

# Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme

December 2015  
to 30 April 2018



South Lanarkshire  
**Partnership**  
Stronger together

# Foreword

Welcome to the first South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership report on progress of the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme. The pages which follow set out why the Partnership became involved in the Programme, progress already made and future plans.

This report provides a flavour of how families are integrating into our communities and I particularly enjoyed hearing about the thoughtful and caring preparation within schools prior to Syrian children arriving and the rapid integration and progress of each child within their schools and community.

The success within South Lanarkshire is most certainly due to the well-established partnership working arrangements involving housing, health, social work, police, fire and community organisations co-ordinated by the Resettlement Support Team. The specialist, practical and emotional support provided to meet family needs is delivered with kindness and an appreciation of the trauma they have experienced.

Syrian families are returning this kindness and supporting the Team to welcome new families into South Lanarkshire and by taking up volunteering opportunities in their own communities.

By continuing to work together we aim to provide positive outcomes for our current families and for new community members yet to arrive. Your continued support and goodwill is very much appreciated.



## **Councillor Maureen Chalmers**

*Chair, South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership Board and  
Depute Leader of South Lanarkshire Council*

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# 1 // Background – UK

The Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS) was introduced by the UK Government, during 2015, due to the escalating humanitarian crisis of refugees fleeing violence in Syria and the growing number of people travelling across Europe and facing exploitation and trafficking.

The UK Government announced that it would accept and support 20,000 individuals across Britain over a five year period from 2015 to 2020. People require to be registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and be living within countries bordering Syria including Iraq, Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan. The Programme aims to reduce the number of people facing the dangers of the journey across Europe.



All refugees registered through this route have to meet certain criteria which include being victims of violence, torture, having young families, or requiring medical treatment. The UNHCR carries out checks on families backgrounds before acceptance including their travel story, background, needs, health and connections to any European country.

Acceptance does not necessarily lead to a move to the UK as other European countries are involved in the Scheme. If the UK is approached for potential resettlement the Home Office have another set of reviews and assessments which are undertaken before a decision is made. If the Home Office is unable to accept a family, e.g. due to size of family composition, they can be referred to another country for consideration.

It is only when a family is accepted by the UK will Local Authorities become involved. If there is a family connection the local authority will be contacted and asked if they can assist depending on the family composition and needs. Overall the majority of people arriving do not have a family connection.

## 2 // Scottish and South Lanarkshire Context

### Numbers of People Resettled

In November 2015, the Scottish Government agreed that Scotland would accept initially 1,000 individuals. Across Scotland Scottish Local Authorities, co-ordinated by CoSLA, agreed to participate in the Scheme. Following continued support from the Scottish Government and CoSLA approval to continue with the Programme resulted in the 2,000 individual arriving in Scotland in December 2017. Local authorities and Community Planning Partners continue to resettle families into 2018.

South Lanarkshire Council, with cross party elected member agreement approved the proposal to assist 60 individuals within the first year (December 2015 to December 2016). A further 60 individuals were approved for arrival during December 2016 to December 2017.

The first two South Lanarkshire families, consisting of 9 individuals, arrived during December 2015 on a charter flight into Edinburgh. Both families were resettled in the Rutherglen area.

As at the end of April 2018, there were 32 families settled in South Lanarkshire (119 people). Arrival details are outlined in table 1 below:

**Table 1**

Arrival periods	Number of families	Number of people*
December 2015	2	9
<b>Total 2015</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>
May 2016	2	8
June 2016	4	14
August 2016	3	13
October 2016	1	3
November 2016	2	7
<b>Total 2016</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>45</b>
February 2017	2	9
March 2017	7	15
April 2017	2	7
May 2017	2	8
September 2017	1	4
November 2017	1	4
December 2017	1	1
<b>Total 2017</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>48</b>
April 2018	3	8
<b>Total 2018 (to April)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Overall total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>110</b>

*\*Not including babies who have been born following family arrival*

- ▶ The overall arrival number through the Programme totals 110 individuals, however 9 babies have been born during this period, which brings the total to 119 individuals. The babies are Syrian Scots and they have the same right to remain in the UK as their parents and have either Humanitarian Protection Status or Refugee Status. A child born in the UK does not provide a right to remain for themselves or their family.



