- Produce or adapt information about life in the UK and your borough in a variety of formats and deliver the information by different methods.
- Work sensitively and consistently with people to help them to understand what is acceptable, what is not and why.
- Be alert to the specific needs of groups within the cohort, some of which may be culturally sensitive, such as sexual orientation and mental health. These needs may not be apparent initially but may become known later as people safer to share more with their caseworker.

Checklist

- Have you got enough information about the individual circumstances of the people who are coming to enable you to design the support that you will provide?
- Have you got enough information about the culture and customs of the people who are coming to enable you to design the support that you will provide?
- Where can you find out more about people's culture — is it possible to access specific cultural awareness training?
- Have you developed links to the places where refugees can establish contacts or access resources, such as faith groups and community organisations?

18. Communications

Resettlement schemes often take place in the context of media and public interest (positive and negative), and it will be important to have a communications plan about your resettlement work. The plan should incorporate the stages of resettlement, mirroring the timeframe you follow when designing your services: pre-arrival, day of arrival and first year, and the longer term. You may find it helpful to consider the points below when devising your communications plan:

- Share your plan with key stakeholders (for example, other service departments or community groups) and involve them in designing it.
- Seek to harmonise your communications strategy with other organisations so that you are broadly giving the same messages.
- Consult with local police as they will be aware of potential community tensions and they will also help you share information with refugees about dealing with hate crime etc. This information should also inform where the accommodation for refugees is located, as they should not be housed in areas with community tensions or right-wing activity.
- Be aware of the communications strategy of central government as they are sometimes keen to publicise resettlement schemes, although at other times they are more discrete. You will need to work out what the best approach is for your area.
- Have prepared statements and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to use with the press and public. The local authority may receive [Freedom of Information](#) (FOI) requests from journalists, the public or other organisations, and it is important to know how to respond to these. Preparing material in advance can save a lot of effort later.
- Proactively place positive stories in the local press and in social media about resettlement and share the findings of any evaluations or case studies that illustrate the value of resettlement (see [Capturing achievements, recording and monitoring your work](#)). Involve supportive local councillors in sharing these stories.
- Include in your plan mechanisms for how the local authority will deal with enquiries from the public, for example the offer of donations or people wanting to volunteer to help. It is helpful to create a separate email inbox for resettlement enquiries and to have a dedicated page on the council website. If the local authority does not have the capacity to accept donations or volunteers, there may be a local VCSE sector organisation that you can refer people to. However, this needs to be done in a structured way and ensuring that the organisation has sufficient resources to process donations and manage volunteers.
- Have designated officers and elected members who will be the spokespeople for the resettlement scheme and who will be available for media interviews, if needed.
- Identify spokespeople from previous schemes or from the community who can convey key messages about the resettlement scheme, if needed.
- Hold social and cultural events that bring together refugees who arrive on the schemes with residents from the local community, where appropriate.
- Invite local, supportive politicians to meet the refugees if clients are happy to do so and if they have been briefed beforehand.

When considering your communications, it is important to respect the confidentiality of the refugees and treat them with dignity and respect. This may involve fending off positive as well as negative press interest. Not everyone wants to share their story and they should not be expected to do so.

Please see below some short films on resettlement:

- [City of London: Bridging – The Experience of Afghan Children](#)
- [Refugee Council: 10 years of protecting refugees \(Hull\)](#)

Checklist

- Have you liaised with your communications team to devise a communications plan or strategy that includes prepared statements and positions?
- Do you know what central government communications there will be about resettlement?
- Can you respond to contingencies?
- Have you thought about how your communications will develop over the years?

19. Working alongside other migration schemes

Resettlement schemes often occur alongside work that is being undertaken with other migrant groups.

Currently, there are people who come to the UK, including many who have come to London boroughs, through the following schemes and routes, such as:

- ACRS, ARAP, UKRS, VPRS, VCRS and Mandate resettlement schemes
- Family Reunion
- [Ukraine Family Sponsorship](#) scheme and [Homes for Ukraine](#) scheme
- [Hong Kong BN\(O\)](#) visa route
- [Community Sponsorship](#) (see [Community Sponsorship](#))
- The [asylum system](#)
- [Work or study visas](#)

Additionally, in many areas there are migrant communities who have come in previous years on a variety of schemes or by different routes. This will mean that many local authorities will have relevant experience of providing services to migrants that can be applied to new resettlement schemes. This experience should be drawn upon and used to influence the design of your resettlement scheme.

