

Resettling refugees: support after the first year



A guide for local authorities

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Please note that Appendix 1: Budgeting toolkit for project planning and Appendix 2: a sample Resettlement Support Plan template, are available to download separately from the LGA website at: www.local.gov.uk/topics/communities/refugees-and-asylum-seekers

Executive summary

Overview

Local authorities participating in the Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) have a unique opportunity to provide fully funded, long term integration support to resettled refugees from Syria. Central government funding means that each resettled refugee should be supported during their first five years in the UK to adjust to their new life here, to become independent and integrated into their local communities.

'Resettling refugees: support after the first year' is a guide for local authorities who are planning and developing their programme of support to resettled clients on the VPRS that have been in the UK for more than a year.

The guide differentiates between the needs of resettled clients during their first year in the UK and during their years 2 to 5. It explores at a deliberately high level the range of issues that local partners will be focusing on. It also provides more detail in key areas that might need additional developmental work and would benefit from practitioner input in the local context.

Programme management

The potential areas for service delivery to meet resettled refugees changing needs covered in this guide should be considered and drawn together by the local authority through strong programme management. A staggered arrival schedule for refugee cohorts between 2015 to 2020 means that local authorities could be running a VPRS programme for up to ten years (between 2015 to 2025).

Local authorities will be responsible for ensuring services are delivered to meet resettled refugees' changing needs and will need to meet associated reporting requirements of the Funding Instruction. Local authorities will determine whether services will be delivered in-house, if they prefer to commission certain services, or develop mixed provision. This section outlines the core functions of the local authority lead, and suggests different ways in which services can be designed and delivered to meet associated reporting requirements of the Funding Instruction and in the spirit of the VPRS goals to promote the independence and integration.

Finance

Local authorities will hold a significant budget and will need to meet associated reporting requirements. This section summarises key information in the Home Office Funding Instruction (FI). The FI specifies the areas of work expected to be delivered to resettled, and the reclaimable costs of providing this support. It suggests which other funding sources might need to be incorporated into project planning and forecasting, such as additional funding for English language support.

Integration casework

Integration caseworker support was a core requirement for local authorities to provide during clients' year 1. Most refugees will not be completely independent after 12 months in the UK. Reduced or different forms of casework during their years 2 to 5 could help refugees to continue to develop the knowledge and confidence to address their everyday questions and issues.

Local community involvement

Interaction between refugees from Syria and members of their neighbourhood can be encouraged using the resources of the VPRS. This can be particularly helpful if certain resettled refugees are more isolated, less confident or need additional opportunities to mix with others. Community groups will also benefit from receiving information about the progress of the programme locally and may be able to get their own related initiatives off the ground with some financial support.

Employment advice

There are many benefits of enabling resettled refugees to access employment at their appropriate skill level relatively soon after arrival in the UK, both for their own wellbeing and for the host society. Employment support can assist clients to understand and navigate UK job culture, transfer their existing skills and qualifications, as well as identify relevant training and study options for each individual.

Language support

Front-loading language support is a crucial step in facilitating refugee integration. In recognition of this, additional funding is available to ensure English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is accessible for all resettled refugees under the VPRS, particularly involving informal ESOL and childcare provision. This section considers the range of practical barriers to improving refugees' fluency and confidence in English, and suggests some ways of tackling them using the additional funding.

Health

The resettled refugee population is likely to have a higher level of health needs – both physical and mental wellbeing – than the general population. Health services may struggle to provide appropriate provision,

particularly as they may not have the skills and experience of dealing with refugees' specific needs. Some medical conditions may only emerge or worsen after refugees have been in the UK for some time. Local authorities will need to work closely with health partners to tackle the challenges of providing appropriate support including, where necessary, specialist support for survivors of torture.

Housing support

When their initial tenancy is coming to an end, refugee families are likely to need help to navigate issues involved with moving house, such as getting adaptations for those with mobility issues and securing school places for children. Some form of housing support can also provide assistance from time-to-time with managing tenancies and understanding any changes to rights and entitlements to housing and welfare support.

Legal support

Pressing legal issues for resettled refugees include changes to their legal status, and making applications to be reunited with family members who are still overseas. Those who received humanitarian protection on arrival in the UK are now likely to want to apply for refugee status, for example. It is a good idea to look at facilitating access to accurate, up-to-date information and accredited legal support for the whole resettled cohort as needed.

Education

It will take time for resettled children to adapt to UK educational culture and catch up on schooling they may have missed. Older children in particular might struggle to achieve their potential. VPRS funding can be used to provide resources, such as classroom assistance and language support, to quicken this adjustment for pupils, parents and schools. It can also be used to support pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

1. Introduction

About this guide

This document is a guide for local authorities who have been participating in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme (VPRS)¹ and are now planning their programme of support for resettled refugees beginning their second year of resettlement, up to the end of their fifth year.

Activities to address these issues obviously interrelate and actions in one area will impact on the others. Consideration of these interrelationships will also form part of programme development.

Each locality will have put in place support that is developing well, but will also have areas that they agree need further work. This guide explores, at a deliberately high level, the range of issues that local partners will be focusing on. It also provides more detail in key areas that might need additional developmental work in a local context. However, the guide is presented largely from a programme management perspective, and would benefit from being supplemented by local practitioner expertise in each thematic area and for specific client subgroups such as children, young adults, and women.

The challenges of supporting vulnerable individuals and families and the complexity of the issues involved are not underestimated. However, throughout the guide, we have provided case studies where possible to illustrate how local areas are tackling these challenges.

Background: refugees' first year in the VPRS

The schedule for bringing up to 20,000 Syrian refugees to the UK through the VPRS has been progressing since 2015 and will continue until 2020. By the end of 2016, over a quarter of this pledged total of refugees had been resettled across every region and nation of the UK.²

Welcoming refugees to their localities and neighbourhoods has been unfamiliar for many local authorities and planning for these new arrivals has required careful consideration. 'Syrian refugee resettlement: a guide for local authorities'³, also written by Migration Yorkshire and commissioned by the LGA, was published in 2016 to support local authorities participating in the VPRS develop their approach, with a focus on helping them to adjust to their new homes and lives in the UK during their first year here.

In July 2017 the Home Secretary announced the expansion of the VPRS to include other nationalities that have fled Syria, acknowledging other groups that have also been displaced by the conflict. The expansion is with immediate effect, and the scheme will now cover vulnerable refugees in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.⁴ Therefore, local authorities might receive non-Syrian nationals as well as Syrian nationals through the VPRS from July 2017. References to resettled refugees from Syria in this guide are intended to reflect all those eligible for the VPRS, regardless of nationality.

Providing longer-term integration support

The nature of the VPRS means a high proportion of refugees selected for resettlement have arrived with high-level, complex physical and mental health needs. This will affect the type and pace of the support they need to become more independent, and the speed of their overall integration into their new UK communities. This should be factored into planning for clients' years 2 to 5, as well as an awareness that 'progress' may not be linear for some clients, especially for those who are recovering from trauma or have mental health and wellbeing issues.

It is important to remember that resettled refugees are also survivors and have shown remarkable resilience despite what they have faced overseas. They need support at this challenging time in their lives, but will best be supported by recognising and encouraging their agency in their own recovery and integration into their new lives in the UK, with support from relevant services and members of their local communities here.

Longer-term integration support for resettled refugees is a new area of work for local authorities. Many have not participated in refugee resettlement programmes before, and no other refugee integration scheme has been funded by central government for more than 12 months.⁵ The VPRS provides funding that will support the integration of these refugees into local communities for the rest of their first five years in the UK, referred to in this guide as clients' years 2 to 5. Now the focus of the VPRS in this period should be to support resettled refugees on 'their journey towards integration and self-sufficiency' (Home Office Financial Instruction (FI) Schedule 1 part 2).

As the arrival of refugee groups is being staggered over a five year period nationally (2015-2020), local authorities will be running VPRS support programmes for up to ten years (between 2015-2025), depending on when their first and last cohorts of refugees arrive. This gives local authorities the opportunity to plan for the longer-term.

Contents of this guide

The guide provides suggestions about how local authorities might want to plan and structure the support package available to resettled refugees from Syria in their area, in light of the minimum requirements of the funding available, and according to the needs of the resettled refugees they have welcomed into their local communities. The legislative and funding situation will differ in different parts of the UK, but there should still be general points around developing resettlement support programmes in this guide that are applicable outside England.

Structure of the guide

- The guide opens by suggesting what project management functions should be undertaken by participating local authorities, and how they might wish to work collaboratively with neighbouring local authorities or as a region through their Regional Strategic Migration Partnership (RSMP).
- The guide then outlines the financial arrangements for the VPRS during clients' years 2 to 5 and the minimum expectations of what support will be provided during that period.
- The main content of the guide covers a range of potential areas where support might be provided, from integration casework, employment and language support, to community involvement and legal support. Each section outlines why this issue is relevant to resettled refugees, and the potential challenges involved in this area of work.
- Each section concludes with a useful set of questions to think through when planning and designing the VPRS support programme locally in the form of a checklist. The lists are not intended to be used as a way of determining progress, nor are they exhaustive and will need to be adapted for the local context.

- Two appendices provide further resources to support local authorities. The first provides a basic budgeting toolkit, while the second provides a sample Resettlement Support Plan, both available separately to download.

Key points to note

When using the guide, local partners will be aware that:

- The VPRS is new and evolving, and therefore this guide covers the process as it was operating at the time of writing in the summer of 2017. We advise local authorities to become familiar with the most recent Funding Instruction (FI) from the Home Office and to contact the Regional Strategic Migration Partnership (RSMP) for any recent procedural changes or policy announcements regarding the resettlement of those who have fled Syria.⁶
- At the time of writing there were very few examples of work done with resettled refugees collated during their year 2, so we have drawn on examples from clients' year 1 that could be extended or modified in the future, as well as plans being made in some areas. These examples demonstrate approaches taken by local authorities and other organisations that could be reproduced in other local contexts and supported by the local authority using VPRS funding.
- This guide has focused primarily on good practice in Yorkshire and Humber, and so does not provide a complete picture of current and emerging practice. We know that there will be other good examples and cases studies from around the UK and we encourage local authorities to share them with others on the LGA Knowledge Hub.⁷
- This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Local Government Association (LGA) for local authorities in England. The legislative and policy context outlined in the guide will differ outside England, although we hope that the guide might have use for those authorities involved in resettlement of refugees throughout the UK.
- This guide does not specifically cover related programmes including the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) announced in April 2016 to resettle up to 3,000 vulnerable and refugee children at risk and their families, from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Nor does it specifically cover the Full Community Sponsorship Scheme of the VPRS for other types of 'sponsors' to provide comprehensive support to resettled refugees for two years, instead of local authorities.

2. Programme management

Why look at programme management?

With the security of resources over time, each local authority has the opportunity to build internal capacity, have a continuity of knowledge and expertise and an opportunity for secure, long-term planning to ensure the success of the programme. This should facilitate a more strategic approach to programme management.

Each local authority will need to plan their pledged numbers and schedule for arrivals, review their existing infrastructure and confirm the priorities identified and decisions they have made about delivering the VPRS within their allocated budget. Since every local authority has a unique context to encourage the independence and successful integration of resettled refugees from Syria, the local project plan will differ from place to place.

The story so far

The combined FI provides an opportunity for local authorities to treat the VPRS as one continuous project, although it has different funding levels for each year and different requirements for clients' year 1 and their years 2 to 5. Having a combined FI should make planning easier for local authorities, and should mean that resettled clients experience more streamlined services, rather than experiencing an artificial gap between services provided between their year 1 and year 2. More information on use of existing finances is available in the next section.

The length of the programme locally will be between five and ten years, depending on

over what timescale have been planned to receive resettled groups. For example:

- A local authority receiving all their arrivals in one year – say 2017 – will participate in the VPRS for five years in total since their refugees will receive integration support for the subsequent five years, until 2022.
- A local authority spreading their arrivals over the whole five year arrivals period of 2015 to 2020 will be participating in the VPRS for a decade, from 2015 to 2025. Their refugees arriving in the final arrivals year 2020 will then receive integration support for the following five years until 2025.

The previous guide also contained a range of information on establishing programme and partnership management, and may still be of interest for those reviewing their arrangements to support refugees from Syria.

Changing client needs in their years 2 to 5

Resettled refugees from Syria will need support in their years 2 to 5 with a range of issues. Clients will have each made different progress in integrating into the local community. As outlined in more detail in subsequent sections:

- Some client needs will continue or evolve from their year 1, such as English language skills, interpreting needs at services, and specialist mental health care, as they become more able to independently navigate access to services
- Other support needs will be new and develop over time, for example, making

arrangements to move house, explore employment options, dealing with new or emerging health conditions, and applying for settlement at the end of their five years post-arrival.

Clients will benefit from a mix of continuing support arrangements from their year 1, as well as perhaps new service or support structures to deal with the new challenges they face in their years 2 to 5, and in anticipation of becoming more self-sufficient and independent over time.

Local partners may have undertaken their own evaluation of activity and may be amending how services are delivered in response to what refugees and contractors are telling them.

A range of areas for potential support are covered in the remaining sections of this guide.

Case study

Seeking Syrian feedback in the North East of England

After their VPRS had been operating for over a year the RSMP for the North East, the North East Migration Partnership (NEMP), sought feedback from Syrian refugees resettled across the North East region in order to improve practice and delivery. The purpose was to enable the NEMP and its stakeholders and providers including local authority officers, councillors, CCG, Police, ESOL providers and third sector stakeholders to reflect on the learning and good practice of the initial 16 months of their VPRS.

The NEMP commissioned the third sector locally to seek input from a selection of resettled clients across 8 local authority areas of the North East about their experiences of being on the VPRS, from pre-arrival to integration stages. This assessment included using Syrian and/or Arabic-speaking community volunteers - not resettled under the VPRS themselves. The community volunteers conducted structured conversations

with resettled participants in their own language, either face-to-face or over the telephone. 20 resettled Syrian couples participated in the project, working with 7 community volunteers. Constructive findings from these conversations were presented by the community volunteers to a range of stakeholders at an interactive session, alongside some of the Syrian participants themselves.

Key themes emerging from the consultation emphasised the importance of prospective VPRS clients receiving accurate information before coming to the country, and having an Arabic-speaking support worker once here. There were also many issues around satisfactorily resolving refugees' queries when here, providing good quality information about rights, support with budgeting and processes for escalating queries. This might be best delivered initially in a group learning setting. Members of the host community played a crucial role in providing practical and emotional support to resettled Syrians. A series of recommendations around ESOL included pre-entry level classes, more informal settings and practical ESOL for everyday life activities.

The report made a series of recommendations about improving social and economic inclusion for consideration by those delivering the VPRS. Further details can be provided upon request to the NEMP.⁸

Providing services in years 2 to 5

What provision needs to cover

The core expectations of the local authority laid out in the FI will require oversight and management. These expectations are outlined in the next section on Finance.

