

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Safe Routes for Afghans to the UK

FAQs: Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)

The ARAP scheme is open for applications.

There is an online application form available: [please click here](#).

You can find further information on the ARAP scheme on APBI ARAP Self Help Guide [here](#).

Question 1:

How long is the ARAP scheme open for?

The ARAP scheme has no closure date. Current guidance says it will remain [open](#) for the foreseeable future.

Question 2:

I do not live in Afghanistan, can I still apply for ARAP?

Yes, you can apply for ARAP outside of Afghanistan.

Question 3:

I was an interpreter with the British Army in Afghanistan. How can I apply for the resettlement schemes for Afghans in the UK?

The ARAP scheme is for those:

- who were directly employed by the UK government; or
- who worked very closely alongside a government department in achieving the UK government military or national security objectives
and are at serious direct risk due to their work with the UK government.

Interpreters under contract for the British Army or directly employed by them are eligible to apply

under the ARAP scheme.

Provide as much evidence as possible of employment by the British army and any details about threats or risk resulting from this.

Question 4:

I have a reference number / pending application for the ARAP scheme, how can I follow up on my case with the UK government?

If you have questions on your existing ARAP application, contact this email: ARAP-Casework@mod.gov.uk. Include the following information:

- reference number;
- any local staff number;
- your date of birth; and
- your full name.

To make a new application under the ARAP, there is an online form to fill in: [please click here](#).

Question 5:

I have lost my documents, can I still submit an ARAP application?

Yes, you can either do the following:

- Submit a “Subject Access Request” to the UK Government department that you used to work and request a copy of any documents; and/or
- Use your Local Staff Number in your ARAP application.

Question 6:

How do I submit a “Subject Access Request” (SAR)?

If you worked with the Ministry of Defence, you can find the form [here](#).

Other government agencies may have a different process for SAR; if you have not worked with the MOD or the FCDO, we recommend you search in the individual webpages of the government agency you worked with for the specific SAR process.

Question 7:

My ARAP application was refused, can I request a review of the application?

If the application has been rejected on eligibility grounds, you can request a review within 90 days from when the letter was issued via the “request a review” [form](#).

If you have compelling new evidence that you did not submit in the initial application, then you can add it when requesting a review.

Question 8:

I have received a refusal of my ARAP review, what can I do?

In exceptional circumstances you can request a further review if you have compelling new evidence that was not available at either the initial application, or when the review was undertaken. This does not guarantee a right to a further review as applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. You will need to email: ARAP-Casework@mod.gov.uk.

Question 9:

As an ARAP applicant, can I apply for my partner and children under 18 years old to reunite with me in the UK?

All family members should be included in your application to relocate. If they are not, they cannot be considered under the ARAP scheme. If you did not list them and you have not received an outcome, you urgently email: ARAP-Casework@mod.gov.uk with the following information:

- details of your application; and
- naming the family members.

Additional family members may be considered in exceptional circumstances under the ARAP scheme. The ARAP self help guide (listed above) has details on how they may be eligible. .

Question 10:

I was evacuated under the ARAP scheme and have an Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) / ALES settlement. I left my adult family members behind (elderly mother/father, adult brother/sister and their families) ; how can they apply to join me in the UK?

Once ILR has been granted, the family members cannot apply under ARAP. They will have to make an application directly to the Home Office to join their family in the UK. Further details can be found [here](#).

Question 11:

My organisation was a contractor with DFID, am I eligible to apply for ARAP?

You would need to show that:

- You were directly working for or contracted by for the UK government; **and**
- your work made a substantive and positive contribution to the UK's military and national security objectives; **and**
- you are at direct risk because of this or you hold information due to this work that puts you at risk.

All three requirements must be met.

For further details, see the [guidance on category 4](#) (special case-by-case basis). People

applying under category 4 need very strong evidence.

To access the form used to make an ARAP application please click [here](#).

Question 12

I have worked for an international organisation/the UN/international non-governmental organisation in Afghanistan, can I apply for ARAP?

Please see answer to **Question 11**.

Question 13:

I worked with Afghanistan's previous government fighting against corruption, am I eligible to apply for settlement under the ARAP scheme?

Being employed by an Afghan government department in itself will not be enough to apply for ARAP. In order to fit into category 4, it will need to be shown that:

- you worked closely alongside a UK government department and that the role meant that the work or provision of services made a substantive and positive contribution to the UK's military or national security objectives; **and**
- you are at risk or danger because of the role.

Question 14:

I worked for the Afghanistan Government in counter-corruption, terrorism, and/or narcotics; am I eligible to apply for resettlement under ARAP scheme?

Please see answer to **Question 13**.

ARAP Question 15:

Is there any scheme supporting Afghan female judges?

