

**COUNTRY
CHAPTER**

GBR

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

**BY THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE UNITED KINGDOM**



United Kingdom 2014 Overview:

Resettlement programme since: 2004	Selection Missions: Yes	Dossier Submissions: Not currently
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Resettlement Admission Targets for 2014:

Admission targets for UNHCR submissions:	750
Total Resettlement Admission Target:	750

Resettlement Admission Targets for 2015:

Admission targets for UNHCR submissions:	750
Total Resettlement Admission Target:	750

Regional allocations for 2014:

	Africa	650
	Asia	
	MENA	100
	Europe	

Sub-quota features:

Designated sub-quota/acceptance for:	2014 Description, additional comments:
Emergency resettlement procedures	No emergency resettlement
Medical cases	No specific sub-quota but invites submission of a few cases at the PMQ stage.
Women at risk cases	No specific sub-quota, invites around 10% of the caseload at the PMQ stage. In practice often exceeds 10%.
Unaccompanied children	The UK does not presently resettle unaccompanied children
Family Reunion (within programme)	Not a specific sub-quota as such, the UK's Mandate scheme is dossier-based, and resettles refugees from around the world who have a close family tie in the UK who can accommodate them.
Other	UK Gateway resettlement programme has been matched funded by the European Union. UK hopes to continue using EU funding subject to confirmation of the Asylum, Immigration and Migration Fund (AIMF), by the Commission.

1. Resettlement Policy**1.1 Description of the country's resettlement policy**

The Gateway Protection Programme (GPP) and the Mandate Refugee Scheme (MRS) are operated by the **United Kingdom Home Office** in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The GPP offers a legal route for a specific number of particularly vulnerable refugees to settle in the United Kingdom (UK) each year. The annual quota is currently 750 persons. The MRS allows refugees from around the world with close family ties with the UK to be resettled.

1.2 Ministries and Departments responsible for resettlement policy

Applications for resettlement under both schemes are processed by UNHCR, who present the individual case submissions to the UK Home Office. The Refugee Team is the part of the Home Office responsible for considering applications for refugee resettlement. Applications cannot be made directly to the Refugee Team, to British diplomatic posts abroad or through other international organisations. All applications are assessed individually on their merits.

1.3 Process for deciding the annual resettlement quota and its composition

Gateway - Refugee Team is responsible for identifying caseloads (in close liaison with UNCHR) for the upcoming year, organising missions overseas and managing the policy as well as the decisions on GPP applications. Refugee Team also maintains oversight and management of the programme and quota once the resettled refugees have arrived in the UK. Each nationality and host country of refuge is approved at Ministerial level.

The Home Office at present meets the full costs of resettlement in the first year, providing a bespoke integration support package comprising; housing, healthcare, education – including access to English language classes – and casework support services. Many of the post-arrival services are provided by partner non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who work closely with the participating Local Authorities. Participation in the GPP by Local Authorities is voluntary and after the initial twelve months, the responsibility for any continued costs falls to the relevant Local Authority and other government departments.

Gateway is a three year programme in line with fiscal budgets. The three year programme has been extended by one year to cover arrivals between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015.

Mandate – Refugee Team is also responsible for receiving resettlement submissions from UNHCR and considers all applications for refugee resettlement under this scheme on a dossier-basis. Refugee Team will also arrange and fund travel of MRS resettled refugees to the UK when alternative funds are unavailable.

2. Criteria for Recognition of Refugee Status Eligibility: Asylum and Resettlement

2.1 National legislation defining refugee status eligibility

The UK works in accordance with the resettlement criteria as laid out in UNHCR's Resettlement Handbook. To qualify for resettlement in the UK, applicants should have been assessed as a refugee within the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol.

2.2 Refugee status criteria -asylum-seekers and resettled refugees

Although the GPP and MRS are separate from the standard procedure for claiming asylum in the UK, the criteria for determining whether or not a person qualifies for refugee status is the same. Both asylum seekers and refugees being resettled are assessed against the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol to determine whether or not they qualify for refugee status. In the case of an asylum seeker in the UK, the assessment is done by Home Office caseworkers whereas a person being considered for resettlement by Refugee Team under the GPP or MRS would already have been recognised as a refugee by UNHCR.

Caseworkers in Refugee Team usually accept UNHCR's determination of refugee status unless there are concerns in regards to the credibility of the claim or new evidence comes to light.

