

**Resettlement
Inter-Agency
Partnership**

Understanding resettlement to the UK

A guide to the Gateway Protection Programme

June 2004

Published by the Refugee Council on behalf of the Resettlement Inter-Agency Partnership



Acknowledgements

This guide has been prepared by the Resettlement Inter-Agency Partnership (RIAP). RIAP is a partnership of independent agencies funded by the Home Office to deliver services on the Gateway Protection Programme.

RIAP are: British Red Cross, the International Rescue Committee, Migrant Helpline, Refugee Action, Refugee Arrivals Project, Refugee Housing Association, the Refugee Council, and the Scottish Refugee Council.

Thanks go to all partners and the Home Office for their contributions and assistance in producing this guide.

Contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Defining resettlement	6
What is resettlement? What is the purpose of resettlement? What are the experiences of resettled refugees? What are the aims of resettlement for refugees? What are the challenges for resettlement countries?	
3. Other resettlement countries	9
4. Background to the UK programme	10
History of resettlement in the UK, Origins of the Gateway Protection Programme, Response of the refugee sector	
5. Who is involved?	12
6. Structures and relationships	13
International (Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, Working Group on Resettlement), The Gateway Protection Programme (Home Office National Steering Group, The Resettlement Inter-Agency Partnership)	
7. Determining eligibility for resettlement	16
Applications, Interview, Quota, Assessing applications for resettlement (Health status, Security screening, Dependants), Outcomes (Discretion)	
8. The resettlement process	19
Pre-arrival (Cultural orientation, Travel to the UK, Documents), On arrival (Orientation sessions, Assistance, Travel to the resettlement region), Long-term settlement (Housing, Benefits, Gaining independence), Longitudinal Research with Resettled Refugees	
9. Rights and entitlements	24
Family reunion, Citizenship, Restrictions (Elections, Travel)	
10. Information materials	26
For resettled refugees, For staff and other interested parties, On-line resources	
11. Description of agencies involved in resettlement	28
British Red Cross, International Rescue Committee, Migrant Helpline, Refugee Action, Refugee Arrivals Project, Refugee Housing Association, The Refugee Council, The Scottish Refugee Council	

1. Introduction

The Gateway Protection Programme is the official name for the UK's refugee resettlement programme. The UK government hopes to receive a quota of up to 500 refugees per year through the Programme. The first refugees on the Programme arrived in the UK in March 2004.

This practical guide usefully draws together into one place relevant information on resettlement from a number of sources. These include, *Refugee Resettlement: An International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration* (Integration Handbook, 2002) published by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UK Home Office asylum policy instructions, material produced by the Resettlement Inter-Agency Partnership (RIAP), including its terms of reference, and the expertise and knowledge of participating agencies.

The guide explains what is meant by resettlement, and outlines the aims of resettlement and some of the challenges faced by resettlement countries. Building on this, it describes the background to the Gateway Protection Programme, who is eligible, how it operates and who is involved.

Understanding resettlement to the UK: A guide to the Gateway Protection Programme is aimed at people working within the Programme and as an induction for those new to it. The guide also provides useful information for anyone wishing to gain a better understanding of the UK's approach to resettlement.

2. Defining resettlement

What is resettlement?

UNHCR promotes three durable solutions to the plight of refugees. These are:

- Voluntary repatriation
- Local integration
- Resettlement

In the context of its global operations, UNHCR defines voluntary repatriation as the voluntary and safe return of refugees to their country of origin after the cause of their flight has been removed or has dissipated; local integration as the settlement of refugees in their first country of asylum, often in the area where they first seek refuge; and resettlement as the transfer of a refugee from their country of asylum to a third country that has previously agreed to admit them and grant them a formal status – normally permanent residency with the possibility of acquiring future citizenship.

Resettlement, however, is more complex than this simple definition suggests. It is a process that may be long and difficult, involving the integration of refugees into a new community and the start of a new life, free of fear and persecution.

Resettlement has often been viewed as the third option in the hierarchy of durable solutions after voluntary return and local integration. However, in April 2000, the then UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, stated, "Resettlement can no longer be seen as the least-preferred durable solution; in many cases it is the *only* solution for refugees".

What is the purpose of resettlement?

Resettlement is recognised as serving a number of purposes, which include:

- Protecting refugees whose life, liberty, safety, health and other fundamental human rights are at immediate and continued risk in the country where they first sought asylum
- Providing a durable solution for those trapped in protracted refugee crises, especially where local integration and voluntary repatriation are not viable solutions
- Acting as a tangible demonstration of international solidarity and burden sharing with countries of first asylum who struggle to support large influxes of refugees from neighbouring countries
- Contributing to the resolution of protracted refugee situations

There are also benefits for the host country.

"While countries resettling refugees are motivated by humanitarian concerns, they also believe that refugee resettlement, along with their general migration programs, enrich them as societies." *Integration Handbook, p7*

What are the experiences of resettled refugees?

It is not possible to categorise refugee experiences simply, nor to distinguish between those of a refugee accepted onto a resettlement scheme and any other refugee. Like many refugees, those proposed for resettlement have particularly strong protection needs. They will have been exposed to a prolonged climate of violence and human rights violations. The UNHCR's *Integration Handbook* (p19) lists the following events to which refugees will have been subjected to or witnessed:

- Killings, assaults, rape, sometimes on a massive scale, including family members and friends
- Torture
- Disappearances
- Summary executions
- Restrictions on freedom of speech and movement
- Imprisonment
- Enforced separation from families and communities
- Destruction of their homes
- Forced displacement
- Enforced conscription

Prior to and since their forced displacement, refugees may also have suffered severe economic and material hardship and deprivation. In refugee camps and in the general community, refugees may have lived a hand-to-mouth, disempowered existence with a high dependence on government or other agencies for basic necessities. A lack of access to education or employment also leads to extreme monotony and boredom. This experience can put many refugees' lives on hold.

"Life in the refugee camp is something that you can really only experience in order to adequately describe it."

Resettled refugee, Integration Handbook, p22

In addition, many refugees will have been subjected to a climate in which their religious, racial, political or cultural integrity has been systematically undermined or destroyed through prohibition, exclusion, discrimination and violence.

Such treatment can continue in countries of asylum, where refugees can form unwelcome minorities and be viewed as competitors for scarce resources whether in camps or in cities. Vulnerable to further violence or abuse of their human rights, they may face the hostility of local communities. Some refugees spend a prolonged period in refugee camps where they may experience violence and lack personal safety. Many refugee children and some adults will have been born in camps.

Studies of permanently resettled refugees indicate that one in four has been subject to torture or severe human rights violations, and almost seven in ten subject to other traumatic events such as prolonged political repression and the loss of family members in violent circumstances (*Integration Handbook*, p19).

