



Home Office



Ministry  
of Defence

# AFGHANISTAN RESPONSE ROUTE

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## Introduction

1. On 19 December 2023, in response to the February 2022 data incident (the “data incident” hereafter), UK Government agreed to establish a new route to the UK for a targeted cohort of high-profile individuals and their dependants **and** who had also held *existing and confirmed links to the UK Government*. This route is known as “The Afghanistan Response Route” (ARR).
2. On 25 March 2024, UK Government agreed to expand the scope of the ARR to also offer relocation to the UK for the remaining highest-risk cohort, and to include a provision allowing individuals eligible under the new route to apply for relocation of their Additional Family Members (AFM). The route became operational in April 2024.
3. As the ARR was operating under the terms of a super injunction, it was not open to applications. Instead, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) issued *invitation letters* to those found eligible. *Invitation letters* issued under the ARR were drafted to mirror the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) in order to mitigate the risks of the route becoming public. The details of the injunction have been communicated publicly in the Secretary of State for Defence’s statement to Parliament on 15 July 2025.
4. In early 2025, the Secretary of State for Defence commissioned an independent review of the policy, which analysed the current level of threat experienced in Afghanistan by those impacted by the data incident. The review concluded that, despite the ongoing dangerous situation, the passage of time – four years after the fall of Kabul – now means that there is little evidence of any systematic killing campaign or reprisals against former officials by the Taliban, and it is “highly unlikely it would be the single, or definitive, piece of information” that would prompt the Taliban to act.
5. As a result, on the 4 July 2025, UK Government decided to discontinue the ARR. The MOD has therefore ceased issuing new *invitation letters*. The route will not be open to applications. However, the MOD will honour the relocation of eligible *principals*, and their *immediate family members (IFM)*, who had received an *invitation letter* to the ARR. *AFM* of those *principals* who have completed the biographic stages of the process, and who have been supported by the UK Government into the next stage of the relocation process, will also be honoured, as long as any applications for *AFM* have been submitted within the 30-day window – that is, 30 calendar days from the date (UK GMT) at which *principals* respond to their ARR *invitation letter*. Existing, or new applications submitted for *AFM* by *principals* who have not yet entered or completed the biographics stage, or who have self-relocated out of Afghanistan, will not be progressed for entry clearance into the UK. Conventional family migration routes for those in the UK remain available.

6. The remainder of this policy statement sets out more details on the eligibility criteria for the ARR, which applied to those who were judged to be at highest risk due to the data incident, and which will continue to be applied to decide the eligibility of immediate and additional family members of those individuals. The policy relating to *AFM* has been amended to reflect the new policy on family members summarised above.
7. It is not anticipated there will be any further iterations of this policy, albeit this statement is without prejudice to any later versions of this policy statement should they come into existence.

## Policy intention

8. The ARR provides access to a route for relocation to the UK for eligible persons in response to the data incident.
9. It provides the ability for those eligible and invited *principals* to apply for their *IFM* and *AFM* to relocate to the UK.

## Background

10. The ARR is in addition to the ARAP, which had settled thousands of Afghans who have worked with the UK Government, and their families; and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS).
11. The ARAP closed to new applications on 1 July 2025. Also on 1 July 2025, UK Government confirmed there will be no further pathways, nor will it accept any further referrals, to the ACRS. Further information can be found here: [Afghan Resettlement Programme - GOV.UK](#)

## General principles

12. The ARR has a two-stage process, similar to the process for the [ARAP](#) and [ACRS](#), comprising of an *eligibility stage* and an *entry clearance stage*.
13. As a relocation route, and in line with the two-stage process, the ARR is owned by the MOD and jointly administered with the Home Office. The MOD is responsible for the *eligibility stage*, and the Home Office is responsible for the *entry clearance stage*. Cases will continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis.
14. The existence of the ARR route does not recognise an obligation, nor imply a commitment, to assist those who worked for or with the UK Government in other countries or theatres of operation, past, present or future, nor to take any action in response to an incident comparable to the data incident.

