

The Refugee Council Advocacy Network Newsletter



SUPPORTING AND
EMPOWERING
REFUGEES

We aim to provide a direct link between the Refugee Council's Advocacy Team and other individuals and organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. [Read more about the Advocacy Network](#) and share with others who may be interested in joining.

Latest news

Countdown to the General Election

There's just a week to go until the General Election takes place on Thursday 8 June. Ahead of the vote, we've been working with Refugee Action and Scottish Refugee Council to ask parliamentary candidates to sign the Refugees Welcome pledge. Thousands of people have also emailed their candidates to ask them to sign up. You can ask your candidates [here](#).

As the election draws nearer, people will also have the chance to ask their candidates key questions about what they will do if elected as MPs. We've created a pack with some suggested questions for people who want to ask about refugees and people seeking asylum. You can find the pack on our [website](#).

If you get any interesting responses, or have any conversations with your candidates, please do let us know by emailing parliamentary@refugeecouncil.org.uk.

Before the election was announced, we had been in conversation with the Home

Office and the Department for Education regarding the [Safeguarding Strategy](#) for separated children. This was due to be published during May, but has now been postponed until after the election.

Government finally recognises resettled Syrians as refugees

At the end of March, the Government finally announced that Syrians being resettled in the UK would receive refugee status. Since the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme began, Syrians had been granted Humanitarian Protection. The move followed calls from the Refugee Council and other partner organisations to award resettled Syrians refugee status.

The change, which will take effect from 1 July 2017, will enable Syrians to access university and to travel more easily to visit relatives in other European countries. We've had initial discussions with the Home Office about how those Syrians who have already arrived will be able to convert their status. We will share further information when it's published.

[Learn more here.](#)

Parliamentary Updates

All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees publishes report

In April, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees published their report "Refugees Welcome?" In it, they condemn the two-tier system of protection for refugees. The cross-party panel found that barriers to integration and a lack of support for newly recognised refugees undermines the protection refugee status should entail.

In the report, the parliamentarians make a number of recommendations, including:

> the next Government should introduce a National Refugee Integration Strategy

- > a Minister for Refugees should be appointed to oversee the integration strategy
- > a support system similar to the Refugee Integration and Employment Service should be introduced

[You can read the full report here.](#)

Resources

Asylum statistics

New statistics published on 25th May show a [significant increase](#) in the number of people being made to wait longer than six months for an initial decision on their asylum application. The figures also show that there has been a fall in the number of asylum applications made in Britain.

[Read our top 20 facts on the latest asylum stats here.](#)

[Read our statistics briefings here](#)

Coming up: Refugee Week!



19-25 June is Refugee Week! From sponsored walks in Durham, to picnics in

Battle, events are taking place up and down the country to celebrate Our Shared Future.

To see what's going on near you, or for ideas about how you might hold your own event, visit the [Refugee Week website](#).

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