



Home Office



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

To: All Council Leaders and Chief Executives in England, Scotland and Wales;
Chair of the Northern Ireland Cross Organisational Strategic Planning Group (Afghan Refugees)

13 September 2021

AFGHAN RESETTLEMENT AND RELOCATION

Since we last wrote to you, we have been delighted to see so many local authorities come forward with offers of support for Afghan citizens and their families who are seeking to rebuild their lives in the UK. We are grateful for this positive response and would like to thank all local authorities across the country that have already provided offers of support, assistance, and accommodation.

But now we must go further. There are many thousands of Afghan families who in recent weeks arrived as part of our Afghanistan relocation programme, many of whom have found homes and a warm welcome from local authority partners across the UK. However, many are in interim hotel accommodation, unable to settle, find jobs and send their children to school.

If every council agreed to resettle a number of Afghan families today, we would quickly be able to provide the warm welcome that those families already here deserve. With funding now in place, we expect to see many more firm offers of support coming forward at pace, from local authorities across the whole of the United Kingdom. We would both like to see offers from all UK councils within the next ten days.

New funding in place to welcome Afghan families to the UK

Today, we have formally announced the details of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and how this interacts with the existing Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme. This letter contains further detail how local authorities can offer their support.

Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)

The ACRS will welcome up to 5,000 people in the first year, up to a total of 20,000 over the coming years, leading the way in the global response to the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. The scheme will provide vulnerable refugees from Afghanistan and those put at risk by recent events in Afghanistan with a route to safety. The scheme will prioritise:

- those who have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for values such as democracy, women's rights and freedom of speech, rule of law (for example, judges, women's rights activists, journalists); and
- vulnerable people, including women and girls at risk, and members of minority groups at risk (including ethnic and religious minorities and LGBT+).

Some of those who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme, which included individuals who were considered to be at particular risk – including women's rights activists, prosecutors and journalists – will be the first to be resettled under the ACRS. People who were notified by the UK

government that they had been called forward or specifically authorised for evacuation, but were not able to board flights, will also be offered a place under the scheme if they subsequently come to the UK.

Further detail is being published today on GOV.uk.

Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)

This ACRS will be separate from, and in addition to, the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), which offers eligible current or former locally employed staff who are assessed to be under serious threat to life priority relocation to the UK. Since the first flight landed on 22 June, we have welcomed around 7,000 Locally Employed Staff and their families under the ARAP scheme, including around 5,000 people who were evacuated during August.

Integration package

Those arriving through either ARAP or ACRS will be granted immediate Indefinite Leave to Remain allowing them to benefit from full rights and entitlements and providing them with the certainty and stability they need to build their life here.

We are pleased to confirm that the integration packages for the ACRS and ARAP will be aligned, providing one comprehensive offer to individuals, local authorities and mainstream services. A generous resettlement package has been developed to support ARAP/ACRS arrivals to acclimatise to the UK, learn the language (where appropriate), and find work, thus enabling rapid self-sufficiency and social integration in UK communities.

The Government will match the tariff for the successful Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) to provide a complete package covering health, education and integration support costs. The core local authority tariff of £20,520 per person will be provided over a shorter period of three years (unlike the five-year VPRS provision), enabling more funding in those crucial early years to support resettled Afghans to integrate into British society and become self-sufficient more quickly. We expect the tariff for each person to be frontloaded in year one, to deliver the vital support needed in the early stages of resettlement, tapering down over the remaining years. As with the VPRS, additional tariffs for health, English language and education services will also be provided in year one only.

Full details of the package are annexed to this letter at Annex A, including a table showing the potential profile of the fund over three years. The full package will cover:

- £20,520 to cover the local authority welcome, integration offer and provision of services
- up to £4,500 per child to cover education provision, subject to their age (year one only)
- £850 to cover English language provision, for adults requiring this support (year one only)
- £2,600 to cover health provision (year one only)

We have also agreed a further £20m fund of flexible funding in the current financial year (2021/22) to support local authorities with higher cost bases with any additional costs in the provision of services.

Further accommodation funding and support

This Government is committed to resettling up to 5,000 people through the ACRS over the coming year and the need for suitable accommodation to support resettlement is pressing. Government has already announced an additional £5m housing fund to help local authorities provide the necessary housing and support for ARAP families and minimise their stays in short-term emergency accommodation.

We can today confirm that the Government is now increasing that funding to £10m in the first year and extending it with £5m available in year 2 and £2m in year 3. This will provide local authorities with longer-term certainty that there will be funding to draw on if needed. In addition to ARAP families, the funding will also be available for local authorities to draw on if they bring forward offers of homes for the families who were brought to the UK as part of the evacuation and who will be the first to be resettled under the ACRS.

Civil society have a crucial role to play in the welcome and support of newcomers to the UK. The Community Sponsorship Scheme enables groups of friends and neighbours, charities and faith groups to support a refugee family as they restart their new lives in our country. Many local authorities have supported the resettlement of Syrian and other refugees through community sponsorship, successfully complementing their own efforts.

We strongly encourage local authorities to promote and support local community sponsor groups, and advocate partnership working with local volunteer groups at this critical time. Advice and information for local authorities is available from Reset, the UK Community Sponsorship hub, at www.resetuk.org.

Seeking your urgent offers of support for Afghan families

With confirmation of this integration and funding package, we now expect that many more local authority offers of accommodation and welcome will be forthcoming. We still have large numbers of Afghan people in hotels and short-term accommodation across the country. We would quickly be able to provide the guarantee of a new life if every local authority in the UK stepped forward and agreed to resettle those families already here.

