



Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk

Response to Reuniting Refugees & Family Members – July 2017

Thank you for contacting me about reuniting refugees with family members.

The Government's refugee family reunion policy allows immediate family members of a person in the UK with refugee leave or humanitarian protection status - that is a spouse or partner and children under the age of 18, who formed part of the family unit before the sponsor fled their country of origin - to reunite with them in the UK. I am very glad that such a scheme exists, which makes sure that family members that have been divided can once again be reunited.

I appreciate your belief that the Government should expand the scheme, however as I understand it there are no plans to widen the criteria. The criteria are fully compliant with the UK's international obligations, and enable thousands of people each year to be reunited with their families in the UK. Three discretionary resettlement schemes are also in place for recognised refugees for whom resettlement is the most appropriate answer. These schemes are operated in partnership with the UNHCR: Gateway; Mandate; and the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation (VPR) scheme.

The Government continues to work with key EU Member States to ensure the family reunification process works effectively. The UK and France have committed to ensuring that the provisions of the Dublin III Regulation are used efficiently and effectively. To assist the handling of such cases, the two Governments have established a permanent official contact group, agreed single points of contact within respective Dublin Units and the UK has seconded an asylum expert to the French administration to facilitate the improvement of all stages of the process. The Government is also providing support to the Dublin Units in Greece and Italy bilaterally and through the European Asylum Support Office.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP