



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Local Authority Leaders and Chief Executives in
England, Wales and Scotland

Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP

*Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and
Local Government*

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local
Government**

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Dear Leaders and Chief Executives

AFGHAN LES RELOCATION SCHEME – NEW £5M AFGHAN LES HOUSING COSTS FUND

Following NATO's decision to withdraw military forces from Afghanistan, we have been working to relocate our Afghan friends and their families in the UK via the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP.) These Afghan Locally Employed Staff (LES) have worked for our country during the past twenty years, putting their lives at risk to support our forces. As a nation, it is morally imperative that we help these people settle into their new lives here in the UK.

Over recent weeks and months, we have been very grateful for the number of local authorities who have offered their support in accommodating our Afghan LES and their families via the ARAP scheme. We appreciate that you have been working at pace, in what has been a very challenging year, to support this vitally important national effort. We remain very thankful for your ongoing work.

We have received offers of support for over 2000 individuals so far, with over 300 properties available. This is an incredible national effort. But, following the troubling scenes which many of you will have seen in recent days, it is clear that we must go further in order to accommodate the remaining large numbers of LES who need our help.

It goes without saying that this Government will do all it can to support those who have helped us and worked alongside our troops. That is why we urgently require more offers to welcome our Afghan friends, from more local authorities, in more locations across the UK.

We know there is a pressure on housing in many areas across the country. Local partners have told us of the difficulties in sourcing housing to welcome our Afghan partners and their families, especially those larger properties which many of the families require.

This is why I am pleased to announce a new Afghan LES Housing Costs Fund of £5 million, to support councils who may have concerns around their ability to come forward with offers of support. To explain how this fund will work in practice, please take note of the following example:

- *If a local authority comes forward with an offer of support, for example for a 3-bed house for a couple with 4 children, their ARAP funding package will include funding for the rental at £15 per person, per night for up to 4 months, or until benefits are in place.*
- *Therefore, to house this family of 6 people, the LA have a nominal 'budget' of £630 per week / £2,730 per month to secure rental accommodation.*
- *The DWP will support efforts to assist the family into employment, but if the family have not found employment and are affected by their benefit cap of £1666.67 (as a family living outside of greater London*) per month, our new fund will enable LAs with ALES to be awarded a 'top up' grant to cover the rent shortfall.*
- *To note the benefit cap for those living within greater London is £1916.67.*

We will be working with our Home Office colleagues and the 12 Strategic Migration Partnerships across the UK to formally roll this out, and we will keep you informed on next steps and formal criteria. But I was very keen to ensure that local partners received early notice of this funding solution, to allow you to now come forward with offers of support for Afghan families immediately.

Therefore, with this new funding in place - which offers security to those local authorities who may have previously had concerns around the impact of the benefit cap on your ability to welcome Afghan families into your areas - we now hope to see many more firm offers of support, coming forward from many more areas.

All my thanks, once again, for your support on this vitally important national mission to ensure we can provide hope and security to all those Afghans who have given so much to this country, as they leave their own.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Jenrick." The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

RT HON ROBERT JENRICK MP