15. Whilst discretionary, the ARR should not undermine existing immigration routes.
16. The existence of the ARR should not be considered an immigration application for the purpose of entry clearance, permission to stay or settlement on any other basis, including Leave outside the Immigration Rules (LOTR). As set out in the relevant published guidance, applicants overseas who wish to be considered for LOTR under compelling and compassionate circumstances should apply on the application form for the route which most closely matches their circumstances and pay the relevant fees and charges.
17. Once in the UK, those who wish to sponsor family members who are not eligible for the ARR can consider whether they can do so under the conventional family migration routes.

## Relevant legislation

18. The ARR is a discretionary policy and confers LOTR to eligible individuals. With respect to eligibility, any reference to definitions in the Immigration Rules is for ease of reference only.

## Definitions/Terms

**Additional family members (AFM):** Family members of the *principal* and/or their spouse/partner who do not fall within the category of those defined as an *immediate family member*. Further detail on *AFM* is set out under ‘Eligibility of *additional family members (AFM)*’ on page 14-15.

**AFM applications time limit:** MOD will honour the *AFM* applications of those *principals* who have completed the biographics stage of the process, and who have been supported by the UK Government into the next stage of the relocation process, as long as any applications for *AFM* have been submitted within the 30-day window – that is, 30 calendar days from the date (UK GMT) at which *principals* respond to their *ARR invitation letter*.

**“Affected”:** A data incident impacted individual who previously applied to ARAP as a *principal* applicant<sup>1</sup>.

**“Break-glass”:** When the data incident became public knowledge on 15 July 2025.

**DARR:** The Defence Afghan Relocation and Resettlement (*DARR*) team in the Ministry of Defence.

**Date of declaration (Principals and IFM):** For the purposes of decisions relating to *Principals* and *IFM*: the *date of declaration* is considered to be one calendar day (UK GMT) after the MOD electronically issues/issued the *ARR invitation letter* to the eligible *principal*.

**Date of declaration (AFM):** For the purposes of decisions relating to *AFM*, the *date of declaration* is considered to be the same calendar day (UK GMT) on which the MOD electronically receives an *AFM* application form from the *principal*.

**Eligibility notification:** Written communication from *DARR* (normally in the form of an electronic letter) in which *principals* and/or their *IFM/AFM* are informed that they have been deemed eligible for relocation to the UK under the *ARR*. *Eligibility notification* is specific to the eligible person notified.

**Eligibility stage:** The first stage of the *ARR*, where a decision is made on whether an individual is eligible for the *ARR*. Further detail can be found on pages 17-18.

**Entry clearance stage:** The second stage of the *ARR*, where the MOD makes an application for processing entry clearance to the Home Office on behalf of an eligible *principal* and family member(s) and in their name(s). The Home Office grants an individual

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<sup>1</sup> In some instances, *affected* individuals may have been those considered under the Ex-Gratia Scheme (EGS)

entry clearance to the UK, if they are both eligible and suitable for relocation to the UK. Further detail can be found on pages 17-18.

**Existing and confirmed link to the UK Government:** Having been directly employed in Afghanistan by a UK Government department; or provided goods or services in Afghanistan under contract to a UK Government department (whether as, or on behalf of, a party to the contract); or worked in Afghanistan alongside a UK Government department, in partnership with or closely supporting and assisting that department.

**Immediate family member (IFM):** one spouse or partner of a *principal*, and the *principal's* dependent children under the age of 18. Further detail can be found on page 11-13.

**Invitation letter:** The initial written communication from *DARR* (normally in the form of an electronic letter) in which *principals* and/or their *IFM* are notified that they may be eligible for relocation to the UK under the ARR.

