

Afghan citizens in Surrey - Frequently Asked Questions

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1. Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP)

Surrey councils are joining up with health colleagues, voluntary and community groups and the faith sector to respond to the Government's Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP). This policy is for Afghans who have supported British efforts in Afghanistan, for example interpreters and other personnel.

The partnership approach aims to ensure effective arrangements are in place. It's important that the partners are able to coordinate efforts across housing, health, social care and education, and to provide community support to help Afghan arrivals adjust to their new circumstances.

You can find a wide range of information and advice on the Government website about the Afghan evacuation situation and how you can help. [Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/afghan-relocation-and-assistance-policy)

2. Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) for Afghan Nationals

This is different from the ARAP policy. This scheme announced by the Government is a new Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, which will allow Afghans most in need, including women, girls and children, to resettle in the UK. Women, girls, children and those most in need have been prioritised, as those who are more likely to face human rights abuses and dehumanising treatment by the Taliban.

The Afghanistan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme will welcome 5,000 Afghans into the UK in the first year and a total of 20,000 in the coming years. Where we have managed to evacuate people to the UK who are not covered by ARAP or otherwise entitled to remain in the UK, they will fall under the new Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme - ACRS. More information here [FACTSHEET: Resettlement routes for Afghan nationals - Home Office in the media \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

3. Help and advice line for non-British nationals

If you are a non-British national in Afghanistan, or are the family member of a non-British national in Afghanistan, and in need of assistance, call +44 2475 389 980 (or 02475 389 980 in the UK).

This helpline is not providing advice on eligibility for the full Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme and it is not for registering interest for the scheme. Please continue checking back on the [Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme](#) page for updated details of the scheme.

4. When can we expect Afghan arrivals?

The last flight with evacuees flew out of Kabul into the UK on Tuesday 31 August. Afghan citizens have already started arriving in Surrey.

5. What is operation Warm Welcome?

Work is underway across the whole of Government to ensure the Afghans who stood side by side with us in conflict, their families and those at highest risk who have been evacuated, are supported as they now rebuild their lives in the UK.

The plans, dubbed 'Operation Warm Welcome', will be overseen by Victoria Atkins as the new Minister for Afghan Resettlement. The support provided will be similar to the commitments in the Syrian Resettlement Programme and ensure that those who worked closely with the British military and UK Government in Afghanistan, and risked their lives in doing so, get the vital health, education, support into employment and accommodation they need to fully integrate into society.

[Operation Warm Welcome under way to support Afghan arrivals in the UK - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

6. How many Afghan citizens will arrive in Surrey and where will they go?

We don't have exact numbers yet. The Government has asked councils to indicate what they think would be a realistic number to be accommodated in their areas and what would need to be taken into account in determining who should go where. Councils across the UK are currently in discussion with the Home Office on these issues.

On arrival into the UK the individuals and families were accommodated for 10 days in Managed Quarantine Service (MQS) hotels. This is in line with UK COVID travel regulations. Emergency medical support was provided at these hotels where needed. Some of these MQS hotels are situated in Surrey.

After the 10 days quarantine, if settled accommodation hasn't been found, people will be moved to "Bridging Hotels" in the area while more permanent housing is found. At this point other health and wellbeing needs and requirements are being assessed as well as registering people with a GP.

7. What is being done in my area of Surrey?

Many District and Borough councils have already opened their doors and welcomed Afghan individuals and families into their communities. To find out what is being done in your area visit your District and Borough website [Borough and district council responsibilities - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk)

8. Will these people be housed in empty council properties or be allowed to jump housing waiting lists?

The councils are looking at possible options to house Afghan citizens. If you have a property to let for this purpose, you should contact your [local borough or district council](#) (you can find out how to do this by referring to: [How do I offer a property for housing?](#)). Council and housing association properties will only be made available if the Afghan family meets the "eligibility and qualification" criteria of the Housing Allocations Schemes published by the [local borough and district councils](#).

9. How do I offer a property to house Afghan citizens?

If you wish to express an interest in making a property available at some point for an Afghan family, you should contact the housing service of your [local borough or district council](#). You will need to provide the following details:

- Property address being offered
- How many bedrooms it has
- When it might be available
- How long it might be available for
- What, if any, rent you are expecting to receive
- Your contact details.

