

# North Alliance Conference 2016

Aberdeenshire's Syrian new Scots;

*Does long distance refugee resettlement  
work, or is it a complex detour in a long  
and distressing journey?*

*Katie MacLean, Syrian Relocation Coordinator*





- *Background to the Syrian VPR Scheme*
- *Refugee Resettlement Research*
- *Aberdeenshire Framework*
- *Phase 1 (Feb – April 2016)*
- *Outcomes & Indicators*
- *Syrian Families' Evaluation*
- *Comparing UK experiences with border country resettlement*
- *Q&A*





Home Office

September 2015

The Government will expand the existing ***Syrian Vulnerable Person Scheme*** and resettle 20,000 Syrians in need of protection during this Parliament. Scotland will resettle 2000 and Aberdeenshire will commit to resettling 50 Syrian families by 2020.

UNHCR will identify people in need of resettlement based on the following criteria: women and girls at risk; survivors of violence and/or torture; refugees with legal and/or physical protection needs; refugees with medical needs or disabilities; children and adolescents at risk; persons at risk due to their sexual orientation or gender identity; and refugees with family links in resettlement countries

Local Authorities will work with the UK Home Office and UNHCR to secure resettlement offers for families, in homes and communities appropriate to their needs.

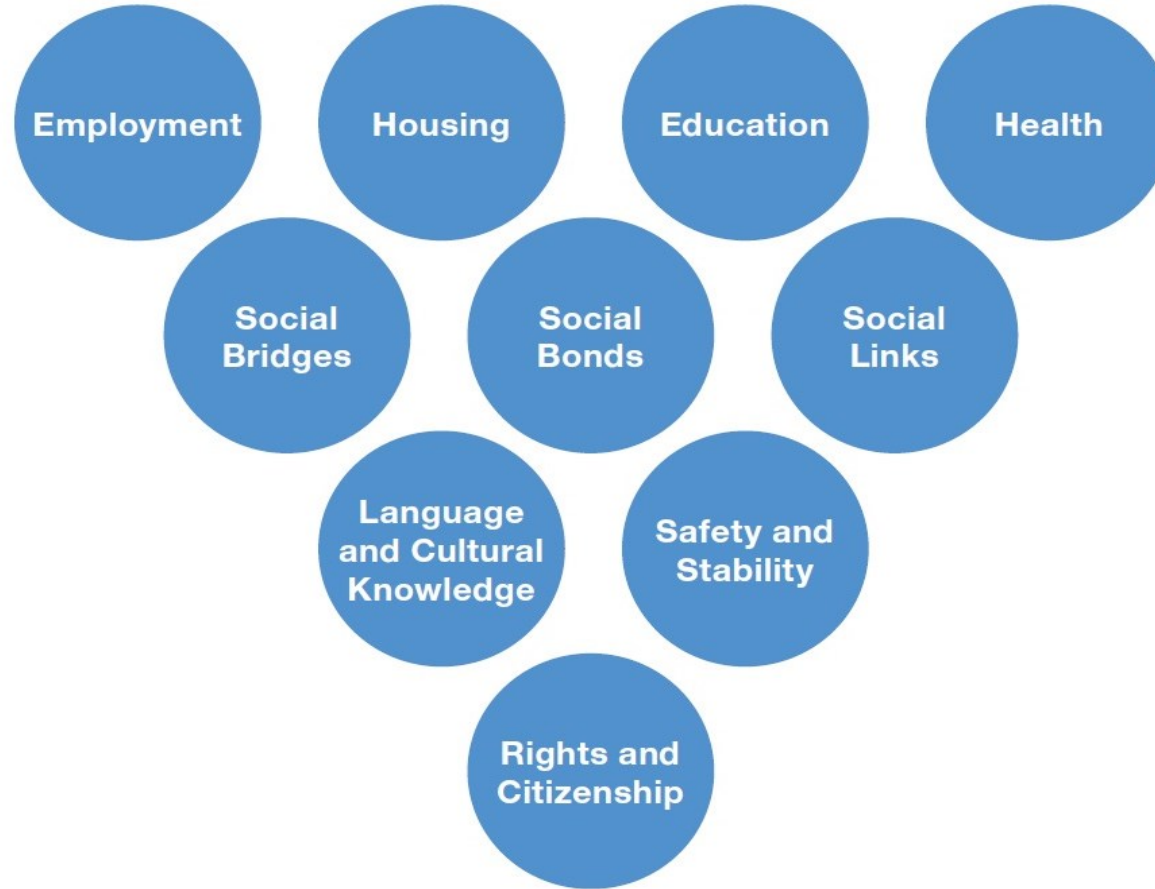
## Research by Dr Alison Strang & Helen Baillot, Queen Margaret University

The Holistic Integration Service (HIS) was a Glasgow partnership between; Scottish Refugee Council, British Red Cross, Bridges Programme, Glasgow Clyde College and the Workers Educational Association Scotland.