"To be here is like a dream that has turned into reality.... We are in heaven, and we have come from hell to be here."

Resettled refugee on UK programme, Sheffield Star, 23 March 2004

What are the aims of resettlement for refugees?

Understanding a little of the breadth and depth of refugee experiences helps to recognise the benefits that resettlement offers and understand why integration can be a difficult and long process.

Resettlement programmes aim to integrate resettled refugees into new communities. The *Integration Handbook* (p32) outlines nine goals for the integration of refugees in countries of resettlement:

1. To restore security, control and social and economic independence by meeting basic needs, facilitating communication and fostering the understanding of the receiving society
2. To promote the capacity to rebuild a positive future in the receiving society
3. To promote family reunification and restore supportive relationships within families
4. To promote connections with volunteers and professionals able to provide support
5. To restore confidence in political systems and institutions and to reinforce the concept of human rights and the rule of law
6. To promote cultural and religious integrity and to restore attachments to, and promote participation in, community, social, cultural and economic systems by valuing diversity
7. To counter racism, discrimination and xenophobia and build welcoming and hospitable communities
8. To support the development of strong, cohesive refugee communities and credible refugee leadership
9. To foster conditions that support the integration potential of all resettled refugees taking into account the impact of age, gender, family status and past experience

What are the challenges for resettlement countries?

Achieving these goals requires commitment from and co-operation between statutory bodies, non-governmental agencies and local communities to ensure appropriate and adequate support is provided to refugees.

Providing support enhances the chances of refugees to gain independence and fully contribute to their new communities. However, ensuring the right support is available at the right time and at the right level, poses a number of challenges in the planning and delivery of a resettlement programme.

Some of the practical challenges include gauging the views and preferences of refugees in the region of origin, managing expectations, placing refugees in suitable host communities, the availability of appropriate housing, language barriers, linking refugees into mainstream services quickly and effectively, and assisting with family reunion.

3. Other resettlement countries

There are currently ten main resettlement countries with annual resettlement programmes or quotas. These are: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States. In addition to these countries, eight emerging resettlement countries, in addition to the UK, have started to implement resettlement programmes in co-operation with UNHCR: Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, Iceland, Ireland, Spain and Argentina. Other countries accept cases on an ad-hoc basis.

UNHCR is encouraging more governments to establish resettlement programmes to extend the opportunity for a durable solution to more refugees.

The following table indicates the scale of resettlement to some of the main resettlement countries.¹

Country	Quota (2001)	Year programme established
USA	80,000	1980
Canada	11,000	1978
Australia	10,000	Not known
Norway	1,500	Not known
Sweden	1,375	1950
New Zealand	750	1979
Finland	750	1979
Denmark	517	1989
Netherlands	500	1984

Like the number of refugees accepted on programmes, the criteria used by states to determine eligibility for resettlement vary. However, all programmes recognise and accommodate a range of compelling circumstances at their core, including protection cases, family reunification, refugees with special needs such as women at risk, seriously disabled refugees or serious medical cases.

¹ http://www.unhcr.org.uk/resettlement/resettlement_pdfs/resettlement_programs03-04.pdf and UNHCR (2001) *Easy Guide to Refugee Resettlement Programmes*.

4. Background to the UK programme

History of resettlement in the UK

Prior to the Gateway Protection Programme, the UK operated two informal resettlement schemes: the Mandate Refugee Scheme, and the Ten or More Plan. These schemes have not been incorporated into the Gateway Protection Programme, although this may change. Resettlement under these programmes is limited. For the Mandate Refugee Scheme applicants must have close ties in the UK, and Ten or More Plan applicants must show that they require medical attention that is not available where they are living.

The UK has also provided resettlement in response to emergency situations since the end of the Second World War, in particular:

- 210,000 Polish Second World War exiles and dependants, 1940-50
- 20,000 Hungarians fleeing Soviet occupation, 1957
- 42,000 Ugandan Asians expelled from Uganda, 1972-4
- 3000 Chilean refugees escaping a military coup, 1973-9
- 22,500 Vietnamese displaced persons, 1979-92
- Over 2500 Bosnians in the early 1990s
- Over 4000 Kosovans, most receiving temporary status, 1999¹

The Gateway Protection Programme marks a change from the programmes established for these arrivals in the Government's commitment to receive refugees for resettlement through a broader, structured programme on a regular and consistent basis.

"Providing a sanctuary for those fleeing terror and persecution is a longstanding noble British tradition."
Home Secretary, David Blunkett, March 2004

In the past, the general attitude shown by the press and public towards arrivals on such programmes has been positive and the reception welcoming.

The UK refugee agencies have a strong record of working on previous programmes, with lessons learnt through a series of independent evaluations. For example, there is now recognition of the importance of long-term support strategies to assist effective integration as well as the need for community development assistance for both the refugees and the receiving communities.

Previous programmes have also highlighted the need for careful management of the placement of refugees, to ensure clusters are developed in appropriate communities and locations. As a result of its experience, the refugee sector has emphasised the good practice of enabling rapid access for refugees to existing networks and mainstream services to facilitate independence. Access to adequate educational support for refugees and refugee children has been shown to be of particular importance.

¹ UNHCR (2004) http://www.unhcr.org.uk/resettlement/home_office_scheme.html

Another positive factor arising, especially from the later programmes, was the importance of effective inter-agency co-ordination in the NGO sector as a cost-effective way of pooling resources and expertise, to maintain a national overview, and to ensure that the best interests of refugees are represented.

Origins of the Gateway Protection Programme

The UK's interest in a resettlement scheme was first declared in June 2000 by the then Home Secretary, Jack Straw, at a European summit in Lisbon, Portugal. He outlined his vision of EU asylum policy, which contained proposals for an EU-wide resettlement programme large enough to have an impact on the number of asylum seekers making their own way to Europe.

On 29 October 2001, the Home Secretary, David Blunkett proposed a UK resettlement scheme that would "provide a means of transporting in safety a number of refugees, for whom life in their region of origin was unsustainable". He made a commitment to operating the scheme in conjunction ("bilaterally") with UNHCR and "in addition to current UK asylum determination procedures".

In a statement on 7 February 2002, launching the White Paper on Nationality, Immigration and Asylum, the Home Secretary characterised resettlement as "the new 'gateway' for those seeking to settle in Britain". The legal basis for funding the resettlement programme is contained within Section 59 of the Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Response of the refugee sector

The refugee sector welcomed the announcement of a UK resettlement programme and proposed 12 guiding principles to which the programme should adhere. The most fundamental of these are:

- The UK programme must be founded wholly on the principle of resettling those in greatest need of protection
- Resettlement must be viewed as additional to the UK's obligations to refugees who make their own way to the UK

The refugee sector also continues to advocate good integration practice and a parity of rights and entitlements between all refugees. The Refugee Council publication, *Principles of a UK Resettlement Programme* provides a full list of the 12 principles and is available on the Refugee Council website¹.