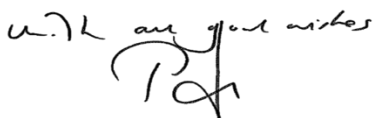
We cannot fulfil the UK's duty to these people without your vital support and we will continue to work in partnership with all local authorities.

Therefore, to reiterate, now that the funding is in place, we would both like to see offers from councils within ten days.

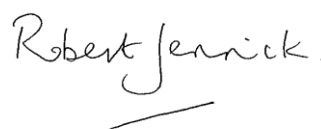
Local authorities seeking to make a firm offer of support should first contact their own local Strategic Migration Partnership. Contact details for the 11 Strategic Migration Partnerships across England, Wales and Scotland, are attached at Annex B. We also welcome confirmation from the Executive Office on Northern Ireland's position.

In the meantime, we will continue to listen to your feedback and our cross-Government teams will continue to engage with local authorities and stand ready to answer any questions you may have.

We are grateful for your continued support and the continued joint efforts as we work in partnership to fulfil our moral duty to those who have fled Afghanistan, many of whom have stood shoulder to shoulder with our armed forces and now seek a new life in the UK.



RT HON PRITI PATEL
Home Secretary



RT HON ROBERT JENRICK MP
Secretary of State for Housing,
Communities and Local Government

ANNEX A

Integration package for Afghan citizens and other refugees resettled under ARAP and ACRS

ACRS/ARAP	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
LA Tariff [per person]	£10,500	£6,000	£4,020	£20,520
Education [per child]	Up to £4,500			Up to £4,500
English Language [per adult]	£850			£850
Health [per person]	£2,600			£2,600

The integration package being put in place covers:

1. Status

- All those who are resettled, whether they have arrived through ARAP or ACRS, will benefit from full rights and entitlements through Indefinite Leave to Remain, providing them with the certainty and stability they need to build their life here.

2. Caseworker support

- All families will have access to a caseworker to help them navigate, access and register with mainstream services (including schools' registration, GP registration, Job Centre Plus appointments and utility registration). The caseworker will also provide advice around and referral to appropriate mental health services.

3. Accommodation

- For those evacuated, immediate quarantine accommodation (also known as 'managed quarantine service' or MQS) and temporary accommodation (whilst waiting for permanent accommodation) will be provided and paid for by the Government.
- For all new arrivals, permanent accommodation will be found and furnished appropriately including white goods. Individuals will cover rental costs themselves using Universal Credit, Housing Benefit or other income.

4. Education

- School places will be provided and nursery places for 2-4 year olds facilitated.
- Further education will be available for 16-19 year olds.
- Those aged 19 and over are also eligible for access to funding for Further Education places.
- In line with the VPRS, a tariff of up to £4,500 per child aged 5-18 years old and £2,250 for ages 3-5), additional to the local authority tariff, will also be provided in year one.
- Also in line with the VPRS, local authorities will receive £850 per adult to provide additional support for English language learning. Where eligible, adults will also have access to mainstream Adult Education Budget funding.

5. Health services

- A health tariff of £2,600 per person in year one only, additional to the local authority tariff, will be provided to support access to mainstream health and mental health services for arrivals settled with local authorities.

6. Benefits and Employment support

- All adults will have recourse to public funds and the immediate right to work.
- DWP will be providing tailored onsite support in the bridging hotels and arranging follow up appointments.

- All adults will have access to their own work coach (once a UC claim is successfully made). This includes personalised and tailored coaching and support to access the full range of DWP support. It also includes an automatic referral to the National Careers Service Skill Audit to understand immediate skills levels and jobs that may be available.
- DWP and the Refugee Employment Network (REN) will work together with local partners to build better links between jobcentres and the organisations supporting integration in local areas. DWP and REN are also coordinating external offers of employment support and jobs. The REN is a network of over 120 organisations supporting refugees and those on resettlement schemes to access appropriate, fulfilling, paid employment or self-employment.

7. Small cash payment

- Where necessary, arrivals will receive weekly cash and rent support up to the day before the first UC payment is due, in order to maintain continuity of support. The amount of support received will be dependent on circumstances - £59.20 per week (for single adults under 25); £74.70 per week (for single adults over 25); £117.40 per week (for couples); £37.75 per week (for children) – together with £15 per person per day for rent until they receive the UC Housing element.

In addition to the above support package:

- We have also agreed a further £20m fund of flexible funding in the current financial year (2021/22) to support local authorities with higher cost bases with any additional costs in the provision of services.
- We are also considering what enhanced integration support could be made available to help with longer term integration and employment once immediate needs have been met.
- We are working to ensure effective transfer of individual information gained whilst in Managed Quarantine Service (MQS) to the relevant agencies as individuals depart for their next location.
- We are creating a portal where the many offers of support from individuals, organisations and businesses can be registered. This portal is already available to submit offers of housing and work is now underway to expand this to further offers, such as job opportunities, professional skills training or donations of items like clothes or toys.
- Whilst many individuals will require the full support provided here, some may not have the same needs. We are exploring options to manage this difference in need.

ANNEX B

Contact details for Strategic Migration Partnerships

East of England	malgorzata.strona@eelga.gov.uk
East Midlands	brein.fisher@emcouncils.gov.uk
London	mark.winterburn@london.gov.uk
North East	janine_hartley@middlesbrough.gov.uk
North West	katie.jones@manchester.gov.uk
South East	roymillard@secouncils.gov.uk
South West	bronwyn.prosser@swcouncils.gov.uk
West Midlands	dally.panesar@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Yorkshire & Humber	David.2.Brown@migrationyorkshire.org.uk
Scotland	andrew@cosla.gov.uk
Wales	wsmcentraladmin@wlgagov.uk emma.maher@wlga.gov.uk