3. Criteria for Resettlement

3.1 Resettlement Eligibility Criteria

Gateway - In addition to being recognised as a refugee within the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, resettlement applicants under the GPP must also meet the eligibility criteria for resettlement as defined in UNHCR's Resettlement Handbook.

If an applicant's spouse and minor children are not declared to UNHCR or to the Refugee Team officers at the point of referral and interview, or are subsequently declared, they will not normally be recognised as the principal applicants' dependants for the purposes of the resettlement application. However, if the resettlement application is granted, the dependants may be eligible to apply for family reunion once the principal applicant is in the UK.

Mandate – Like the GPP those applying for resettlement under the MRS must have been recognised as refugees within the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. They must also have close family ties with the UK. Close ties are usually taken to mean that the applicant is the spouse, minor child or parents/grandparents over the age of 65 of someone settled in the UK. That is; the age and relationship criteria apply to the person seeking admission to the UK. In exceptional circumstances other relationships will be considered; parent/grandparent (in the singular) under 65, family members aged 18 or over: son, daughter, sister, brother, uncle, aunt. No other categories of family relationship will meet the close ties requirement. The family members in the UK do not need to have been accepted as refugees but must be settled here or have limited leave in a category leading to settlement and this includes family members here under the Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave provisions. Those who are here in a temporary capacity (e.g. visitors, students, for medical treatment etc) would not normally provide the mandate refugee with a close tie with the UK. The relative in the UK must confirm that they are willing to provide initial accommodation and help with the integration of the resettled refugee(s).

3.2 Admissibility criteria

The applicant (and his/her dependants) must co-operate with UK officials and any other body involved in the GPP. The UK also looks at whether the GPP is able to meet the resettlement needs of the applicant and their dependants; and whether resettlement of the applicant and their dependants in the UK would not be conducive to the public good. The UK process also seeks to establish whether resettlement to the UK may be contrary to the best interests of the applicant, or their dependants.

4. Resettlement Allocations/Processing Priorities

Gateway - The number of arrivals to the UK through the GPP is determined by an annual quota, the level of which is established by Ministers each year having considered the resources available, the need for resettlement globally, and the impact on local services in the UK.

Mandate - There is no quota for the number of arrivals under the MRS. Most submissions are accepted as long as they meet the resettlement criteria under the scheme by having close family ties with the UK.

5. Submissions and Processing via Dossier Selection

5.1. Dossier (RRF) submission policies

Gateway - The UK may conduct dossier selections in certain circumstances. For example, where it is not deemed appropriate for the UK to travel to a host country to carry out a selection mission but there is a pressing need for the resettlement of a particular group. The UK may also conduct dossier selection where a particular group of refugees has been

residing in a refugee camp in the host country for a lengthy period of time and it is deemed appropriate to consider the caseload without conducting a resettlement interview.

The UK is also willing to consider the group methodology form of submission where it is deemed appropriate. The UK will also conduct interviews by video conferencing arrangements where this is deemed appropriate and where facilities are available.

Policies and procedures that would apply are as detailed in section 6.

Mandate - MRS is completely based on dossier selection. The Home Office accepts resettlement submissions under this scheme from UNHCR around the world. It is particularly important that the Resettlement Registration Form (RRF) contains up to date contact details for the UK relative as Refugee Team officials have to contact the 'receiving' relative as soon as possible to confirm their support. The RRF should also contain as much detail as possible on any serious medical conditions and an up to date medical report if available should be submitted with the RRF.

5.2. Routing of Submissions

RRFs are referred to the Refugee Team only by UNHCR. Resettlement applications cannot be made direct to UK embassies or high commissions abroad. Submissions should be sent by email by UNHCR only to Resettlementprogramme@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

5.3. Processing Times – decision making process

Refugee team caseworkers will conduct a short interview with the UK relative to determine their level of support for the refugee and general ability to provide help with integration. The application will be considered based on that interview, the information contained in the RRF as well as information contained in any Home Office immigration file available relating to the refugee or the UK relative.

The time required to process a resettlement application could vary although Refugee Team does give these cases a degree of priority. Refugee Team contacts the UK relative to confirm that initial accommodation and help with integration can be provided but response times vary and the consideration cannot progress without such confirmation.

Acceptance of an application

An acceptance letter will be sent to UNHCR. At the same time a form authorising the issue of a visa will be sent to the relevant British Diplomatic post. A request will also be sent to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to make travel arrangements including pre departure medical checks.

