

Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme

May 2018
to June 2019



South Lanarkshire
Partnership
Stronger together

Foreword

Welcome to the second South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership report on progress of the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme, for the period May 2018 – June 2019.

This provides a brief overview of how Syrian families continue to settle positively within our area with the ongoing goodwill and support from everyone involved.

The positive outcomes and experiences of our new Scots families is down to the hard work and commitment of all Community Planning Partners, the Syrian families already settled in the area and communities who assist families to integrate into the Scottish way of life.

Learning, health and community integration are key themes in this year's report. I was therefore pleased to see that the increase in ESOL Tutors is making a difference with so many learners showing real improvement in English language skills.

Language skills and being able to participate in community activities and volunteering are so important to help with integration. It was fantastic to read the Volunteering and Apprenticeship case studies which illustrate this perfectly.

Many people arriving in Scotland have serious and complex health conditions and this demands lengthy and detailed planning with the Home Office, health, housing and other community planning partners. I cannot begin to appreciate how individuals feel when they arrive in Scotland – a mix of anxiety, trepidation and relief perhaps but if a member of your family has a life threatening health condition it must be even more challenging and as described in the case studies emotionally overwhelming.

The care and attention given to planning and preparing for the families and the intensive support provided is critical to reducing anxiety and improving wellbeing. Again, I am overwhelmed by the commitment, compassion and kindness shown by community planning partners and in particular the Resettlement Team who work intensively to ensure successful integration of all the families into our communities.

Councillor Maureen Chalmers

*Depute Leader, South Lanarkshire Council and
Chairperson, South Lanarkshire Community
Planning Partnership*



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1 // Background – UK



South Lanarkshire children in Edinburgh

The Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme has now been running within the South Lanarkshire area since December 2015. The Programme was introduced by the UK Government in response to the growing number of refugees who had left Syria due to the civil war and were facing increasingly dangerous journeys in fleeing from persecution. The UK Government agreed to accept 20,000 individuals, registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) who were refugees in countries surrounding Syria, over a five year period from 2015 until March 2020.

All refugees registered through this route meet certain criteria including being victims of violence, torture, having young families, or requiring medical treatment. Before a family arrives in the UK there are a series of checks which the UNHCR and the Home Office carry out. The process from initial registration to arrival in a host country is very complex and detailed and can take years before a family arrives in South Lanarkshire.

Currently there are approximately 15,000 Syrians resettled in the UK through the Resettlement Programme which is due to end March 2020.

The UK Government have announced a new Programme which is due to commence from April 2020. This programme will consolidate the wide range of schemes that are available into one new Global Resettlement Scheme. The aim is to “continue to identify and resettle the most vulnerable refugees, identified and referred by the UNHCR.” The UK Government “aims to resettle in the region of 5,000 of the world’s most vulnerable refugees” in the first year of operation. This would equate to similar numbers of refugees who have arrived year on year through the Syrian Resettlement Programme. As with the current programme participation by Community Planning Partnerships will continue to be voluntary. Further information on the new program is still in development however the Scottish Government have advised of their intention to engage with local authorities developing the expanded program.

2 // Scottish and South Lanarkshire context

All 32 Scottish Local Authority areas have participated in the Syrian Resettlement Programme and over 3,000 Syrian individuals have been resettled in Scotland since 2015.

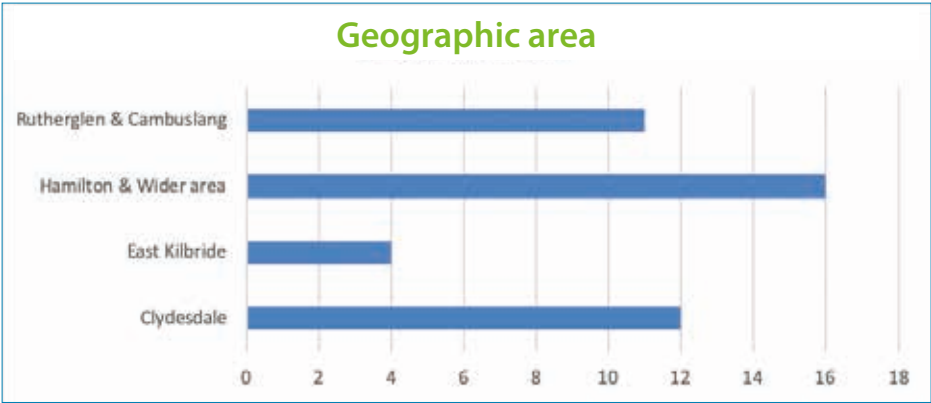
As at end August 2019 there are 46 Syrian families (170 individuals) settled across the South Lanarkshire area with approximately half being children under 16.

