

Extracts from Full Report

Voice of the Afghan Community: a Focus Group Discussion

The Afghan Pro Bono Initiative's (APBI) new report, "[Still Waiting: The Afghans Abandoned by the UK](#)", highlighted the lived experience of resettled Afghans in the UK. In June 2024, APBI hosted a focus group with stakeholders, which included Afghan nationals who are participants in the various resettlement schemes discussed in this report. We wanted to listen to their experiences and suggestions. They highlighted critical issues with the way the resettlement schemes have been implemented.

Lack of Clear Pathway for Family Reunification

There is no established single pathway for family reunion for Afghans resettled in the UK, leading to confusion about eligibility criteria and delays in the resettlement process. Delays of up to, in some cases, two years have resulted in tragic outcomes, such as the death of family members in Afghanistan.

Legal System Barriers

Afghans face significant barriers in navigating the UK legal system due to a lack of clarity of their legal rights, inadequate translation services, and confusion regarding their legal status. This leads to misconceptions that hinder their access to necessary legal support which increases their vulnerability.

Lack of Adequate Health and Social Care Support

Domestic violence and substance misuse were particularly highlighted during the discussion. The lack of adequate health and social care support means that Afghans in need of specialist support on these issues are left to cope on their own, making it harder for them to feel included in society.

In its new report, APBI has suggested practical solutions for the issues raised in the focus group discussion. We hope these suggestions will influence the policy landscape. The Afghan community sits at the heart of the work that APBI does and we will continue to amplify their voices going forward. Scan the QR Code below to access the full report or click [here](#).



Local labourers in an old bazar. Kabul, Afghanistan (2023).
Photo Credit: ©Kayhan.

“There has also been confusion for some Afghans over their legal status in the UK. Afghans resettled under ACRS or ARAP receive biometric residence permits (BRPs). The Focus Group recited anecdotes of Afghans receiving various iterations of BRPs, initially denoting their status as ILR under ARAP, but then these BRPs were subsequently cancelled by the Home Office and reissued as ILR under ACRS. For some people, this process of cancellation and reissue occurred on several occasions. This categorisation makes a real difference as Afghans with ARAP ILR status have greater rights in relation to family reunion than those with ACRS ILR status. This has led to a strong sense of injustice amongst Afghans who have experienced this, because they said it feels like their rights have been stripped away.” (pg38 of the Report)

APBI Case Study

Feroza (*not their real name*), then-twelve years old, was separated from her parents and siblings when she was evacuated out of Afghanistan under ACRS during Operation Pitting. She arrived in the UK as an unaccompanied minor and sought reunification with her family. There was subsequently a huge delay in getting her mother over, and her father tragically died while still in Afghanistan.

Subscribe to
APBI Newsletter



Read the full report



Follow Our Service

RLS: www.refugeelegalsupport.org

SPI: www.safepassage.org.uk



Men in the street. Pol Sokhta, Kabul, Afghanistan (2023). Photo Credit: ©Kayhan.