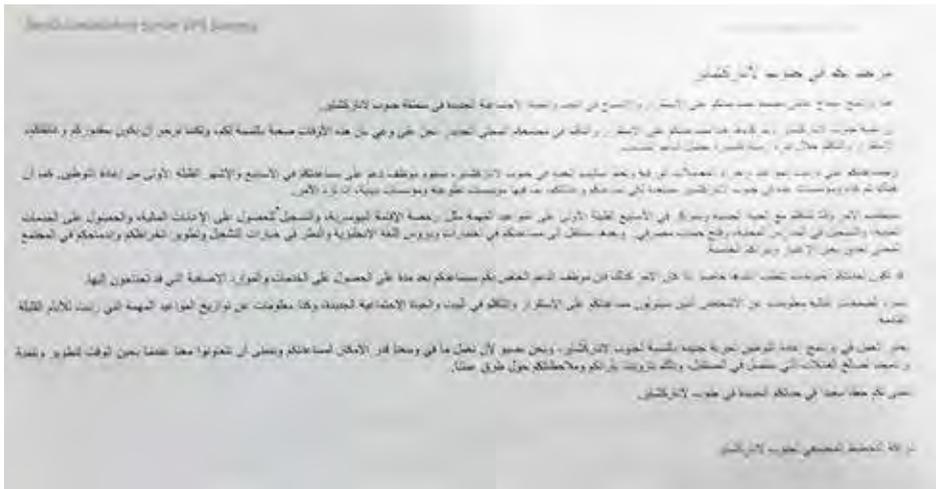
*The first Syrian Scot baby born in South Lanarkshire*

## 3 // Support Provided to New Arrivals

When families initially arrived a very intensive support package is put in place for the first two weeks. This agenda is co-ordinated by the Refugee Resettlement Support Team, consisting of a full time Advisor, two full time and two part time Support Officers, working within Housing and Technical Resources. The families and the Team meet with partners from Health, Education, Department for Work and Pensions, Registered Social Landlords, voluntary and third sectors, Police Scotland, Fire and Rescue services, local communities and other services as required by each individual. The range of work and appointments include:

- ▶ Securing appropriate accommodation;
- ▶ Accessing emergency health treatment if required – not all health issues are disclosed before arrival;
- ▶ Welfare benefit requirements established;
- ▶ Bank accounts opened;
- ▶ Registered with local Doctor and Dentist practices;
- ▶ Assessed by ESOL tutors and placed into appropriate lessons;
- ▶ Opportunity to access health services as appropriate which may include physiotherapy, mental health services, smoking cessation, dietician, speech therapy etc;
- ▶ School age children registered with school including specialist provision if required;
- ▶ School uniform grants requested;
- ▶ Nursery age children registered with nursery;
- ▶ Children aged between 0-2 provided with opportunity to attend nursery provision – depending upon family circumstances;
- ▶ Registered with Health Visitor;
- ▶ New babies supported in terms of accessing charity provisions including prams, childcare provisions etc. as required and requested; and
- ▶ Orientation – including area, travel, financial, shopping, religious, legal etc.

Once the initial two week intensive agenda, which is translated in Arabic, has been undertaken an assessment of ongoing support needs is agreed from which an individual support plan is developed. The main focus for families arriving in South Lanarkshire has been to integrate into new communities, learn English and to obtain employment.



### Family Integration Plan in Arabic

The tailored Integration Plan is person centred and developed to meet their individual needs. This is supported by the Refugee Support Team and partner organisations. This can include but not limited to:

- ▶ Opportunities for further education;
- ▶ Accessing volunteering opportunities or part-time and full time working opportunities.
- ▶ Seeking own employment opportunities;
- ▶ Providing support to families who have requested family reunification – which is a long timely process following initial submission – accounts for only 1% of individuals processed by the UNHCR worldwide;
- ▶ Supporting families to access Syrian Refugee Employment Grant fund (Refugee Council) – depending on requirement of individuals/families
- ▶ Opportunities to access music, sports, arts and crafts sessions;
- ▶ Access to sports provisions and leisure interests as appropriate;
- ▶ Opportunity to attend further education learning, appropriate to language skills – e.g. health and safety training, food handling, beauty therapy courses etc; and
- ▶ Pregnant ladies being supported, as appropriate, to attend doctors and midwife appointments.