The project offered up to 12 months support to people who have been granted Leave to Remain following an asylum claim in Scotland. Integration Advisers offer advice, advocacy and support to new refugees, and record their work in a casework management system which the evaluation team have been able to interrogate for quantitative data (e.g. length of time in homelessness) and qualitative data (e.g. service beneficiaries' aspirations for the future). This data has been supplemented with interviews, focus group data and stakeholder feedback to provide a holistic view of refugees' journeys towards integration in Scotland. The observations below are based on data covering year two of the service (1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015) when 882 new refugees accessed HIS, of whom 8% were from Syria.

- **Financial stability:** It is vital that refugees have all status documentation, including National Insurance Numbers (NINo), when they first make a claim for benefit. Any inaccuracies, such as a dependant spouses without a NINo result in significant delays in payment, and destitution
- **Financial stability:** 95.5% of refugees in the service required at least one casework intervention to access benefits (this includes those assessed as 'resilient'). 'Call centre' options are not accessible to beginners in English. Refugees commonly demonstrate that they have not understood the conditionality of their Jobseekers' Claimant Commitment
- **Housing:** Unstable or inadequate housing interferes with refugees' capacity to engage with language classes or employability preparation. Refugees may want to take some time to choose a home that will meet their needs now and in the future. Living in a 'safe' area is of particular importance
- **Life Project - Language:** Delays, gaps and barriers to ESOL access seriously undermine progress across all aspects of integration. New refugees rely on language and other courses to acquire cultural knowledge and make new friends
- **Life Project - Employment:** Social networks with other people from their home countries can provide opportunities for employment which root some refugees to Scotland. Others move to areas where they perceive that co-ethnic connections will enable them to find work more easily
- **Life Project - Employment:** A large majority of refugees employed within one year of gaining status work in low skilled jobs. Reasons included: lack of recognition of existing qualifications, gaps in education and training, difficulties in acquiring employers' references and in navigating the complexity of employment and training options. Refugees reported that finding work that matched their skills and experience was very important to them in regaining their self-esteem and identity