10. What if I want to offer a room in my house to an Afghan citizen?

The Government has not asked people to come forward with offers of a spare bedroom. Instead it advises people who want to offer a spare room to contact one of the organisations operating projects to support vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees, such as the British Red Cross. You can call the Red Cross's dedicated phone line on 0800 107 8727 for more information.

11. Who is paying for resettling the Afghan citizens?

The Government has currently confirmed that:

As well as the [grant funding](#), £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.

£3 million of additional NHS funding under the ARAP scheme for access to healthcare and GP registrations. All are being offered the COVID-19 vaccine.

£12 million to prioritise additional school places, to provide school transport, specialist teachers and English language. Further funding for up to 300 undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships for Afghans at UK universities. Adults will also be able to access English language courses free of charge.

£200 million for first year of the ACRS.

12. How do I donate cash or other items to Afghan citizens in the UK?

The Government advises the best way to help is to donate cash to humanitarian organisations or charities who are already working with refugees. The information on the [Government's website](#) lists the main charities taking donations.

Local support in Surrey

Our communities stand ready to support this effort and many Surrey residents are asking if they can help. Due to operational and logistical challenges, as well as COVID control considerations, we are asking that any donations at this point are financial ones, to charities that are best equipped to immediately support Afghan citizens in Surrey. [The Community Foundation for Surrey](#) is set up to administer these donations locally and information on how to donate can be found on their website.

Alternatively, the [Red Cross](#) are already active in managing donations and supporting arrivals from Afghanistan, and wider local support will be needed from foodbanks and other charities, which can be found via [Surrey Information Point](#).

Thank you for your generosity and support.

13. Can I help by fostering an Afghan child evacuee?

The Government's relocation programme for Afghan evacuees does not include unaccompanied children. They would arrive in family groups so the question of fostering does not arise in such cases. However, the council has an ongoing need for more foster carers across all groups of children who, for whatever reason, are unable to live with their parents or extended families. They include unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. To find out more about [fostering in Surrey](#), please contact us on: 08000 96 96 26.

14. How will they be allocated school places in Surrey?

As families are settled into accommodation, Surrey school liaison officers are visiting families and working with them to identify appropriate school places for their children. The council is working closely with school leaders to support Afghan children to settle successfully into school and continue their education in Surrey.

15. COVID safety measures

In terms of COVID, Afghanistan has been designated as a red zone so families and individuals are required to quarantine for 10 days on arrival to the UK in line with current COVID travel guidance. Thereafter they can be transferred to either their future accommodation or a Bridging Hotel.

The Government will be providing additional healthcare provision in line with their individual needs, including COVID-19 vaccines and support for mental wellbeing.

Further information can be found [here](#) on support given to those arriving via the ARAP scheme.

16. Where can I volunteer to help?

The Government is advising people who want to find out how to volunteer to help evacuees to contact one of the national charities and organisations working with evacuees and asylum seekers across the UK. More information on these organisations is available on the [Government's website](#).

If you want to find out about local volunteering opportunities in Surrey to support please contact one of the [local volunteer centres](#) in the county.

17. Afghan culture and religious beliefs?

What religion are they? Afghan people are mostly Sunni Muslim. Languages spoken are [Pashto](#) and [Dari](#). Dari is the official name of the variety of [Persian language](#) spoken in Afghanistan. It is often referred to as the *Afghan Persian*. Although still widely known as *Farsi*. Many of the evacuees in the ARAP scheme had been working as interpreters so they will have good English language skills.

Ethnic Groups in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic and mostly tribal society the population of the country consists of numerous ethnolinguistic groups.

[Pashtun](#), [Tajik](#), [Hazara](#), [Uzbek](#), [Aimaq](#), [Turkmen](#), [Baloch](#), [Pashai](#), [Nuristani](#), [Gujjar](#), [Arab](#), [Brah ui](#), [Qizilbash](#), [Pamiri](#), [Kyrgyz](#), [Sadat](#) and others.