Refusal of an application

If the applicant has been refused, the Refugee Team will send a decision letter to UNHCR briefly outlining the reasons.

5.4. Recourses, appeals

There is no right of appeal against a decision to refuse an application for resettlement. However, if an applicant's circumstances change or if additional information comes to light that was not previously available; UNHCR may re-submit a case to the Refugee Team for reconsideration.

6. Submissions and Processing via In Country Selection

6.1 Selection mission policies

Refugee Team consult relevant government departments, and UNHCR to agree a region within the host country as well as the size and composition of the allocated group of cases there, taking into account the need for resettlement and the general profile of the suggested cases.

6.2 Case documentation

Once agreement on missions has been obtained, appropriate UNHCR field offices prepare RRFs in consultation with UNHCR's relevant Resettlement Hub and the Resettlement Service in Geneva. The Refugee Team considers the RRFs pre-mission to ensure all necessary information is included and makes an initial assessment on the application.

At this stage, it is particularly important for the RRF to provide detailed information about the applicants' flight from their country of origin and how they would meet the UK criteria. The Refugee Team also have to consider the size of the family to ensure that suitable accommodation can be identified.

Due to limitations on budget, the UK is only able to consider a limited number of medical cases.

6.3 Routing of Submissions

RRFs are referred to the Refugee Team only by UNHCR. Applications cannot be made direct to UK embassies or high commissions abroad.

Prior to the submission of the RRFs, Refugee Team complete a pre-mission questionnaire which is shared with the UNHCR field office so that both parties can discuss and agree upon the logistics of the mission. Following receipt of the questionnaire Refugee Team normally request that RRFs are forwarded from the UNHCR Branch Office to the Refugee Team at least six weeks before the selection mission. This will give a reasonable amount of time before the mission to allow Refugee Team caseworkers to make a full initial assessment and for preparation to be completed.

6.4 Processing times - decision making process

A Home Office official will interview all principal applicants and their dependants aged 12 and over to assist the UK based caseworker in making their decision. The interview will be used to supplement the information given in the RRF as well as to gather information to facilitate integration and support needs.

The time required to process a resettlement application could vary. The Refugee Team requires around six weeks between the submission of the RRF referrals and the start of the selection mission. Following the selection mission, it could take up to three months to receive the results of the medical screening.

Acceptance of an application

If a person is accepted for resettlement, the Refugee Team will send a decision letter to the applicant via UNHCR to confirm that they have been accepted.

Acceptance for resettlement is on the condition that no new information emerges before an applicant travels to the UK which would have resulted in a refusal if it were known before the initial decision was made. Where any such information does emerge, the case will be re-assessed, and a fresh decision made and notified.

Once an applicant has been accepted for resettlement, agencies in the UK require at least 6 weeks between date of decision and date of arrival in the UK to ensure reception arrangements are ready. It may, therefore, take 2 – 4 months for a decision to be made after a mission has taken place. The Refugee Team aims to move the majority of accepted cases to the UK within 6 months from the end of the mission.

Refusal of an application

If the applicant is refused, the Refugee Team will send a decision letter to UNHCR briefly outlining the reasons.

6.5 Recourses, appeals

There is no right of appeal against a decision to refuse an application for resettlement. However, if an applicant's circumstances change or if additional information comes to light that was not previously available, UNHCR may re-submit a case to the Refugee Team for reconsideration.

7. Emergency Cases/Urgent Cases

The UK does not accept emergency cases either under GPP or MRS.

8. Special Categories/ Specific Needs

8.1 Refugees with Medical Needs

The Refugee Team conducts medical screening of all GPP resettlement cases and their dependants (see Section 9 below). Certain medical conditions are given special consideration and a decision is made on a case by case basis after reference to Ministers. A limited number of medical cases will be considered for each mission, which will be stipulated in the pre-mission questionnaire.

If accepted, preparations for medical treatment are made in conjunction with the relevant NGO and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) within the UK.

Mandate - Refugee Team does not conduct medical screening under this scheme and relies on UNHCR to provide up to date medical/psychiatric reports on all serious medical cases. This helps to signpost the medical treatment/care that the UK relative will need to provide or help the refugee to access.

8.2 Survivors of violence or torture

Assessments of individuals who are survivors of violence or torture are conducted as part of the normal process. It is important that RRFs are as explicit as possible in respect of the refugees' mental health issues as a result of violence and / or torture, so that preparations for potential treatment can be made.

