



Joint ADPH and FPH press release

UK needs urgent, co-ordinated public health action on Syrian refugee crisis

Release date: 16 September 2015

The Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) and the Faculty of Public Health (FPH) are today (16th September) calling for the urgent coordinated action of Local Government, Public Health Agencies, NHS and the Voluntary Sector in response to the resettlement of Syrian Refugees.

We welcome the Home Secretary's call today for agencies to work together to support refugees arriving in the UK. Our organisations will do all we can to help, and we will draw on our previous experience of such work to help ensure that refugees are appropriately supported and welcomed to the UK.

If the UK is to respond effectively to the immediate needs of vulnerable people traumatised by the on-going conflict in Syria, ADPH and FPH believe the government needs to accelerate the implementation of the UK Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme within the next 12-18 months. This scheme offers the most vulnerable refugees fleeing the Syrian crisis protection in the UK.

Dr Andrew Furber, President of the Association of Directors of Public Health (and Director of Public Health for Wakefield) said:

"Previous experience tells us the health and wellbeing needs of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in the UK can be complex. It is important that local authorities are adequately supported to provide the necessary response. Directors of Public Health are well placed and ready to support the management of such an exercise."

Professor John Ashton, President of FPH, said:

"The UK has a proud and strong tradition of providing humanitarian support both through its overseas development aid and through compassionate and humanitarian provision of support to refugees arriving in the UK. We must learn from our previous experience and extend that same compassion in public health now. Today the focus is Syria. Tomorrow we must think about the equally compelling needs of the men, women and children displaced from Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and elsewhere"



Lessons learned from the Kosovo response should inform a more rapid gearing up of refugee reception in the UK, so that the current UK target of receiving 20,000 refugees from the countries bordering Syria can be realised rapidly to meet urgent humanitarian needs. Lessons learned from the Kosovo response should inform a more rapid gearing up of refugee reception in the UK, so that the current UK target of receiving 20,000 refugees from the countries bordering Syria can be realised rapidly to meet urgent humanitarian needs.

In terms of urgent next steps it is recommended that:

- Based on previous experience and our understanding of the current situation, ADPH and FPH believe that an accelerated implementation of the UK Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme within a timeframe of 12-18 months rather than the five years will ease integration and transition of refugees into the UK.
- Lessons should be learnt from the Kosovan refugee crisis on the phases of the response and managing effective arrangements.
- The required service response for vulnerable children and orphans needs to be scoped urgently and its implications on Local Government and health services; such as fostering and family support, and protection and children's mental and emotional wellbeing services including complex needs such as conflict related sexual abuse, torture and trauma.
- Financial support should be available to allow local authorities who are willing and able to accept refugees to do so quickly and without a major impact on routine services.
- A dedicated resource should be created to manage and coordinate the crisis response, drawing together expertise from all four nations, working with the UK and devolved governments and UNHCR to deliver services for the reception and care of refugees, including unaccompanied children.
- Local Directors of Public Health have an important contribution to make to support the arrival of Syrian refugees within their local area.
- The UK should ensure that whatever mechanisms are used to coordinate arrangements for new arrivals, robust communication plans are also implemented between designated asylum/ refugee agencies and local authorities.

ENDS

Further information

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- For all FPH media enquiries, please contact Liz Skinner, Senior Media and PR Officer, email lizskinner@fph.org.uk, tel 020 3696 2478 or for out-of-hours media enquiries, please call 07703 715106.
- For ADPH interview requests please contact Enquiries at enquiries@adph.org.uk.

Notes to Editors

1. The Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) is the representative body for Directors of Public Health (DsPH) in the UK. It seeks to improve and protect the health of the population through DPH development, sharing good practice, and policy and advocacy programmes. www.adph.org.uk
2. ADPH has a strong track record of collaboration with other stakeholders in public health, including those working within the NHS, local authorities and other sectors.
3. The Faculty of Public Health (FPH) is the leading professional body for over 3,300 public health specialists in the UK. It works to improve people's health and wellbeing through its core aims of setting the standards for and quality assuring the specialist public health workforce and advocating for action on public health issues. www.fph.org.uk
4. As the leading professional body for public health specialists in the UK, their members are trained to the highest possible standards of public health competence and practice, as set by FPH. With 3,300 members, in the UK and internationally, they work to develop knowledge and understanding, and to promote excellence in the field of public health. For more than 40 years, FPH has been at the forefront of developing and expanding the public health workforce and profession.
5. The LGA have produced a one stop resource to answer any questions regarding the resettlement of Syrian refugees. <http://www.local.gov.uk/refugees>

**Association of Directors of Public Health
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