



## **FAQs for Service Personnel regarding ARAP persons living in SFA**

### **Q. What is the ARAP scheme?**

**A.** The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) is for Afghan citizens who worked for or with the UK Government and British Armed Forces in Afghanistan in exposed or meaningful roles. It may include an offer of relocation to the UK for those deemed eligible by the Ministry of Defence and who are deemed suitable for relocation by the Home Office. It is an evidence-based scheme and is intended for a select group of Afghans who we worked with, or served alongside, during our military operations in Afghanistan, rather than for all who wish to relocate to the UK.

Afghan citizens who are eligible for relocation to the UK under ARAP may relocate with a partner, dependent children and additional family members who are deemed eligible by the Ministry of Defence, and suitable for relocation by the Home Office.

More information on the ARAP scheme is available at the GOV.UK website: [Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy: further information on eligibility criteria, offer details and how to apply - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy)

### **Q. How have ARAP persons supported UK efforts in Afghanistan and what is Defence's commitment to them?**

**A.** We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Afghans who risked their lives working alongside British Armed Forces in Afghanistan and will honour our commitment to them. The ARAP scheme provides relocation or other assistance specifically to Afghan nationals who worked for or alongside British Armed Forces in support of the UK's mission in Afghanistan. ARAP is not intended as an open resettlement scheme for all Afghans wishing to relocate to the UK.

To date, we have relocated over 12,000 people to the UK, while others are being readied for travel out of Afghanistan or are already receiving Government support in the safety of third countries. It is right that those arriving have somewhere suitable to stay once they are in the UK. The Secretary of State for Defence has committed to making Service Family Accommodation (SFA) properties available for ARAP families.

### **Q. Why is SFA being used to accommodate ARAP persons?**

**A.** The Secretary of State has committed to making available Service Family Accommodation (SFA) properties for ARAP families.

These properties have been identified from SFA stock which is not currently being used by Service Personnel. As such SFA is not available at all MOD sites.

A range of Government departments have been collaborating to ensure we find accommodation solutions for eligible Afghans, and SFA plays a key part in this. The MOD liaises daily with the Home Office and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on this core priority.

**Q. What is transitional SFA?**

**A.** Transitional SFA is SFA that is specifically intended to provide temporary accommodation for ARAP families while leased accommodation is sourced for them. The properties offered are SFA which are outside the wire and the process will operate on a rolling basis, with ARAP families expected to move in and out over a period of around six weeks.

**Q. Why can't they stay in hotels?**

**A.** UK hotels are not – and were never designed to be – suitable long-term accommodation in the UK for eligible Afghans. Moving into leased accommodation will help those relocating/resettling to rebuild their lives in the UK, put down roots, gain employment, and have reliable access to public services like education and healthcare.

**Q. What will the impact to Service Personnel be?**

**A.** We are trying to minimise impact to Service Personnel by using SFA which is currently not being used for Service Personnel for both transitional SFA and leased SFA.

**Q. How can we support those in transitional SFA?**

**A.** We would be grateful if you could give those in transitional SFA a warm, neighbourly welcome to their new life in the UK. They will have travelled to the UK very recently, so will be settling into their new environment. There will also be formal support for families.

**Q. By allocating SFA to Afghan families, is the government denying homes to our Service Personnel and their families?**

**A.** We are identifying SFA for those ARAP families to ensure they can move to the UK at pace. SFA is only one part of the solution, and we are also finding commercial properties where needed for families in the private rental sector. Every effort will be made to ensure that accommodation needs of service families will be met.

**Q. There are 'x' empty SFA at location 'y' - why can't they be used?**

**A.** Not all empty SFA can be made available. The MOD manages up to 16,000 moves every year and maintains a margin of vacant properties to facilitate this, others are kept vacant for essential repairs and modernisation, marked for disposal or in locations that are unsuitable for sub-letting. All houses used for ARAP families are also outside the wire.

**Q. Will this affect the ability of those Service Personnel in Long Term Relationships (LTRs) to apply for and be allocated surplus SFA in a timely manner?**

**A.** Eligible Service Personnel in established LTRs may still apply for SFA at selected locations ([Long Term Relationships to benefit from Widening Accommodation Entitlement \(sharepoint.com\) for more details](#)). There are many factors that affect the availability of SFA for eligible Service Personnel, so subsequent applications cannot be guaranteed.

**Q. Do these families have affiliations to any units based in the local area?**

**A.** It has not been possible to select locations for resettlement on this basis.

**Q. Why were certain locations chosen to house Afghan families relocating to the UK under ARAP?**

**A.** Decisions will be based on many factors including the size and type of house required by Afghan families, where there is availability, and where they can be supported.

**Q. Is SFA suitable for housing large Afghan families arriving under ARAP?**

**A.** SFA that has been made available to accommodate ARAP families are a combination of two, three and four bed properties. ARAP families are matched to a property that is suitable for them based on the family size and individual family requirements.

**Q. Why are we housing Afghan families when there are homeless veterans in need of accommodation?**

**A.** No one, not least those who have served this country, should be homeless. We remain steadfastly committed to our 'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good' strategy, which commits that no one who has served in the Armed Forces should face the need to sleep rough, and that is why we are investing £2 billion over the next three years into tackling rough sleeping and homelessness. There is a range of support that veterans can access, including receiving preferential access to social housing and through the Veterans Gateway.

**Q. Which SFA locations have been selected and why?**

**A.** SFA homes across the Defence estate, located 'outside the wire', will be made available for ARAP families as leased accommodation for a period of three years. SFA homes will be made available as transitional SFA for around six weeks. This is in support of the UK Government's Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) to help provide housing for Afghans who worked alongside the British Armed Forces in Afghanistan.

Heads of Establishment are being notified by DIO if their sites have been identified where there are sufficient surplus SFA to be used by Afghan families as part of the scheme. The

requirement and use of SFA will be kept under review. Responsibility for matching Afghan families to SFA that the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) has made available for leasing rests with the Home Office.

Final decisions will be based on a number of factors, such as the right size and type of house required by Afghan families.

**Q. What if I need SFA accommodation in the future? Will I still be able to access vacant accommodation?**

**A.** DIO maintains a management margin to ensure entitled Service Personnel can be offered appropriate properties. The MOD remains committed to enabling Service personnel and their families to meet their needs of mobility, safety, security, and all statutory requirements.

**Q. How long might this scheme last for?**

**A.** Leased SFA will be leased for a period of three years with the agreement of the DIO. Families are expected to spend around six weeks in transitional SFA.

**Q. Are these the families of former interpreters working with the British Armed Forces?**

**A.** The Afghans who are resettling in the UK as part of ARAP have supported the UK and our role in Afghanistan over the past two decades in a number of ways. Many of the Afghans are former locally employed staff (such as interpreters), others may have worked in close partnership with our Armed Forces and other Government departments in other ways.

**Q. Why are they being given SFA and not council/social housing?**

**A.** The resettlement of so many Afghan families is a huge cross-Government effort. By offering leased SFA, we can provide capacity to house the Afghan families, thereby supporting this important resettlement programme and humanitarian effort.

**Q. What security checks have been carried out on the Afghan families moving into the SFA estate?**

**A.** All persons extracted to the UK under Op PITTING and under ARAP have undergone the necessary security checks.

**Q. An Afghan family has moved into our street. What should we do if we are contacted for a comment by the media or other organisations?**

**A.** In the unlikely event the media tries to contact you directly, please do not provide comment but refer any enquiries to your Unit Press Officer, who in turn will provide them with contact details for the MOD Press Office.

**Q. What do I do if I want to help an Afghan family who has moved in near me?**

**A.** If you would like to help people as they start their new lives in the UK, please visit the following links: [Help people who have come to the UK from Afghanistan: Ways you can help - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/help-people-who-have-come-to-the-uk-from-afghanistan)

**Q.** What do I do if I wish to raise an issue about an Afghan family who has moved in near me?

**A.** Speak to your HOE via your chain of command.