**High-risk countries/country of risk:** Afghanistan, or other countries where an individual faces risk of deportation to Afghanistan, or where an individual, due to the nature of the role they are linked to, may be at equivalent risk of reprisals in that country.

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**Principal:** An individual who meets the ARR eligibility criteria (paragraph 24) as a primary applicant.

## Applications in respect of those with children

19. The duty in section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 to have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK means that consideration of the child's best interests is a primary, but not the only, consideration in immigration cases.
20. Although Section 55 only applies to children in the UK, the statutory guidance, Every Child Matters - Change for Children, provides guidance on the extent to which the spirit of the duty should be applied to children overseas.

## Offer under the ARR

### Immigration status

21. Those who are relocated under the ARR will receive settled status Indefinite Leave to Enter (ILE) or Remain (ILR) in the UK, with no restriction to rights or access to benefits and services. They will be able to apply for British citizenship after 5 years in the UK under existing rules, subject to the relevant fee.

### Accommodation and integration tariff (“the resettlement offer”)

22. The Secretary of State for Defence announced the Afghan Resettlement Programme (ARP) on 18 December 2024, which brought together the existing Afghan resettlement schemes into a single, efficient pipeline, including the resettlement offer. The ARP includes the ACRS, ARR and ARAP. It went live in spring 2025. Further information can be found here: [Afghan Resettlement Programme - GOV.UK](#)

23. Under the ARP, ARR arrivals receive the same accommodation support from the MOD and package of integration support from Local Authorities, which are provided under the ARAP.

## Eligibility of Principals

24. An ARR eligible *principal* is an individual who the “**decision maker**” (see paragraphs 25-28) assessed as being at highest risk by meeting all eligibility requirements in A, B, C & D below. The “**decision maker**” can be either *DARR* or the Secretary of State for Defence, as set out in paragraphs 25-28.

A. They are an *affected* individual.

**AND**

B. They must have been positively assessed by the “**decision maker**” in accordance with the MOD’s caseworker guidance to have held, or claimed to have held **Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section**

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- i. one or more of the roles in **Addendum A**; or
- ii. one or more of the roles in **Addendum B** and where it has been determined by the “**decision maker**” that the person’s role puts them at equivalent risk to an individual with one or more of the roles in **Addendum A**; or
- iii. a different high-profile role not listed in **Addendum A** or **Addendum B**, but where it has been determined by the “**decision maker**” that they held a role which puts them at equivalent risk to those in the identified roles.

**AND**

C. They are an individual who has not previously been found eligible under either the ARAP, ACRS or any other route which provides settled status (Indefinite Leave to Enter (ILE) or Remain (ILR)) in the UK.

**AND**

D. They are considered to be, from the information available to His Majesty’s Government (HMG), in a *high-risk country*, which is defined as:

- i. Afghanistan, or countries where the eligible *principal* faced risk of deportation to Afghanistan; or

- ii. Third countries where there were UK national security concerns should that individual remain in that country; **or**

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## Decision makers

- 25. To be eligible under the ARR the applicant must have received a positive eligibility decision from the MOD.
- 26. *DARR* will act as the “**decision maker**” for ARR eligibility decisions under Condition B (i) and (ii).
- 27. The Secretary of State for Defence will act as the “**decision maker**” for ARR eligibility decisions, on a case-by-case basis, under Condition B (iii).
- 28. Further detail to support “**decision makers**” on *principals* can be found in the relevant *DARR* caseworker guidance.

## Eligibility of immediate family members (IFM)

29. *IFM* are considered as one spouse or partner of a *principal*, and dependent children under the age of 18 as set out in paragraph 39 below.
30. For the purpose of decisions relating to family members, the *date of declaration*, as set out under *Definitions/Terms*, applies (page 5).

