

Syrian Vulnerable Persons Scheme FAQs

Following the decision in December 2015 to welcome Syrian refugee families to Cornwall, we have been busy working with our partners in the public sector, voluntary organisations and the wider community to resettle the families.

We have been asked lots of questions which we have listed, with answers below.

What is the difference between a refugee, an asylum seeker and an economic migrant?

• Refugee

A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

The *1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* states that in the UK, a person is officially a refugee when they have their claim for asylum accepted by the Government.

• Asylum Seeker

A person who has left their country of origin and formally applied for asylum in another country but whose application has not yet been concluded.

• Refused asylum seeker

A person whose asylum application has been unsuccessful and who has no other claim for protection awaiting a decision. Some refused asylum seekers voluntarily return home, others are forcibly returned and for some it is not safe or practical for them to return until conditions in their country change.

• Economic migrant

Someone who has moved to another country to work. Refugees are not economic migrants.

Who are the refugees?

The people coming to the UK under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement (VPR) scheme are in desperate need of assistance. The scheme prioritises those who cannot be supported effectively in their region of origin and includes women and children at risk, people in severe need of medical care and survivors of torture and violence, amongst others. They come from the areas and refugee camps around Syria so do not include people who have arrived in Europe.

All refugees will be screened for any security concerns by UNHCR before they get to the UK.

How many refugees are in Cornwall?

There are currently three families settled in Cornwall.

Where are they living?

In order to protect the families' privacy we will not be sharing information about where they are living but it is in the mid Cornwall area. . The families will not be housed within social housing stock and later they will be free to choose their own home in the private sector.

How long will they stay?

Refugees are granted a five year humanitarian protection visa. After five years they can apply to stay for longer, or return to Syria depending on the situation there.

How is this being paid for?

The Home Office provides Cornwall Council with funding to be spent on making sure the refugees get the services they need.

How is this support being delivered?

We have recruited two voluntary sector organisations to deliver support to the families, who help with things like translation, accessing services, filling in forms and settling into the community.

How can people help?

The funding from the Home Office covers all resources for the refugees, and as there are only a few families in Cornwall, not everybody will be able to contribute directly. However, if you want to offer some help in any form, please do so through www.gov.uk/helprefugees. Cornwall Council receives messages through this website.