¹ <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/publications/pub007.htm#resettlement>

5. Who is involved?

The Gateway Protection Programme involves an array of Government departments, local councils, inter-governmental organisations, and non-governmental organisations as can be seen in the following table.

Type of organisation	Name
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Office • Department for Work and Pensions • Department for Health • Department for Education • Local authorities • Other departments and agencies where appropriate
Inter-governmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees • International Organization for Migration
Non-governmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Red Cross • International Rescue Committee • Migrant Helpline • Refugee Action • Refugee Arrivals Project • Refugee Housing Association • Scottish Refugee Council • The Refugee Council • Community organisations

The Home Office is the lead government department and is responsible for overall management of the Programme. The non-governmental organisations are responsible for much of the practical implementation of the resettlement programme.

The relationships between and structures of the above organisations are described in section 6; the roles of these organisations in the resettlement process are described in section 8; and descriptions of the non-governmental agencies can be found in section 11.

6. Structures and relationships

International

Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATC)

The Gateway Protection Programme is one of a number of national resettlement programmes operating in co-ordination with UNHCR. The Annual Tripartite Consultations provide a forum for resettlement countries, UNHCR and non-governmental organisations to review progress on resettlement issues and to shape a joint strategy. UNHCR describes the purpose of the Consultations as follows:

- To raise awareness with a view toward building consensus in the Executive Committee (EXCOM) for the support of key resettlement issues, including the establishment of new programmes
- To share information about resettlement needs, provide opportunities for planning purposes and allow for analysis of important policy issues
- To focus attention on UNHCR's resettlement activities, relevant operational issues, and key responsibilities for case identification and referral¹

Working Group on Resettlement

This meets on a more regular basis than the ATC and is attended by resettlement countries to discuss their annual refugee resettlement quota.

The Gateway Protection Programme

Home Office National Steering Group

The Gateway Protection Programme is overseen by the National Steering Group. Meeting every six weeks and led by the Home Office, the Steering Group brings together participating government departments and non-governmental agencies to assess and advise on the roll-out of the Programme.

The Resettlement Inter-Agency Partnership (RIAP)

The Resettlement Inter-Agency Partnership (RIAP) comprises of the British Red Cross, the International Rescue Committee, Migrant Helpline, Refugee Action, the Refugee Arrivals Project, the Refugee Housing Association, the Scottish Refugee Council, and the Refugee Council. These eight non-governmental organisations came together at the planning stage of the Gateway Protection Programme to form a partnership for the delivery of services on the Programme.

Successful partnerships were developed for the delivery of services during successive programmes including the Vietnamese, Bosnian and Kosovan programmes through the 1980s and 1990s, as well as currently for front-line asylum services. RIAP has been modelled on these previous partnerships.

The full structure and governance of RIAP is set out in the partnership's working arrangements and terms of reference. The following (and the diagram on page 15) summarises this document:

¹ <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home?page=PROTECT&id=3bc6f5c64&ID=3bc6f5c64&PUBLISHER=TWO>

RIAP Chief Executives' Group (CEG)

The Bosnian and Kosovan programmes demonstrated the need for organisations to maintain a strategic overview of a programme at a senior level, ensuring a partnership approach to policy and operational developments. The chief executives, or senior management representatives, of the RIAP agencies form this strategic group.

The group, referred to as RIAP, meets monthly and is responsible for ensuring that the Programme and its development is in the best interests of asylum seekers and refugees, and is contextualised within the sector's wider policies and services. RIAP oversees the co-ordination of the participating agencies and their relations with the Home Office, NASS and local authorities as well as maintaining an overview of finances and service standards.

The Home Office attends RIAP meetings. Other agencies such as IOM and UNHCR are invited as appropriate.

The Inter-Agency Management Group (IAMG)

The programme managers from each RIAP agency together form the Inter-Agency Management Group (IAMG). Identified by previous programmes as an important mechanism for effective project management, IAMG takes forward the detailed planning for the roll out of services for the Programme.

In addition to the planning, development and delivery of services within their own agencies, the managers in this group are responsible for working with the Resettlement Inter-Agency Co-ordinator (RIAC) to ensure co-ordination, consistency and good practice across the Programme.

Chaired by RIAC, this group is facilitated and serviced by the Resettlement Inter-agency Team (RIAT). Meetings currently take place on a monthly basis.

Inter-Agency co-ordination

In previous programmes, an inter-agency co-ordinator was key to ensuring effective inter-agency co-operation and the positive input of the refugee sector. In the Gateway Protection Programme, as also agreed in previous programmes, this role sits within the Refugee Council. To maintain a distinction between the Refugee Council's operational services and this co-ordination role, the Resettlement Inter-Agency Co-ordinator (RIAC) is located within the Refugee Council's Development Group.

RIAC is responsible for a range of co-ordinating issues including, the planning, development, and delivery of services by partner agencies, good communication and the sharing of good practice, and liaison with the Home Office and other stakeholders such as local authorities and UNHCR. RIAC also provides expert advice to RIAP and the Home Office, informs on new national and international policy developments, and manages the Resettlement Inter-Agency Team (RIAT), which supports RIAC in these activities.

In addition, RIAT produces, disseminates and co-ordinates information for the Programme, and provides regular updates to partners and other stakeholders about programme developments and refugee caseloads. RIAT is a point of

contact for the Home Office, community organisations and other stakeholders for information on the Programme. It also helps to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of the Programme.