There is no specific scheme for this. It might be possible for a judge to apply under ARAP but only if they met the narrow criteria of the scheme - this is unlikely in most cases.

FAQs: Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)

General Information

This scheme launched on 06 January 2022. It is a referral only scheme - there is no application process.

There are [three main](#) pathways for referrals for ACRS:

- **Pathway 1** - People identified under "Operation Pitting" i.e., those who were evacuated by the UK Government from Afghanistan in summer 2021, and those individuals who were called forward, but could not board the flights.
- **Pathway 2** – People referred by the UNHCR who are refugees in neighbouring countries, i.e., those who fled from Afghanistan to refugee camps in neighbouring countries.
- **Pathway 3** – those at risk who supported the UK and international community efforts in Afghanistan and those who are particularly vulnerable. The first stage covered the British Council, GardaWorld contractors, and Chevening alumni.

ACRS ILR means indefinite leave to remain under the ACRS.

Question 16:

I want to bring my family under the ACRS Pathway 1 - Separated Families, what should I do?

On the 30th of July, the UK Government opened a new route for separated Afghan families under the [ACRS Pathway 1 Stage 2](#). The pathway was **closed** at 3pm on the 30th of October 2024. If for any reasons you feel you are eligible but could not submit your application on time, please contact acrsp1separatedfamiliesinforequests@homeoffice.gov.uk and explain the reasons that you missed the deadline.

Question 17:

Can I complete the form without my BRP or UAN?

You will not be able to access the ACRS Sponsor Referral Form without your BRP number. If you cannot find it/do not have it, please email the Home Office for help on ACRSP1SeparatedFamiliesInfoRequests@homeoffice.gov.uk.

Question 18:

The ACRS Sponsor Referral Form is giving the error 'details not found' when I try to start the form even though I have ACRS status. What should I do?

There have been reports that some sponsors have not been able to access the ACRS Sponsor Referral Form online even though they have an eligible BRP number. If so, please contact ACRSP1SeparatedFamiliesInfoRequests@homeoffice.gov.uk and explain that you are having difficulties accessing the referral form.

Question 19:

How long does it take to get a response regarding my application?

The Home Office has not provided a specific timeline for reviewing applications.

Question 20:

Do my family need to book a VAC appointment in advance?

There is no need to book a VAC appointment in advance.

Question 21:

Can my family have an exemption from travelling to the VAC?

There is no guidance on exemptions from travelling to VACs. The Home Office has said that applicants must enrol their biometrics at a VAC in a third country and that once accepted as eligible, applicants must arrange their own travel to that third country. Once in the third country, the International organisation for Migration (IOM) will assist with providing accommodation while biometrics and health checks are arranged and will arrange onward travel to the UK.

It is not recommended that an exemption from travelling to a VAC is sought as it may delay the process. However, if there is no way that family member(s) can travel to the VAC then they should contact the Home Office and give reasons why it is not possible for them to make the journey at ACRSP1SeparatedFamiliesInfoRequests@homeoffice.gov.uk.

Question 22:

What should I do if my application was refused by the Home Office?

The refusal letter will explain whether you have a right of review of the decision. If you have a right of review, the request for review should be submitted within 14 days. It is wise to seek legal advice if you receive an ineligible decision. An immigration advisor will be able to advise you on the best course of action regarding your specific circumstances.

Question 23:

I have ACRS ILR. How can my partner who was left behind join me in the UK ?

Spouses and partners are eligible to be resettled under ACRS with the main applicant. However, if your partner was not relocated with you, then you would need to seek separate legal advice on the best way for them to apply to join you.

Question 24:

I have ACRS ILR, can I fill a new application for my parents and siblings who are over 18 years old?

There is no application for this situation.

Only in exceptional/rare circumstances, would it be possible for parents and siblings who are over 18 years old to be resettled under ACRS. Please look to the family reunion

section for details of how to apply for any extended family members.

Question 25:

I am a civil rights / women's rights activist, what route is there for me?

This would be coming under Pathway 3, but the expression of interest is currently closed.

Question 26:

How are 'exceptionally compelling circumstances' in the scheme being interpreted under Pathway 3 of the ACRS?

Very little guidance has been provided on what 'exceptionally compelling circumstances' means. It is likely that it is a heightened threshold.

Question 27:

I am a British citizen, when I was in Afghanistan, I received a call from FCDO for taking my family's passport details and still I haven't heard anything since then.

Please fill in an enquiry form which can be found [here](#).

Question 28:

I am a journalist and have worked with the press, what route is there for me?

A journalist may be considered as falling within the group of those who have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for values such as democracy/freedom of speech. As the ACRS is referral only, it is not possible to make an application.

Question 29:

How can I get a referral from the UNHCR for Pathway 2 of the ACRS?

Citizens of Afghanistan can only be referred on to the ACRS Pathway 2 if they are outside of Afghanistan.

To increase the chances of a referral onto the ACRS by the UNHCR, you should register with the UNHCR in the country you are currently in. A list of UNHCR resources in most countries is available online: [please click here](#).

Once you have registered, the UNHCR will consider your status by reference to its resettlement submission categories: [please click here](#).

You cannot apply to be referred onto the scheme. After you have registered, it is up to the UNHCR whether it refers you onwards.

FAQs: Family Reunion

Question 30:

I have a Refugee ILR. Can I sponsor my extended family members who are under 18?

It is possible to sponsor extended family members who are minors (under 18) under Appendix CNP of the Rules. Further information can be found [here](#).

Question 31:

I have a Refugee ILR. Can I sponsor my children who are over 18?

If you have Refugee ILR, it will be possible under FRP 6.2 of the Rules to sponsor adult children (over 18) to join you where there are "exceptional circumstances". Further information can be found [here](#).

If your Indefinite Leave to Remain is not as a refugee or is under ACRS, we suggest that you obtain legal advice on the best way to make such an application based on your individual circumstances.

Question 32:

I have a Refugee ILR. Can I sponsor my extended family members who are over 18?

Under Appendix FM, it is no longer possible to make an application for adult dependent relatives.

Question 33:

I have a Refugee ILR. Can I sponsor adult family relatives who are dependent on me?

Yes, you can apply for an adult dependent relative (family visa) under Appendix ADR. Further information can be found [here](#).

Question 34:

I am a refugee in the UK, can I sponsor my elderly parents from Afghanistan?

Please look at the answer to **Question 33**.

Question 35:

I am a British citizen, can I sponsor my extended family members (adult siblings, elderly parents, cousins etc.)?

Please look at the answer to **Question 33**.

Question 36:

I have a Refugee ILR, can I sponsor my spouse who I met after I left Afghanistan?

If you met your partner after you left, then you cannot use the refugee family reunion route. However, you can sponsor your partner under Appendix FM of the Rules to come to the UK. You can also apply under Appendix FM if you have ILR or are a British citizen. The requirements can be found [here](#).

Question 37:

I am a British citizen, can I sponsor my spouse?

Please look at the answer to **Question 36**.

FAQs: Students Visa

Question 38:

I am an Afghan student in the UK. Can I apply for a work visa in the UK?

If you are on a student visa you should be able to work for a limited number of hours as part of your visa, you will need to check the conditions on your Biometric Residence Permit card.

Usually, you cannot work for more than 20 hours per week during term-time.

We suggest that you seek legal advice about this based on your circumstances.

Question 39:

If I am in the UK on a student visa, can I apply for asylum in the UK?

Yes, you can only apply for asylum if you are in the UK.

If you have been here on a different visa for some time we would suggest seeking independent legal advice related to your situation prior to making your application. Legal aid is available for

asylum matters for people with no/low income.

To contact a solicitor click [here](#), and to contact an immigration advisor click [here](#).

FAQs: Others

Question 40:

I have Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), am I eligible to request for a Travel Document?

If you obtained ILR as a Refugee, then you should be eligible to receive a Refugee Travel Document.

However, if you obtained ILR under ACRS or ARAP, you would not be eligible for a Refugee Travel Document. Instead, you could apply for a Certificate of Travel if you cannot obtain a national passport from the Afghan embassy. This costs £280 and more details are [here](#). It may be worth getting immigration advice before applying as it is a high cost and not all countries accept them.

Question 41:

I have Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), can I use my Afghan passport for travelling out of the UK?

If you have an Afghan passport and you hold your ILR under ARAP or ACRS Pathway 1 or ACRS Pathway 3, you can travel on your passport.

The Foreign office are currently advising that people do not travel to Afghanistan.

Question 42:

When would I be eligible to apply for a British Passport (ARAP and ACRS ILR holder)?

If you have held ILR (indefinite leave to remain) for at least 5 years, you can apply for British Citizenship.

The requirements for holding British Citizenship can be found [here](#).

Question 43:

What are the differences between refugees and holders of Indefinite Leave to Remain or Leave to Remain?

Indefinite Leave to Remain means that there is no time limitation on your stay in the UK and you

can be here permanently. Your status is only at risk if you leave the UK for more than 2 years, or if you commit a serious crime.

Refugees initially get 5 years to be in the UK (Leave to Remain) and can then apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain.

Leave to Remain means you have the right to be here but it is time limited and this will be noted on your Biometric Residence Permit card. Leave to Remain is normally given in 2.5 year blocks of time.