## 4 // Where People have been Resettled

Families have been resettled throughout the South Lanarkshire area.

**Chart 1** provides an overview of numbers of families within each area.

**Chart 1 (Number)**



### Accommodation

Families have been accommodated by South Lanarkshire Council and Registered Social Landlord partners. **Chart 2** provides a breakdown of number of families accommodated by RSL's and the Council.

**Chart 2 (Number)**



The Refugee Support Team work closely with the Council's Area Housing Teams and Housing Association and Housing Co-operative partners to identify a range of accommodation types which will meet family requirements. All properties are risk assessed by Police Scotland before families arrive and families are provided with the opportunity of receiving a Home Fire Safety visit from Fire and Rescue Scotland.

## 5 // Education



*Primary School in Rutherglen*

All school age children, either Primary or Secondary, are attending age appropriate classes and have settled well into school life. The educational environments have provided a safe and happy environment for learning and social interaction. The majority of children do not have English language skills when they arrive. Now they are speaking English, with a Scottish accent, and engaging well with their teachers and peers. A number of children have never had access, or very limited access, to schooling since leaving Syria. School communities have welcomed them with open arms and provided support to them and their families. Children and parents are involved in a wide range of school engagement and participation opportunities which greatly assists with community integration.

<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
٠	١	٢	٣	٤	٥	٦	٧	٨	٩

*Arabic/English numbers*

Before families arrive school placements are allocated and the school community commences work to ensure a smooth transition for the children arriving and for the children who will be welcoming new classmates. Children are excited to meet new friends and the Headteacher and teachers are just as welcoming. There is also ongoing sharing of good practice and tips between schools who currently have children and schools about to receive new starts.

**Chart 3** highlights that the majority of children are of primary school age and under. Experience has shown that primary age children arriving in South Lanarkshire pick up the English language very quickly.

### Chart 3

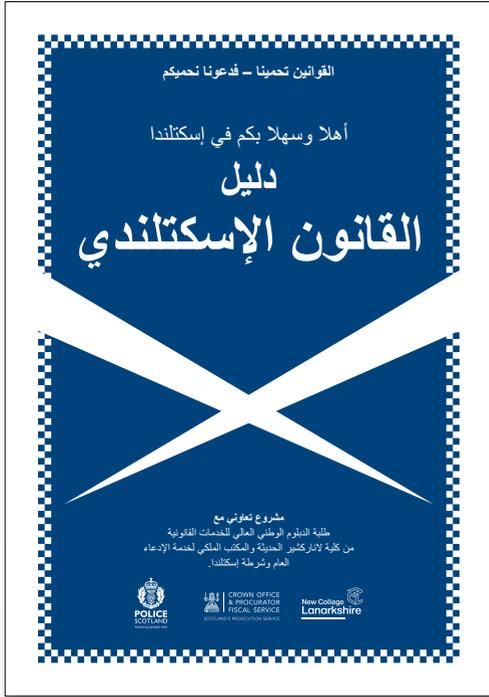


## 6 // English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) Provision



ESOL provision is available for families when they arrive and their level of written and spoken English is assessed to ensure that they receive the correct support. Some families arrive and can speak English. ESOL support is provided in different ways which enhances the learning process - there is a mixture of learning methods including class room sessions, informal drop in centres, employability discussions, and attendance at cultural and social venues which celebrate Scottish and British culture and where appropriate attendance at ESOL classes in local colleges. ESOL classes normally stop over the school holiday period however as part of the commitment to the Programme holiday sessions have taken place over the past two years enabling families to visit a wide range of venues across the Central Belt of Scotland and to use different vocabulary other than the day to day language they have acquired.