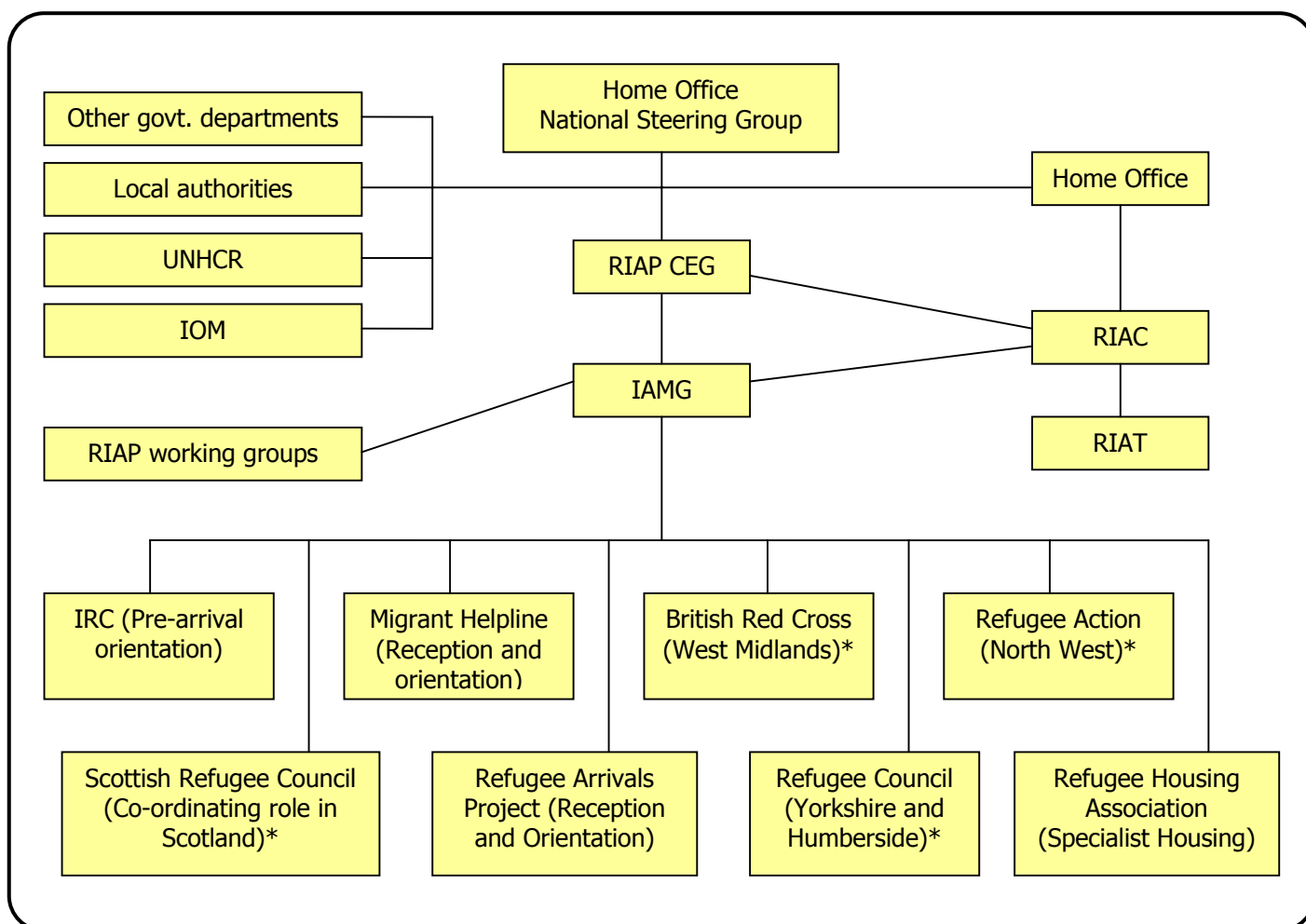
Inter-agency working groups

These are formed as need arises. The main working group is the Information Sub-Group (ISG), serviced by the RIAT Information Officer. ISG ensures the co-ordination of information across the Programme. The group includes all RIAP agencies.

Local/regional structures

Local advisory groups facilitate liaison between statutory and voluntary sector service providers in the resettlement regions. These meetings are chaired and facilitated by the lead agencies in the appropriate region as indicated by the asterisk '*' in the diagram below. The regions listed are those under current consideration. RIAP is working with the Home Office to develop resettlement potential in other regions as well.

The Gateway Protection Programme: – Diagram of structures and relationships



7. Determining eligibility for resettlement

The following is a summary of the Home Office's asylum policy instructions.¹ They describe the basis on which refugees are considered for the Gateway Protection Programme.

Applications

UNHCR refers applications for resettlement to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) in the Home Office. Applications can only be made through UNHCR. After interview, applications are assessed and decisions made individually on their merits by IND caseworkers.

Interview

An IND Overseas Resettlement Officer (ORO) interviews all principal applicants and, if appropriate, their dependants, to assist in making a decision by confirming and supplementing information passed to IND by UNHCR. The interview is also used to gather information regarding integration and support needs, should the application be successful.

The interviews take place during a Home Office mission to a region where the Home Office in conjunction with UNHCR has identified an appropriate caseload. Missions do not take place at regular intervals. They take place only when there is capacity to receive refugees in the UK. OROs interview between 60 and 100 people (including dependants) on each mission.

Quota

An annual quota limits the number of arrivals through the Gateway Protection Programme. The quota was set at 500 individuals for 2004/05. Ministers set the quota each year based on available resources, global resettlement needs, and the impact on local services in the UK.

Assessing applications for resettlement

Individuals referred to the UK for resettlement are considered by UNHCR to be eligible for recognition as refugees according to the 1951 Refugee Convention. When IND caseworkers assess cases, they must also be satisfied that the applicant is a refugee under the terms of the 1951 Refugee Convention, as well as being satisfied that the applicant meets the UNHCR criteria for resettlement. These are

- because their life, liberty, safety, health, or other fundamental human rights are at risk in the country where they have sought refuge; or
- to provide a durable solution if the applicant's situation is not secure in the long term (they may not have immediate protection concerns).

The UNHCR's *Resettlement Handbook* states that, the applicant may:

¹ Available at <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/default.asp?PageId=4448>

- have legal or physical protection needs;
- have medical needs;
- be a survivor of violence and torture;
- be a woman at risk;
- not have local integration prospects;
- be elderly (and in a situation that makes them particularly vulnerable); or
- be a child (and in a situation that makes them particularly vulnerable).

In addition to this, the UK states that applicants must also

- co-operate with UK officials, UNHCR, and any other body involved in the UK resettlement programme (for example by complying with anti-fraud procedures);
- be committed to supporting themselves and their family (with support and training);
- not be in a polygamous marriage; and
- not have an active application lodged for the mandate scheme or ten or more plan.

Caseworkers are also instructed to take into account

- whether the Programme is able to meet the resettlement needs of the applicant and their dependants;
- whether resettlement of the applicant and their dependants in the UK would not be conducive to the public good;
- the health of the applicant, and dependants (see below);
- whether resettlement to the UK may be contrary to the best interests of the applicant, or their dependants; and
- whether the case is linked to that of a dependant, someone upon whom the principal applicant is dependant, or a relative and the impact of refusal or acceptance.

These factors should be balanced against the applicants' personal circumstances, including their need for resettlement.