Below are points that can help guide your approach and understanding to this aspect of resettlement:

- It can be effective to make the resettlement team part of an existing migration team, whichever section of the local authority it is based in.
- It is possible to use funding from one scheme to develop capacity and expertise that can be used indirectly for other migrant groups.
- Resources developed by other migration initiatives can be drawn upon or adapted to support the resettlement work. For example, the employment guides produced for people who have come by the Hong Kong BN(O) visa route, or the support material developed for people from Ukraine.
- A joined-up approach at a local authority level to working with different migrant cohorts will ensure the most effective use of resources and increase the positive outcomes for resettled refugees.

Checklist

- Are you aware of other migration routes and programmes that may impact upon your resettlement work?
- Are there ways in which you can complement the resettlement scheme with the work that you do with other migrant groups who live in your borough?

- How can you use the expertise of staff working with other migrant groups, for example, can you second people to the resettlement team?

20. Capturing achievements, recording and monitoring your work

It will be important to establish what must be recorded for monitoring purposes (usually decided by central government) and additionally, what is needed from a casework and safeguarding perspective. As with any project or service, you will need to have mechanisms for capturing details about the work that has been undertaken, including ascertaining what the outcomes and impact has been of your resettlement work. The types of information you will need to capture will include the following:

- Information relating to the families that you have worked with, including secure systems for recording casework interventions.
- Depending on the scheme, the Home Office may ask for information to be recorded about specific elements of the refugee's situation and progress, such as their employment status or ESOL level. To date, this has been a data capturing exercise a few months after a family has arrived, but there is always scope for reporting requirements to change.
- Overview statistical information on the numbers of refugees, locations, etc.
- Records of expenditure (see [Finances: what you need to know and how to access funding](#)).

You may have targets or performance indicators that provide a way to measure the outputs and outcomes of your work. In the case of quantitative elements, for example, the target may be the number of people registered with a GP within a set time from when they have arrived in the country. For qualitative outcomes, such as the engagement of a person with the community, the indicators and the methods you use to measure them will be more complex. Some local authorities have found it useful to adopt the [Indicators of Integration](#) developed by the Home Office in this respect.

To capture some of the information, it may be possible to use systems that you already have in place for recording work with other service users, for example personal care plans or housing support plans. Or it may be that you develop something bespoke for the refugee cohort such as an Outcomes Stars (see [Suggested approaches to casework support](#)). Whatever method you use it will be helpful if it is integrated into a system, for example a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database, that is able to extract anonymised statistics and overview information that can be used to inform the development of your resettlement scheme.

Alongside the quantitative information, it is important to be able to find ways to capture the qualitative aspects of your work — the human element beyond the numbers. You need to be able to learn from your work by assessing what is effective in your resettlement services, what the challenges are, how you have overcome these and what you may need to change. It is also important to find ways to identify and to celebrate what you have achieved and share this with others (see [Communications](#)).

You should consider the following ways of capturing the qualitative aspects your work:

- Hold regular forums and workshops where frontline practitioners can share experiences, learning, good practice and provide peer support. Such forums could be with people working on resettlement in other boroughs, such as the Refugee Resettlement Coordinators groups convened by the London Strategic Migration Partnership (LSMP).
- Establish a lived experience group of refugees who have arrived under the resettlement scheme. Support this group to meet regularly and channel feedback into the scheme. It is also good practice to compensate

- people for their time and expertise.
- Set up an advisory group for your scheme that involves local groups and key stakeholders within your borough.
 - Ensure that you have a complaints and feedback mechanism in place that is open to all the refugees who come on the scheme.
 - Collect case studies (which would be anonymised) that can be used to illustrate the resettlement work and used in broader communications about resettlement.
 - Commission methods of capturing the human stories of resettlement, such as films, photographic essays or artistic groups. [Find an example from the Scottish Refugee Council.](#)
 - Undertake formal evaluations or research into your resettlement work, optimally from the beginning of your resettlement. This can be done by commissioning an outside body or person to conduct the evaluation, such as an academic institution.

Please see some impact tool examples below:

- [Indicators of Integration](#)
- [Mayor of London's Social Integration Measurement Toolkit](#)
- [UK Government: Refugee resettlement analysis collection](#)
- [The Centre on Migration, Policy and Society \(COMPAS\) University of Oxford research](#)

Checklist

- Are you clear about what you need to record for reporting and monitoring?
- Do you have systems in place to capture the information you need?
- Are there aspects of the work beyond what you are required to report on, that you would like to capture and if so, how will you do that?
- How will you include the refugees into the methods for capturing the impact of your work? For example, you could coproduce a film or support an arts project for the refugees to produce material with which they can share their experiences.

21. Other formats and languages

For a large print, Braille, disc, sign language video or audio-tape version of this document, please contact us at the address below:

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City Hall
Kamal Chunchie Way
London E16 1ZE

Telephone **020 7983 4000**
www.london.gov.uk

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