Different forms provision can take

Lead role and project management

Each local authority has a named lead person responsible for the coordination of the VPRS locally. This role has been approached in a number of ways, depending on the numbers pledged in the area, local authority staffing structures, and how far the local authority is involved in direct service delivery with clients.

Where local authorities have pledged to take larger numbers of resettled refugees, the budget available is significant. In these cases, this might justify employing staff to project manage the VPRS locally, and commissioning services that are needed to meet Home Office requirements as specified in the FI. Decisions on staffing levels are key to ensuring the best outcomes for resettled refugees from Syria.

Local authorities pledging to take smaller numbers of refugees might look at alternative ways to manage their VPRS, including working closely with peers, neighbouring authorities and other local organisations to share expertise and resources to ensure the best outcomes for their clients.

However, there are some core functions that need to be covered, as suggested in the adjacent box.

Local authorities may wish to consider funding a role that ensures these core functions are met:

Suggested core functions of the local authority lead for the VPRS

- Taking responsibility for ensuring the Home Office FI requirements are delivered as a whole for all resettled clients, monitoring delivery partners if the local authority is not directly delivering services, and liaising with health colleagues
- Taking the strategic lead in programme design and local delivery, including decision-making on how services will be provided
- Authorising spending and allocation of funds, managing contingency funds (for example for social care services), and deciding when to apply for additional funding through the 'exceptional needs pot'
- Undertaking financial and reporting requirements including the Home Office and any other local agreements
- Providing oversight to ensure safeguarding issues, complaints, critical incidents and other sensitive issues are managed appropriately and reported as required
- Being the main point of contact for the local programme internally within the local authority, for external stakeholders and partners such as Home Office, RSMP, other local authorities and service providers, and for responding to media enquiries
- Coordinating operational meetings between all delivery partners and relevant stakeholders
- Monitoring progress of all individual clients across a range of integration measures, including those specified or suggested in the FI, holding case reviews, providing a trouble-shooting function for complex cases⁹ in partnership with relevant stakeholders
- Representing the local authority in any wider strategic or resettlement stakeholder meetings
- Sharing appropriate information on trends, emerging issues and practice with peers and colleagues in the area, and the wider region if appropriate.

Commissioned services

Local authorities may choose to commission specific integration services for resettled refugees from Syria. This may be particularly appropriate if technical expertise is needed, such as a specialist employment service, or for evaluation purposes (see for example, the case study box on seeking Syrian feedback). It may also be appropriate if engagement with certain clients is difficult in that area. For example, home-based services may be needed with women refugees or those with medical difficulties who find it difficult to leave the house.

Extended in-house services

Local authorities may choose to fund existing services within their area to ensure they have capacity to deliver specifically to resettled clients as a target group. Local authorities will have to ensure that these services are able to engage resettled clients and meet their specific needs.

Partnership working

Local authorities may want to explore jointly commissioning services with other local authorities in their region. This may provide cost efficiencies, and enable specialist providers to provide a uniform, good quality service for clients across the region. In this scenario, joint commissioning will also require coordination, perhaps by one local authority taking that lead role, or the RSMP.

Another opportunity for partnership working at a more informal level is enabling peer support for staff involved in the VPRS. This could include regular or one-off meetings to share practice and problem-solve difficult cases, or provide consistent briefings and training which are important in a rapidly changing policy environment. Again, this peer support would need to be coordinated by a lead authority or RSMP.

Case study

Joint commissioning in Yorkshire and Humber

Groups of local authorities in Yorkshire and Humber are working together to jointly commission services for their VPRS. Coordinated by Migration Yorkshire, a flexible model is developing where local authorities can opt-in to a number of different service arrangements. This model enables local authorities to deliver consistent services to resettled refugees from Syria across different parts of the region over the next few years. This is also beneficial where a local authority feels it needs additional expertise and capacity to deliver according to the terms of the FI.

Two different services are being developed and commissioned with specialist refugee providers to meet the needs of clients during their years 2 to 5:

- **A casework service** called 'integration living advice' that will run for the remaining 7 years of the VPRS in Yorkshire and Humber to 2024, with the last cohort of refugees planned to arrive in 2019. The service is designed to support resettled clients to become more independent, and is based on principles collectively agreed by participating local authorities. The casework service will involve an assessment and handover from existing caseworkers at the end of clients' year 1, a dedicated advice phone line for individual advice during office hours with an interpreting service, group briefings and workshops, home visits where needed, accompanying clients where needed, referrals and connections to mainstream services etc.
- **A community development service** called 'community/social inclusion and active citizenship'. Community development and volunteer coordinators based in different subregions of Yorkshire and Humber will develop opportunities for resettled clients and host community members to volunteer,

for example, as befrienders to new arrivals or help to deliver awareness-raising sessions. The coordinators might encourage resettled refugees to become service user/local representatives in the community, or develop their own community groups. They will also bring different communities together for events and celebrations. Local authorities are working closely with a specialist refugee provider to ensure they have sufficient local knowledge to be able to make links with and work together with community groups and other existing infrastructure etc. Further, individual local authorities will each manage a small Community Grants Fund using their VPRS funds, available to support new activities in their area initiated by communities who may only need a small amount of capital to get their projects off the ground.

This partnership working builds on the success of work done during clients' year 1, where a number of local authorities have worked together to develop a specialist mental health service model to overcome the barriers to providing this key component of the VPRS (see Health section). Any model like this needs to be able to adapt to any emerging needs identified among the resettled client group, and to take account of the different decision-making timescales and mechanisms for each local authority involved.

Case study

Partnership working across council and community sponsorship resettlement schemes in Pembrokeshire

Pembrokeshire and two Community Sponsorship groups, Croeso Abergwaun and Croeso Arberth, are working together to maximise their resources and the opportunities for resettled Syrians in their area.

Strategically, the local council gave Cabinet approval for both types of scheme in October 2016, which enabled the development of a working model that takes into account the different schemes. A Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator has facilitated practice sharing between these groups and with other local authorities nearby. The Community Sponsorship groups are now active participants in the local multi-agency group that was set up to steer the local authority scheme.

Resettled families ideally access equitable support regardless of which scheme through which they arrive in Pembrokeshire. Mindful of this, a family-centred partnership model is being developed whereby personal support plans for resettled individuals are focused on existing support mechanisms in the community, with appropriate referral pathways for additional needs.

Economies of scale are operating in this scenario in a number of ways. For example, volunteers in the Community Sponsorship groups are able to access relevant training already provided through the local authority. This again ensures parity of support and expertise available to resettled families. Similarly, the Community Groups are looking at sharing surplus donations with families resettled by the local authority. Further, the local authority has committed to using additional ESOL funding for all resettled Syrian families, which not only maximises the value from this funding

stream but will also enable clients arriving through different support schemes to meet one another. A similar principle is being explored in relation to interpreting resources. Finally, the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership is looking at developing a discussion forum between relevant agencies to tackle emerging barriers and share practice.

Checklist: Programme management

Reflecting on the early stages of the VPRS

- What worked well in the local area so far?
- Is everyone aware of what support services are available in the local area?
- Who has named responsibility for delivering the core functions of the VPRS programme for the local area (as outlined in more detail below) Does this need to be a separately funded post through the VPRS?
- Is there a strategy to meet the FI requirements and to fit the local context and priorities?

Syrian perspectives

- How will the needs of resettled clients at the end of their first year be assessed? Have clients been consulted about the kinds of provision they feel they need?
- Have any changes in provision to clients been communicated?
- What outcomes are local partners working to? How will clients' progress during their years 2 to 5 against these be recorded and monitored?
- How will whether clients continue to experience barriers to service access during their years 2 to 5 be monitored?
- How will whether clients are becoming more self-sufficient and independent over time be determined?

Planning

- What is the overall budget and project length?
- Do new services need to be commissioned to meet client needs and overcome barriers clients are facing? What is the best way of doing this for the local context?
- Does provision also encourage resettled families to access mainstream courses and services where appropriate, so that they can also mix with other people not on the VPRS?
- How will 'complex cases' of those resettled families with severe, complicated or multiple needs be regularly monitored? Do there need to be a regular operational group that considers each family?
- How will local authorities work with and share practice with colleagues involved in the programme? Would it be beneficial to network with peers in neighbouring authorities?

3. Finance

Local authorities are required to co-ordinate the VPRS in accordance with the Home Office FI. The potential budget for the programme over the duration of the project is significant and needs to be managed well in order to ensure the best use of public money and the best outcomes for resettled refugees from Syria under the programme. A number of different funding streams and allocations will need to be coordinated by the local authority.

The story so far

Funding arrangements for the VPRS and related programmes are outlined in a Funding Instruction (FI). The FI specifies the maximum funding available for reimbursement under each programme. The FI is reissued each financial year, even if no changes are made.

References to the FI and its requirements in this guide are taken from the FI for 2017/18¹⁰ which was in draft form at the time of writing. We advise local authorities to become familiar with the most recent FI from the Home Office and to contact the RSMP for any recent procedural changes or policy announcements regarding resettlement of those who have fled Syria.

The FI was originally issued as two separate FIs covering support to be provided during clients' year 1 and years 2 to 5. It is now a combined document to cover all 5 years of support, although the requirements and allocations remain different for clients' year 1 and years 2 to 5.

The funding for clients' year 1 is a per capita allocation of £8,520 for local authority costs, but there were separate allocations for education and health costs.

Education costs in clients' year 1 are £4,500 per child aged 5 to 18 years, and £2,250 for 3 to 4 year olds. Health costs for clients' year 1 are £2,600

per capita, agreed with the Department of Health and health partners to cover initial primary and secondary care costs, as per the separate Health FI.¹¹

Financial arrangements in clients' years 2 to 5

The per capita funding allocation or tariff for VPRS clients in their years 2 to 5 in the UK is as follows as described in paragraph 2.6 of the FI:

- Client year 2: £5,000 per beneficiary
- Client year 3: £3,700 per beneficiary
- Client year 4: £2,300 per beneficiary
- Client year 5: £1,000 per beneficiary.

The standard per capita allocation under the VPRS is to be claimed annually, in the second financial quarter (Jul-Sept), with payments made in the third quarter (Oct-Dec).

Other funding sources

While the per capita allocation is the principal component of the VPRS budget, there are several other funding streams that are likely to require incorporation into project planning and forecasting:

- **Pledged numbers of refugees to be resettled under the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) and Full Community Sponsorship Scheme**, and the associated funding allocation.

- **Additional funding for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)** from April 2017¹¹ equating to £850 per person. This is for resettled adults aged 19+ in England, Scotland and Wales. It must be claimed in clients' year 1, even if it is spent in a later financial year. Guidelines suggest it is used to ensure an additional 8 hours of ESOL per week per individual until they reach entry level 3, including up to 25 per cent on non-participation costs i.e. infrastructure. See Schedule 1 Part 4 of the FI.
- **ESOL childcare bids** (£500-600K nationally, per year of the VPRS). This funding is not guaranteed, but bids are subject to approval by the Home Office. Bids should cover improved access to ESOL for VPRS and VCRS adults where childcare is a barrier to accessing ESOL. Women with families are the expected principal beneficiaries. See Schedule 1 part 5 of the FI.
- **Regional ESOL coordinator role:** this is short-term funding made available to RSMPs in late 2016/7 to support ESOL mapping, planning and sharing practice. It was later extended to cover 2017/8.
- **Other local authority funding sources:** for example, some ESOL might be funded through the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Flexible Support Fund, Department for Education/Skills Funding Agency adult education budget, or the Education and Skills Funding Agency for 16 to 19 year olds. More broadly, local authorities in England might apply to the Controlling Migration Fund that supports host communities.

Exceptional costs

Any costs for adult or children's social care should come from the local authority's general per capita allocation for the VPRS, unless the costs are above and beyond what could reasonably be regarded as normal expenditure. There is an 'exceptional costs' pot for additional essential costs beyond normal expenditure under the VPRS. This is not guaranteed, but subject to approval on

a case-by-case basis by the Home Office, which should be sought prior to incurring costs. This is expected to be predominantly used during Years 2 to 5 to cover exceptional social care costs such as occupational therapy. It will not cover costs that are normally funded through the per capita health or education funding, or welfare payments, as outlined in paragraph 6.13 of the FI.

Funding for other statutory sector partners

Other statutory sector departments and agencies in the local area may require clarification about how the support they provide to resettled refugees from Syria is funded or reimbursed:

- **Education:** there is no separate allocation for clients' years 2 to 5, as mainstream funding accounts for SEN pupils on the school roll after clients' year 1
- **Health:** health partners can reclaim additional per capita health costs for secondary care treatment for clients' years 2 to 5, subject to separate budget conditions under the Health FI. Needed treatment must have been identified during year 1.

Minimum requirements

The local authority is free to decide how best to use the VPRS funding, but must comply with the following:

- be able to provide evidence of how it has been used to support individual clients according to the factors in Schedule 1 of the FI and the aims of the VPRS for monitoring and evaluation purposes (para 3.8 of the FI), both outlined in more detail below
- provide information to monitor outcomes from the additional ESOL funding (para 8.4 of the FI)
- not use the funding for any other purpose than delivering the VPRS outcomes (para 6.1 of the FI).

There are also some core expectations laid out in the FI which will require oversight and management by the local authority. These are outlined in the box below.

Minimum expectations of local authorities (based on the FI)

Local authorities must be able to demonstrate that the funding has been used to support clients and the aims of the VPRS to promote integration and self-sufficiency.

Interventions

Local authorities must provide evidence of progress during clients' years 2 to 5 against the following suggested areas (as per Schedule 1 part 2 of the FI):

- ongoing integration into the community
- social care costs for adults and children
- additional educational support
- tailored employment support
- 8 hours of Formal Language Training and conversation practice, until a client has reached at least Entry Level 3.

The funding must not include activities that are party political or religious (except inter-faith activity) (paragraphs 6.3-6.4 of the FI). It also cannot be used for support after a client has been in the UK for five years, or if they have applied for another form of immigration status (paragraphs 6.7-6.8 of the FI).

Project management

Local authorities are also expected to:

- manage and monitor the delivery of quality support provided to clients
- be able to provide relevant documentation at an individual client level about their progress against their support plan
- ensure normal support provision is provided 9am-5pm on working days, relevant out of hours provision is also provided
- provide monitoring information on

additional ESOL funding

- fully equip and train staff
- have complaints and incidents procedures, reporting incidents to the Resettlement Programme by the end of next working day.

Providing services in years 2 to 5

Local authorities do have the freedom to judge how best to use the funding available. Local authorities will need to estimate costs for different aspects of the programme being planned. This will need to involve the numbers pledged, and thus the scale of the project and whether the numbers allow for efficiencies of scale in project delivery. A basic template is available in the [Budgeting toolkit for project planning](#) by downloading Appendix 1 of this guide.

