WHAT IS REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT?

For 65 years, the UN Migration Agency (IOM), has played a vital role in refugee resettlement around the world. As part of its global contribution to migration management, IOM supports refugee integration through comprehensive resettlement services.

Resettlement is a sometimes unrecognised yet compelling instrument and symbol of international solidarity and responsibility-sharing. It is a durable solution for refugees who are unable to return to their country of origin for fear of continued persecution, and who do not have the option to stay in their country of asylum. IOM works closely with national and local governments, UNHCR—the UN Refugee Agency, and civil society partners to resettle refugees around the world.

The process typically begins with UNHCR who identifies, interviews and submits refugee cases to the United Kingdom for resettlement consideration. After the government accepts (in principal) a refugee for resettlement, IOM provides resettlement services — Health Assessments, Pre-Departure Orientation and Movement Operations. After arrival, the United Kingdom provides refugees with legal and physical protection, including access to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights similar to those enjoyed by UK nationals. Most refugees eventually become naturalised citizens of their country of resettlement.

Since 2004, IOM has partnered with the UK to resettle refugees. As part of this work, IOM delivers both pre-departure orientations for refugees and the equally important Refugee Information Sessions for host communities to understand more about the refugees they are welcoming.

ABOUT IOM

Founded in 1951 to assist in the resettlement of Europeans displaced in the aftermath of World War II, IOM has globally provided essential services supporting refugee resettlement operations for over six decades.

In the UK, IOM’s work encompasses resettlement and integration, community cohesion, combatting human trafficking and modern slavery, diaspora and development, migrant assistance, supporting migrant children and migration policy and research.

+15,000 refugees

have been resettled to the UK by IOM since 2015 under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), Gateway Protection Programme and the Vulnerable Children at Risk Scheme.
Refugees can be particularly vulnerable, with health profiles that vary according to displacement experiences, pre-existing health conditions and epidemiological profiles, among other factors. Pre-departure health assessments and related services are intended to ensure that people travel in a safe and dignified manner, are fit to travel, facilitate appropriate access to follow-up health services upon arrival and do not pose a hazard to other travelers or receiving communities.

Once the UK’s Home Office accepts the case (in principal) for resettlement, IOM conducts medical health assessments, under the Health Protocol from Public Health England and the Home Office. Each health assessment includes a person’s medical history, tuberculosis detection and clearance, serology, a full physical examination, vaccinations and assessments of any other communicable diseases. The health assessments also flag any serious medical conditions requiring follow-up in the UK and any mobility issues that may affect housing accommodation.

Any person with a known medical condition will be called back to IOM 1-3 weeks before departure for a Pre-Departure Medical Screening. IOM doctors will re-review the patient in light of the known medical condition and advise if there are any changes in their condition/travel requirements. A Pre-Departure Medical Screening certificate is produced for all cases and shared with the Home Office.

All refugees (including those who receive the Pre-Departure Medical Screening) will also receive a Fitness to Travel check 1-3 days prior to departure. This is a brief check-up, looking for any obvious signs of ill health. Like the Pre-Departure Medical Screening, certificates are produced during the Fitness to Travel examination for all refugees, which are again shared with the Home Office.

People requiring health assistance (e.g. wheelchairs, supplemental oxygen, medical escorts, etc.) during their travel are identified at the time of the health assessment to ensure that they travel safely and without undue hardship to themselves or to other travelers, and to avoid in-flight medical emergencies or flight deviations.

**KHALED, A SYRIAN RESETTLED TO DEVON**

“When I was told my paperwork had been submitted to the UK, it felt like newly being born. After such hardship, I saw hope,” said 30 year old Khaled.

IOM arranged the flight to the UK from Lebanon for Khaled and his family. “I couldn’t believe it. It was like a dream. This was the very first time I was ever on a plane. I was so excited as we were landing, I took so many photos out the window.”
Moving from a vulnerable situation in a country of first asylum to another country you have never seen before can be daunting. To better prepare refugees for what to expect in the UK, IOM provides pre-departure orientation sessions for resettling refugees.

