



UK Government schemes to resettle Afghan citizens

As a response to the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, the UK Government has set up two schemes to resettle Afghan people in the UK. These have broadly the same aim, to provide protection for Afghans at risk, but have different eligibility criteria.

Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)

The ARAP is a scheme launched on 1 April 2021 to provide support for Afghans who worked closely with the British military and UK government in Afghanistan, including current and former Locally Employed Staff in Afghanistan. This includes staff who have worked in roles which could have exposed their identities and placed them at risk of reprisals as a result of their work for the UK Government. In May 2021, the ARAP scheme was expanded so that contracted interpreters who supported military operations were eligible for relocation by default.

Since the first ARAP flight on 22 June, around 7,000 Locally Employed Staff and their family members have been relocated to the UK. 1,400 former staff and families were relocated between 2013-2021 under the previous scheme for Afghan locally employed staff. The government is currently working with more than 100 councils across the UK to meet the demand for housing, with over 2,000 places already confirmed.

The government is making at least £12 million available to prioritise additional school places so children can be enrolled as soon as possible, and to provide school transport, specialist teachers and English language support to assist with learning. Further funding will be provided for up to 300 undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships for Afghans at UK universities and adults will also be able to access English language courses free of charge.

Those coming to the UK under this scheme will receive immediate indefinite leave to remain, meaning they can stay in the UK without any time restrictions.

Other measures provided by the Government to support the ARAP scheme include:

- £3 million of additional NHS funding so that Afghans arriving under the ARAP scheme can access healthcare and register with a GP once they leave quarantine.



St Vincent
de Paul Society

England and Wales

Turning Concern into Action

St Vincent de Paul Society Policy Brief

- £5 million funding for councils in England, Wales and Scotland to support Afghans coming to the UK via the ARAP scheme and provide a top-up to help meet the costs of renting properties.

More information on the ARAP scheme, including more details on eligibility criteria and application process can be found [here](#).



Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)

The Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) scheme is separate from, and in addition to, the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP). The ACRS will provide protection for Afghan people at risk. The government has committed to welcome around 5,000 people in the first year (2021) and up to 20,000 over the coming years. The Government will work with UNHCR and aid agencies to identify people for resettlement.

Eligibility

The ACRS 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, academics, journalists);
- Vulnerable people, including women and girls at risk, and members of minority groups at risk (including ethnic and religious minorities and LGBT people).

People will not be able to apply directly to the Home Office for the ACRS. Instead, eligible people will be prioritised and referred for resettlement to the UK in one of three ways:

- Some of those who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme and 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.
- The government will work with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to identify and resettle refugees who have fled Afghanistan.
- The government will work with international partners and NGOs in the region to implement a referral process for those inside Afghanistan, (where safe passage can be arranged,) and for those who have recently fled to countries in the region.

Rights and entitlements

Those resettled through this route will be granted 'indefinite leave to remain' and will be able to apply for British citizenship after five years in the UK under existing rules.

People will be allowed to work and will be eligible to access public funds where needed. They will also receive integration support including support to learn English and find work.



Where will Afghan refugees be resettled?

A full list of Local Authorities (LAs) who have committed to resettling families is not publicly available yet, however what we know so far is that:

- So far, over 100 LAs have committed to housing Afghan refugees.
- 55 LAs in the South of England have pledged to welcome families in their area.
- 33 families have already arrived under the scheme (in 14 Local Authorities in the Southeast of England).
- Other LAs in the Midlands and North of England who have pledged to help resettle families include Mansfield District Council, Melton Borough Council, Nottingham City Council, Broxtowe Borough Council, Gedling Borough Council, Derby City Council, Stoke-On-Trent Council, Wolverhampton Council, Dudley Borough Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and Coventry City Council.

LAs resettling families will receive a tariff of £20,520 per person to cover the cost of helping people resettle. There will also be £20m of flexible funding in the current financial year (2021/22) to support Local Authorities with any additional costs in the provision of services.

More information on the ACRS scheme is available [here](#).

For more information, please contact Alessandra Sciarra, Social Policy Manager at alessandras@svp.org.uk.