Health status

Health screening is conducted for all applicants and their dependants. Resettlement is not offered when an applicant has a disease or illness, which, for the applicant's own health, or for public health reasons, precludes travel, or requires treatment before travel. Resettlement may be offered when this ceases to be the case. In such cases, a decision can be suspended until an applicant can travel.

Resettlement is not offered to applicants, or dependants, with HIV/AIDS, Multi-Drug-Resistant-TB, or established renal failure. However, the Secretary of State can exercise discretionary power to admit such applicants onto the Programme.

Security screening

Security screening is conducted for the principal applicant and dependants. Any information obtained is considered against the exclusion provisions in the 1951 Refugee Convention. If there is any reason to suspect that an applicant, or dependant, has been a combatant, checks are made with relevant authorities to

ensure that the applicant is not wanted by a recognised authority for war crimes, or in connection with their military service.

Dependants

Ordinarily, only the spouse and/or minor children of a principal applicant are treated as dependants in an application for resettlement. However, in deciding whether other persons should be considered as dependants of the principal applicant caseworkers must take into account

- whether the dependant is part of a pre-existing family group;
- the family relationship to the principal applicant;
- whether the caseworker is satisfied that the relationship is genuine, and as claimed;
- the impact on the dependant, financially and psychologically, if they are not resettled with the principal applicant.

Also taken into consideration, when assessing whether a dependant can be resettled with the principal applicant, are the additional criteria as described for the principal applicant above as well as the dependant's age, their own need for resettlement or protection, and the impact upon them, should they not be resettled with the principal applicant.

Dependants who are not declared to UNHCR or IND at the point of application cannot apply to be recognised as the principal applicant's dependants after a decision on the application. If the application has been granted, dependants can apply for family reunion in the normal way.

Outcomes

Grant of resettlement: When a person is accepted for resettlement they are informed of the decision by letter, via UNCHR, and are told of the steps to be taken, such as pre-departure health treatment, cultural orientation and travel. Normally, people accepted onto the resettlement scheme are granted indefinite leave to enter the UK, and those recognised as Convention refugees qualify for refugee status on arrival.

Suspended decision: This is issued when a person will be accepted for resettlement, but is temporarily unable to travel or be received in the UK, for example if the person is in the late stages of pregnancy or is still receiving medical treatment in preparation for travel. An applicant is informed by letter, via UNHCR, of the delay and when the case will be reviewed and travel to the UK arranged.

Refused resettlement: If an applicant is refused resettlement they are informed of the decision via UNHCR, giving clear reasons for the refusal. If the refusal is on medical grounds, of which the applicant may not be aware, the applicant receives support and advice from IOM. Refused applicants do not have a right to appeal the decision. However, if an applicant's circumstances change, UNHCR can re-submit their case for consideration.

Discretion

If an applicant or dependant does not qualify for the resettlement programme, but has compelling compassionate circumstances then discretion can be exercised to admit the applicant or dependant outside the normal criteria.

8. The resettlement process

Refugees accepted onto the Gateway Protection Programme are currently brought to the UK in groups of approximately 20 persons. The number of households this will comprise is dependent on the size of the families being resettled. Under normal circumstances, there will be a two-week interval between the arrival of each group.

The following describes the process undertaken by the first arrivals. The location of the pre-arrival cultural orientation sessions (Accra) and the destination city in the UK (Sheffield) are not fixed and will vary according to the roll-out of the Programme.

The diagram on page 23 may help in understanding the process.

Pre-arrival

No later than six weeks prior to arrival in the UK, the Home Office informs the Resettlement Inter-Agency Partnership (RIAP) of the composition of a caseload accepted for resettlement to the UK pending further health checks and the allocation of accommodation in the UK.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) escorts the refugees from camps or current place of refuge to Accra. Refugees on the Programme arrive in Accra on a Friday, departing late the following Thursday. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) welcomes the refugees to the hotel accommodation in Accra and ensures that they are safely settled on the Friday evening.

On the Saturday morning, the refugees should receive final health checks, inoculations and other treatments arranged by IOM. A small amount of pocket money is provided and shoes and warm clothing for those in need of them.

Cultural orientation

IRC prepares the refugees for their arrival in the UK through a pre-arrival cultural orientation programme. This takes place at the hotel where the refugees are staying. The pre-arrival cultural orientation programme lasts four days, starting with an introductory session on the Sunday afternoon. Additional individual or group sessions are provided where there is a clear need.

Sessions are designed to manage expectations and give refugees a clear understanding of the resettlement process. They include familiarisation with the UK (history, geography, politics, climate), finance and budgeting, housing, employment, healthcare, education, rights and responsibilities, and cultural adjustment. Sessions are discussion-based and client-led, with workshops and role-plays, to ensure they best meet the needs of the group.

On the final day, an evaluation session is held with the group and certificates are presented to each of them. This is followed by sessions with the principal applicant or households, if necessary, to answer specific concerns or meet specific needs. During these sessions, IRC explain data protection and refugees can sign a data authorisation form enabling IRC to share information with other agencies. If the form

is signed, IRC attach case notes to the refugees' IOM folder to assist partner agencies later in the process.

Childcare facilities are provided by IRC, to ensure that all those over the age of 15 can fully participate in the cultural orientation programme.

Prior to arrival in the UK, refugees may also be given English language training, subject to time and budgetary constraints, and the needs of a particular caseload.

Travel to the UK

On the day of departure, IOM transport the refugees to the airport, assist them through departure procedures and escort them on the flight itself. The flight lasts approximately seven hours, with refugees leaving Accra late on Thursday night and arriving in London early on Friday morning.

Documents

One-way identity documents valid for travel to the UK, called 'GV3s', are issued to enable travel from the region of origin. Refugees also carry with them their medical records. Status documents are prepared for each refugee prior to their arrival in the UK. These documents are passed to the Immigration Service and checked against the flight list. The documents are given to the refugees at the immigration desk upon arrival in the UK.

Status documents take the form of an official status letter granting indefinite leave to enter (ILE) and an accompanying explanatory letter. The status letter is soon to be replaced by an identification card, or 'vignette', incorporating a photograph.

On arrival

The refugees do not travel immediately to their resettlement region. On arrival in the UK, they ordinarily spend three nights in accommodation near to the airport to give them opportunity to rest, to begin to orientate themselves in a secure environment, and to ensure that pressing medical needs are rapidly identified. Refugee Arrivals Project (RAP) and Migrant Helpline deliver services during this arrival period.

At the airport, IOM UK and RAP meet the refugees and their IOM escort airside. A quick assessment of needs is made by RAP and a brief explanation of what is to happen is given to the refugees. IOM disengage. The refugees are taken to immigration control and their GV3s are exchanged for status documents. RAP escort the refugees to a nearby hotel where they receive further orientation and briefings.

