

Families reunited as asylum seekers transferred to the UK

This is the latest in a series of flights which has brought asylum seekers to the UK from Greece to reunite with family, demonstrating that throughout the pandemic, the UK has remained open and fully committed to family reunification.

Around two thirds of the group were children, who will now be supported by their UK family.

The 28 are a mix of Afghan, Iraqi, Kuwaiti, Syrian and Bangladeshi nationals. Five arrived on Monday, eight on Tuesday and seven yesterday (Thursday). The remaining eight will arrive today (Friday). The youngest of the group was aged six, while the oldest was 42.

Through resettlement schemes, the UK resettles more refugees than any other country in Europe and are in the top five countries worldwide. Since September 2015, more than 25,000 vulnerable refugees have been resettled, with around half being children.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

I am delighted that we can bring families, who have suffered the trauma of being separated, back together. These individuals, most of whom are children, are now able to be in the UK alongside their loved ones.

Such arrivals show that our commitment to those in need of protection has not waivered, even in the midst of a global pandemic.

Legal and viable routes to the UK demonstrate that it is not necessary for people to try and reach the UK via dangerous journeys, such as across the Channel.

The UK granted protection to more than 6,320 children in the year ending June 2020 and more than 44,600 children since 2010 through a range of legal pathways, including asylum and through world leading refugee resettlement schemes.

The group were transferred to the UK under the Dublin Regulation and will now be allowed to have their asylum claim assessed alongside their family members.

The UK has a proud tradition of providing safe and legal routes to the UK and has continued to honour its commitments under the Dublin Regulation throughout the Pandemic and the transition period.

Even beyond the transition period, the UK has committed to continue to process all family reunion applications made before the 1 January.

The UK also presented a genuine and sincere offer to the EU on a future reciprocal arrangement for the family reunion of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. On 19 May the government published a draft legal text as a constructive contribution to negotiations.