

Extra healthcare and housing support for those arriving from Afghanistan

- First dose of COVID-19 vaccine will be offered to everyone arriving from Afghanistan
- Rapid access to support for mental wellbeing

Additional healthcare provision, access to COVID-19 vaccinations and funding for housing will be provided to support Afghans coming to the UK via the Afghanistan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme.

Councils in England, Scotland and Wales will have access to a share of £5 million to help them provide the necessary housing and support to Afghans who have worked for this country in Afghanistan, but who now face threats of persecution or worse.

The Afghan LES (Locally Employed Staff) Housing Costs Fund will provide a top up to help councils meet the costs of renting properties for those that need it, including larger homes for families. This will help give councils the security to make a firm offer of support to take people into their communities and help them build a new life.

So far the UK has secured the evacuation of 1,615 people since Saturday, including 399 British Nationals and their dependants, 320 embassy staff, and 402 Afghan nationals under ARAP. The UK is doubling the amount of humanitarian aid to the region, up to £286 million with immediate effect, and our new bespoke resettlement scheme will be one of the most generous in British history, set to relocate up to 20,000 vulnerable Afghans.

As President of the G7 the UK is working to unite the international community behind a clear plan for dealing with this regime and we are asking our international partners to match our commitments and work with us to offer a lifeline to Afghanistan's most vulnerable people.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Our immediate focus is to evacuate the Afghans who risked their lives supporting us over the past twenty years and to whom we owe so much.

We are proud to bring them to the UK, and this additional support will help make sure that those arriving from Afghanistan receive the housing and healthcare that they need as they start to build a new life here.

We will do everything we can in the days, weeks and months ahead to

protect the most vulnerable, which is why we're doubling our humanitarian aid to the region and setting up a new bespoke resettlement scheme to give up to 20,000 of those most in need of refuge here in the UK.

Additional healthcare provision has also been put in place. All those who have fled Afghanistan are also being offered the COVID-19 vaccine on arrival, if they haven't received one already, and will be issued with a vaccine card.

New vaccination points will also be set up at each managed quarantine hotel and those arriving will be invited to get their jab after they have received a negative Day 2 PCR test. Enhanced healthcare support to Afghan refugees will also include:

- Doubling our medical provision to ensure everyone can access medical support 24/7;
- Providing rapid access to support for mental well-being in the wake of experiencing trauma;
- Reuniting family members who arrive on different flights where possible;
- Allowing people to stay in large family groups in quarantine for comfort and support;
- Providing regular information check-ins with local services to prepare refugees for resettlement with additional translators to support engagement with the services being provided;
- Providing toys to keep children entertained; and
- Giving appropriate clothes for people who may have left Afghanistan with very little.

This is on top of the robust health and wellbeing support already in place at managed quarantine hotels. As part of existing support, those entering quarantine hotels from Afghanistan will also have access to:

- Medical support to ensure all evacuees undergo a health check;
- 24/7 on-site medical team;
- Care links to local care providers where needed;
- Access to both female and male health professionals; and
- Daily health and wellbeing checks, either through doctors safely visiting hotel rooms or through a guest telephone calling system, with all call handlers speaking both Pushto and Dari.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

In response to this unfolding tragedy, we are committed to ensuring those who are being resettled here in the UK under our Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy have our full support.

As Health Secretary, my focus is on the health and wellbeing of families from the moment they touch down in the UK. I was very pleased today to be able to meet one such family who arrived

recently and learn from their experience of the healthcare we have provided so far.

We are boosting our health and wellbeing services to evacuees during their 10 day quarantine. This includes giving everyone a first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, if they have not already received one, doubling our medical provision to ensure everyone can access support round the clock and reuniting families who arrive on different flights where we can.

Local Government Secretary Robert Jenrick said:

There is already an enormous effort underway to support those arriving from Afghanistan with close to a third of councils already stepping up to support new arrivals.

However, we urgently need more offers of support to welcome Afghan families who have stood shoulder to shoulder with the UK, serving our troops and our country so bravely in recent years.

With this extra support in place, I'm calling on all councils who have not yet come forward, to contact us with a firm offer of support to help our Afghan friends and their families as they build a new life in safety here.

The ARAP scheme launched on 01 April 2021. Under the scheme, any current or former Locally Employed Staff who worked in Afghanistan for the UK Embassy assessed to be at serious risk of threat to life are offered priority relocation to the UK regardless of their employment status, rank or role, or length of time served.

Thanks to the efforts of over a quarter of councils across the UK and vital delivery partners, hundreds of Afghan nationals who have worked alongside British forces and diplomats in Afghanistan have already been welcomed by councils across the country.

This work is happening at pace and, with many more Afghan families set to arrive, there is still more to do to ensure we are supporting new arrivals as best we can.

Earlier this week, the government set out its ambition for the new Afghanistan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme – a new plan to resettle 5,000 Afghan nationals in its first year, with priority given to those most in need due to the current crisis – including women and girls, and religious and other minorities, who are most at risk of human rights abuses and

dehumanising treatment.

This resettlement scheme will be kept under further review for future years, with up to a total of 20,000 people potentially eligible in the long-term. The ambition to provide protection to thousands of people fleeing Afghanistan and the complex picture on the ground means there will be significant challenges in delivering the scheme, but the government is committed to doing all it can for those who need our support and is working at great speed to address these obstacles.