Orientation sessions

Migrant Helpline devise and deliver orientation sessions in the hotel. The information they provide builds on the pre-arrival cultural orientation programme and is tailored to individual and household needs. Sessions include information about road safety, using UK currency, rights and responsibilities, benefits and support in the resettlement region.

Assistance

While in this accommodation, meals are provided. A small amount of money is given to the refugees to spend on personal items. Clean underwear, new shoes and a

toiletry pack are also provided. A clothing store is also available, consisting of second-hand items. Refugees can choose several items, including warm clothing.

Travel to the resettlement region

After the final night in the arrival accommodation (usually Monday morning), RAP escort the refugees to their resettlement region. During the journey, each adult refugee receives the equivalent of two weeks' jobseekers allowance. This money is a grant and counts as ordinary capital when the refugees' benefit claims are assessed.

Long-term settlement

It is important from the outset to encourage independence and reduce institutionalised dependence potentially arising from life in camps. However, once in their resettlement regions, the refugees will continue to require support. This is offered for at least the first 12 months in the UK through the relevant RIAP agency and is led by the needs of the individual refugee (see page 13 for the structures and relationships within RIAP).

The first arrivals on the Gateway Protection Programme were resettled in Sheffield and supported by the Refugee Council. The following describes the model devised by the Refugee Council. This may be subject to change in regions where other agencies have responsibility.

Housing

Housing is arranged for refugees on the Programme prior to arrival in the UK. However, the refugees sign standard tenancy agreements and must pay for the rent themselves. In Sheffield, the Refugee Council sub-contracted housing provision to Safe Haven. Safe Haven finds suitable properties and ensures that they are ready for new tenants. Most of the properties identified by Safe Haven are owned by housing associations. Only in exceptional circumstances are refugees on the Programme housed in temporary accommodation rather than their permanent residence.

RAP accompany the refugees to Sheffield where they are met by Safe Haven and the Refugee Council. Individual households are then taken by car direct to their properties.

Each household is shown around their new home and instructed how to use appliances. A food pack is prepared for each household containing basic items, such as coffee, sugar, salt, oil, vegetables, bread and rice.

Benefits

Within the first week in Sheffield, the refugees are taken to Jobcentre Plus. Here they are interviewed and advised regarding national insurance, jobseekers allowance, income support, tax credits, council tax benefit, and housing benefit (see page 24 for a description of entitlements). Benefit payments are backdated to the day the refugees arrived in Sheffield. The refugees are also given advice about training, language courses, and volunteering and employment opportunities.

Gaining independence

Although private transport is used in the first few days, the refugees thereafter are encouraged to use public transport and should be using it regularly within two weeks. Also in the first two weeks in the resettlement region, the refugees go food

shopping, they open a bank account, register with a doctor, and have their children enrolled in schools or colleges and even starting classes. The adults themselves may begin language or other courses at colleges to help them into employment.

The assistance and planning of local authority departments such as the local education authority and the Primary Care Trust are crucial to ensuring these activities take place promptly. Interpreters are provided where needed.

After this intense period of activity, on-going support is provided through regular Refugee Council home visits and local drop-in sessions. The level of support offered to the refugees is determined by individual and group needs. Individual case plans are developed by the Refugee Council to track progress and assist integration. However, a flexible approach is adopted to respond to evolving needs.

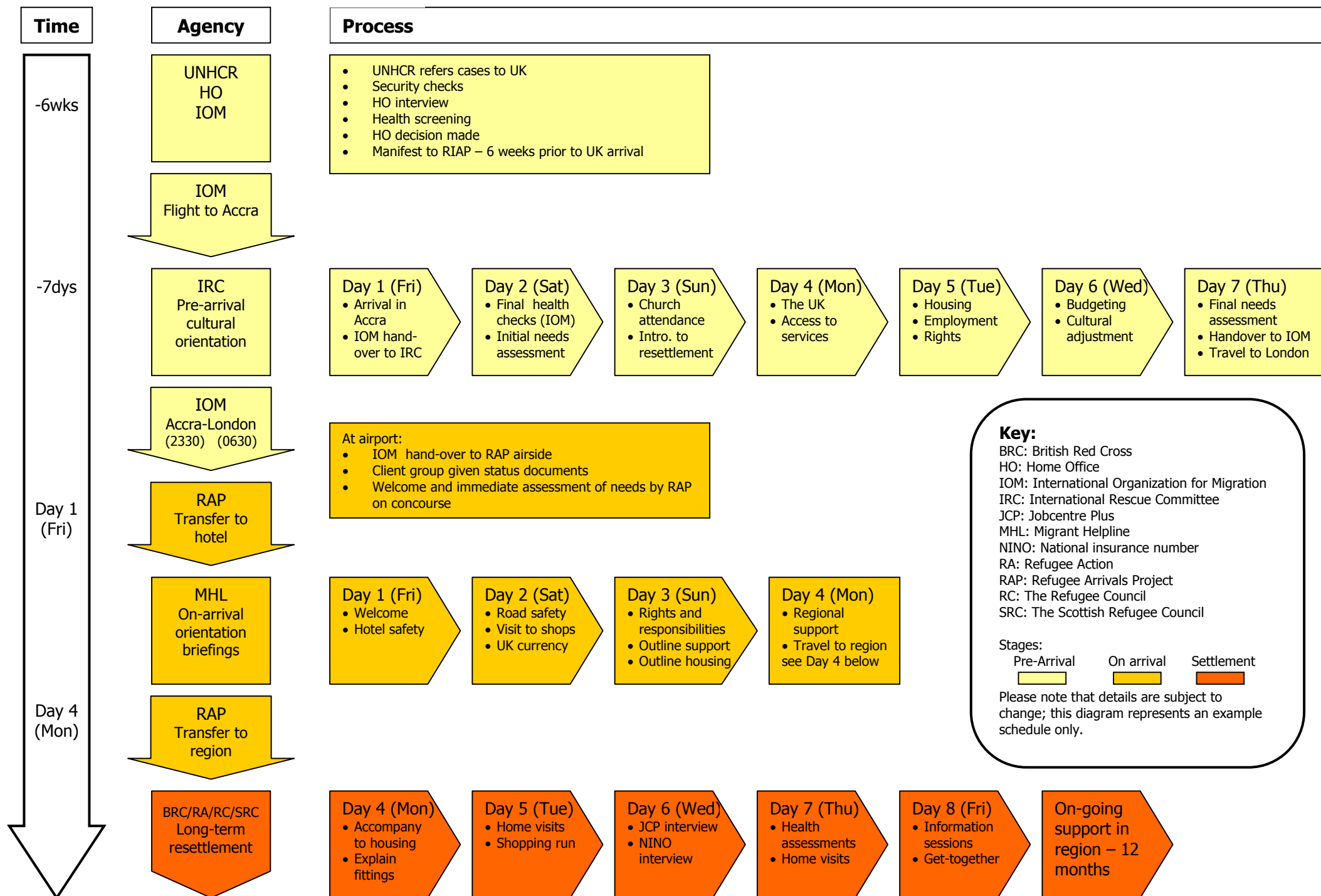
For the agencies involved, this process starts again after two weeks with the next group of refugees being resettled.

