

Minister for Syrian Refugees visits families given sanctuary

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News story

The UK's new Minister for Syrian Refugees has visited some of those who have been given sanctuary in this country to see how coming here has changed their lives.

From:

Home Office and Lord Richard Harrington

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Richard Harrington went to Bradford to meet a group of Syrian families and to speak to those who are helping them to settle in the community.

The families were welcomed to the UK among more than 5,000 people who have been given refuge here since the conflict in Syria began.



The government has announced that it will bring a further 20,000 of the most vulnerable Syrians to the UK from the refugee camps set up for those fleeing violence at home.

Mr Harrington, who was appointed as the Minister for Syrian Refugees in September to co-ordinate the resettlement operation, said:

We want to bring the refugees from Syria here as quickly as possible – but we have to make sure we get it right for them.

I have spoken to those who are delivering the scheme on the front line. They spoke candidly about what has worked well, where things could be improved and what pressures they will face as the scheme grows – be it in school places, healthcare or housing. Their experiences will be critical to the success of the scheme as it expands.

I have also spent time with families who are now starting a new life in the UK. Listening to the stories of their journeys, their ordeal in the camps and how Britain has helped them start again, I was deeply proud of what we have already achieved.

But we have much more work ahead.

The minister's first priority is to increase the number of arrivals via the government's Vulnerable Persons Resettlement (VPR) scheme by working with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees)) to identify those who need our help the most.

Many have been injured or suffered psychological trauma. Others will need wider health or social care support. UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees) staff will provide support on the ground and give us their expert view on those who most need our assistance.

The UK has provided more than £1.1 billion in humanitarian aid – more than any other country in the world except the United States – to support those who have fled the Syrian conflict.

The government has also set up a new Organised Immigration Crime Task Force to work with our European partners to tackle the gangs of people-smugglers who are preying on the vulnerable by claiming to offer them the route to a new life in the EU.

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