The South Lanarkshire Council Refugee Resettlement Team, within Housing and Technical Resources work intensely with new arrivals to ensure that they receive the support required when settling into a new country. The team consists of three Support Officers and one Advisor. All of the team are registered with the Scottish Social Services Council and regulated by the Care Inspectorate. The team have enhanced their expertise working with this vulnerable client group and undertake regular training to ensure that all concerns which may arise with new arrivals will be supported appropriately. The team have made valuable links across the partnership and communities and are the first point of contact for both families and partner agencies. They work intensively with households until they are confident in their environment and have access to the services they require.

3 // Geographical settlement

Families have been resettled throughout the South Lanarkshire area. **Chart 1** provides an overview of numbers of families within each area.

Chart 1



4 // Accommodation

Families have been accommodated by South Lanarkshire Council and Registered Social Landlord partners. **Chart 2** provides an overview of numbers accommodated by landlord type.

Chart 2



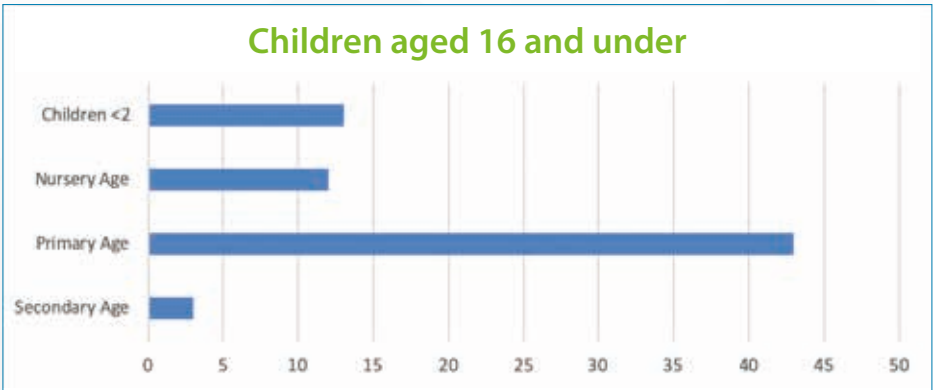
5 // Education



Local South Lanarkshire school

Chart 3 shows the age profile of the younger refugees and highlights that the majority of children are of primary school age and under. All children attending school are integrating very well and developing excellent English language skills.

Chart 3



6 // English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision

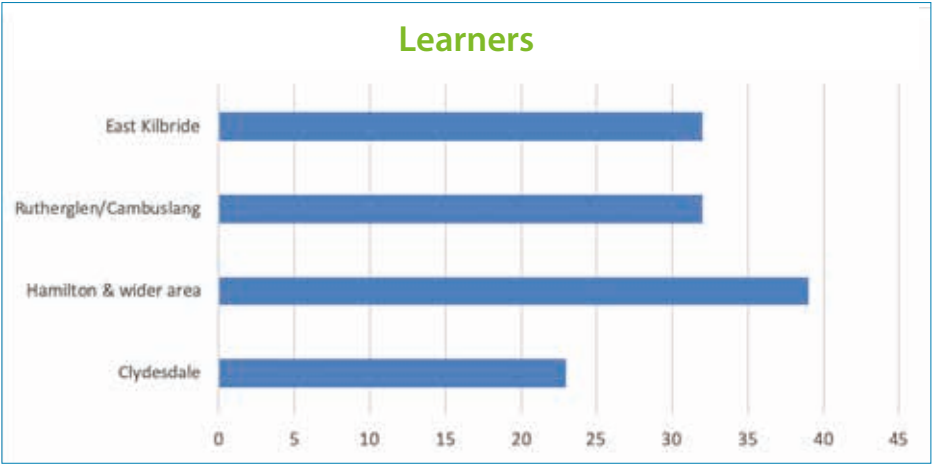
ESOL provision is available for families when they arrive and their level of written and spoken English is assessed to ensure that they receive the correct support. ESOL delivery in each area has steadily increased since the start of 2019 which is due to an increase in the number of ESOL tutors – with four ESOL tutors now working closely with re-settled Syrian families. There are 126 ESOL learners across South Lanarkshire of which 118 are Syrian Learners.