This could involve a number of different working arrangements including subcontracting and partnership working, as suggested in the case study box.

Case study

Regional coordination in Yorkshire and Humber

14 (21 including districts) participating local authorities in the region are using some of their VPRS funding so that Migration Yorkshire can provide opportunities for them to work together more effectively than if working in isolation. Migration Yorkshire then provides a number of functions including:

- providing secretariat for regular Board and operational meetings
- sharing latest news, updates and guidance from the Home Office
- local authorities being able to feedback or ask questions collectively
- facilitating practice-sharing and training across local authorities

- troubleshooting: supporting individual local authority's response to unexpected, complicated or difficult scenarios, and identifying any issues that are more widespread
- submitting reporting and monitoring data to the Home Office on behalf of local authorities
- development of an 'integration framework' identifying priorities across the region for delivering the VPRS, with a suggested financial breakdown
- tailored support to develop local plans
- consult with local authority partners and develop jointly-commissioned service models, with a reporting and monitoring mechanism and undertaking third party contract management
- responding to media enquiries.

This arrangement has also enabled local authorities in the region to respond quickly to the additional funding for ESOL coordination, undertaking ESOL mapping, identifying challenges and submitting a regional ESOL childcare bid.

This will also need to take into account the costs of delivering services in rural or urban areas, and any peculiarities of the local context. The case study box provides an example of how the VPRS has been adapted for a rural, two-tier context.

Case study

The challenges of developing the VPRS in a rural, two-tier local authority area

North Yorkshire has a two-tier local government system. Local government services are provided either at the county or district level: social services and education, for example, are provided at a county level (the North Yorkshire County Council or NYCC), while housing falls within the district remit. This means that in some ways the work involved for the VPRS

is multiplied, and effectively requires starting 'from scratch' with seven different housing authorities, different GPs and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in each district, and engaging different staff in county-wide services such as the police and the County Council.

Refugee families being resettled under the VPRS and the VCRS are being resettled across this largely rural but diverse geographical area. Rurality brings with it its own challenges. For example, VPRS staff have found that the availability of ESOL teachers can be difficult to secure across all parts of the county.

The local authorities in North Yorkshire have developed an approach to ensure the VPRS is as effective as possible in this rural, two-tier environment. Firstly, a phased roll-out has been conducted, beginning with three western districts that have good connections to large cities beyond North Yorkshire and are in reach of other resettled groups from Syria. This has enabled staff to develop expertise before rolling out the programme to other large towns in the county. The most rural areas will welcome the final cohorts of resettled refugees and will benefit from the accumulated experience of these neighbouring districts.

Another feature of the North Yorkshire approach has been to develop a governance structure that reflects the two-tier system. District-level multiagency operational groups have been set up, supplemented by additional conference meetings for complex family cases. A county-level Programme Board oversees strategic issues that are better managed at this level, including: programme rollout, communications, developing a long-term strategy and funding projects for clients' years 2 to 5. A dedicated refugee resettlement project manager is responsible for coordinating the VPRS and VCRS schemes across the county, which helps to ensure consistency in programme delivery across each district.

While the two-tier context for the North Yorkshire programme has presented challenges, the county also recognises some of the benefits. For example, the existing structures enable practice-sharing across the seven districts, and the pioneer districts can pass on their learning about what works and what doesn't in delivering the VPRS and VCRS schemes to the other districts before they encounter the same issues, maximising efficiency and good practice for the benefit of clients from Syria and their host communities. Each new area is able to capitalise upon the enthusiasm of staff that comes with being involved in something that is new and about making a positive difference to other peoples' lives. It also means that by spreading out the resettlement of families across the county, no one area faces disproportionate pressures on services such as school places.

Planning over time

This tariff can be pooled to provide and commission services. The overall budget for the duration of the programme might be as follows, excluding additional education and health costs which are reimbursed separately for clients' year 1:

- a local authority resettling 10 refugees from Syria would have a total budget of up to £205,200 of which £120,000 are claimable costs for clients' years 2 to 5
- a local authority resettling 100 refugees from Syria would have a budget of just over £2 million (£2,052,000) of which £1,200,000 are claimable costs for clients' years 2 to 5.

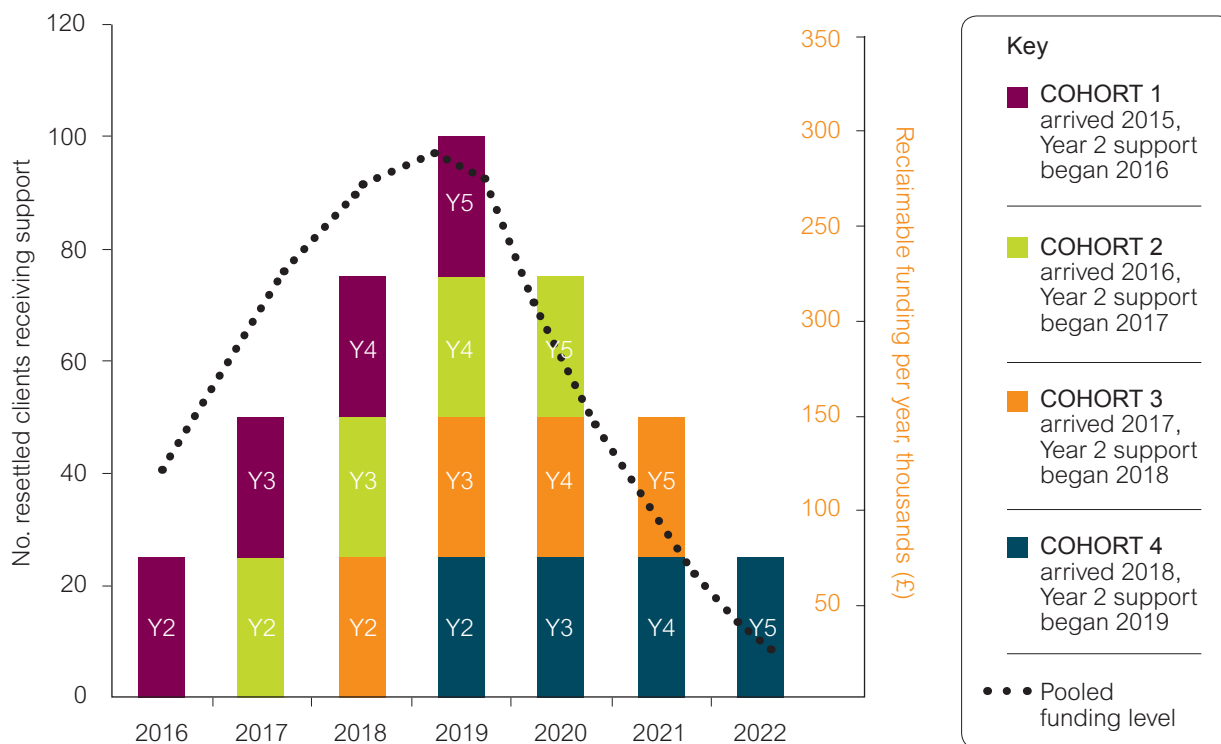
The chart opposite provides an example of how the budget and numbers of resettled clients might change over time. It is based on a scenario for a hypothetical local authority that has pledged to receive 100 resettled refugees. This example is based on a plan to resettle 4 groups of 25 individuals arriving over a four year period, using the per capita tariff only. If refugees arrived between 2015 and 2018, support during clients' years 2 to 5 would be provided between 2016 and 2022. Therefore the VPRS would be a 7-year project for the local authority.

Each block in the chart represents one cohort of 25 refugees. For example, the purple block of 25 refugees shown as Cohort 1 arrived in 2015 but entered their year 2 in 2016, and their support would end in their year 5 in 2019.

For this scenario, the pooled budget for the entire programme would peak in 2019, as shown by the dotted line in the chart below. Note the following:

- Delivery of support services spans a 7 year period from 2016-2022, with a peak in eligible clients and funding in 2019
- Client numbers would be the same (at 75 refugees) in both 2018 and 2020 for example, yet the funding levels would not be the same

Planning example: overall client numbers and pooled budget for support in clients' years 2 to 5, by arrival cohort



- The shift in numbers and funding over time will not necessarily reflect a uniform need among clients, nor a single, uniform support service.

This scenario is hypothetical. Many local authorities will not receive resettled refugees in such a planned way, but will have a more complicated arrivals schedule. Some local authorities, for example, offer places for resettlement as housing becomes available, and thus their arrivals schedule will ebb and flow with some variation. Local authorities may also find that at some point resettled refugees might choose to move to a different local authority area. In this case, the per capita tariff moves with the client. Local authorities will need to work together to ensure a smooth transition and clear understanding of their respective reclaimable costs.

It may be helpful to develop a version of this chart for the programme locally, using planned arrival dates for each cohort and the associated tariff for each individual. See the [Budgeting toolkit for project planning](#) by downloading Appendix 1.

Related programmes

Although not covered specifically by this guide, the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS), for vulnerable and refugee children at risk and their families, from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region - operates in a very similar way to the VPRS and is covered by the same FI.

Similarly, the Full Community Sponsorship Scheme may need to be taken into account. This again is a national programme, enabling community 'sponsors' to provide support to resettled refugees for two years instead of local authorities. In areas where community sponsors have come forward, the local authority could be asked to provide support during clients' years 1-2 and might be able to provide support and claim associated costs for clients' years 3-5 (see Schedule 1 Part 3 of the FI).

Checklist: Finance

Financial planning

- What lessons from clients' year 1 can you apply to the financial management of your VPRS for clients' years 2 to 5?
- Have you got sufficient financial staff to cover the demands of the VPRS for the size of your overall budget and for the duration of your project (between 5-10 years, depending on how quickly your clients are scheduled to arrive in your area)?
- Have you planned for a budget that peaks then diminishes during the project lifecycle?

Funding sources

- Have you anticipated each of the funding sources this project will be administering?
 - VPRS per capita rates for different cohort years of the project
 - additional funding for ESOL
 - VCRS funding
 - other potential sources of funding such as ESOL childcare bids and other local authority funding sources.
- Have you claimed the additional funding for ESOL for clients during their year 1? Will this be spent in subsequent years of the project?
- Is your local authority bidding for childcare funding for ESOL? Is this alone or in collaboration with other local authorities?

Working in partnership

- Have you incorporated time and costs for your staff employed under the VPRS to attend local or regional coordination or operational meetings?
- Do you have working arrangements with social care colleagues to ensure that additional social care costs can be planned for and come from the VPRS budget?
- Are your education colleagues aware the costs of supporting all resettled students are not covered by the VPRS budget from clients' year 2 onwards? Instead they should be met through the standard per capita education funds. Where there is no mainstream funding, are there initiatives that can be supported through VPRS funds?
- Have you checked that health colleagues are managing the health care costs associated with supporting resettled clients within the terms of the Health FI and reclaiming costs directly themselves from the Home Office? Are there additional health care costs the VPRS funding can be used for example specialist mental health services?
- Do you have a process prepared for working with any other local authority on funding issues in anticipation of clients moving between local authority areas?

Subcontracting arrangements

- Do you have a procurement procedure in place for any subcontracting you are planning?
- Do you have a monitoring and reporting procedure in place at the individual client level?
- Do you have adequate legal arrangements for any partnership arrangements you plan to enter into, including a Data Sharing Protocol (as per the FI para 5.9)?

4. Integration casework

Why include integration casework?

For resettled refugees now entering their second year in the UK, everything from language to systems and cultural norms are still very new. They are unlikely to be completely independent, confident and self-sufficient at this stage. They will still need a way of asking questions and requesting support for various issues they encounter. Casework support is a tested way to ensure certain client groups are able to access services.

The FI suggests that support in clients' years 2 to 5 could include a continuation of support that helps them integrate further into their local community in the UK.

The story so far

All resettled Syrian families and individuals should have received some form of caseworker support in their first year to help them adjust to their lives in the UK. This 'Integration caseworker support' was a core requirement for local authorities in clients' year 1 (according to the Statement of Outcomes in the Home Office FI), but is not mandatory for clients' years 2 to 5.

What is meant by integration and independence?

The meaning of the terms 'integration' and 'independence' or 'self-sufficiency' are not always clear and are subject to interpretation. Local authorities and delivery partners will need to consider what integration would look like in their local context. The UNHCR, the UN organisation with responsibility for refugees that works directly with the UK to

implement our resettlement programmes, uses definitions and commentary that may be useful for this.

UNHCR on self-reliance:¹³

'[Self-reliance is] the economic and social ability to meet essential needs on a sustainable and dignified basis. ...

Self-reliance brings benefits to all stakeholders. For host States, self-reliant refugees contribute to the sustainable social and economic development of the country and have the potential to attract additional resources which can also benefit host communities. ...

For refugees, it helps them regain better control of their lives, provides greater stability and dignity.'

UNHCR on integration:¹⁴

'The integration of refugees is a dynamic and multifaceted two-way process which requires efforts by all parties concerned, including a preparedness on the part of refugees to adapt to the host society without having to forego their own cultural identity, and a corresponding readiness on the part of host communities and public institutions to welcome refugees and meet the needs of a diverse population.

The process of integration is complex and gradual, comprising distinct but inter-related legal, economic, social and cultural dimensions, all of which are important for refugees' ability to integrate successfully as fully included members of society.'

UNHCR advises that hosting countries can truly benefit from integrating refugees into their communities:

'History and the varied origins of populations the world over nonetheless show that it is indeed possible for people to integrate fully into new communities and cultures and that refugees who are allowed and enabled to become well integrated can represent a valuable resource and make positive, even internationally recognised, contributions to host countries.'¹⁵

Changing client needs in their years 2 to 5

By the time that refugees from Syria have been in the UK for a year, each will have made different progress in adjusting to life in the UK, achieving different levels of independence in living in the UK and integrating into their local neighbourhoods. Some will have already successfully transitioned to using mainstream services themselves. Others will benefit from different kinds of support during their years 2 to 5 here. For example, young people leaving full-time education will have different needs to new parents with small children or resettled clients with long-term health conditions that might affect their mobility or ability to learn English. Levels of need generally should reduce as refugees become more independent, but some clients will require more support than others. More vulnerable clients, such as those with severe medical conditions, will continue to require more intensive support to become as independent as possible and to become part of their new communities.

It is generally accepted that most, if not all, resettled Syrians will benefit from some form of continued casework support from their year 2 onwards. An assessment by caseworkers at the end of clients' year 1 could help to identify and design any support needed from their year 2 onwards. An example Resettlement Support Plan template is available to download separately as Appendix 2 to complement this guide,

and can be adapted for each local context.¹⁶ It might be helpful to give a different project name to any service provided in clients' years 2 to 5, to reinforce the message to clients that this is different to the support package they received in their first year here.