Longitudinal Research with Resettled Refugees

This research project follows refugees arriving in the UK on the Gateway Protection Programme over a substantial period of time to see how they adjust, settle and integrate into their new communities. The Immigration Research and Statistics Service (IRSS), a section of the Home Office, are conducting the research. They will conduct regular interviews with the refugees for the duration of the project.

The information gathered will be used by the Home Office to help develop policies to assist future arrivals achieve economic and social integration. Interviews are conducted on an entirely voluntary and anonymous basis.

Gateway Protection Programme – Process map



9. Rights and entitlements

Refugees on the Gateway Protection Programme have been recognised as refugees according to the 1951 Refugee Convention by UNHCR. Further to this, they have been proposed for resettlement to the UK by UNHCR because of particular protection needs. The Home Office has also assessed the refugees on a case-by-case basis and considers them eligible for the resettlement programme, exceptionally outside of the UK immigration rules.

Consequently, upon arrival in the UK, the refugees on the Programme are granted the immigration status of indefinite leave to enter (ILE). This entitles the refugees to permanent residency in the UK and grants them the right to work, and therefore to the same benefits as all settled residents, as is the case for any refugee in the UK.

Refugees are eligible for jobseekers allowance, income support, working tax credit, child tax credit, housing benefits, council tax benefit and most other forms of benefit. As refugees, those on the resettlement programme are also immediately eligible for all the provisions of the New Deal.

Similarly, refugees have the same rights to education, healthcare and social services as settled residents. The Jobcentre Plus website gives more information about benefits for refugees at: www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk.

The following table summarises the entitlements of resettled refugees.

Entitled to	
Welfare benefits	Yes
Public housing	Yes
Social services	Yes
Early years nurseries	Yes
Schools (ages 4-16)	Yes
Further education	Same as UK citizen
Higher education fees	Same as UK citizen
Higher education grants/loans	Yes
Permission to work	Yes
National Health Service	Yes
Family reunion	Yes
Travel overseas	Yes (with restrictions)

Family reunion

Refugees who have fled their country and have been living in camps for many years may not conform to standard family units. As a result of the death of husbands, wives or children, family units may have been reshaped in order to cope with life in the camps and to care for those who survived. It is possible that a household will be headed by two sisters, or for a woman to care for her nephews as if they were her children, or for an eldest brother or sister to look after their siblings. In recognition of these circumstances, the Home Office will consider applications exceptionally from non-immediate family members on a case-by-case basis.

Furthermore, the Home Office is exploring ways in which its family reunion policy can accommodate resettled refugees' needs. The Home Office specifically ask in interviews whether refugees have other family members who are not currently residing with them. However, given the circumstances from which the refugees come, there will always be the possibility of re-establishing contact with family members, and therefore the need for them to be reunited with their family.

In the process of considering family reunion applications, the Home Office, in conjunction with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, may seek to verify the nature of the relationship by the method of DNA testing. In such circumstances there is a minimum waiting period of eight weeks before an application can be formally concluded.

Citizenship

Acceptance onto the Gateway Protection Programme does not fast-track a person to citizenship. If resettled refugees wish to become British citizens, they must have five years continuous residency in the UK, or three years if married to a British citizen.

Restrictions

There are main two areas where resettled refugees, like other refugees, encounter restrictions not faced by UK citizens.

Elections

Refugees cannot stand or vote in local, national, or European elections unless they are a European Union or Commonwealth citizen.

Travel

Refugees have freedom of movement within the UK. If they wish to travel abroad they need to apply for a Convention Travel Document, as they will not have a national passport. The Convention Travel Document will prohibit travel to the country from which a refugee has sought asylum.

Furthermore, not all refugees on the resettlement programme will be eligible for a Convention Travel Document, particularly if the Home Office has admitted them to the UK on compassionate grounds, rather than recognising them as Convention refugees. In such cases, they will need to apply for a Home Office travel document. Some countries do not accept this as a valid travel document. Some of resettled refugees may therefore be restricted from travelling to certain countries, including their country of nationality.

10. Information materials

RIAP produces information materials to assist refugees being resettled, those working within the Programme, and interested parties. This ranges from information about life in the UK, detailed information about accessing services, to social and cultural information about refugee groups. The Resettlement Inter-Agency Team (RIAT) hold a directory of all the information materials used and available on the Programme, including core guides. Information is also available on the Refugee Council website at: www.refugeecouncil.org.uk.

Information for the Programme is produced and co-ordinated by the RIAT Information Officer in conjunction with the Information Sub-Group. The following is a list of the core information available for the Programme

For resettled refugees:

Pre-arrival	<p><i>Welcome to the UK – A first step</i></p> <p>An introduction to the resettlement programme, including information on what will happen and what to expect upon reaching the UK. Will require updating for each new region.</p>
	<p>Classroom materials</p> <p>Laminates and acetates with images of currency, resettlement region, housing, common sights. Also, maps, videos, and postcards. Updated for each new region.</p>
On-arrival and initial settlement	<p><i>Welcome to the UK – Further steps</i></p> <p>Detailed information covering the arrival period and the early stages of settlement, for example, what happens next, rights and entitlements. This guide is updated for each new resettlement region.</p> <p><i>The Gateway Protection Programme – Client brochure</i></p> <p>Pictorial information given to the refugees on arrival to help them familiarise themselves with common sights, equipment and documentation.</p>
Long-term settlement	<p>Supplementary leaflets</p> <p>Give advice on specific issues that may arise over the longer-term, such as finding a home, accessing higher education, training opportunities, childcare or covering issues not discussed in core guides, such as what a refugee should do if they leave the resettlement programme.</p>

For staff and other interested parties:

Prior to arrivals	<p><i>A guide to social and cultural norms</i></p> <p>Provides information for those working within the Programme to assist with preparations for a new caseload. A guide has been produced about Liberian arrivals. New guides will be produced depending on the size and background of new client groups.</p>
Programme-wide	<p><i>Understanding the Gateway Protection Programme</i></p> <p>A guide to resettlement in the UK detailing its history and the processes involved in the current Programme.</p> <p>Briefs and written articles</p> <p>Digestible information for media purposes, sector newsletters and circulars. Important in the early stages of the Programme and in part superseded by <i>Understanding the Gateway Protection Programme</i>.</p>

On-line resources

The following websites contain useful or relevant information pertaining to the Gateway Protection Programme, refugees on the Programme, or services for refugees.