South Lanarkshire ESOL students

Chart 4 shows the number of ESOL learners in each geographic area.

Chart 4

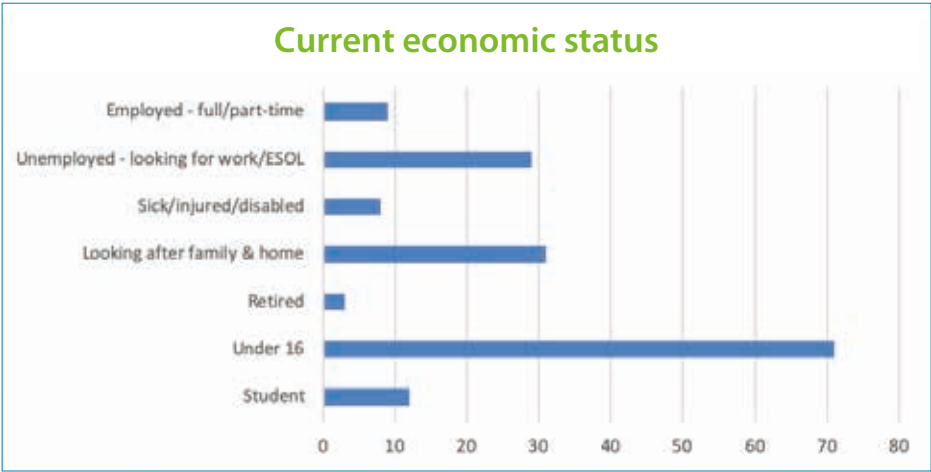


There are currently 70 female ESOL learners and 56 male learners attending the ESOL classes from March to June 2019. Out of the 126 ESOL learners, 88 are showing that they have improved their English language skills. Fifty-three ESOL learners are participating in other learning activities including working or volunteering in their community. Paid employment and volunteering, e.g. within charity shops, is an essential element of learning to speak and understand English as they have to engage and communicate with their colleagues and members of the public.

7 // Current economic status

The initial focus for adults is to learn to speak and write English to increase their employment opportunities. All adults who are unemployed and looking for work are also attending English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes/courses. **Chart 5** provides a breakdown of current economic status.

Chart 5



8 // Health

All individuals are registered with medical and dental practices.

Chart 6 shows the frequency an individual has visited their GP or hospital within the first six months following arrival. During the period of this report a number of households with very complex needs arrived in South Lanarkshire following lengthy planning periods between Housing Services and the Home Office and involving all relevant community planning partners, in particular Health.

Chart 6

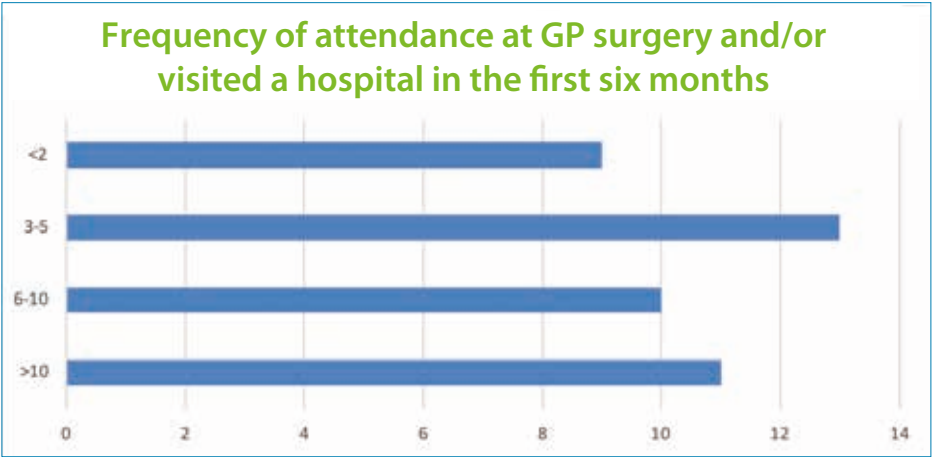


Chart 7 highlights health improvement within the first six months following arrival.