### Spouse or partner

31. *Eligibility* will in any circumstance be considered in line with [partners, divorce, and dissolution guidance](#).
32. The following must apply for consideration of a spouse or partner:
- A person being considered eligible must be the spouse or partner of an *eligible principal* under the ARR;
  - A spouse or partner of that *principal* must meet the requirements set out in [Appendix Relationship with a Partner](#);
  - They must have been at least 18 years of age on the *date of declaration*;
  - If the *eligible principal* has more than one spouse or partner, including where the *principal* is in a polygamous or polyandrous marriage, only one spouse or partner can be found eligible and granted entry clearance under the ARR.

### Divorces and polygamous marriages

33. Eligibility for a spouse or partner, particularly where there are concerns about divorce, polygamous or polyandrous marriages, will be assessed in line with the [Partners, divorce and dissolution guidance](#).
34. A divorced or separated ex-spouse or partner of an ARR-eligible *principal* cannot be found eligible as either an *IFM* or *AFM* of that *principal*.
35. A divorced or separated ex-spouse or partner of an ARR-eligible *IFM* or *AFM* cannot be found eligible as an *AFM* of the ARR-eligible *principal*.

### Under 18 spouses/partners

36. A person cannot be found eligible under the ARR as a spouse or partner (of any person) if they are under the age of 18 at the relevant *date of declaration*.

37. A marriage or civil partnership that is lawfully contracted before the age of 18 overseas can only be taken into account for entry clearance or settlement in the UK as a partner once the eligible *principal or family member* and their spouse or partner are both 18 or older. A marriage which was contracted when one or both partners was aged under 18 is recognised once both partners are over 18, if:
- a. the marriage was valid in the country it took place; and
  - b. both parties to the marriage had the legal capacity under the law of their domicile to marry each other or enter into a civil partnership.
38. *Principals* who wish to sponsor a spouse or partner where the spouse is now over the age of 18, but who had not been found eligible for the ARR because they were under 18 at the *date of declaration*, can consider whether they can do so under other relevant immigration routes.

### Dependent child under 18

39. To be considered as an eligible dependent child aged under 18, the child must meet the following conditions. They:
- a. must be under 18 on the *date of declaration* **and**
  - b. must not be leading an independent life; **and**
  - c. must not be married nor in a durable relationship; **and**
  - d. must not have formed an independent family unit; **and**
  - e. must be the child of the *principal* **and** the child's other parent is the *principal's* spouse or partner who is relocating under the ARR, unless one of the following applies:
    - i. the child is that of the *principal*: **and**
      - (a) the child's other parent is deceased; **or**
      - (b) the *principal* has sole parental responsibility for the child's upbringing;

**OR**

  - ii. the child is the child of the *principal's* spouse or partner: **and**
    - (a) the child's other parent is deceased; **or**
    - (b) the *principal's* spouse/partner has sole parental responsibility for the child's upbringing;
- OR**
- iii. the child is not the biological child of either, but the “**decision maker**” is satisfied there has been a genuine transfer of parental responsibility to:
  - (a) The *principal*; **and/or**
  - (b) The spouse/partner of the *principal*; **and**
  - (c) Both of the child's natural parents are deceased.

40. Cases under iii. (above) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The *principal* must produce sufficient evidence to satisfy the caseworker that circumstances are met. Information on sole parental responsibility can be found under [Appendix Children](#).
41. When determining eligibility decisions of dependent children who have turned 18 since the *principal's* original ARAP or Ex-Gratia Scheme (EGS) application, a “**decision maker**” had the discretion to, on a case-by-case basis, consider the date of original ARAP or EGS application as the *date of the declaration* (see Definitions/Terms at page 5). This is to ensure mitigation against *break-glass*. See pre *break-glass* considerations at page 20.

### Newborns

42. Any newborn born after an *invitation letter* had been issued can be considered for ARR eligibility on a case-by-case discretionary basis by *DARR*. All individuals require a positive eligibility decision from *DARR* and individual entry clearance applications to the Home Office.