BBC News – <http://www.bbc.co.uk>
News in 43 languages

LingNet: The Global Language Network – <http://www.lingnet.org>
Provided by the Defense Language Institute, LingNet hosts an expanding 'Countries in Perspective' series at www.lingnet.org/areaStudies/perspectives.

MORE Project – <http://www.more.fi>
A joint project established by Ireland and Finland with the aim of developing comprehensive resettlement models that can be utilised by European Union Member States and other countries.

Multikulti – <http://www.multikulti.org.uk>
Provides information, advice, guidance and learning tools on a variety of welfare issues in 11 languages.

Refugee Access – <http://www.refugeeaccess.info>
Aims to provide a single gateway to information about services and rights for asylum seekers and refugees in Yorkshire, Humberside, and the Liverpool area. Information is available in eight languages.

The Cultural Orientation Project – <http://www.culturalorientation.net>
A resource centre for cultural orientation information used on the USA refugee resettlement programme. The cultural orientation guide, *Welcome to the United States: A Guidebook for Refugees* (1996) is available at www.culturalorientation.net/welcome.

UNHCR – <http://www.unhcr.ch>
Provides up to date information about refugees, asylum seekers, and displaced persons around the world, as well as policy papers and statistics. Information about the UK resettlement programme can be found at UNHCR's UK website, www.unhcr.org.uk/resettlement.

The UNHCR Resettlement Handbook and the Refugee Resettlement: An International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration are both available on-line at www.unhcr.ch.

For further information about the Gateway Protection Programme contact the Resettlement Inter-Agency Team at the Refugee Council or visit the resettlement pages on Refugee Council website at: <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk>.

11. Description of agencies involved in resettlement

British Red Cross

UK Office,
9 Grosvenor Crescent,
London SW1X 7EJ

Tel: 020 7235 5454
Fax: 020 7245 6315
<http://www.redcross.org.uk>

The British Red Cross (BRC) is part of the world-wide Red Cross movement assisting vulnerable people affected by conflict and natural disaster. It is an emergency response organisation with 23 areas across the UK assisting vulnerable people in crisis. Amongst other activities, the British Red Cross delivers services on the Mandate Refugee Scheme and the Ten or More Plan, and helps to restore family links between those separated by conflict.

International Rescue Committee

11 Gower Street
London
WC1E 6HB

Tel: 020 7692 2727
Fax: 020 7323 3800
<http://www.theirc.org>

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has been serving refugees, the displaced and populations affected by conflict for 70 years. The IRC is a leading international NGO provider of services at all stages of the refugee cycle, from emergency relief services in conflict zones or countries of first asylum, through to refugee return and reintegration programmes, resettlement to third countries or the development of local integration strategies. The IRC is the UNHCR's largest NGO implementing partner, and maintains offices in over 25 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and North America.

Migrant Helpline

The Rendezvous Building
Freight Services Approach Road
Eastern Docks
Dover CT16 1JA

Tel: 01304 203977
Fax: 01304 203995
<http://www.migranthelpline.org.uk>

Migrant Helpline is an independent charity, providing a comprehensive and wide ranging reception and advice service to asylum seekers and refugees within the Kent, Sussex and Croydon regions. Founded in 1964, the organisation has a history of working with newly-arrived asylum seekers, oversees the running of the Kent Induction Centre and provides briefings, and also operates a network of One Stop Services throughout the counties of Kent and Sussex. Migrant Helpline believes that the integration of asylum seekers and refugees into the community should underpin the work which the organisation undertakes.

Refugee Action

The Old Fire Station
150 Waterloo Road
London SE1 8SB

Tel: 020 7654 7700
Fax: 020 7401 3699
<http://www.refugee-action.org>

Refugee Action has always worked through regional offices within a national framework. Through individual advice and advocacy, and service and community development, Refugee Action strives to help refugees and asylum seekers build new lives in the UK. Underpinning all of the work is the belief that services should be guided by the voices of refugees and their communities. Refugee Action has experience of resettlement through working on the Vietnamese, Bosnian, Montserrat and Kosovo programmes.

Refugee Arrivals Project

41b Cross Lances Road
Hounslow,
Middlesex TW3 2AD

Tel: 020 8607 6888
Fax: 020 8607 6851
<http://www.refugee-arrivals.org.uk>

The Refugee Arrivals Project (RAP) is an independent not-for-profit refugee organisation committed to providing high quality advice and assistance to newly arrived asylum seekers and refugees. RAP's services cover Heathrow, Gatwick, Luton, Stansted and City airports taking referrals from a wide range of sources including immigration, refugee community organisations, legal representatives and statutory bodies. The Heathrow office is staffed seven days a week including public holidays.

Refugee Housing Association

MHT House
Crescent Lane
London SW4 9RS

Tel: 020 7501 2200
Fax: 020 7501 2260
<http://www.refugeehousingassociation.org.uk>

Refugee Housing Association seeks to provide quality housing and support services to refugees and asylum seekers to develop their independence, promote their positive contribution to this country and ease their integration into the UK. The Refugee Housing Association was established over 45 years ago and is now a registered social landlord, constituted as an industrial and provident society, and operating as a member of the Metropolitan Trust Housing Group.

The Refugee Council

240-250 Ferndale Road
London SW9 8BB

Tel: 020 7346 6700
Fax: 020 7346 6778
<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk>

The Refugee Council is the recognised lead agency working with asylum seekers and refugees in the UK. It is committed to achieving a real difference for asylum seekers and refugees through the provision of practical help, advocacy and supporting the

development of refugee community organisations. With offices in London, Birmingham, Ipswich, Leeds and Oakington, it has strong and credible relationships with regional stakeholders. It is a membership organisation with 180 members, many of whom are refugee community organisations. The Refugee Council provided the co-ordinating role for the Bosnia and Kosovo programmes.

The Scottish Refugee Council

5 Cadogan Square
(170 Blythswood Court)
Glasgow G2 7PH

Tel: 0141 248 9799
Fax: 0141 243 2499
<http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk>

Founded in 1985, the Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) is an independent charity dedicated to providing advice, information and assistance to asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland. The Scottish Refugee Council was the lead agency in Scotland co-ordinating both the Bosnia and Kosovo programmes.



Registered address:
Refugee Council,
3 Bondway,
London SW8 1SJ
Charity number: 1014576
Company number: 2727514

**Resettlement
Inter-Agency
Partnership**