A review has been undertaken regarding the ESOL provision and new tutors will be employed to continue to provide and enhance the progress made to date. Provision of important items of paperwork is made available in Arabic where appropriate and necessary to assist the integration process – e.g:



### *A Guide to Scots Law\**

*\*Developed and published by New College Lanarkshire, Crown Office, Procurator Fiscal Service and Police Scotland*

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Produced for Housing and Technical Resources by Communications and Strategy. 046124/Aug18

1	I need help.	احتاج المساعدة
2	I need an appointment with a Doctor.	احتاج موعد مع الطبيب
3	I need an appointment with a Nurse.	احتاج موعد مع الممرضة
4	I need an appointment.	احتاج الي موعد
5	I need to reschedule my appointment.	احتاج ان أغير مواعي

*Support Card*

## 7 // Health Engagement



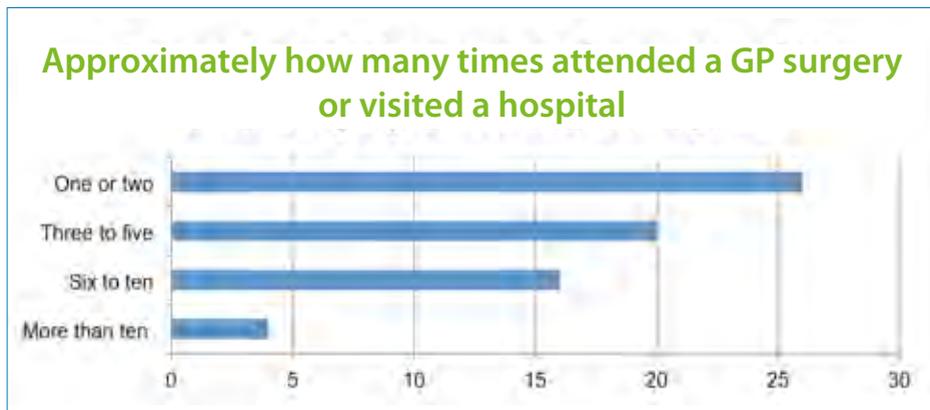
Individual experiences of receiving medical treatment before arriving in South Lanarkshire from Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt etc has been very mixed. If people had funds they paid for medical and dental treatment otherwise medical conditions or oral health became a low priority over food and shelter. As soon as practical upon arrival every individual is seen by a medical practitioner and registered with a local medical centre and health visitors.

All new arrivals attend the Public Dental Service to ensure that major oral health issues are dealt with before the individual is registered with local dental practices.

Families and individuals are given details, in Arabic, about gaining access to emergency medical services and how to access doctor and dentist appointments. Overall families report a very positive experience engaging with health services. The change in culture towards a care service which is free at the point of contact has come as welcome and appreciated change.

**Chart 4** shows how many times an individual has visited their GP or hospital within the first six months following arrival

### Chart 4 (number)



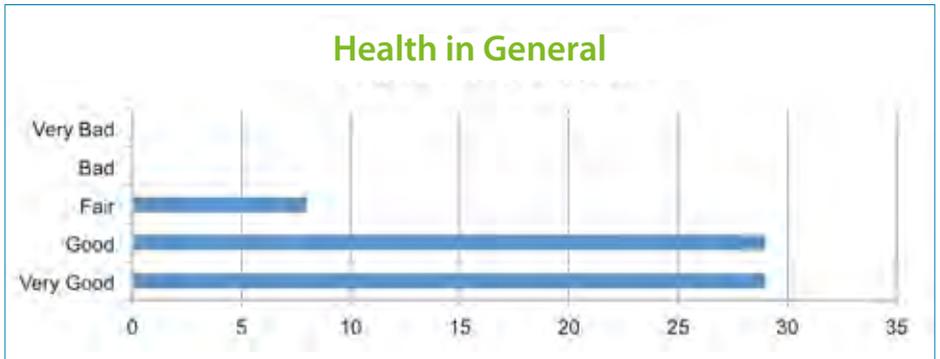
**Chart 5** highlights individual views on health improvement within the first six months following arrival

### Chart 5 (Number)



**Chart 6** highlights individual views on their health in general within the first six months following arrival.

### Chart 6 (Number)



## 8 // Integration and Community Involvement

Families have been warmly welcomed into their local communities by faith groups, schools, community centres, local individuals and services e.g. Health Visitors linking to local charity provision. A range of donations have been generously provided including shoe boxes filled with presents, clothes, prams, toys etc. A national charity has provided small televisions and radios for families on arrival and funding has been raised and administered by local churches which has provided lawnmowers for families with gardens.

In turn the individuals and families have volunteered their time to charities and gifted back toys, clothes, prams etc. which have been grown out of.

