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Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme - Extended Family Members

Under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement scheme we are working closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to ensure that vulnerable Syrians can, where possible, be resettled as a family group. We know that this is important for many of our families, but we do recognise that families sometimes become separated. When families are separated this can create queries to Local Authorities, who in turn seek advice from us, Strategic Migration Partnerships (SMP's) and from MP's about their extended family members ability to be resettled in the UK. In response, we have developed this information note for Local Authorities and their Resettlement contacts to understand the different routes through which family members *may* be eligible able to join their family already resettled under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme in the UK and what to do if they receive a request.

Family Reunification

If the families you have resettled have other family members based in one of the UK's resettlement host countries (these are Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt) and they wish to join their extended family in the UK under the resettlement scheme, this *might* be possible and there is a process through UNHCR to which they can apply.

Families in the host countries will first need to be registered with UNHCR. Then UNHCR will decide if resettlement is the right solution for them and if this happens, they will then be referred to the UK for consideration.

UNHCR supports the resettlement of individuals for whom:

- resettlement is the most appropriate durable solution, and
- fall under UNHCR's Resettlement Submission Categories, which are:
 - Legal and/or Physical Protection Needs
 - Survivors of Torture and/or Violence
 - Medical Needs or disabilities
 - Women and Girls at Risk
 - Family Reunification
 - Children and Adolescents at Risk
 - Lack of Foreseeable Alternative Durable Solutions

UNHCR will then also consider their exclusion criteria. Resettlement submissions are then prioritised according to the urgency of the case.

The *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook*, available from UNHCR's website at www.unhcr.org/resettlementhandbook, provides detailed guidance on the identification of refugees in need of resettlement, and the requirements for submission under the Resettlement Submission Categories.

There is no guarantee that family members will qualify to come to the UK. If they *are* accepted onto the scheme *and* they qualify to come to the UK, the UK authorities will try to



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resettle them in the same area of the UK if that is what both families wish, but this may not be in the same town and could be several miles/kilometres away depending on the availability of housing.

What should I do if I receive a request?

If your families contact you and ask you to assist their family members to join them in the UK through the family reunification route, you should direct these enquiries to UNHCR:

gbrlo@unhcr.org

We are unable to provide any information from UNHCR about extended family members resettlement applications and any prospective family reunification resettlement cases, without specific consent from the respective refugee abroad to disclose this information.

UNHCRs advice is that UK relatives should discuss directly with the refugees abroad the progress of their resettlement case.

Family Reunion – Immigration Rules

Under separate arrangements, the UK also allows dependents (children under the age of 18) and spouses/partners who formed part of the family unit before their sponsor fled their country to claim asylum or to join family members already in the UK. Applications for a family reunion visa should be made from outside the UK, but applications can also be made to UKVI by eligible family members already in the UK. There is no charge for Family Reunion applications and eligible family members can apply as soon their family members have arrived in the UK. This route under the Immigration Rules is separate to the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and the [family reunification](#) process under that scheme, no additional funding will be paid to the local authority. The following webpage provides further information on how to make an application - <https://www.gov.uk/settlement-refugee-or-humanitarian-protection/family-reunion>.

Other relatives may also be able to apply to come to the UK if they meet the particular criteria set out in the Immigration Rules. However these applications attract a fee, the family member in the UK will need to financially support any relatives that enter the UK using this route. There is no guarantee that an application will be successful. The following webpage provides further information on the qualifying criteria and how to make an application - <https://www.gov.uk/join-family-in-uk/overview>

There is no facility for making any UK visa applications (including family reunion applications) in Syria but family reunion applications can be made in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq or any other UKVI Visa Application Centre around the world.

The British Red Cross have qualified caseworkers in several parts of the UK who provide family reunion visa application support. Please contact the [British Red Cross](#) to find out whether this service is available in your area.