Chart 7

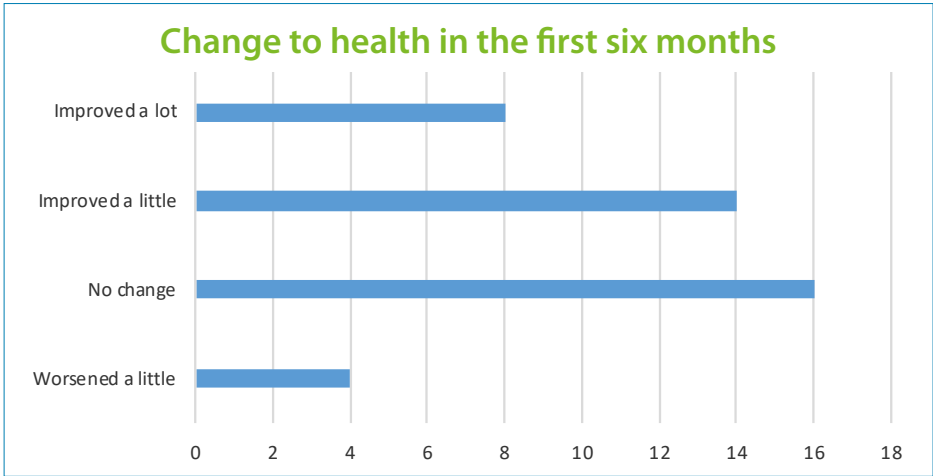
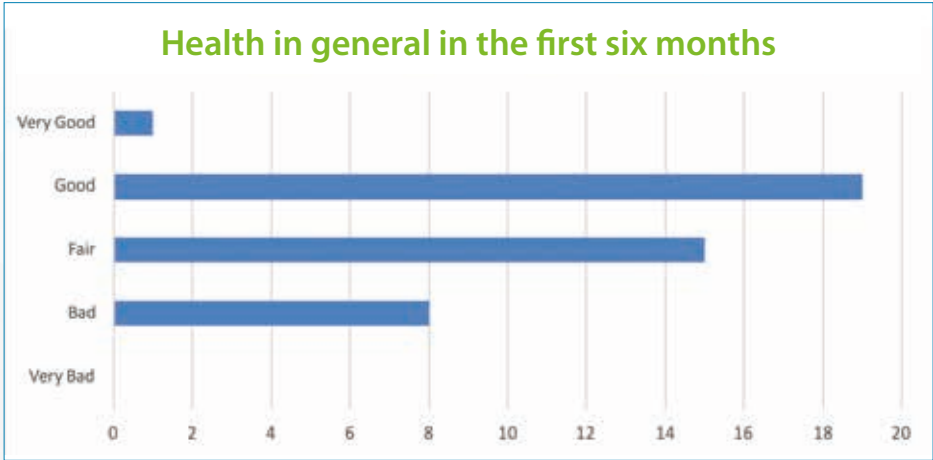


Chart 8 highlights individual views on health improvement within the first six months following arrival.

Chart 8



9 // Integration and community involvement

Families continue to be warmly welcomed into their local communities by neighbours, community groups, faith groups, local services and a whole range of individuals who have shown kindness and assistance to individuals and families. In our experience over the last couple of years children have always integrated very well, limited English has not been a barrier to having fun and playing together. Current families are very good at assisting with the integration and ensure that new families are included and welcoming both parents and children.

Chart 9 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.

Chart 9

Extent to which agree/disagree local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (during first six months)