Scottish and Syrian families are learning about the cultures and beliefs of their new neighbours both adults and children through cooking and art. The families share how they cook Arabic/Syrian food and examples of artwork exhibited by an interpreter working with the Support Team and ladies attended art work classes are shown below:

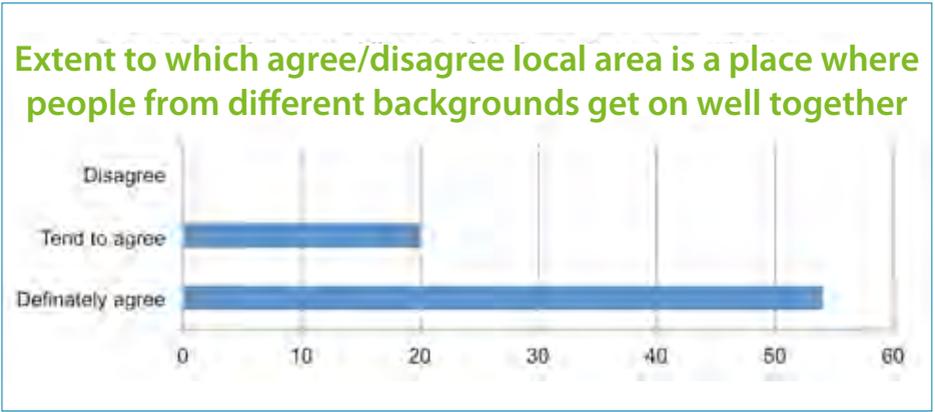


*Calligraphy by  
Jawdat Al Sabbagh and  
Glass Work by  
Hoda Al Aakra*

A number of events have taken place involving families and Community Planning Partners as well as celebrating Eid, Christmas and the first Wedding. Families assist with organising events and contribute their time and extensive cooking skills.

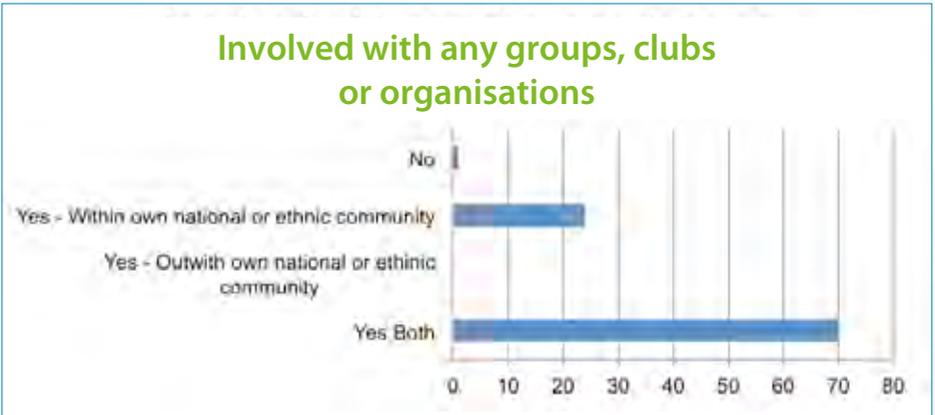
**Chart 7** shows the extent to which individuals (18+) agree or disagree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together – within the first six months from arrival

### Chart 7 (Number)



**Chart 8** highlights if individuals (all ages) are involved with any groups, clubs or organisations within the first six months from arrival

### Chart 8 (Number)



## 9 // National Involvement



### *South Lanarkshire New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy discussion session*

All families were involved in developing a response to the Scotland wide review of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy by providing their views at an event held on 13 September 2017. Three ladies from Rutherglen spoke of their experience arriving in Scotland and how the school made a positive impact on their children's lives. The Head teacher from the primary school spoke on the initial difficulties settling the children into school as well as the benefits and delights of having the children attend the school community.

Refugee Week Scotland  
**18-24 JUNE 2018**

**DIFFERENT PASTS, SHARED FUTURE**

Families attended a number of Refugee Week events during 2017 and wanted South Lanarkshire to be involved during 2018. It was generally agreed that a football event would be organised – celebrating the world cup year – and five aside Syria Loves Football event would be held involving adult teams and sessions for the children with a group picnic afterwards.



