

Quick Guide to Refugee Resettlement

There have been a number of UK refugee resettlement schemes over the years. [The Gateway Protection Programme](#) closed in March 2020 after resettling 9,939 refugees from various nations since it began in 2004, an average of just 621 people a year.

In addition there have been schemes to assist refugees fleeing war zones or perilous situations. The largest of these was the [Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme](#) (SVPR), which ended in 2021 after settling 20,000 Syrians over 5 years, a valuable but tiny proportion of the 6.8 million who have fled the country since the war started in 2011.

In 2021 the UK took in around 7,000 Afghans through the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy, which is open to Afghans who had worked directly for the UK or British contractors in Afghanistan. In January 2022 the [Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme](#) opened. The government has pledged to take in 5,000 Afghans a year through the scheme, but it is feared that many eligible Afghans will not be able to access the scheme.

Other than these schemes safe routes no longer exist for refugees to come to the UK. The best place to find current developments is probably the [Refugee Council website](#), which is regularly updated.

The biggest positive to come out in the last few years is the [Community Sponsorship](#) scheme. Loosely based on the very successful Canadian scheme, which has been running for decades, it allows community groups such as churches and voluntary organisations to support families coming into the UK as resettled refugees. There are hurdles to overcome, including financial commitments, but an increasing number of churches and faith groups are finding the scheme an excellent way of welcoming and supporting refugees, especially if their area has no asylum dispersal accommodation and no local refugee projects.

The three main national groups overseeing Community Sponsorship are [RESET](#), [Citizens UK](#) and [CSAN](#) (Caritas Social Action Network).

The Home Office counts Community Sponsorship placements in the general resettlement statistics, which unfortunately has the effect of making the UK government's contribution to refugee resettlement seem greater than it actually is.