### Adopted children

43. Adoption or guardianship arrangements for children in Afghanistan has no legal validity in the UK. Eligibility will be assessed in line with [Appendix Adoption](#) of the Immigration Rules. Arrangements of a sole parental responsibility are considered above at paragraph 39.

### Related external links:

[Appendix FM - GOV.UK](#)

[Partners, divorce and dissolution guidance](#)

[Appendix Adoption - GOV.UK](#)

[Appendix Children - GOV.UK](#)

## Eligibility of additional family members (AFM)

44. *AFM* of eligible *principals* who have completed the biographic stage of the process and who have been supported by the UK Government into the next stage of the relocation process will continue to be progressed for entry into the UK.
45. Those *AFM* who have received an offer letter, but the principal has not as of 4 July completed the biographic stage, will not be progressed for entry clearance into the UK. However, there may be instances whereby such an individual may still be found eligible for the ARAP. In these instances, the MOD will consider their *AFM* application in line with the ARAP *AFM* immigration rules.
46. Those *AFM* who have a decision pending and whose principal has not completed the biographic stage, or whose principal has not yet been supported by the UK Government into the next stage of the relocation process, will not be progressed for entry into the UK.
47. For those *AFM* who have a decision pending and whose principal has completed the biographic stage, and who have been supported by the UK Government into the next stage of the relocation process, these applications will be considered on the basis of the criteria at paragraph 48 a - f.
48. Eligible *principals* who have completed the biographic stage and who have been supported by the UK Government into the next stage of the relocation process, and who are still in the 30-day window to submit an *AFM* application, can do so provided the following applies:
  - a. The individual must be an *AFM* of an eligible *principal* and/or their eligible spouse or partner under the ARR; **and**
  - b. The *AFM* cannot be an additional spouse or partner of the *principal* where one spouse/partner has already been found eligible for the ARR, nor is already in the UK under any provision as a spouse or partner; **and**
  - c. The *AFM* cannot be an additional spouse or partner of the *IFM* spouse or partner who is relocating to the UK with the principal through the ARR; **and**
  - d. The *AFM* cannot be a former spouse or former partner of the *principal*, or of a former spouse or partner of the *principal's IFM* or of another *AFM*; **and**
  - e. Their *principal* must have completed the biographics stage, and been supported by the UK Government into the next stage of the relocation process, before 4 July 2025; **and**
  - f. The *AFM*
    - i. as a result of the eligible principal's eligibility under the now closed ARR scheme, the applicant must be at **current** elevated risk of

targeted attacks, specific threats or intimidation, putting them at high risk of death or serious injury **or**

- ii. must face specific vulnerabilities which have led to an exceptional level of family dependence, and would be unable, even with the practical and financial help of the eligible *principal* or their spouse/partner, to obtain the required level of care outside the UK either because it is not available, and there is no other person who can reasonably provide it, or because it is not affordable.

49. Children under 18 may be found eligible as *AFM* if they meet the criteria at paragraph 48 and the following additional criteria:

- a. The child must be found eligible alongside an eligible *AFM* who holds existing parental responsibility and decision-making role(s) for the child; **and**
- b. Both of the child's natural parents are found eligible alongside the child and have also both been found as *AFM* eligible; **or**
- c. One of the child's natural parents is found eligible alongside the child, had been found as *AFM* eligible with them, and the other natural parent is deceased; **or**
- d. One of the child's natural parents is found eligible alongside the child, has also been found as *AFM* eligible with them and has parental sole responsibility for the child's upbringing; **or**
- e. The child's natural parents are both deceased.

50. Children who meet the criteria outlined in paragraphs 39-41, including de facto adopted children of the *principal*, should only be found eligible as *IFM*.