Pre-departure orientation (PDO) prepares refugees by providing practical information about the UK to help set realistic goals and to better adapt to their new home. IOM works closely with the Home Office to develop a curriculum including a general introduction to the UK (climate and weather, the political system, demographics, etc.), post-arrival services, employment, housing, education in the UK, the law, health systems, British values and cultural adaptation. Delivered by IOM’s multilingual, multi-cultural trainers these orientations typically last 10 hours.

Pre-departure orientation is intended to provide refugees with a general foundation of information for life in the UK, rather than a comprehensive picture of what an individual’s specific experience will be. It is therefore important to anticipate that many individuals will still encounter a transition period as they adjust to life in the UK and build relationships within their new community. This is natural and a part any cultural adaptation process.

Pre-departure orientation is an integral component of successful resettlement and integration. As integration is a continuum, it is most effective when pre-departure and post-arrival support are closely linked. This includes orientations for refugees, as well as Refugee Information Sessions for host communities. For more information on IOM UK’s post-arrival integration work, please visit our website.

IOM also facilitates pre-embarkation briefings to prepare refugees (many flying for the first time ever) for their flight, including what to expect at the airport, in-flight, while in transit, and upon arrival in the UK. The briefings also address safety, customs and immigration formalities.

**TOPICS COVERED AT PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATIONS (PDO)**

- Introduction to PDO
- Cultural Adaption
- Education
- Introduction to UK
- Health
- Employment
- Pre-departure travel briefing
- Housing and benefits
- Law
- Legal status in the UK and post-arrival services

To better assist refugees and the UK Government, IOM strives for excellence across all resettlement service areas, placing emphasis on **flexibility**, **efficiency**, and consistent **high quality**.

**WHERE IN THE WORLD?**

In Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey and Iraq, IOM provides pre-departure orientations approximately 2-3 weeks before a refugee resettles to the UK.
Coming from a vulnerable situation, leaving loved ones and communities behind, and moving to an unknown country can be stressful for any of us, including a resettling refugee. IOM therefore provides escorts for resettling refugees, to ease the process as much as possible. Escorts provide assistance en-route and upon arrival, and in cases of acute medical needs, medical escorts are provided throughout the journey to address any health issues as they arise.

### THE RESETTLEMENT PROCESS

**BEFORE AND DURING SELECTION**
- Interview cases
- Complete government forms
- Logistical support during selection missions

**AFTER SELECTION**
- Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO)
- Visa, exit visa and travel document arrangements
- Travel and escort arrangements
- Pre-Departure Health Assessment (PDHA)
- Physical examination
- Chest x-ray and interpretation
- Immunizations
- Treatment for selected conditions and referrals as needed
- Laboratory diagnostics

**1-3 DAYS BEFORE DEPARTURE**
- In-country transportation
- Transit centre accommodation
- Fitness-to-Travel check
- Pre-embarkation session

**TRAVEL**
- Assistance at departure, in-transit, and upon arrival
- Operational and/or medical escort and other medical travel arrangements

**AFTER ARRIVAL**
- Reception
- Integration post-arrival

**For over 65 years**, IOM’s worldwide network of experienced movement operations staff have worked to smoothly transport refugees to their final destinations.

For the UK, IOM’s resettlement movement services include:

- **Obtaining travel documents** (i.e. exit permits, transit/entry visas, travel documents)
- **Pre-embarkation orientation** reviewing what to expect
- **Flight arrangements**, including reduced fares, preferential baggage allowance and preferential routings
- **Transportation to and assistance at embarkation airports** to check-in and help with customs and immigration formalities
- **Operational/medical escorts** assisting passengers with special needs, monitoring and attending to medical requirements en-route, liaising with flight staff and other authorities
- **Transit assistance**, including accommodation and meals (as needed), guidance to connecting flights, and booking adjustments
- **Arrival assistance**, including meet and assist services on arrival, notification and handover to reception authorities

IOM resettles most refugees by scheduled commercial air service using its unique negotiated agreements with leading airlines. However, IOM also maintains standby agreements with air charter operators to conduct movement operations in remote locations or where large numbers of refugees must be moved quickly.

In 2015, IOM UK scaled up its operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Nepal and Turkey, with smaller operations taking place in over 43 other countries.