Casework support can be provided in a variety of ways and local authorities will take different approaches according to their own situation. Each local authority can reflect on how their chosen means of delivery worked for clients' year 1, the skills among their own staff teams, and how available support organisations have developed during this time. Options for providing casework support include delivery in-house through different service areas (housing, social care etc.), subcontracting this work to a specialist or third sector organisation, or some combination of both.

Case study

Syrian information sessions tailored to local authority areas¹⁷

Hundreds of people involved in the VPRS around the country have been attending Syrian information sessions. Participants have come from a range of stakeholder organisations from health and council staff, to police, interpreters, English teachers, volunteers and third sector organisations.

IOM (the International Organisation for Migration) has been running these tailored information sessions for local authorities resettling refugees from Syria in the UK. IOM has worked with the LGA, DCLG and RSMPs to set up the sessions in a way that would be beneficial to local authorities across the country. The aim of the sessions is 'to support local authorities in reducing the adjustment period for Syrian refugees and providing strong, appropriate integration services for Syrian refugees by increasing local knowledge of the Syrian communities being resettled in the UK'.

The sessions last between 1.5 hours and half a day, are CPD-certified and

are conducted by invitation from local authorities and delivered regionally. IOM partners with members of the Syrian community to co-facilitate the information sessions and provide their insight into Syrian history and culture. The sessions can cover a range of topics according to what local authorities feel is needed, from the education and health systems in Syria to cultural traditions, the civil war, and culture shock in the UK.

These information sessions have enabled many people from different sectors involved in delivering the VPRS across the country to receive consistent and up-to-date training. This supports the FI requirement of the local authority to ensure that staff and volunteers are adequately trained.

Providing services in years 2 to 5

Resettled Syrians may need support for some of the following issues:

- continuation of support in some areas of their everyday lives, such as continuing to develop their English language skills, and to understand UK systems
- new support with aspects of their circumstances that have changed, such as understanding changes to their entitlements like benefit changes when working a certain number of hours. They may be moved onto Universal Credit, develop health issues, have children in the UK, move house, or be dealing with an emergency.

This might include:

- understanding and responding to letters
- crisis intervention – unforeseen circumstances
- access to mainstream services, making links with housing teams where appropriate
- budgeting advice, and help to understand

benefits issues and changes, such as changes to Child Tax Credit or the benefits cap level

- being accompanied to appointments
- advice and signposting related to travel documents and family reunion
- support in developing IT competence in order to use services that are increasingly, or even solely, accessed online e.g. utilities, Universal Credit
- assistance with schools.

Support could take a number of forms, such as:

- intensive support for high need or vulnerable clients e.g. home visits, or accompanying to appointments
- general enquires and advice for non-urgent issues e.g. through a phone line to a caseworker in office hours
- group workshops or briefings for common issues e.g. family reunion, benefit changes
- short-term crisis intervention e.g. advocacy and referrals to appropriate providers
- purchase of laptops or tablets and the costs of setting up broadband. This will enable clients to manage services online as well as, for example, access online ESOL resources or support children with translation in school.¹⁸

Certain areas of caseworker support might overlap with other areas of provision in the overall programme for client years 2 to 5, such as language or employment support. Arrangements for practice sharing, such as in multi-agency fora or operational meetings, can help to ensure that both duplication and gaps in provision of support are avoided.

Case study

Developing integration support locally

Kirklees Council in West Yorkshire provides a package of integration support to resettled Syrians for the duration of their first five years here through a combination of in-house support workers in their Housing Solutions team, as well as working closely with other local services and commissioning them to provide relevant services.

Each resettled family has weekly contact with their own support worker, through a mix of home visits and drop-in sessions, which evolves according to the complexity of their needs. The team provides tenancy support in particular. Each family has an initial family assessment, and a support plan is put in place covering for example, language learning and employability skills. Resettled families are not only directed to access relevant services, but they are encouraged to meet other local people through activities they enjoy, and build their own sustainable support networks.

The council resettlement team works closely with a range of relevant statutory and voluntary sector agencies, including the adult learning team and the investment and regeneration team at the council, DWP and other employment support providers, and ESOL providers. They work closely with local voluntary sector organisations who have the expertise and local connections to complement the core integration support provided by the council. The voluntary and community sector is seen as key to helping people integrate locally and encouraging families to get involved in wider activities and meet one other. Different services provided include additional ESOL classes and health and wellbeing support, including 'welcome to Kirklees' sessions and regular, accessible social events such as dinners with community transport provided.

The council regularly reviews individual family support plans with partner agencies, as well as in consultation with the family themselves about how they feel they are progressing in settling into life in Kirklees. This involves working to clear, measurable outcomes to indicate how families are moving towards independence and employability. Further, this will help to determine the appropriate pace of withdrawal of intense support from support staff, recognising the progress and independence that each family member has made so far.

Case study

Developing integration support collectively

In Yorkshire and Humber, a number of local authorities collectively commissioned the Refugee Council to provide integration caseworker support for resettled Syrians during their first year in the UK. Named caseworkers were assigned to each family, supporting individuals and families in all aspects of their new life in the UK and working towards independence. Practically, this service included orientation support, responding to urgent needs, accessing services and to encourage support within the resettled Syrian community.

The local authorities in this region are now considering commissioning a flexible model of casework support for clients' years 2 to 5 that adapts to the changing needs of resettled refugees and encourages them to become as independent as possible. Those opting-in to this model will be able to ensure a consistent service is offered to resettled clients across different areas, enabling them to monitor progress and to share practice collectively over a period of several years.

Checklist: Integration casework

Planning

- How will you assess the needs of resettled clients at the end of their year 1?
- What is your strategy: how do you plan to meet those needs, anticipate future needs and also promote independence? Will you need to commission a service or can you provide it in-house?
- What delivery format for support has worked well in your local area? For example, think about whether this is in group or individual settings, what locations or phone/online support are used, whether it is delivered by your local authority staff or by commissioned organisations, and how have you reached the more vulnerable clients . Do you want to reproduce that or amend it?

A client-centred approach

- Have you consulted clients about the kinds of support they feel they now need?
- Have you communicated changes in support to your clients?

Monitoring and evaluation

- How will you record and monitor client progress towards independence, acknowledging there may not be linear progress towards complete independence? What outcomes are you working to?
- How will you know if a client is not in touch because they are well-integrated and independent, rather than becoming isolated, afraid or unable to seek support?

5. Local community involvement

Why include local community involvement?

Resettled refugees can improve their employment prospects by volunteering in their local communities, and their mental health and wellbeing is likely to benefit if they can use their skills and feel they are making a valuable contribution to the locality.

In addition, the whole community benefits if newly-arrived refugees integrate successfully. Good community relations can be encouraged and facilitated by providing opportunities for resettled refugees and local residents to interact and get to know one another as neighbours in the same locality.

Integration and mixing shouldn't be forced, but new arrivals to the UK can struggle to find opportunities to interact and spend meaningful time with British people and other UK residents beyond their own migrant community. Some resettled refugees have begun to get involved in the local community by themselves already, but others may be more isolated, less confident and need additional support, encouragement and opportunities to mix with others.

Each local context will be different, and each place will have different opportunities and community development projects in place already. The funding regime for the VPRS offers the opportunity to initiate and financially support initiatives that will directly encourage refugees from Syria to participate in their local area, and for host communities to encounter refugees in their everyday lives. Positive local support for resettlement from Syria presents a great foundation for social relationships to flourish between refugees and local residents.¹⁹

The story so far

Some local communities immediately reached out to welcome Syrian refugees to their area, and were organising support even before families had arrived, while others proactively developed ways to welcome their new refugee neighbours once they had moved in.

During their first few months in the UK, resettled refugees might also understandably have been prioritising their basic needs and learning how to live independently in the UK: setting up home, supporting their children into school, understanding their rights and entitlements and learning basic English. Once these are in place, there is a good opportunity to enable resettled refugees from Syria to become more active participants in their local communities.

Although there are some great examples of community support, resettled refugees will have each made different progress in socialising beyond their immediate family or resettled refugee cohort for a variety of reasons. Some refugees may have had few opportunities to engage with other people. Some will have been consumed with looking after the needs of their family members in their first year in the UK. Others may have felt a little overwhelmed by their new environment, conscious of their lack of fluency in English, and nervous of talking to people outside of their family.

Changing client needs in their years 2 to 5

Resettled refugees from Syria might benefit from opportunities and encouragement during their years 2 to 5 to do some of the following, if they haven't already done so:

- Get to know their neighbours and other people who live locally
- For parents, to meet other parents, taking part in activities at their children's school, or attending baby and toddler groups or Children's Centres can be helpful
- For older teenagers, taking part in informal education activities like the National Citizen Service²⁰
- Join local clubs, organisations or faith networks. This might include activities such as scouting groups, after school groups, youth groups and summer sports clubs for children, evening classes and sports clubs for adults
- Take up volunteer opportunities with local organisations, in local shops or services, particularly those who are seeking work or recently left full time education
- Improve informal conversation and everyday communication skills, particularly those adults who may be more isolated or not working
- Understand life in the UK and adapt to British cultural norms.

As part of supporting the local community response to Syrians, local communities will benefit from continued meetings or events to keep informed about the progress of the VPRS and to become more aware of the continuing needs of those who have been here for over a year. Local groups might wish to develop the kind of support they have been offering, and may only need a small amount of financial support to get an idea off the ground. Local authorities may wish to set up a local community grants programme for this purpose.

Providing services in years 2 to 5

Different forms provision can take

The possibilities are endless, and will reflect local contexts and local partnerships. Local areas might want to consider or adapt some of the following ideas:

- **events** to bring people together and share their different beliefs, perspectives and cultural traditions or celebrate together²¹
- **volunteering opportunities** including identifying and coordinating volunteering opportunities in the local area, through existing coordination mechanisms.²² This could include training resettled refugees as volunteers in local organisations,²³ or training local residents as volunteer befrienders
- **gender-specific events and initiatives** as appropriate, such as workshops on gender norms in British culture, safeguarding etc.
- **working with local sports and social clubs** to encourage resettled refugees to join in
- **facilitating communication between resettled refugees** in different geographical areas, and supporting them to develop (in)formal networks or a community group. This might also include advice on developing a formal charitable organisation for example, including how to develop a constitution, open bank accounts, make funding applications, meet legal reporting requirements etc., and building this knowledge and skills among the membership
- **organising day trips** involving resettled refugees and local residents
- **including and supporting resettled refugees from Syria to be user representatives** – for example user groups in local services, school parent groups and governors

- **work with local employers and further/ higher educational institutions** to see if they can provide access for resettled refugees to their facilities, including leisure and library facilities
- **working in partnership with local organisations**, such as the City of Sanctuary movement, or local business fora.

It is also important to carefully consider how far these events are inclusive of other migrant groups in the local area, including dispersed asylum seekers, new refugees from the asylum system, former unaccompanied children leaving care, other resettled refugees through the Gateway Protection Programme, and other migrant groups from EU and non-EU countries. While VPRS funding is specifically targeted at supporting resettled Syrians and others who have fled Syria, it is important not to alienate other migrant groups while doing so.

Encouraging independence

Promoting active citizenship and community engagement between resettled refugees and local residents should be done in ways that encourage refugee independence. So, for example, a befriending scheme should enable refugees to understand UK culture, norms and systems, rather than a befriender undertaking everyday tasks on behalf of a refugee.

Supporting local initiatives in different ways
VPRS funding obviously cannot be committed to long-term costs that can't be provided after clients' year 5. It might provide the resources to get local ideas off the ground and local areas will want to consider how best to enable community integration to continue sustainably and meaningfully in the long-term.

Not all community schemes require funding, but - as above - small local groups will still benefit from up to date information and guidance from the local authority. They may also benefit from practical advice they may not have the resources to research, for example about getting Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for working with vulnerable client groups.

Case studies

Since support during clients' years 2 to 5 is completely new and most areas have not even begun their year 2 activities yet, these examples come from activities and initiatives that took place in clients' year 1 of the VPRS in some areas, and other projects outside of the VPRS. They could be replicated or adapted as part of the support provided in clients' years 2 to 5 of the VPRS.

Refugees as advisory members of local user groups

Bradford University's Faculty of Health runs a user representatives group which includes asylum seekers and refugees. The group has been involved in recruitment, teaching, assessment and research applications. Feedback so far has highlighted the value of the group in sharing their experiences with students, as well as benefits to the user representatives themselves in terms of their confidence and understanding of higher education.

Similarly, refugees have been sought to sit on School Appeals Panels in another part of Yorkshire, so that the panels better reflect the diversity of the local community.

Countryside experiences in the North Yorkshire Dales

Syrian families have been included in a North Yorkshire project (People and the Dales, or PAD) that enables people in inner cities to spend time in the countryside, with the aim of improving their mental wellbeing. 34 Syrian women and children have already spent time at various events organised through local churches and an activity centre, and stayed with local families. Activities included visiting a farm, a party in the parish hall, and the opportunity for refugees to share their stories at a church service.

In return, some host families have now visited the refugee families in Leeds. There

are plans to explore the idea of twinning with other groups, and links are being made with other local towns and cities.

Syrian women's groups

Groups in Harrogate, Leeds and Selby are led by women from Syria, with support from volunteers and some staff. They primarily involve informal discussions about life in the UK and how it differs from Syria, in terms of gender roles, parenting, access to health services, and so on. The group also has activities including celebrations, food, dancing and crafts. The groups are intended to reduce isolation of women and to build their confidence in a safe environment.

Resettled Refugee Communities' Forum, Sheffield

This Forum brings together resettled refugees in Sheffield who arrived through a resettlement programme, so includes refugees who have been resettled over a decade ago as well as very recent arrivals. It enables resettled refugees to share experiences, address common issues and build relationships across cultural divides through a range of activity groups. The forum covers 11 nationalities, includes refugee community organisations and community associations.

Learning about UK culture and values alongside other refugees and asylum seekers

Resettled Syrians are participating with other refugees and asylum seekers in a unique, five-week course in Leeds that helps them to better understand British values and culture. This in turn enables refugees to feel more settled and more independent in the UK. As a further benefit for more isolated refugees, the course provides social interaction and the possibility of creating a friendship and networking group.

The course Feeling@Home in Leeds, run by RETAS (Refugee Education and Training Advice Service) Leeds, offers

practical advice, training and guidance about what is 'usual' in the UK, but in a context that is respectful of the home cultures of different participants. Its content is designed taking account of research that has highlighted areas that are the most culturally difficult for migrants in the UK, including: participating in groups; social conversation; seeking help; and, saying no and expressing disagreement.

The course has run at least three times, each with 8-10 participants from a range of countries including Syria, Eritrea, Sudan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Iran, Iraq and Rwanda. Those not yet at the level needed to join the course are prepared gradually on the entry-level courses they attend at the same centre.

Checklist: Local community involvement

Existing practice

- Are there examples of successful, spontaneous integration of resettled refugees in your local area already?
- Which local groups and organisations have initiated projects or come forward to help already?