## Family member access to the ARR

### Deceased principals

51. Bereaved family members will be considered under the ARR on a discretionary, case-by-case basis, if the *principal* had died and the following circumstances apply:

- a. It must be demonstrated that the *principal* is deceased; **and**
- b. It must be demonstrated that the family members are related as claimed and are eligible for the ARR;

**AND**

- c. The *principal* confirmed their intention to take up their offer of relocation under the ARR before they died, and the eligible *IFM* were included in their *principal's* initial response to their *invitation letter* under the ARR (for *IFM*). Eligible *AFM* will also be considered for relocation if the *principal* had applied for their relocation and they had been granted their visas, even if the principal had consequently died.

## Process for the ARR

52. The ARR comprises of a two-stage process.

### Stage 1: Eligibility

53. *Principal*: To be deemed as an *principal* for the ARR, an individual must be found eligible by the “**decision maker**” against requirements A-D in paragraph 24.

54. *IFM*: To be deemed eligible for the ARR, an *IFM* must be found eligible by the “**decision maker**” against the conditions in paragraphs 29-43 above.

55. *AFM*: To be deemed eligible for the ARR, an *AFM* must be found eligible by the “**decision maker**” against the conditions in paragraphs 44-50 above.

### Relocation of minors

56. Any eligible children under the age of 18, who meet the criteria as an *IFM* or *AFM*, must travel at the same time as one or both of their eligible parents. Children under 18 will not be relocated if unaccompanied. This is not a relevant factor in their eligibility consideration.

### Stage 2: Entry clearance

57. The MOD will submit an application for entry clearance to the Home Office on behalf of eligible *principals* and their eligible *IFM* and/or *AFM*. The MOD must submit the application to the Home Office as soon as is practicable by the MOD, and no later than 12 months after the *eligibility notification* is sent.

58. All *principals* must submit their biometric data, as well as their eligible family members', in line with the [Biometric Information: Enrolment guidance](#) at a Visa Application Centre (VAC) to support their entry clearance applications for relocation to the UK under the ARR.

59. Following the submission of biometrics, the Home Office will process entry clearance applications. To ensure compliance with entry clearance requirements, the Home Office reserves the right to seek clarity to enable robust eligibility decisions including (but not limited to) identity, relationship and age matters.

60. Suitability requirements apply to all routes and must be met in addition to validity and eligibility requirements. This includes Part 9: Grounds for Refusal of the Immigration Rules. Only those who successfully complete the entry clearance process will be granted entry clearance.

61. Cases where biometrics, security and other checks reveal adverse information will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, with reference to published policy which considers

an individual's suitability for being granted UK entry clearance. Government departments, including the MOD and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), may have information on caseworking and other systems that is relevant to entry clearance considerations including on suitability for entry clearance, particularly given the two-stage process. For best practice, wherever possible, these should be communicated to the Home Office at the point of the entry clearance application by the MOD to support suitability considerations.

62. If a principal is found to meet the [non-conductive grounds for refusal or cancellation of entry clearance](#), their application will fall for refusal. In such cases, the application will fail suitability checks and the principal will be refused entry clearance. As all *IFM* and *AFM* applications are reliant on their relation to an eligible ARR principal, they too would fall for refusal on validity grounds, unless exceptional circumstances apply. All cases will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and the Home Office reserves the right to determine the final outcome of any entry clearance application.
63. Additionally, the Home Office may seek further information from the *principal*, any family members, or the MOD or other government departments for entry clearance, including, but not limited to, matters covered by Part 9: Grounds for Refusal of the Immigration Rules.

## Third country support

64. The MOD have overall responsibility for the eligibility and operationalisation of this route, including assistance with the relocation of individuals to the UK via third countries. *Principals* in *high-risk countries* who have accepted an offer of relocation through the ARR may be able to access support provided by or on behalf of HMG. However, *principals* should not directly contact the Embassy, High Commission or any third party organisations. These individuals may be offered support only once initial biographical checks have been completed successfully, and once the Embassy, High Commission or a third party organisation has been notified by the MOD. Accommodation and/or other support may then be provided if appropriate and at HMG discretion.
65. Where an individual is subsequently refused entry clearance to the UK, or where they decide they no longer wish to be relocated in the UK, or want to delay their move, accommodation and other support will be terminated. Accommodation and other support will be terminated at the point when the individual notifies HMG that they no longer wish to be relocated or want to delay their move. Accommodation and other support may also be withdrawn where an eligible individual fails to comply with the procedures necessary for relocation or in other circumstances at HMG's discretion.