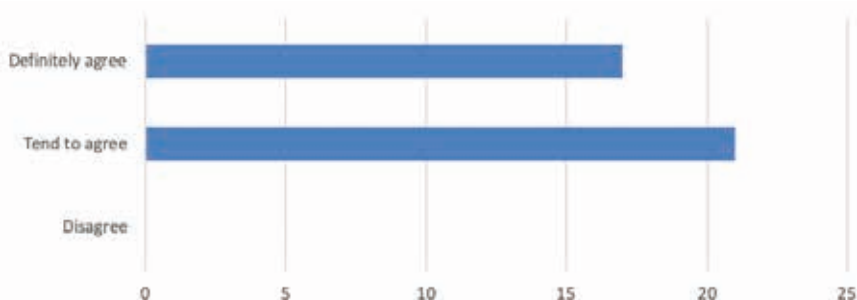
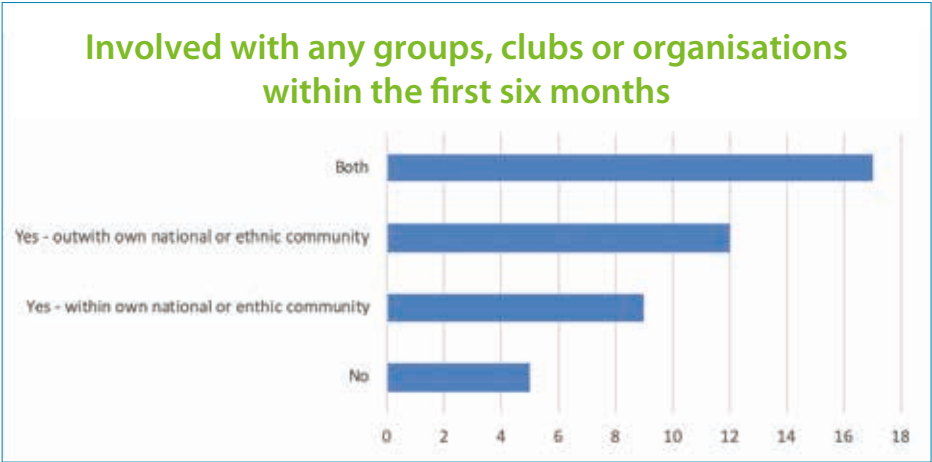


Chart 10 highlights if individuals (all ages) are involved with any groups, clubs or organisations within the first six months from arrival.

Chart 10



10 // Case studies

The following case studies highlight examples of positive changes in the lives of individuals and families who have arrived through the Refugee Resettlement Programme.

Health case study (1)

A young family with very complex health needs arrived in South Lanarkshire during September 2018. The South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partners – specifically Health and the Housing Syrian Refugee Resettlement Team put in place an arrival and support plan which would see the adult female taken directly to hospital from the airport. The hospital welcomed the family and medical treatment was initiated immediately. An Arabic speaking Refugee Support Officer also stayed overnight with the lady to support her and her husband and young child were taken to their new home.

It was a very stressful and emotional time for the family who did not previously have direct access to lifesaving treatment due to lack of funds and having sold all of their possessions to pay for the little treatment they had. It was emotionally overwhelming for them when shown the welcome and compassion they received from all staff involved in resettlement plans, in particular health professionals.

Both adults arrived with life changing conditions which impacted on the whole family and complex and long term support plans were put in place. Health professionals ensured that the family had access to all appropriate health provisions upon arrival and these have developed on an ongoing basis as the health needs of both adults have changed. The Housing Syrian Refugee Resettlement Team provided 24 hour one to one support in the first six months from arrival as well ensuring that they family could access other non-medical supports including benefits and education provisions.

The adults will continue to have ongoing medical issues resulting from their past experiences however they have a positive outlook on their future due to the work and commitment shown by everyone who worked with and continues to work with them. The family can now enjoy simple things without constant pain and enjoy the exuberance of their young daughter.

The family want to thank everyone who has assisted them especially Health, the Housing Syrian Refugee Resettlement Team and everyone who volunteers to drive the family to and from every hospital in the Lanarkshire and beyond!

Health case study (2)

A family of four arrived during November 2018. One of the young girls has very complex physical and educational needs. She has never had access to medical services to suit her needs, as her condition was not seen as treatable in her country of origin or refugee host country and no provisions had ever been put in place to make her young life comfortable resulting in exclusion from any form of schooling.

A support and health plan was developed based on the information that was available on the family and their needs and plans were put in place for arrival. From the first day everyone involved with the family worked towards making her comfortable and pain free.

The family were overwhelmed with the support and compassion they received and commented that their daughter had never been shown the respect and tenderness which was given by people working with her and the family. It was the norm for the girl to be ignored by people due to her condition and nobody would engage directly with her or touch her to alleviate her pain.

Over the months there has been a marked change in the young girl, she now smiles and the periods of upset and pain have reduced dramatically. She is receiving physiotherapy, occupational therapy, input from a dietician and educational psychologist and will soon be attending school when a specially adapted wheelchair is available.

The family are now more relaxed, although they still worry about their eldest daughter, but can see the positive changes to her life which in turn has made a positive change for them and their youngest daughter.

The following case studies highlights how the South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership work together to make positive impacts on two families who have very complex medical needs.