Syrian perspectives

- What preferences do resettled clients have for getting into the local community? Have your resettled clients expressed an interest in certain activities, or even setting up a community group themselves?
- Which of your clients seem more isolated or are struggling to adapt to their life in the UK? Have you consulted them about the kinds of activities they might be interested in?
- How will you record and monitor progress in community integration and cohesion in clients' years 2 to 5? What changes or developments do you (and resettled clients) hope to see?

Local community involvement

- Do the interventions and activities you are supporting through your VPRS maximise opportunities for resettled refugees to mix with other locals, for example: mixed ESOL classes or supporting children to attend mainstream schools?
- What priorities and preferences do local community members have for encouraging resettled refugees from Syria to participate in the local community?
- How will you ensure that other migrants, minority groups and other local residents do not feel marginalised or excluded by your development work with resettled refugees from Syria?
- Are there other groups you could approach to see if they have an interest in getting involved or working with resettled refugees?

6. Employment advice

Why include employment advice?

Most people need to feel they are engaged in meaningful activity and supporting their families economically. This is really important for resettled refugees to maintain their sense of dignity and good mental health and wellbeing, by demonstrating their independence and making a tangible contribution to society. Furthermore, employment is known to be a key factor in facilitating refugee integration in host societies partly because it's a change to make new social contacts and partly because it reflects the traditional work culture that those who can work should work. It also enables refugee families to meet the cost of living, particularly in light of the benefit cap.

However, it is likely that most resettled clients will need significant support to navigate the local job market and secure employment at their skill level. The FI recognises this reality and suggests that VPRS funding in clients' years 2 to 5 could include support into employment.

The story so far

Clients' year 1 focused on arrival issues and getting resettled refugees settled into their new homes and communities. Most refugees that arrived through the VPRS will not have had the English language skills to be able to consider finding paid work during their first year here so will have been accessing welfare benefits during this period to meet their living expenses (see Language support section).

Changing client needs in their years 2 to 5

There will be a wide spectrum of ability to start work among the resettled refugee cohort. Over time, some of the resettled refugees from Syria will become more ready and keen to find work, particularly as their English language skills have improved. Even with motivation to gain employment, there are a range of barriers and other complexities involved in supporting vulnerable people into meaningful employment.

Providing services in years 2 to 5

What provision needs to cover

Resettled refugees may have been referred by Jobcentre Plus (JCP) to the 'Work Programme' which supports long-term unemployed people into work using personal advisors through private or third sector providers. The Work Programme will be replaced either with direct support from JCP or a new 'Work and Health Programme' from Autumn 2017. Unemployed resettled clients may be referred to this new programme during their years 2 to 5.²⁴ Other employment support arrangements exist in the devolved nations, including Jobs Growth Wales, Steps 2 Success in Northern Ireland, and Apprenticeship Scotland.²⁵

It is important that any employment support funded through the VPRS complements, rather than duplicates, existing statutory support. Some clients may have already received some employment support through a local employment support programme.

Local areas will be finding that:

- Some resettled refugees might struggle to find appropriate employment immediately. They could feel compelled to take very low-skilled, poorly paid jobs or those which are not sustainable. They might benefit from support to set milestones towards their personal goals, maintain a balance between raising their aspirations and managing their expectations, and to be able to identify and avoid exploitative workplaces.
- Most resettled refugees from Syria will not be able to transfer their existing skills and qualifications such as educational certificates, technical qualifications etc into the local job market on their own. They will benefit from additional support to transfer their qualifications and avoid long-term underemployment.
- Some resettled refugees will not yet be ready for work, but can be supported to become more employable through volunteering, internships, mentoring, undertaking IT classes or other training such as an interpreting qualification or ESOL classes that are designed with work in mind.
- Some refugees from Syria may seek work assuming they cannot afford to continue or begin university studies. They may not realise they would pay home fees for university tuition rather than overseas student fees, might be eligible for student finance if they have refugee status or have had Humanitarian Protection for three years, and can apply for a range of bursaries or scholarships that have been made available specifically for refugees, and Syrians in particular. Advice should cover opportunities to study further, but also highlight the responsibility to pay back any student loans.

It is important that support staff are alert to any mental health and wellbeing issues and can refer clients to the appropriate services if they are needed (see Health section of this guide).

Different forms provision can take

All resettled refugees from Syria will benefit from learning about the UK job culture. For some, this may be the first time in their lives that they have had the opportunity to find work, either due to their displacement and the length of time they have spent in refugee camps, for young adults because they have recently left school, or for women who have been undertaking domestic roles up to this point. It is really important that they understand their rights and entitlements at work, in order to avoid exploitation and to be able to challenge unfair work practices. They will also need to understand the implications of accepting different types of work upon their benefit level. Like other jobseekers, resettled refugees will be expected to have IT access and competence in order to conduct job searches and apply for Universal Credit.

Support may be provided via:

- **Individual advice and support** tailored to the needs of the individual
- **Group briefings or workshops** on UK job culture, work rights and exploitation, higher education, setting up a small business, employer and university presentations etc. These might be tailored for different groups such as young adults or women, to reflect the particular issues that they face, such as young people moving from the education system to apprenticeships, training or work
- **Supporting refugee-led or community initiatives** that provide work experience, for example, defraying the costs associated with voluntary work or short-term/one-off events like equipment, paying for DBS checks, application and registration fees
- **Supporting employment support projects** to extend their work to specifically work with resettled clients
- **Funding places** on ESOL-for-work courses²⁶
- **Purchasing IT equipment and financing broadband setup costs** so clients can manage their job searches and benefit payments independently.

Case studies

These examples have been funded in a variety of ways, but not all through the VPRS. They are included here as examples to inspire work that could be replicated using VPRS funding in other areas.²⁷

An employment support service in Yorkshire²⁸

A pilot employment project in Bradford has been working with resettled Syrian refugees to support them towards employment. World Jewish Relief offers a combination of interventions as a holistic approach to improving the prospects of employment for both skilled and unskilled clients, including additional ESOL, and training and support for professionals to re-enter their profession post-arrival. The Home Office funded project is now being extended across much of Yorkshire. Similar projects are also operating in the Midlands and Scotland.

The Syrian Kitchen, Leeds²⁹

Syrian chefs create Syrian and fusion-style meals two days a week at the Rainbow Junk-tion Café, a food waste project run by volunteers in Hyde Park, Leeds. It is part of the Real Junk Food Project network.

A multifaceted approach to employability support

North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) has adopted a multifaceted approach to support the employability of Syrians they have resettled across North Yorkshire. It has developed an employment project based in the County Council's HR Resourcing Solutions team, which specialises in recruitment and employability initiatives for different client groups and has a sound knowledge of the local labour market.

A full-time employment advisor in this team will have a refugee client caseload for at least two years, supporting Syrians and those being resettled under the VPRS

to find sustainable employment that fits their needs and aspirations through a range of services. The post-holder will work closely with the employment advisors for the World Jewish Relief project, who cover overlapping geographical areas. Between them, they are ensuring that resources are directed wisely to reach all clients in this rural area, and reflecting the assets and expertise of each organisation.

Further aspects of the NYCC approach includes ESOL provision that incorporates employability sessions in its syllabus, and it is exploring the possibility of funding apprenticeships with local employers for suitable candidates.

Checklist: Employment advice

Local community links

- What existing employment support can resettled clients access in your area and will these provide them with opportunities to mix with other work seekers? Think about DWP support, as well as organisations that provide computer access, bus passes and clothes for interviews, as well as careers services in schools and colleges. Also consider supporting voluntary sector initiatives that will provide resettled refugees with work experience or other opportunities.
- Have you made any links to large local employers? Can they be briefed on the VPRS and assured of resettled refugees' rights to work?

Syrian perspectives

- Have you, Jobcentre Plus or another partner organisation undertaken an assessment for each client, logging their qualifications and training overseas and their current English language level?
- Have you consulted clients individually about their aspirations about study or work, including self-employment, both immediately and in the longer-term? How will you monitor their progress towards these goals?
- Do some clients need information and support about employment provided in a more accessible way? Think about providing sessions for those with children, or women-only sessions.

Information and resources

- Do you want to commission a service that will undertake assessments, requalification, and employability support for resettled refugees?
- What are the options for resettled clients who want to set up their own small business?
- Do you know what bursaries and scholarships are available at local educational institutions at further/higher education level? Have you made links with them and provided information about the VPRS?

7. Language support

Why include language support?

Being able to communicate in the language of the host country is crucial for the successful integration of resettled refugees. Good language skills will enable refugees to understand and navigate their way around local and national systems and places, will help them to develop social relationships with people they interact with, and improve their employment prospects. For this reason, it is important to front-load language support.

The FI recommends that clients continue to be provided with at least 8 hours of language training and conversation practice during their years 2 to 5 until they reach at least Entry Level 3.

The story so far

Resettled Syrians should have had a language assessment and access to language tuition within their first month, provided by an accredited English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provider. This should have continued for the first year until mainstream support was available to enable Syrians to be able to carry out 'basic transactions' in their new communities.

People claiming JSA or work-related Universal Credit, including most recently arrived resettled Syrians, who have English skills below entry level 2 are required to improve their language skills to keep receiving their benefit payments.³⁰ These clients are referred by Jobcentre Plus to appropriate locally available classes and face benefit sanctions if they do not complete their training. DWP-

mandated ESOL provision is usually a 10-12 week course, currently restricted to a maximum 16 hours per week for up to 6-9 months. Where Universal Credit is in place, work coaches will have more flexibility to refer clients for more ESOL hours over a longer period of time.

This mandatory ESOL will not necessarily meet all the ESOL needs of a client, but should be taken into account when assessing clients' language support needs. For example, a client in this situation may need informal ESOL support to complement the formal provision received through DWP.

Local authorities will wish to provide a range of ESOL options that meet the needs of each resettled Syrian in their area and ensure access to ESOL that is appropriate for resettled Syrians in terms of:

- proficiency level
- delivery type (informal or formal)
- location
- time of day
- suitable childcare options.

Multiple barriers to learning could be present for different clients at the same time, meaning that it might take a number of changes and efforts to support some clients to continue learning and access appropriate ESOL provision. Home Office guidance emphasises the need to offer flexible provision that overcomes barriers to learning faced in different areas, such as rural areas or places without an established ESOL infrastructure, or provision supported by appropriate childcare. It recognises that even the most motivated learners may struggle to attend every class.

The Home Office recognises a flexible approach to ESOL is needed and has provided additional funding to address specific barriers for individual's access to ESOL. In winter 2016/17, the Home Office made several announcements offering additional funding to local authorities to support ESOL provision to resettled adult Syrians (financial details as per section 4 above). Home Office priorities so far emphasise:

- Informal as well as formal ESOL, especially for pre-entry and those who are illiterate
- Childcare, particularly for women
- Functional English language to support day to day independence, confidence to better connect and participate in local communities, and employability. Provision that enables clients to mix with others outside the VPRS is encouraged
- Holiday provision; continuing language provision through holidays, especially the long summer holiday, to 'bridge the gap' until clients can access more formal learning in term time, but also to provide informal language opportunities and family learning events to support confidence in English and broader integration.

Funding can be used for a range of ESOL activities:

- fees to access mainstream ESOL courses or commissioning discrete ESOL classes
- funding evening, weekend or online classes
- 'non-participation' costs e.g. to increase ESOL infrastructure such as training ESOL teachers, buying equipment, resources, renting classroom space and transport.

Changing client needs in their years 2 to 5

Resettled Syrians will each have made different progress in their language skills under different circumstances and so will have different ESOL needs from clients' year 2 onwards. While a tailored approach to meeting individual clients' needs is encouraged, this will mean that clients from the same cohort will need different ESOL provision and will make different progress. For example, the main householder on a benefit claim may be referred to DWP ESOL courses, while a non-working spouse might only access informal ESOL when it fits around childcare, although this may change under Universal Credit as each adult will have their own claim. Ongoing assessment and consultation with clients is vital for understanding their changing needs and priorities over time, in order to maximise the take-up of ESOL provided.

Some new aspects that may need to be considered when ensuring resettled clients have access to appropriate ESOL – and in light of the overall aim to encourage their independence – include:

- childcare needs
- informal and formal settings – for daily transactions and social interaction, or for seeking employment
- confidence in using their language skills
- mixing with other ESOL learners as a way of furthering independence and connections in the local community.

Case study

Identifying language support needs

Focus groups and interviews were conducted with resettled Syrians in the Yorkshire and Humber region to understand needs and the barriers faced in accessing appropriate language support. Client focus groups were conducted with interpreters in three different locations: a city, a town and a rural area. This captured the experiences and views of a range of resettled adults. A number of 1:1 interviews were also conducted with individuals currently unable to access ESOL, due to individual barriers such as health.

Clients articulated that learning English was important for communicating with schools, helping children with homework, speaking to new friends in English, going to the shops, and finding work.

Clients confirmed key barriers to accessing ESOL such as: geographical isolation, lack of pre-entry and informal provision, women not being offered classes comparable with the amount of DWP ESOL provided to benefit claimants, lack of childcare and class times that fit around the school run, and health issues restricting participation in classes.

In addition, the focus groups highlighted a number of issues that were less well-known. For example, people unable to access class-based learning, such as women in late stages of pregnancy and with newborns or those with complex health needs, needed more 1:1 learning opportunities. Another issue was that some clients felt they would benefit from having Arabic-speaking ESOL teachers, to enable those with low levels of English or literacy to ask questions in class and learn more effectively. Finally, there was a clear need for work-related ESOL to support clients towards employment, including work-related English, and helping with CVs and job applications.

Identifying the multiple barriers to accessing ESOL faced by individual

resettled refugees has enabled the supporting local authorities to look at tailoring the types and availability of ESOL much more precisely to meet client needs.

Providing services in years 2 to 5

Most areas do not have precisely the required amount and type of ESOL provision already in place to meet the needs of all resettled refugees. Improving local ESOL can be tackled by developing good relationships with local DWP staff, colleges and other providers in other settings, such as the Workers' Educational Association (WEA).³¹ These key contacts might be unaware of the presence and needs of the resettled refugee cohort, and may need to be alerted to future arrival groups that are planned. Armed with greater understanding, they might be able to put on courses to bridge the gaps already identified, drawing on other resources such as the Adult Education Budget to increase appropriate provision.

Mapping and sharing information

Mapping ESOL provision in detail at local level can help signpost resettled refugees to existing classes, identify gaps and engage with local providers to increase provision. The one-off funding for ESOL coordination should have enabled this to take place in some areas (as outlined in the Finance section in this guide). However, it is a large and complex task to map and then update the information regularly. For more ideas on mapping existing ESOL provision, take a look at the Learning English in Leeds website at: www.lel.help

Improving availability of formal ESOL

Formal, accredited ESOL classes are available at many colleges and FE providers, covering a range of levels from beginner or pre-entry level, leading to a certificate or qualification. This might be useful, for example, for refugees seeking work and building their CV. Challenges to improving access to formal ESOL for resettled refugees include:

- clients may be put on waiting lists as ESOL provision is limited, so may miss opportunities to begin learning.
- clients could wait up to nearly a year to register for formal ESOL classes, as registration usually occurs only once a year for the following academic year.