*Syrian children playing football (2018)*

National events have been held since Syrian families first arrived in Scotland. The most recent celebration was for the arrival of the 2000 individual in Scotland during December 2017. South Lanarkshire families attended and thoroughly enjoyed the celebration and provided an opportunity to meet other Syrian families from across Scotland and to meet the First Minister.



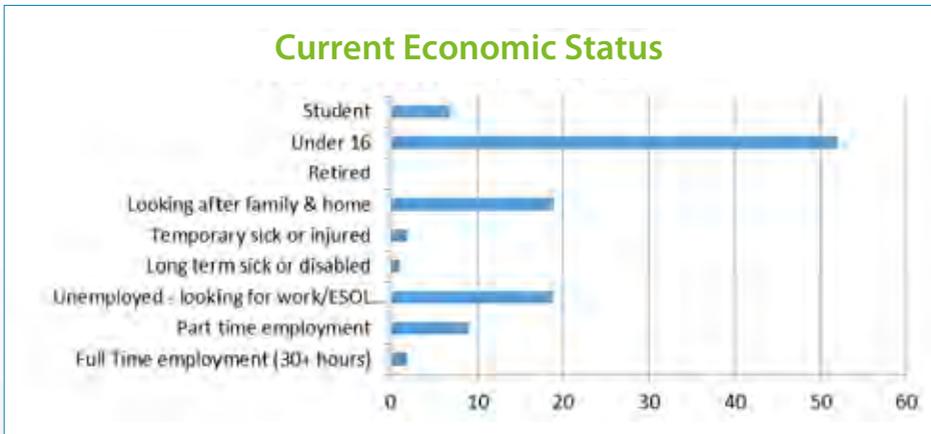
*South Lanarkshire residents meeting Nicola Sturgeon. (December 2017)*

# 10 // Employment and Volunteering

When individuals arrive the Refugee Support Team discuss their employment background and experiences which is further developed and supported by Department of Works and Pension colleagues (DWP) and Job Centre employees who provide hands on links to local employers and volunteering opportunities. Individuals have come with a wide range of skills ranging from the food service industries, building trades, beauty therapy, financial services, degree level education, business and entrepreneur experience. The initial focus for adults is to learn English to increase the number of employment opportunities available. While individuals are developing their language skills they are involved in volunteering with charities and assisting, unpaid, in local community shops, as arranged and agreed through their Job Coaches. This ongoing engagement assists with local integration and increases their confidence to speak English.

**Chart 9** provides a picture (February 2018) of economic status

## Chart 9 (Number)



# 11 // Case Study

The following case study highlights how South Lanarkshire's Community Planning Partners worked together to make a substantial positive impact for a family with very complex needs.

## Family

Family had been living in Lebanon before being relocated through the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme. Family consists of one male adult, one female adult and two male, primary school age children. The oldest child required specialist school provision and adapted accommodation.

## Pre-Arrival

Partners developed a plan which was put in place before the family arrived (within a six week period of accepting family). This included:

- ▶ Housing partner offering a suitable ground floor property which was modified to suit a wheelchair user, installation of a wet room, widening doors, decorating and furnishing etc.;
- ▶ Health working with local medical practice and Health Visitors by arranging emergency appointments both for the day after the family arrived – including visit by Specialist Nurses;
- ▶ Education Resources organising a school placement for youngest child to start school within a week of arrival;
- ▶ Education making arrangements for the assessment of requirements of eldest child within a fortnight of arrival; and
- ▶ Social Work Resources organising an appointment to visit family within the first week of arrival for assessment of needs.

## Post Arrival

The family were allocated an Arabic speaking Refugee Support Officer – ensuring the family were kept well informed about what was happening, appointments arranged and providing them with a voice and choice in what was planned. Also a separate Arabic speaking interpreter, who specialised in medical terminology, was with the family for three weeks following their arrival.

On arrival the family were very keen for the appointments for their oldest child to start immediately. The child had very little access to medical treatment in Lebanon and no access to a wheelchair. The older child was very upset with the move, and showed his frustration through physical and verbal behaviour. He did not sleep for long periods, he did not eat properly due to difficulties swallowing, his medication was not appropriate and he had constant dental pain. The care given to the eldest child in Syria and Lebanon was based on having funding available when required as medical provision is fee paying resulting in medical treatment being sparse for all family members. The response from all partners was swift and appointments were issued within three weeks of arrival including:

- ▶ Physiotherapy;
- ▶ Occupational Therapy;
- ▶ Paediatrics, surgical and urology;
- ▶ Speech Therapy;
- ▶ Dietician;
- ▶ Dental service including hospital visits; and
- ▶ Educational Psychologist.