# Key Elements of Refugee Resettlement



# Syrian new Scots' Resettlement in Aberdeenshire

## Syrian Partnership Group



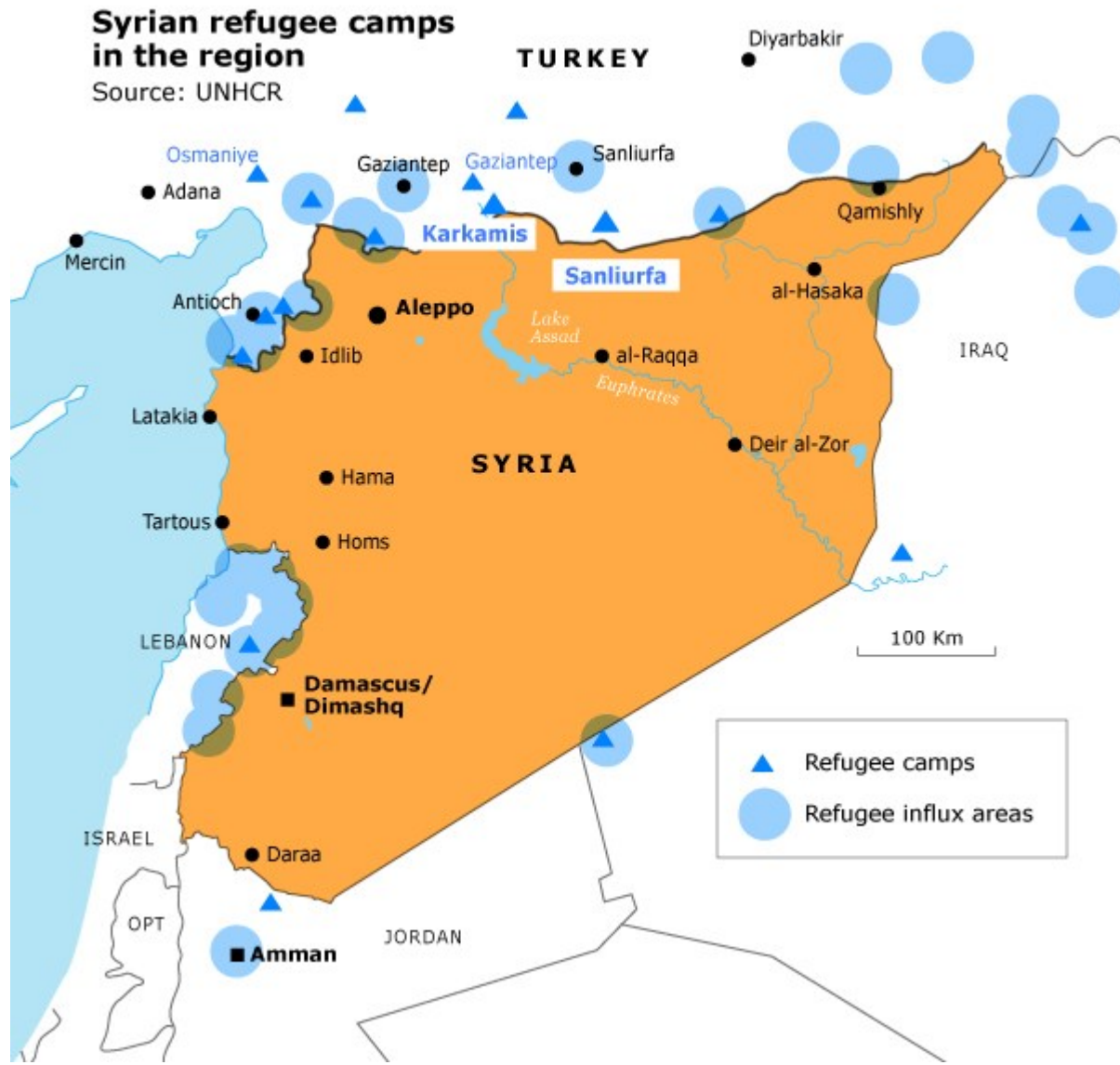


# Aberdeenshire Syrian new Scots' Integration Plan

## Housing

*Families will be provided with safe, secure and suitable housing that will enable them to settle and progress with family life*

Aberdeenshire Council	Third Sector Interface	Registered Social Landlords / GREC	Aberdeen Solidarity With Refugees	Aberdeen Mosque & Islamic Centre (AMIC)
<p>Identify and secure an appropriate portfolio of housing for families including Private Rented Sector, Registered Social Landlord and Council ex HMO stock</p> <p>Map against school, health infrastructure and community capacities</p> <p>Work with Positive Action in Housing and ASWR to signpost private home offers to the 'Room for Refugees' Programme</p> <p>Ensure houses are appropriately furnished, adapted and equipped for families</p> <p>Provide ongoing housing and tenancy support and advice in Arabic as required</p>	<p>Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE) will provide home food packs for arrival and first few weeks of resettlement</p> <p>Additional essential items of home equipment unable to be sourced by AMIC or ASWF will be sourced and provided by the TSI</p>	<p>The Minority Ethnic Outreach Worker will provide independent housing advice to refugees, will advocate to resolve problems with landlords and will inform tenants of rights and responsibilities in a tenancy</p>	<p>Signpost offers of home hosting to the 'Room for Refugees' Programme</p> <p>Work with the wider community to provide additional items of furniture, clothing and equipment as required</p>	<p>AMIC will provide Arabic speaking assistance to families during the home arrival and settling in period</p> <p>Syrian food packs will be prepared and put into houses in preparation for arrival</p>



Phase 1;

Lebanon *5 families*

Jordan *2 families*

Iraq *1 family*

Turkey *1 family*

- 9 properties (Inverurie & Westhill)
- 9 families (2 extended)
- 35 people
- Pre-entry level or no English
- Physical and learning disabilities
- Serious & terminal illness
- All families have displaced children worldwide
- Sunni Muslim
- Torture victims
- Syrian and Kurdish



# Resettlement Outcomes & Indicators

## *Home Office;*

- ESOL progression
- Health improvement
- Employment
- Self-sufficiency (voluntary work and community participation)

## *Aberdeenshire;*

- Families will be provided with safe, secure and suitable housing that will enable them to settle and progress with family life
- Families will be supported to access benefits, entitlements, financial, training and employment opportunities to enable them to progress with family and working life, when appropriate
- Children and young people will be fully integrated into Aberdeenshire early years, schools, colleges and universities and will receive the support and learning they require to be successful, confident, responsible and effective learners and citizens
- Families will feel, and be safe in their homes and communities

- Families will have the charitable support required if need arises
- The needs of families will be closely matched with the services and resources that Aberdeenshire can provide
- Families will receive the health and social care services they need to enable them to thrive
- Families will receive the social and community support they need to integrate and participate fully in community life
- Adults will receive the ESOL support they need to overcome language and communication barriers and to enable them to progress with employment, training, educational and social opportunities
- Families will have the interpretation and translation services they require to access essential services and resources
- In the face of crisis, families will be supported to overcome barriers and seek positive and sustainable solutions
- Families will have the opportunity to participate in a range of cultural and faith activities, to suit their needs
- Families will be fully informed of their rights and the responsibilities of living in Aberdeenshire and Scotland

*Excerpt from Syrian Evaluation; Dr Sophie Alkhaled, Lancaster University, September 2016*

- 100% of adults wish to return to Syria
- Young people less certain
- They came to the UK for their children's future and safety
- Expectations of UK were high (turned down other countries – unsure if that was the right decision)
- Safer and more welcomed than expected
- Systems are slow and confusing – particularly Benefits and health systems
- Living on benefits is harsh
- Not enough English classes
- Women feel disenfranchised and frustrated
- Cultural shift is more dramatic than expected
- Access to employment more difficult than expected