Work-related ESOL provision

Work-related ESOL can support clients with qualifications wishing to re-enter their profession. It can also be used for clients with lower levels of education, to move towards appropriate less-skilled work. Some examples are given in the Language support section of this guide, as well as a case study below.

Case study

Providing work-related ESOL

Ashford Borough Council has commissioned a practical training course tailored to support the integration of resettled refugees in the South East of England. The course is designed to provide technical and cultural ESOL to resettled Syrian refugees, as a pre-employment and community integration training course.

The idea behind the programme is to provide a flexible mix of practical skills and language training about specific vocational areas of work, including: construction, manufacturing, market gardening, health and social care, health and beauty, business administration, hospitality and retail. It should enable refugees to develop a technical vocabulary for the area of work they wish to pursue.

Individual clients will be given an initial assessment, and will have an individual learning plan based on their needs and aspirations. Training will cover not only language and skills, but also social and professional culture. The programme will provide peer/mentor support and work placements where appropriate. By the end of the 4-5 month course, participants should have an up-to-date CV with recent

work experience and references from local people.

The programme provider is also seeking recognition from the Royal College of Psychiatrists as an 'enabling environment', mindful of the background from which Syrian refugees have come. The aim is for participants to feel safe, engaged and a sense of empowerment.

The Learning and Industrial Skills Training (LIST) is being designed and delivered by Concept Training.³⁷ The programme is now being rolled out for resettled clients in Kent as well as Ashford.

Informal ESOL provision

Informal provision can be especially important for pre-entry learners, to help build language and literacy skills in preparation for more formal learning. It is also important for those clients with complex health needs who are unable to easily leave the house. Informal provision can be delivered in a range of settings that might make clients more comfortable, including local schools, children's centres, libraries, community centres and clients' homes.

Informal provision can be delivered by engaging with a variety of volunteers, sessional workers and paid qualified ESOL tutors. It can include a range of approaches, such as:

- community learning eg WEA, Talk English,³² English My Way³³
- 1:1 tutoring eg SAVTE English At Home³⁴
- e-learning (requires basic ICT skills and internet access) eg Little Bridge³⁵
- family learning eg East Renfrewshire Family ESOL.³⁶

It may be possible to capitalise on local goodwill for the VPRS; for example, there may be local residents wishing to offer support, including retired teachers and other professionals. However, since informal provision often relies on volunteers, it may be limited in availability and volume.

Whilst an hour or two of informal conversation per week may be sufficient to supplement those accessing more formal learning, it is important to increase the amount available for illiterate clients or pre-entry learners. This may include offering training to existing ESOL tutors to increase capacity and specialist skills needed for teaching pre-entry and basic literacy. It is also important to ensure quality and to use trained ESOL tutors and recognised models, such as English my Way, wherever possible.

Ensuring access for female refugees

For some resettled refugees, learning English might have been hindered by a lack of childcare options or ESOL class times that fit around the school run. Women during late stages of pregnancy or with newborn children might not have the confidence to use public transport to reach classes, or might not prioritise formal class-based learning at that time. If they are not the main JSA claimant in the household, then they will not have been assigned to DWP-mandated ESOL provision and may not have received equivalent tuition through other forms of ESOL.

Informal, family-friendly learning environments might be more appropriate for women in these situations. The most appropriate types of language support should be identified during an individual assessment with each client.

Rural ESOL provision

Rural locations can face particular challenges in providing ESOL for resettled adults, as they usually have little history of migration in the area and thus minimal ESOL infrastructure already in place. Clients can be fairly isolated from other resettled refugees and from ESOL services. They will have additional barriers to accessing ESOL such as limited transport options to reach the nearest place with ESOL provision that can fit alongside their other commitments such as taking children to and from school.

In recognition of this, up to 25 per cent of the additional ESOL funding can be used for 'non-participation' costs to help set up provision or infrastructure where needed, such as training tutors, providing a venue and transport costs.

Checklist: ESOL

Existing experience

- What delivery format for ESOL has worked well in your local area?
- Are you aware of what ESOL is available in your area? Do you need to invest resources in developing an ESOL directory?
- Have you made links with your local JCP advisers, college providers and others?

Syrian perspectives

- How will you assess the ESOL needs of resettled clients at the end of their year 1?
- Have you consulted clients about the kinds of ESOL provision they feel they need? Is this informal or formal style, pre-entry to advanced levels, online or in person, evenings or weekends, with childcare facilities?
- Have you communicated any changes in ESOL provision to your clients?
- How will you know if clients are still experiencing barriers to ESOL, if a client is not accessing the right level for them, or not learning as quickly as you had expected?

Planning

- Do you need to commission ESOL provision to overcome barriers your clients are facing?
- Do you have enough flexible childcare provision to enable resettled Syrian parents to access ESOL?
- Do you have an ESOL strategy for resettled clients during their years 2 to 5? Can you cost out the FI recommendation of 8 hours ESOL per week for clients until they reach Level 3? Have you incorporated the findings from the work conducted by your regional ESOL coordinator, under the 2016-17 funding, into your plans?
- How does your ESOL strategy also promote independence?
- How will you record and monitor client progress in language acquisition and communication skills and confidence during their years 2 to 5? What outcomes are you working to?
- Does your ESOL provision also encourage resettled families to access mainstream courses where appropriate, so that they can also mix with other people not on the VPRS?

8. Health

Why include health?

One of the criteria for refugees to be selected for the VPRS relates to having particular medical needs, a disability, or having survived violence or torture. Therefore resettled refugees as a whole will have a relatively higher level of long-term health needs than the general population, including physical health, mental health and mental wellbeing.

Many refugees have health issues that require long-term care and resources, while some refugees' mental health needs may not have been apparent initially but will emerge later. Funding available through the VPRS can be used to meet these health needs during clients' years 2 to 5.

Local authority staff working on the VPRS will not have the clinical healthcare expertise of medical professionals. They will need to work closely and facilitate dialogue with these colleagues to understand the healthcare needs of different resettled clients - such as children, women and those with complex medical conditions - and to work within existing structures to meet these needs as effectively as possible.

The story so far

All resettled refugees should have had appointments with a GP and dentist in their first few weeks of arrival in the UK, plus with an optician if needed. Clients should have had initial check-ups, immunisations, if necessary, and been supported to claim exemptions from relevant health costs.

Local authorities should have established a good working relationship with local health representatives, such as Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and their equivalents in different parts of the UK, to ensure that health services are available and accessible by resettled refugees. For client year 1, health partners can claim for initial health care costs at a fixed rate, and claim reimbursement on a case-by-case basis for additional medical costs during the year if pooled costs have been exceeded, as per the Health FI. At the time of writing, this was £2,600 per person: £600 for primary care and £2000 for secondary care.³⁸ Secondary care treatment during client years 2 to 5 might be reclaimed through the exceptional funds pot if the client needs were identified in their Year 1.

One of the minimum requirements for local authority participation in the VPRS is that they must ensure that survivors of torture have access to specialist mental health services where needed. Note that not all resettled refugees are victims of torture, and not all victims of torture will need or want specialist support. However in practice, even with the level of resources through the VPRS and the commitment of public service providers, some local areas have struggled to secure appropriate specialist mental health provision, and without long waiting times. This is largely because of a lack of relevant skills and experience of dealing with these types of needs among health providers, which include the medical and psychological consequences of warfare, torture and other human rights abuses.

Changing client needs in their years 2 to 5

It is realistic to assume that many of the medical issues that may arise among resettled refugees from Syria will require ongoing treatment. Some refugees might still be waiting for specialist treatment due to difficulties in finding appropriate treatment, while others may present new conditions.

It is well-established that refugees who have experienced war and upheaval may present delayed symptoms. Therefore it is likely that some clients will need access to mental health support for some time after arrival in the UK.

Local health providers need to anticipate that while some medical conditions will have been identified and treated during clients' year 1, the overall health needs of some resettled refugees might increase during the subsequent period.

Case study

Ensuring access to dentists in the North East

Some local authorities have struggled to facilitate access for resettled refugees to dentists. There is no need to register with a dentist in the same way as with a GP, but some local dental practices do not have many available appointments at short notice or the capacity to take on new clients as NHS patients.

In the North East, links were made with the Primary Care Commissioning Manager (Dental) from NHS England who has responsibility for Cumbria and the North East. Through this key contact, local authorities provide relevant details about the resettled refugee cohort plus imminent arrivals, their ages, addresses and any pressing dental needs.

The Primary Care Commissioning Manager assesses capacity among dental practices in the relevant local areas, and facilitates contact between those with availability and the local authority. Local authority staff or caseworkers may need to contact several practices to be able to meet client needs at a particular time, and to ensure they have interpreters available if necessary.

'Syrian Vulnerable Persons Scheme Dental Protocol for the North East' outlining this process has been developed in this region by the North East Migration Partnership.

Providing services in years 2 to 5

What provision needs to cover

Local authorities need to work in partnership with local health leads to ensure that resettled clients have:

- Ongoing access to mainstream health services. Resettled refugees should have an understanding of how to access UK health services, including the difference between primary and secondary healthcare services, and that access to free prescriptions, glasses and dental care is dependent on receiving certain benefits
- Access to specialist mental health services that is equipped for a client group that includes survivors of violence and torture.

A number of practical challenges need consideration when ensuring these services are in place:

- Identifying and engaging with health partner leads in each area may be difficult for local authorities. Administrative boundaries for health authorities and local authorities do not always mirror one another, which means that local authorities need to identify and work with more than one health lead. Further, the most appropriate health leads in each area may not have the same remit or job title.
- Establishing new working arrangements between local authorities and health partners
- Mainstream providers may not have sufficient knowledge, understanding and experience of working with refugee clients to feel sufficiently confident and competent to meet their needs
- Limited specialist mental health provision available locally in many areas
- The small number of refugees from Syria resettled in some areas, making commissioning new, locally based services impractical
- Health partners may be unable to use NHS

numbers to track clients

- Ensuring interpreters are routinely available for all resettled clients' appointments in hospitals, GP surgeries and other medical contexts.

Different forms provision can take

Consider the following:

- outreach services for clients living in rural areas, perhaps using therapists and interpreters on a consultancy basis
- specialist clinics available on particular days of the week, perhaps located at a surgery or venue already familiar to the client group.

Like the other areas of service delivery suggested in this guide, health services need to be able to engage with the client group and be seen as accessible. This is particularly important in the area of mental health and wellbeing, as in some cultures it is not well understood or treated, and clients may feel uneasy about requesting or attending such services. This will have an impact on the way that services are advertised and delivered.

Case study

Commissioning new, flexible mental health services across Yorkshire and Humber

Migration Yorkshire, the RSMP for the Yorkshire and Humber region, coordinated conversations among local authorities, CCGs, NHS England, third sector providers and the Home Office to find a way of providing suitable specialist mental health services available to all the 1500 Syrians who are being resettled across the region during the VPRS.

The problem

There was a mix of experience and infrastructure in Yorkshire and Humber to be able to respond to the mental health and wellbeing needs of resettled Syrians:

- **Limited experience and infrastructure:**

Ten asylum dispersal areas have some infrastructure to meet refugees' needs, but specialist mental health services are not available in all areas. Even in these areas, the local authority and health partners have not always needed to work closely together because there has not been a separate budget for refugee support before.

- **No experience or infrastructure:** Quite a few local authorities participating in the VPRS are new to providing refugee support. They do not have the existing infrastructure to provide specialist mental health services to their resettled refugee clients.

- **Small client groups:** Some new areas decided to take relatively small numbers of Syrians as they are doing this type of work for the first time. They are concerned that commissioning new mental health services for such a small group is not realistic or workable as a minimum number of clients are needed to make new services viable.

The solutions

Two local specialist mental health providers in Hull and Leeds were already working with refugee clients in their respective local areas but did not have the resources to extend this work to include resettled Syrians. With additional resources from the VPRS, the providers agreed to offer services for resettled Syrians and extend the geographical areas in which they worked to include those areas struggling to provide or commission services. They developed their services to provide outreach services in new areas using self-employed, accredited therapists on a consultancy basis for whom they provided clinical supervision. Referrals can be made by integration caseworkers, GPs or resettled clients themselves, and the provider identifies an appropriate therapist for each client. The providers then arrange appropriate venues that the clients can travel to, and trained interpreters for each session.

Some practical difficulties about reclaiming costs under the Health FI associated reimbursement process also needed to be ironed out for this model. This involved the providers, CCGs and the Home Office deciding whether invoices would verify clients by VPR number or patient NHS number. A process was introduced to overcome this; details can be shared by Migration Yorkshire upon request.

One local authority instead decided to commission a 1-2 day service at a local clinic where VPRS clients had already registered. A neighbouring authority is exploring pooling their resources so their own clients can also access this clinic.

Checklist: Health

Reflecting on existing arrangements

- Do you have a working arrangement established between your local authority and health partners in your area?
- Have health partners been claiming costs for supporting resettled Syrians?
- Do your local GP surgeries have experience of working with refugee client groups and feel well-equipped to meet their needs?
- Are appropriate specialist mental health services available in your area? Have your resettled clients accessed them? Have they been advertised and explained to your client group in a culturally appropriate way?

Syrian perspectives

- Have your resettled clients been successfully, independently accessing mainstream health services?
- Have your resettled clients had any difficulties in communicating with staff at their health appointments, with GPs and hospitals? Have they routinely been offered interpreters at every appointment? Do you need to raise this issue with local health providers?

Planning

- Do medical practitioners, receptionists and other professionals such as health visitors and midwives need supplementary training? Would they benefit from practice-sharing with other professionals or peer support from an experienced practice? Can you facilitate this?
- Do you need to commission new specialist mental health services? Do you want to explore commissioning across local authority areas?
- How will you know if clients need support but are not accessing it? Which professionals in their lives have established trusting relationships and can encourage clients to seek support where they need it?

9. Housing support

Why include housing support?

Resettled refugee families may have to move house during their years 2 to 5. They may need some support in navigating the housing options available to them in order to secure appropriate, affordable accommodation.

Those families who do not have to move in the near future may still need a little support with managing their tenancies and maintaining a good relationship with their landlords.

All families may need someone to contact for advice and support if there have been changes to any personal circumstances, such as family size or medical needs, that might affect their housing needs, and as resettled refugees' rights and entitlements change due to evolving national policies on housing and welfare. Landlords may also require information about the rights and entitlements of resettled refugee tenants.

The story so far

Resettled refugees from Syria should have been provided with suitable accommodation for at least their first 12 months, if not two years, according to the Home Office minimum requirements.