66. The third country support offer is in line with the ARAP offer, published on GOV.UK and may be subject to change.

## Evidential requirements and timelines

67. Individuals must respond to an *invitation letter* and, if they wish to be relocated, provide details of all *IFM* they wish to be considered for relocation under the ARR no later than 30 calendar days from the date (UK GMT) at which they were sent an ARR *invitation letter*. The policy for access to apply to bring *AFM* is set out in paragraphs 5, and 44-50.

68. Where an individual does not respond to the *invitation letter* within 30 calendar days, their invitation will not be progressed further. The “**decision maker**” will consider whether a response to an invitation offer beyond this period can be progressed where exceptional circumstances apply, and where evidence of the circumstances is provided.

69. It is the *principal's* responsibility (and where this is not possible, their family members') to provide sufficient evidence to show they are related as claimed to their *IFM* and *AFM*. Where sufficient evidence to prove the claimed relationship has not been provided, or where there are concerns about any documentary evidence previously submitted, further information may be requested. Applicants have 14 calendar days from the date (UK GMT) from which they are sent a Request for Information (RFI) to respond. If the applicant does not respond to the first RFI, a caseworker or “**decision maker**” will send up to two further requests to respond to the RFI, each with a 14-day limit.

70. The “**decision maker**” will assess the eligibility of *IFM and AFM* using the information and evidence provided, as well as any further information available to HMG.

## Pre “*break-glass*” considerations

71. “*Break-glass*” is the term used to describe the moment of the lifting of the super injunction. Pre “*break-glass*”, UK Government made best endeavours to mitigate against the risk of “*break-glass*” due to the potential risks deemed to be in play at that time. This including the policy and process of the ARR mirroring ARAP as closely as possible. The ARR included mitigations intended to minimise the risk that operationalising this route could have on breaking the glass.

## ARR invitation letters & ARAP offer letters

72. *Invitation letters* issued under the ARR have been drafted to mirror the ARAP and therefore provide the same links to Appendix ARAP of the Immigration Rules. This will have assisted those *principals* who have already submitted Family Member applications to ensure consistency with the ARAP letter as much as possible, while also ensuring applicants can refer to published policy to assist them in their applications. However, all ARR *IFM* and *AFM* applications have been assessed against the criteria in this and previous iterations of ARR policy statement, which has necessary deviations from the *IFM* and *AFM* policy set out in Appendix ARAP.

73. There may also be instances whereby an individual has already been sent an *invitation letter* under the ARR, but they are expected to be found eligible for the ARAP. In these instances, the MOD can consider their ARR *AFM* application on the basis of risk as well as dependency as set out in the ARAP *AFM* immigration rules.

74. Some of those in scope of the ARR will also have had ARAP reviews pending. This includes those being reviewed as part of the ‘Triples Review’ announced on 1 February 2024 and Phase 2 announced on 16 May 2025. All individuals who are in scope of the ‘Triples Review’, and who were eligible for either ARAP or ARR, were offered access to a route for relocation to the UK as soon as it was practicable, and whichever route was determined first. For those who have received an *invitation letter* under the ARR and who have then been deemed eligible for ARAP, their ARAP *eligibility notification* was withheld “pre *break-glass*” in order to mitigate against the risks of “*breaking-glass*”. All such *principals* will now receive this confirmation and they and their family members will be progressed under the ARAP.