## **Eighteen Months On**

The family are well settled in the community which has been very welcoming and supportive. Family are now involved in volunteering in the community and supporting new Syrian arrivals.

The youngest child is settled in school – has made a number of school friends, always outside playing and he does not like school holidays. He has acquired very good English language skills – with a Scottish accent.

Health issues have settled down for all the family. Their English language skills have improved greatly and they are attending all appointments on their own now with very little support from the Support Officer. Support is only provided if an unusual appointment is required. Health and Education colleagues are still very much involved with the family and ongoing discussions are had requiring potential changes to service delivery depending on changing needs.

He is now attending a school which tailors the education programme to suit his needs. He is delighted to go off to school every morning and he also doesn't like school holidays. He has undergone a number of medical procedures over the past eighteen months and these have made a significant positive impact on his life and he now:

- ▶ enjoys new experiences;
- ▶ is more mobile in his own wheelchair;
- ▶ has stabilised medicines which the family know how to administer;
- ▶ he is eating well following assistance from dentist, speech therapy and dietician involvement;
- ▶ is communicating his needs through non verbal methods;
- ▶ is sleeping through the night in his own room; and
- ▶ is a content and happy child.

## **Future Requirements**

The positive change in the family, especially the health of the oldest child, has been significant. All partners and individuals working with the family have commented on the change and continue to provide support which is tailored to meet ongoing requirements of the eldest child as he grows and medical needs change.

# 12 // Priority Action Plan 2017/18 (to end March 2018)

Progress on areas of work prioritised during 2017/18 is noted below:

Refugee Support Team			Red/ Amber/ Green
Ensure suitable accommodation is secured and ready for 100% of new households	Refugee Resettlement Team	2017/18	
Integration plans fully implemented for all new households by 4th week after arrival	Refugee Resettlement Team	2017/18	
Provide planned housing support service (assessment, plans and reviews) to all refugees in line with agreed housing support procedures (with quality assured through audit processes)	Refugee Resettlement Team	2017/18	
Develop and implement process to get regular feedback from refugees on the service they receive from the team	Refugee Resettlement Team	By March 2018	
All refugees who are fit and not caring for children to be engaging in meaningful activity by the time planned support is ended	Refugee Resettlement Team	2017/18	

# 13 // Plan for going forward into 2018 and 2019

The following provides an overview of the work plan going into 2018/2019. This will evolve and develop as needs and guidance require.

- ▶ Executive Committee Report (May 2018) approval requested for a further 120 individuals through Resettlement Scheme – spread over the period 2018 and 2019.
- ▶ Where possible, focus on family reunification for 2018 (families connected to current families);
- ▶ Increase local voluntary sector involvement;
- ▶ Continued engagement with CoSLA and Scottish Government Implementation of participation commitments identified by Home Office;
- ▶ Full six monthly Home Office assessment – including Health assessments/ ESOL progress;
- ▶ Undertake a review of connected family details;
- ▶ Implementation of new ESOL commitment;
- ▶ Increase number of people working (with partner support); and
- ▶ Introduction of reviewed Health and Social Care Standards.

# 14 // Expression of Gratitude

Gratitude is extended to Partners who have provided assistance and support to the Programme and includes but not limited to:-

Local communities and individuals;

South Lanarkshire Council – all Resources;

NHS – Lanarkshire;

Housing Associations and Housing Co-operatives;

CoSLA;

Department of Work and Pensions and local job centres;

Police Scotland;

Scottish Fire and Rescue Services;

South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture;

Refuweege;

Faith Groups - Lanarkshire Mosques and  
South Lanarkshire Area Christian Churches;

University of the West of Scotland;

VASLAN;

The Refugee Council;

Wavelength;

Project Linus UK;

Everyone who has donated items and/or funds; and

Everyone who has volunteered their time.

If you need this information in another language or format,  
please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs.

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