Sourcing appropriate accommodation to meet the needs of individual family members of newly-arrived resettled Syrians in their first year has been challenging for the professionals involved. Accommodation had to be accessible for those clients with mobility issues, and had to be located in areas with schools with available places.

During their years 2 to 5, some clients will move accommodation, either through choice or necessity if their tenancy ends. It is realistic to assume that the families will need support in securing appropriate accommodation themselves and navigating this unfamiliar system.

Changing client needs in their years 2 to 5

Resettled refugees from Syria will have different levels of independence and communication skills. They might need housing support in their years 2 to 5 because of the following issues that affect their housing situation:

- **Changing family size** due to new children, older children leaving home, family breakdown or deaths of family members. This will affect the number of bedrooms required
- **Changing medical needs** such as deteriorating or new health problems may affect mobility and access requirements, in addition to existing complex needs of many families
- **Changing entitlement** this might include rollout of Universal Credit, or the benefit cap affecting housing benefit
- **Searching for a new house** which requires knowing how to search and apply for new tenancies in the same area or in a new area
- **Moving house** including assistance with the practicalities of physically packing up and moving, particularly if the family is physically unable to lift heavy or difficult items, and arranging transport, with a driver and removal people.

- **Managing the relationship with a new landlord** as the new landlord may need information about the VPRS and confirmation that the family has a 'right to rent', and may need to make adaptations to the property
- **Linked cases** acknowledging new arrivals may need to be housed near to or with existing resettled family. This might happen if the family has made a successful application to bring family members to the UK under the family reunion rules, or if extended family members of existing clients arrive through the VPRS.

Providing services in years 2 to 5

What provision should cover:

- **Housing information to families** about how the private rented and social housing sectors operate in the area, how families may need to 'bid' for properties, and the pros and cons of moving at all.
- **Advice about budgeting** not only to cover the rent, but also anticipating costs such as utilities and Council Tax and the financial options available to families, including any changes to the level of housing benefit and other forms of financial support available.
- **Repairs and adaptations support** as families will need to know how to get repairs and adaptations made to their property, how to get help with physically moving their belongings, where to get help with furnishing a new home etc.

Links may need to be made with a range of services, but clients should also be enabled to negotiate these relationships themselves as much as possible. These might include contacting benefit assessors, education services or schools if a move will involve a child changing schools, and local charities who may be able to help with moving logistics or furnishings.

The local authority may also need to liaise with local landlords who will benefit from understanding the VPRS and resettled families' needs. Internally, any housing support staff will need to be linked with their lead officer on the VPRS to be authorised to use VPRS funding for agreed purposes.

Further, a family wishing to move across local authority boundaries means both local authorities will need to liaise regarding implications for the family, for support agencies and for funding arrangements.

Different forms provision can take

Different families will require different levels of housing support. Some may need relatively little support, perhaps some information or signposting, while others may need intensive support. This may mean offering a mix of provision to meet these needs, from giving information over the phone or email, to home visits.

Programme leads may wish to consider whether it is possible for the housing support officers involved with client families in the VPRS to continue that involvement, since they have the knowledge and experience of working with these particular clients, and the clients will have an existing relationship with them and feel able to approach them.

If housing support staff are unfamiliar with this client group, consider providing training that will mean they can support resettled families effectively. This might include shadowing staff already involved in the VPRS, or shadowing housing teams in other local authorities, for example.

Case study

Anticipating change in housing needs in Hull

Hull City Council found an appropriate property to accommodate a newly-resettled Syrian family in the city. One of the reasons that the family was selected for resettlement was because one family member has a particular medical condition.

At the moment, the accommodation is suitable for the family. However, if the condition of the unwell family member deteriorates, the family is likely to need to move to a more suitable house that is adapted to the needs of the individual with this specific condition.

Hull City Council has been working to ensure that if a different home is needed for this family, the move can be as well-planned as possible. For example, the adaptations needed for this client in any new property have already been anticipated. This has also meant the local authority can coordinate this change and deal with related impacts, such as identifying alternative school places for the children in the family.

Through these efforts the disruption to the family's life, by moving house again with an unwell family member, should be minimised.

Checklist: Housing support

Reflecting on client year 1

- What elements of housing support worked well in your local area during clients' year 1?
- How will you assess any changed housing needs of resettled clients at the end of their first year?

Syrian perspectives

- How far can each family manage their changing housing needs independently? What additional support do they need and how do you plan to provide this?
- Have you notified clients of any change to the service offered after their first year here?
- Have you mapped out when different families' tenancies are due to end? Have you communicated the implications of this to each client well in advance?
- How will you know if clients are experiencing difficulties with their housing at any point during their year 2 to 5 period?

Planning

- Do you know what third sector support is available in your area for vulnerable people moving home?
- Do local landlords need updated information about the VPRS and the needs and entitlements of resettled refugee clients? Can you provide this?
- Have you anticipated and planned for clients who wish to move across local authority areas, either into or away from your local authority?

10. Legal support

Why include legal support?

Changing legal status and the process of family reunion are two key areas that resettled clients are likely to want to explore once they have settled into life here, perhaps during their years 2 to 5. Legal entitlements and processes invariably change over time, and resettled refugees from Syria will need to be kept up-to-date with accurate information about their situation. Clients may also seek support to make relevant applications. This information and support could be provided collectively to avoid individuals facing significant legal costs. Any anxiety about legal status can be detrimental to refugees' wellbeing and integration.

The story so far

Syrians arriving under the VPRS have so far been granted the legal status 'humanitarian protection' (HP) with five years' limited leave to remain. This means clients broadly have the same rights and entitlements as British nationals during their first five years here.³⁹ Resettled refugees also have the right to apply to be reunited with close family members overseas.

Changes to rights and entitlements

Rights and entitlements are subject to change. For example, rights to disability and carers' benefits have already changed since some Syrians arrived under the VPRS.⁴⁰ In early 2017, some resettled Syrians became concerned about the certainty of their longer-term stay in the UK, because of a government announcement about 'safe return reviews' for people with refugee status or HP.⁴¹

Refugee status

With effect from 1 July 2017, a further change took place to the legal status of resettled refugees. Newly-arriving resettled refugees from Syria are now granted refugee status and five years' limited leave.

Refugees who were resettled under the VPRS and VCRS before 1 July 2017 can apply to change their status from humanitarian protection to refugee status. Resettled clients in their year 2 will need to decide whether or not this is the best option for them, and might wish to apply to change their status in this way. Refugees or their local authority representative will need to complete a form downloadable from the Home Office website that will request a change of leave.⁴² Completing this form should not require accredited legal advice, nevertheless some clients may need some form of support to do so.

At the same time, refugees can have their Biometric Residence Permit and travel documents updated. These changes may make it difficult for resettled refugees to provide ID while these processes are being undertaken.

Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)

Towards the end of their five years' limited leave, resettled refugees from Syria will need information and guidance about their options. Most likely, they may wish to apply for indefinite leave to remain (or ILR – also known as 'settlement') so that they can stay permanently in the UK.

Reuniting with family members who are overseas

Refugee agencies always try to keep family groups together during the resettlement process, but sometimes families can become separated. Consequently, resettled refugees often want to explore their options to reunite with family members as a priority. There are different mechanisms through which family members of resettled refugees may be eligible to do this, including:

- 'Family reunification' through UNHCR's resettlement programme, with associated funding for provision of support post-arrival. Due to the high number of requests, UNHCR have set up a dedicated enquiry line: +44 (0) 203 761 9500 (press 2 for Legal Protection) or gbrlo@unhcr.org
- A 'family reunion' visa under UK Immigration Rules, separate to the VPRS or VCRS, where family members in the UK must be able to financially support arriving relatives through this route.⁴³

Different forms provision can take

- group oral briefings with the opportunity to ask questions
- written briefings to clarify or supplement group briefings
- drop-in sessions or appointments for individual support in completing or checking applications and ensuring submission of the correct supporting documentation
- exploring different ways of providing prompt, accurate information eg via texts, social media, phone calls, letters or online, to reassure clients when they have questions or fears because of news items they think may relate to their situation in the UK, or that of family members overseas.

Providing services in years 2 to 5

What provision needs to cover

- Generic, timely information about changes to rights and entitlements, legal status and the family reunion process, plus relevant issues such as family tracing services
- Appropriate support for completing applications eg for family reunion, travel documents, refugee status from July 2017 or ILR towards the end of the 5 years' limited leave. ILR applications require immigration advice that is provided by someone with an OISC Level 2 qualification, for example.

Checklist: Legal support

Keeping up to date with legal changes

- Have you or your subcontractors made your clients aware of legal changes to their status, rights and entitlements that might affect them, which have been introduced since they arrived?
- How will you ensure that your clients do not panic when they hear news items that may cause them to have anxiety or stress about their own personal situation?
- Do you need to plan or commission a regular programme of briefings to keep clients and your own or subcontracted staff up-to-date with relevant legal developments and services?

Planning

- What support do you plan to provide if clients want to make applications for family reunion, changing to refugee status and associated documentation (BRP and travel documents), or applying for ILR? Could this be organised to make savings and keep costs to a minimum?
- Do you have a process in place to ensure that any resulting changes are anticipated, planned for and links made to relevant services? For example, if an application for family reunion is successful, consider making housing plans to keep family members together in one property or in the nearby area. Similarly, if changes to housing benefit entitlements might affect families' ability to pay their rent, can you anticipate this and ensure the family is equipped to plan for and respond to this scenario?

11. Education

Why include education?

Resettled children will have started school here very shortly after arrival. It will take time for these children to learn sufficient English to participate fully, adapt to the UK educational culture, and catch up on the schooling they may have missed.

There is no 'per pupil' education allocation in the VPRS after their first year. The FI suggests that in clients' years 2 to 5 the broader VPRS budget could, but does not have to, include additional education support.

The story so far

Schools and children's services, as those holding responsibility for school admissions, should have accessed a specified education budget under the VPRS for clients' year 1 to assist the reception and early stages of settling resettled children into schools. This might have included securing resources for EAL pupils (those with English as an Additional Language), interpreting, bilingual classroom assistants, school uniforms, school meals before eligibility for free school meals is confirmed, and transport to school. Additional funding might have been secured from the Home Office for individual cases in full time education to cover 'compelling circumstances', for example, Special Educational Needs (SEN).

Older children aged 16-19 will ideally be accessing full-time education, or perhaps some form of vocational training. Local schools and colleges with resettled pupils should be aware of what the VPRS is about and be linked to local leads.

The FI for clients' years 2 to 5 does suggest that educational support could be funded through the general VPRS budget. However, unlike clients' year 1, the VPRS funding does not have a specified education allocation per pupil from their years 2 to 5.

Case study

New arrivals guidance for schools in Wales with Syrian refugees

School guidance is being prepared utilising the expertise of the Gwent Education Minority Ethnic Service which supports minority-ethnic and English additional language pupils across South East Wales, covering Newport, Caerphilly, Monmouth, Torfaen, and Blaenau Gwent. The guidance will be developed alongside a toolkit of resources to help schools across Wales to help integrate Syrian refugees within schools. It includes:

- Establishing a clear systematic process to welcome refugees into school
- Guidance and resources to help teachers and school staff with the acquisition of English and Welsh within the classroom
- Providing emotional and therapeutic support
- Assessing an additional educational need if required
- Developing a culturally diverse curriculum
- Building relationships with the parents and carers
- Late arrivals within Key Stage 4
- Preparing for transition post-16.

The guidance will build on existing identified good practice across Wales and raise awareness of good practice resources that are readily available. More information is available upon request.⁴⁴

Case study

Schools resource pack

In Leeds, a briefing resource pack is being developed by the council to support schools with new arrivals under the VPRS. This will help schools to keep informed about the programme and know what to expect when receiving information about new pupils who are resettled Syrians. The booklet provides contact details for key staff at the council and other support organisations, and provides examples of good practice locally.

Changing client needs in their years 2 to 5

Refugee pupils are likely to have a continuing need for classroom assistance, English language support, SEN etc.

Resettled children and their families might need support in their years 2 to 5 with:

- classroom support continued from clients' year 1, including classroom assistants, language support, SEN support etc.
- exploring options for pre-school education, including eligibility and access to free nursery places
- applying for school places as children reach school age or transition from one school stage to another, such as from primary to secondary schools, or from secondary to further or higher educational institutions
- the prospect of changing schools prompted by the family moving house. This might include enabling pupils to remain at their existing school through, for example, providing transport

- older children facing exams relatively soon after arrival, who have not yet caught up with their peers and may have fewer future options as a consequence
- finding out options for older children such as FE, HE, apprenticeships or other vocational training, and what impact a change might have on the parents' entitlement to child benefit, child tax credits etc.

This might involve providing information to parents and children about the advantages and disadvantages of different options. In the interests of promoting their independence, it will be important to encourage families to find out information, make informed decisions themselves, and undertake as many of the corresponding practical arrangements themselves as possible.

Families will want to support their children to attend and attain at school. This will partly be enabled by the progress parents have made learning English, so is linked to improving ESOL access for parents.

There are concerns that older teenagers in particular might not be accessing the education to which they are entitled, and could be falling through the net. Schools and colleges might be reluctant to enrol these students in full-time education where they will clearly be unable to quickly 'catch up' and compete with their peers at a time when they are taking examinations. Faced with the demands of quickly gaining educational qualifications and coming to the end of their formal education, these older children might struggle to achieve their potential.

There are no easy answers, but funding from the VPRS can be used to facilitate and quicken adjustment through a variety of interventions. With additional resources, receiving schools and colleges can provide an educational environment that welcomes and nurtures resettled pupils, encourages refugee parents to participate in school life like other parents, give teachers and other staff the knowledge and confidence to work effectively with these new pupils, and ensure that existing pupils' own learning is enhanced, not hindered, by having a more diverse peer group.

Providing services in years 2 to 5

Different forms provision can take include:

- Direct funds to schools eg for bilingual teaching assistants, interpretation, school uniforms, internal coordination role to support new arrivals
- Special needs provision
- Additional provision such as summer schools, IT courses, (peer) mentoring schemes, advice sessions about moving on and next steps
- Initiatives to encourage and support refugee parents: this might include participation in their child's education, for example with homework, reading etc. It might also involve their broader participation in school life such as attending parents' evenings and other parents' meetings, taking on a voluntary role at the school etc.
- Training and resources to keep staff up-to-date (see case study box)
- A whole-school approach; for example, initiatives that demonstrate a whole-school approach through personal stories or becoming a school of sanctuary (see case study box)
- Liaison and coordination between schools and colleges to facilitate moves.

Case studies

Resources for schools

Schools can draw on lots of existing resources to support the inclusion of new arrivals into their classroom teaching and school environment.⁴⁵

Little Bridge is an e-learning package designed specifically to support primary school children learning English. Basic accounts are free. Little Bridge offers support to schools who have resettled Syrian pupils.⁴⁶

Raising school awareness with personal accounts

Resettled Syrians under the trailblazer cohort are volunteering with the Refugee Council to tell their stories to staff and students at schools in North Yorkshire.⁴⁷

School declarations

There are different ways for schools to make public statements about welcoming refugees.