## Right to Review

75. The ARR is a discretionary policy and not set out in the Immigration Rules. It has operated on an invitation-only basis and does not carry a 'Right to Review' for *principals* or *IFM*.
76. The 'Right to Review' for *AFM*, however, mirrors the ARAP processes. Where the "**decision maker**" makes an ineligibility decision for an *AFM* under the ARR, there is a right to seek one review of the decision if:
- a. the *principal* believes the decision was not made in accordance with the policy; and/or
  - b. The *principal* can supply new evidence to support their case that was not available when the decision was made.
77. Those *principals* whose *AFM* are deemed ineligible and receive an outcome letter advising them of this may seek a review of the decision within 90 calendar days of receipt of that letter, save for where there are compelling circumstances which have prevented them from meeting this deadline and which they provide evidence for.
78. Upon receipt of a review application, the MOD may make an RFI. Applicants have 42 calendar days to respond to an RFI. This is composed of 14 days to respond to the RFI. If the applicant does not respond to the first RFI, a caseworker will send up to two chasers, each with a 14-day limit. Failure to respond to this RFI within this timeframe will result in the application being assessed using only the information already held.

## History of Afghan relocation and resettlement schemes

79. The UK has a proud record of providing protection for people who need it, in accordance with our obligations under the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights. However, there is no provision within our Immigration Rules for someone to apply to come to the UK to seek asylum, temporary refuge, or humanitarian protection. Whilst we acknowledge the complex situation in Afghanistan, the UK is not required to consider asylum or protection claims from the very large numbers of people overseas who may wish to come here. Those who need international protection should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach – that is the fastest route to safety.

### Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)

80. The ARAP scheme was launched on 1 April 2021 and provided relocation or other assistance to Afghan nationals who worked for or alongside UK forces in support of the UK's mission in Afghanistan in meaningful roles.

81. The ARAP closed for new principal applications on 1 July 2025. Further information on the route and its closure can be found [here](#).

### Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)

82. The ACRS was designed to support those who have assisted UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for UK values, as well as vulnerable people, including members of minority groups at risk. On 1 July 2025, the government announced that there will be no further pathways nor accept any further referrals to the ACRS.

83. Eligible people were prioritised and referred for resettlement to the UK through one of 3 referral pathways:

- a. Under Pathway 1, vulnerable and at-risk individuals who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme have been the first to be settled under the ACRS. Eligible people who were notified by the UK Government that they had been called forward with assurance of evacuation, but were not able to board flights, and do not hold leave in a country considered safe by the UK, are also eligible under Pathway 1.
- b. Under Pathway 1 Stage 2: Separated Families, the pathway for the immediate family members of people who were evacuated from Afghanistan and were subsequently granted indefinite leave to remain under Pathway 1 of the ACRS, opened on 30 July 2024. Those who are resettled in the UK under ACRS Pathway 1 and were evacuated during Operation PITTING

without their immediate family members were able to make a referral under this pathway. This pathway closed on 30 October 2024.

- c. Under Pathway 2, we received referrals from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) of vulnerable refugees who have fled Afghanistan for resettlement to the UK. UNHCR has the global mandate to provide international protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees. UNHCR referred individuals in accordance with their standard resettlement submission criteria, which was based on an assessment of protection needs and vulnerabilities.
- d. Pathway 3 was designed to offer a route to resettlement for those at risk who supported the UK and international community effort in Afghanistan, as well as those who are particularly vulnerable, such as women and girls at risk and members of minority groups. In the first stage of this pathway, the government has considered eligible, at-risk people for resettlement from three groups: British Council contractors; GardaWorld contractors and Chevening alumni. Further information on the ACRS is available [here](#).

### Additional routes

- 84. Should people wish to join family members here, for work or study, they would need to meet the requirements of the relevant Immigration Rules under which they were applying to qualify for a visa and meet the requirements to provide any biometrics and pay any relevant fee (or obtain the necessary waiver).
- 85. Details about the criteria and how to apply are available on the [GOV.UK website - Apply to come to the UK](#).