Volunteering case study (3)



Young Volunteer of the Year – British Heart Foundation 2019

A young Syrian man (18 years old) arrived in South Lanarkshire in April 2018. He arrived with his mother and has had to work from a very early age to support them – both in Syria and the host refugee country.

On arrival, as well as learning English, he was very keen to be involved and got to know his local area very well by walking everywhere, getting to know his neighbours and attending the local leisure centre. He wanted to pay back into his community and worked with the Housing Syrian Refugee Resettlement Team to find volunteering opportunities. The ideal opportunity arose at the British Heart Foundation in Hamilton – this charity is very important as his father had died from a heart attack three years ago. With his Support Officer he attended interviews and obtained a position on a voluntary basis over two days a week. He was so enthusiastic and willing to help he obtained secure paid work two days a week as a furniture restorer in the store.

Despite his limited English he is an extremely popular member of the team and is well-known for his hard work. He found it a challenge settling into a new country at first, but volunteering has helped him make new friends and feel part of his local community.

He was nominated, by his store, for the British Heart Foundation's Young Volunteer of the Year, Scotland, award in June 2019 and went through to the UK awards where he won the title of the UK Young Volunteer of the Year award.

He has been to London twice with his mother and a Refugee Support Worker – all funded by the BHF and although he enjoyed his time there he is glad to live and work in South Lanarkshire – this is where he feels supported, has his friends and is more than happy to payback into his community and continue to work towards his ambition of becoming a doctor.

Apprenticeship case study (4)




A young Syrian man arrived in South Lanarkshire during October 2016 as a 16 year old with limited language skills. He had been working to support his family in the host refugee country and had limited education opportunities. On arrival he attended secondary school which provided him with a range of classes and options which allowed him time to develop his language skills as well as integrate and build connections with his peers. His interests were focussed on carrying out practical tasks and he started to attend college to improve his English language skills and to give him options for choosing a career path.

This work led towards a local firm taking him on as an apprentice painter and decorator, where he is learning a trade as well as going to college to enhance his skills. He is really enjoying the apprenticeship and the opportunities that it has brought both him and his employer.



11 // Priority Action Plan 2018/19 (to end March 2019)

Noted below is progress on areas of work prioritised during 2018/2019:

Refugee Support Team			Red/ Amber/ Green
Events with families:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Legal Session with Refugee Council ▶ Visits to Lanarkshire Mosques ▶ Cultural visits to National Museum, Peoples Palace, Glasgow Green, European Championships, Blair Drummond and Culzean Castle – all ESOL focused 	Refugee Resettlement Team and ESOL Team	2018/19	
Increased ESOL provision – two new ESOL tutors attached to the Refugee Resettlement Team New ESOL Buddying System set up where individuals matched with a volunteer in their community to assist with developing English language skills	Refugee Resettlement Team and ESOL Team	2018/19	
Donations/Charities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ New East Kilbride venue set up for charitable donation of toys, prams clothes etc. for young children – access through the Resettlement Team ▶ Working with Refuweege and Baby Bank Scotland to access support for new arrivals and new babies 	Refugee Resettlement Team	2018/19	

12 // Plan for going forward into 2018 and 2019

The following provides an overview of the work plan for 2019/2020. This will evolve and develop as needs and guidance require:

- ▶ Continued work towards settling families within the programme until March 2020;
- ▶ Continue with the expansion of ESOL provision of the new Buddy System with Education ESOL colleagues;
- ▶ Continuing to work with partners to ensure all resettled individuals have opportunities to work and learn;
- ▶ Continue to support individuals to participate further within their communities – through communities councils, tenant participation etc.;
- ▶ Develop end of Programme Report up to 31 March 2020;
- ▶ Implement reviewed financial guidance commitments;
- ▶ Continued evaluation and submission of data to Home Office as per timescales;
- ▶ Work with CoSLA, Scottish Government and Home Office on future guidance post 2020; A new programme is being introduced by the Home Office which will replicate the support provided for Syrians through the Syrian Resettlement Programme. The programme will commence April 2020 and will include Syrians and other refugees (determined by the UNHCR and the Home Office); and
- ▶ Engaging with the Scottish Government and CoSLA on the development of the expanded programme, new reporting structures; and ongoing debate and participation in the evolution of the programme.

13 // With thanks

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;

Baby Bank Scotland;

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

University of the West of Scotland;

Project Linus UK;

The Refugee Council;

VASLAN;

Everyone who has donated items and/or funds; and

Everyone who has volunteered their time.

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