The UK, as part of its integration programme offers an initial counselling session to all arrivals under the GPP. This can be followed up with further sessions if necessary.

Mandate - no special arrangements, aside from the usual mainstream social services and those provided by the voluntary sector available to all refugees in the UK.

8.3 Women at Risk

Assessments of special needs are made pre-departure to ensure that women at risk are housed appropriately and given suitable support, including counselling.

Mandate – no special arrangements, aside from the usual mainstream social services and those provided by the voluntary sector available to all refugees in the UK.

8.4 Children

The UK does not consider unaccompanied children as part of the GPP.

Dependant children aged 12 and above will be interviewed by Refugee Team officials. Dependant children under 12 will be required to accompany the principal applicant to the interview.

Mandate - MRS minors can be considered only where the child will be joining their parent, brother or sister in the UK. In these cases the UK relative is interviewed by a Refugee Team caseworker so that the Refugee Team can be satisfied that they are related as claimed and that the child will have adequate support in the UK. No other relative can be considered as there is no provision for DNA testing under the scheme.

8.5 Elderly

Gateway - Referrals of elderly persons will be considered on a case by case basis, taking into account special needs relevant to their integration needs if accepted.

Mandate – no special arrangements, aside from the usual mainstream social services and those provided by the voluntary sector available to all refugees in the UK.

9. Medical Requirements

Gateway – IOM is contracted to conduct health screening of all proposed GPP cases. IOM conduct the health screening for each person under resettlement consideration and prepare a report, which caseworkers in Refugee Team use as part of the consideration process. All cases are health screened before the UK makes a decision. The results of the health screening can take up to three months to receive. IOM also carry out pre-departure health checks shortly before the flight and an official from IOM will travel with the refugees from the country of departure to the UK.

Resettlement will not normally be offered when, in the opinion of the medical examiner, the individual has a disease or illness, which for the individual's own health, or for public health reasons, currently precludes travel, or requires treatment before travel. Resettlement may be offered to such individuals once, in the opinion of the medical examiner, this ceases to be the case. Pre-departure treatment, for those who have been accepted for resettlement in the UK, is funded by the Refugee Team budget. Where an applicant or a dependant has a medical condition that constitutes a danger to public health or where the costs are disproportionate to the GPP, resettlement will require ministerial consent.

Mandate - No medical health checks are conducted under the scheme although Refugee Team may request further medical reports from UNHCR when necessary.

10. Orientation

Gateway - The Home Office provides cultural orientation for all persons within the caseload prior to their departure from the country of refuge. This is conducted generally by the mission teams during resettlement missions and consists of one day of cultural orientation.

Mandate - No cultural orientation is provided as the scheme relies on the refugees' relative(s) to confirm that they will facilitate integration.

11. Travel

Gateway - Travel for refugees accepted for resettlement under the GPP is co-ordinated by IOM and paid for by the Home Office. Travel is organised once arrangements in the reception area in the UK are finalised. The Refugee Team liaises with the local British diplomatic post and the IOM to ensure all travel documentation is prepared. Successful applicants will usually travel on a one way European Union Uniform Format Form (EU UFF), which is retained by the Home Office on arrival in the UK.

Accepted cases will travel in groups from their current country of residence to the UK. Where the refugee has relatives in the UK and, after appropriate counselling, chooses to stay with their relatives and their relative has confirmed they are willing to accommodate them; those refugees are considered as independent arrivals and will not benefit from the 12 months support package provided to GPP refugees. Refugee Team will make the travel arrangements for independent arrivals and fund the cost of the flight but once they have arrived in the UK Refugee Team's support stops and they have to make their own arrangements to access mainstream social services.

Mandate - Where alternative funds are unavailable, the Home Office will pay for and IOM will co-ordinate the travel of refugees accepted for resettlement under the MRS. The Refugee Team liaises with the local British diplomatic post and the IOM to ensure all travel documentation is prepared. Successful applicants will usually travel on a one way EU UFF which is retained by the Home Office. The Refugee Team will inform the UK relative that the refugee has been accepted and the flight details so that they meet their relative on arrival at the airport.

12. Status on Arrival and Pathways to Citizenship

12.1 Immigration status on arrival

Gateway - Leave to enter the UK under the GPP is granted exceptionally, outside the Immigration Rules. All persons accepted on the programme will be recognised as 1951 Refugee Convention refugees and will be granted indefinite leave to enter on arrival in the UK. Dependants will normally be granted leave to enter in line with the principal applicant.