- Becoming a 'School of Sanctuary', linked to the City of Sanctuary movement. Resources supporting schools to find out more about Schools of Sanctuary are available, as well as examples from schools themselves.⁴⁸
- Signing up to 'Refugees Welcome Schools', linked to Refugees Welcome/ Citizens UK. This is part of a broader initiative to get communities involved in welcoming refugees. It has a pledge that schools can sign, as well as classroom resources.⁴⁹

These initiatives can send a positive message to the community about new pupils and their families from Syria.

Checklist: Education

Reflecting on clients' year 1

- What initiatives were funded in your area through the education allocation per pupil during clients' year 1? Which of these were particularly successful in your area? Which still need to be funded during clients' years 2 to 5 through the general VPRS budget?
- Are you monitoring progress of children who have not been able to attend mainstream schools? Are any children in this situation able to return to mainstream provision?

Syrian perspectives

- What information would families benefit from in terms of the process of children starting, changing or leaving school, and any impacts on their financial circumstances? Who is best placed to deliver this?
- Are children with SEN statements receiving all the support they need to participate fully in education?
- Are there any additional ways in which parents are or could be enabled to support their children's learning?

Planning

- Are the relevant professionals communicating about the educational needs and progression of resettled children and young people in your local authority? This might include, for example, children's services, head teachers, SEN leads, and diversity leads.
- Would it be beneficial to consult with education professionals about directing VPRS resources to address barriers to progression that they have identified among the resettled cohort, such as those facing older teenagers?
- Have you anticipated which resettled children and young people in each cohort will be facing exams, changing or leaving school in the coming academic year? How can they be supported during these times of transition to make informed choices about their options?
- Is there an appetite among schools with resettled pupils for some kind of professional network to keep schools up to date, share resources and initiatives, put on learning or training events and conferences etc.?

References

1. The UK initiative to resettle refugees displaced by the Syrian conflict was originally known as the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) or the Vulnerable Person Resettlement (VPR) programme. The term Syrian Resettlement Programme (SRP) was introduced following the Prime Minister's announcement in October 2015 to expand the number of Syrians resettled to 20,000. In practice, these terms tend to be used interchangeably by people involved in delivery of the initiative. This guide uses 'VPRS' and describes the client group as 'refugees from Syria' to reflect the expansion of the eligibility criteria in July 2017 to include other nationalities also displaced by the Syrian conflict.
2. By the end of December 2016, 5,454 Syrian refugees were recorded as having been resettled in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and each of the nine English regions of the UK. See Home Office (2017) Immigration Statistics, October to December 2016. Asylum data tables Vol.4. www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-statistics
3. Migration Yorkshire (2016) Syrian refugee resettlement: a guide for local authorities. Local Government Association: London www.local.gov.uk/syrian-refugee-resettlement-guide-local-authorities
4. 'Resettlement', Amber Rudd, Home Secretary. Written statement HCWS23, 3 July 2017 www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2017-07-03/HCWS23/ and 'Refugees of all nationalities fleeing Syria are now eligible for resettlement in the UK', Home Office News story, 3 July 2017 www.gov.uk/government/news/refugees-of-all-nationalities-fleeing-syria-are-now-eligible-for-resettlement-in-the-uk
5. Some local authorities participate in the resettlement programme known as the Gateway Protection Programme (GPP) and, previously, some local authorities participated in the government-funded Refugee Integration and Employment Service (RIES) from 2008-2011 for refugees who had come through the asylum process. Both programmes only involve a 12-month package of support.
6. Contact details for each Regional Strategic Migration Partnership (RSMP) are available at: www.local.gov.uk/topics/communities/refugees-and-asylum-seekers/refugees-and-unaccompanied-children
7. More examples are available on the Knowledge Hub for the VPRS and in the previous Guide. Both are available via www.local.gov.uk/topics/communities/refugees-and-asylum-seekers/refugees-and-unaccompanied-children
8. Contact Lisa Williams, North East Migration Partnership Officer, for further information: Lisa_Williams@middlesbrough.gov.uk or 01642 729225.
9. A certain proportion of resettled households are described by the Home Office as 'complex' cases, indicating particular needs of that household of which the local authority will need to be aware and take account of when delivering the VPRS; where appropriate,

- this may involve ensuring these families have access to mainstream provision rather than separate services, in light of the aim to promote integration. Complex cases are categorised as: mobility; serious medical; psychological; SEN or special employment needs; and, larger families of 7+ individuals. These categories will cover a variation in levels of severity or need. Some households may fulfil more than one of these criteria, while others may become ‘complex’ after arrival.
10. Home Office, DCLG and DFID (2017) Funding instruction for local authorities in support of the United Kingdom’s Resettlement Programmes, Financial Year 2017-2018. Version 1.0, July 2017 www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-resettlement-programmes-funding-instruction-2017-to-2018
 11. Home Office / DCLG / DFID (2017) Funding for Healthcare in England in support of the resettlement programmes for the financial year 2016-2017. Version 0.4 Date of issue: January 2017.
 12. Please read the ESOL funding guidance, which at the time of writing included the following:

Funding to Local Authorities for the provision of ESOL Training in England, Scotland & Wales, Financial Year 2016/17 In Support of the Syrian Resettlement Programme (SRP) and Vulnerable Children’s Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) – date of issue 19/12/16 version 1.0

Interim Guidance on Commissioning ESOL for those on the VPRS and VCRS 2016/17 (England) issued 21/12/16

Q&A ESOL Funding to Local Authorities (to be read in conjunction with Interim Guidance on Commissioning ESOL), VPRS and VCRS 2016/17’) issued 21/12/16
 13. UNHCR (2005) Local integration and self-reliance www.unhcr.org/uk/excom/standcom/42a0054f2/local-integration-self-reliance.html
 14. UNHCR (2007) Note on the Integration of Refugees in the European Union www.unhcr.org/uk/protection/integration/463b462c4/note-integration-refugees-european-union.html?query=integration
 15. UNHCR (2005) Local integration and self-reliance www.unhcr.org/uk/excom/standcom/42a0054f2/local-integration-self-reliance.html
 16. The example Resettlement Support Plan is available to download as Appendix 2 from www.local.gov.uk/topics/communities/refugees-and-asylum-seekers. Our thanks go to the Refugee Council for sharing this document.
 17. For more information, contact your RSMP or visit: Syrian Refugees: An Information Session <https://cpduk.co.uk/directory/profile/international-organization-for-migration-iom> A news item on a session for a Community Sponsorship Scheme group is featured at: ‘UK Supports Lambeth Palace in Welcoming Syrian Refugees’ IOM, 26 July 2016 <http://unitedkingdom.iom.int/iom-uk-supports-lambeth-palace-welcoming-syrian-refugees>
 18. Some schools in Scotland have provided resettled pupils with tablets to help them with translation needs at school. See for example: ‘Meet the 12-year-old Syrian refugee who fled conflict and ended up in a top UK school’, New Statesman, 2 February 2017 www.newstatesman.com/politics/education/2017/02/meet-12-year-old-syrian-refugee-who-fled-conflict-and-ended-top-uk-school

19. Some support groups have already formed in host communities. A helpful resource for those wanting to develop a local support group is Welcoming Syrian Refugees: An introductory guide developed by a range of third sector organisations, downloadable at: https://issuu.com/theuniversityofwinchester/docs/print_refugee_brochure_2
- Another grassroots initiative, Help Refugees, is developing UK-based projects to support refugees <http://helprefugees.org.uk/uk>
20. National Citizen Service (NCS) is a government-backed 2-4 week programme in school holidays for 15-17 year olds www.ncsyes.co.uk
21. In Coventry, resettled Syrians wanted to host a 'thank you' event for the local community, which included a Syrian meal cooked by a Syrian chef. 'Syrian refugees host dinner for city that welcomed them', The New Arab, 03.12.16 www.alaraby.co.uk/english/society/2016/12/3/syrian-refugees-host-dinner-for-city-that-welcomed-them
22. Timebank, for example, is a national volunteering charity <http://timebank.org.uk>. The National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) has an online search tool for accredited volunteer centres by postcode or town: www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/find-a-volunteer-centre. The government website also has links to the 'Do-it' volunteering database and to 'Volunteering Matters' at: www.gov.uk/government/get-involved/take-part/volunteer
23. In Germany, for example, some Syrian and Iraqi refugees have been trained as Arabic-speaking museum guides. Watch this short film to find out more, at: 'Germany: Refugee museum guides', UNHCR, 29 June 2016 www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/videos/2016/6/5773d42a4/germany-refugee-museum-guides.html
24. 'Long-term' unemployment is usually classed as over six months. The current Work Programme took new clients up to 1 April 2017. There are separate arrangements for Scotland as health is a devolved area of governance. For more information, see: House of Commons Library (2016) Work and Health Programme. House of Commons Library Briefing Paper Number 7845, 22 December 2016. <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7845/CBP-7845.pdf>
25. Further information about these employment support programmes in the devolved nations can be found as follows:
- Northern Ireland: www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/steps-2-success
- Scotland: www.apprenticeships.scot
- Wales: <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/skillsandtraining/jobsgrowthwales/?lang=en>
26. ESOL-for-work courses already exist in some areas, such as the North East where a five-week course runs every term in Newcastle and Sunderland for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. See the Action Foundation webpage ESOL for employability <http://actionfoundation.org.uk/action-language/esol-for-employability>
27. Examples of initiatives supporting the employment of asylum seekers and refugees exist throughout the UK. Some are highlighted in this piece: 'The Brits helping refugees help Britain', The Guardian, 10 October 2016 www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/10/brits-helping-refugees-help-britain?CMP=share_btn_tw
28. 'Supporting Syrian refugees in the UK', World Jewish Relief, 14 January 2016 www.worldjewishrelief.org/news/145-supporting-syrian-refugees-in-the-uk

29. 'Leeds Syrian Community', Rainbow Junk-tion, All Hallows' Café <http://rainbowjunktion.org.uk/about/leeds-syrian-community>. Videos available at: 'Refugees' culinary skills put to good use', BBC Local Live, 2 Feb 2017 <http://bbc.in/2jzMg1E>, and 'Leeds Church welcome refugees with the opening of Syrian kitchen', #LeedsHacks www.leedshacks.co.uk
30. This policy was announced in the 2013 Spending Review, and implemented in England in April 2014, and is expected to be rolled out in Scotland and Wales. It developed an existing measure to become a more systematic approach to apply to all claimants at the start of a new claim. See SFA: ESOL – new English language requirements for more details, at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/esol-english-language-requirements-update-from-the-sfa-and-dwp
31. The Workers' Educational Association www.wea.org.uk
32. 'Talk English' is a volunteer-led community learning programme, funded by DCLG. It operates in a number of areas in the North West, Yorkshire and Humber, the Midlands and London. See www.talk-english.co.uk
33. 'English My Way' provides digital resources to support community learning. It has network centres in different parts of England. It is funded by DCLG. See: www.englishmyway.co.uk and www.goodthingsfoundation.org/projects/english-my-way
34. SAVTE operates in Sheffield only, but is a good example of a local initiative to provide 1:1 learning at home for people who are particularly isolated or excluded. <http://savte.org.uk/>
35. 'Little Bridge' has developed e-learning designed for primary school children and their families to learn English. See: www.littlebridge.com
36. Examples of family ESOL activities carried out in East Renfrewshire with families whose first language is not English are described in this newsheet: www.roukenglenpark.co.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=12472&p=0
37. See www.concepttraining.co.uk for more background information about this training provider.
38. Home Office / DCLG / DFID (2017) Funding for Healthcare in England in support of the resettlement programmes for the financial year 2016-2017. Version 0.4 Date of issue: January 2017.
39. There are some areas where rights differ, which include access to particular benefits (originally outlined on p.13 of Syrian Refugee Resettlement: a guide for local authorities), the speed of access to student support for Higher Education, and the speed of access to the same travel documents as people with refugee status.
40. In September 2016, DWP confirmed that people with HP or refugee status do not have to pass the 'presence in the UK' test to access these benefits. See: UK Government (2016) The past presence test and refugees. MEMO ADM 21/16. www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551872/adm21-16.pdf and MEMO DMG 20/16 www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551837/m-20-16.pdf
41. Those coming to the UK through a 'protection route' (including refugees and those with HP) will have their cases reviewed when their leave runs out, if and when they apply for further leave to remain in the UK.
42. UKVI (2017) Request to change Humanitarian Protection status to refugee status. www.gov.uk/government/publications/request-to-change-humanitarian-protection-status-to-refugee-status

43. Applications for family reunion visas for dependents under the age of 18, spouses and partners can be made immediately upon arrival of resettled refugees in the UK. Other relatives can also apply if they meet particular criteria, although this application requires a fee. For more information, see: www.gov.uk/settlement-refugee-or-humanitarian-protection/family-reunion and www.gov.uk/uk-family-visa/overview
44. For more details about the school guidance for Wales, contact Tracey Pead, Head of Pupil Support (ALN) / Pennaeth Cymorth Disgyblion (ADY), Torfaen County Borough Council/Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Torfaen on 01495 742450, 07951024149 or tracey.pead@torfaen.gov.uk
45. See for example, '8 educational resources to better understand the refugee crisis', Amnesty International, 23 Oct 2015, www.amnesty.org/en/latest/education/2015/10/8-educational-resources-to-better-understand-the-refugee-crisis/; 'Supporting Syrian refugee children who arrive in your school', SecEd, 4 Nov 2015 www.sec-ed.co.uk/best-practice/supporting-syrian-refugee-children-who-arrive-in-your-school/; National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum (NALDIC) (archived page of resources) Refugee and asylum seeker children in UK schools www.naldic.org.uk/eal-teaching-and-learning/outline-guidance/ealrefugee/
46. Little Bridge website and contact details at: www.littlebridge.com
47. For example, see: 'Syrian refugees share their stories with school students', Refugee Council News, 13 March 2017 www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/latest/news/4869_syrian_refugees_share_their_stories_with_school_students
48. The Schools of Sanctuary website with a range of resources for schools is at: <https://schools.cityofsanctuary.org>. Oxfam also has a number of resources on their 'Schools of Sanctuary: Giving a Warm Welcome' webpage at: www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/schools-of-sanctuary. An example of a school celebrating their School of Sanctuary status can be seen in Kenton in the North East: 'Kenton school awarded School of Sanctuary' www.kenton.newcastle.sch.uk/leading.php and in their 'School of sanctuary' YouTube video featuring a resettled Syrian pupil www.youtube.com/user/kentonschool
49. See: Refugees Welcome Schools webpage for the pledge and resources: www.refugees-welcome.org.uk/schools



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