In circumstances where the refugee has married a person in the country of refuge, who is a national of that country; then Convention status cannot be granted to that person. That person would be granted Indefinite Leave to Enter outside of the immigration rules.

The refugees will usually travel on a one way EUUFF, which is retained by the Home Office on arrival in the UK. Refugees are then required to enrol their biometrics (fingerprints and photograph) in order that a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) can be issued. A BRP is required in order that mainstream benefits can be accessed. The refugee will be provided with written guidance how to enrol biometrics and supported in doing so. The BRP will be handed to the refugee by the NGO providing support to the refugee. The BRP is proof that the person has refugee status and is allowed to stay in the UK indefinitely. This document does not permit the refugee to travel and if the refugee wants to travel they may apply for a UK issued Convention Travel Document.

Mandate - as above except the EU UFF is not retained on arrival and refugees must send the EU UFF to the Refugee Team. The Refugee Team will retain the EU UFF and provide advice as to how the refugee should enrol their biometrics in order that they can be issued with a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP). The BRP will then be sent by post to the applicant.

12.2 Process for regularization of status and citizenship, including requirements and timeframes

Resettled refugees are eligible to apply for British Citizenship after 5 years residence in the UK.

12.3 Documents issued to children born after arrival but before naturalization of their parents

Any children born after arrival in the UK but before the parents have been naturalised will be need to apply for a BRP

13. Domestic Settlement and Community Services

13.1 Overview of services and providers

Gateway – Home Office Refugee Team manages the programme in partnership with Local Authorities and NGOs, and other organisations with experience of working with refugees and migrants.

13.2 Reception

Resettled individuals are normally met upon arrival at a port of entry and transported to their permanent accommodation by local service providers. They are responsible for ensuring that primary basic needs are met like: food, toiletries, additional clothing (where necessary), an initial cash allowance to meet living costs and a briefing pack (providing practical information).

Once the refugees have settled into their accommodation, additional support is provided in the form of information on their local community, access to local services and regional orientation. The aim is to assist those newly arrived on the programme to settle and adapt to their new communities.

13.3 Resettlement Services

Resettled individuals will be provided with support from NGOs and the Local Authorities in which they are resettled. A caseworker will be appointed to each family in order to provide one to one support, to enable an assessment of their needs and assistance in accessing the services described below. This additional support lasts for twelve months.

13.4 Housing

Upon arrival in the UK, persons resettled under the GPP are provided with furnished accommodation. They are entitled to claim housing benefit under the same conditions as British Citizens.

13.5 Health

Health screening will be conducted for all GPP applicants and their dependants before a decision is made on their resettlement application. This health information is released to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in which the resettled refugee will be living and the CCG will be made aware of those refugees with specific needs. Once in the UK, resettled refugees will have access to health care services under the same conditions as nationals. Any additional costs for supplemental support for refugees with specific needs will have been agreed with the CCG prior to the refugees' arrival in the UK.

13.6 Language Training

Guidance and information on the English language courses available is offered as part of their long-term resettlement.

13.7 Education

Education for those between the ages of 5 and 17 years is compulsory. Resettled refugee children are given the same access to education as British Citizens. Information is also given on facilities and services for pre-school and under five years.

13.8 Vocational Training and Employment

Resettled refugees have the same access to vocational training and employment as British Citizens.

13.9 Financial Assistance

Gateway - Refugees are entitled to claim welfare benefits under the same conditions as British Citizens. For the first 12 months Home Office will fund the cost of their living and after this period they can continue to access welfare benefits via mainstream services.

Mandate - None of the services above are directly provided or funded by Home Office but refugees under MRS are entitled to claim welfare benefits and use mainstream social services under the same conditions as British Citizens. The UK 'receiving' relative is expected to provide guidance to the refugee on how to access these services in the UK.

14. Family Reunification of Refugees

For many years, the UK has maintained a policy of allowing the refugee's spouse and dependant children under the age of 18 years old to join him or her in the UK. This longstanding policy has now been incorporated into the UK's Immigration Rules. Further guidance and information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration>.

15. References, Resources

- Further information on the UK's Gateway Protection Programme can be found in policy guidance published at: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration>
- Information on Convention travel documents can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration>
- Guidance on online visa applications can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration>
- For information on Biometric Residence Permits: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration>