



Ministry  
of Defence

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WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

RT HON JAMES HEAPEY MP  
MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON, SW1P 4DF

FELICITY BUCHAN MP  
MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

4/4/1/12/is

29<sup>th</sup>

November 2023

Dear Councillor Thomas,

We are writing to express our sincere gratitude for all that you have done in support of the UK Government's work to resettle those on the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) arriving in our country. You will know that this matters enormously, bringing these individuals and their families to the UK and helping them to start their new lives is a moral obligation for this Government, given all they did to aid British efforts in Afghanistan. You have played a significant part in making this happen and we are hugely grateful for your support.

The Ministry of Defence is providing fifty-seven settled Service Family Accommodation (SFA) properties for ARAP families in Vale of White Horse. Twenty-four of these have already been leased, meaning that twenty-four families now have a home from which to begin their lives in the UK. Thank you for your hard work in making this happen.

In addition to this, we have activated twenty-four transitional SFA properties in your area. These will provide many families with a place to stay until their settled homes are made ready. We aim to close these facilities by Easter.

As you know, we owe a debt of gratitude to this cohort who supported our efforts in Afghanistan, and it is essential that we move at pace to provide them with appropriate housing. However, we also want to acknowledge the impact that this will be having on local resources. HMG is asking a lot of Local Authorities, and we know that this work is adding to very real pressures.

Councillor Bethia Thomas  
Vale of White Horse District Council  
35 Eastern Avenue  
Park Drive  
Milton  
Abingdon  
OX14 4SB

We will work with you to deliver on our promise to our Afghan families. We want to listen to any concerns that you have and we're keen to tailor our approach to meet your requirements and best facilitate your continued support. As a priority, we want to understand the most efficient way in which you can absorb ARAP families in your community, and our officials are working with your teams to gather this information. Where you are unable to welcome ARAP arrivals at pace, we want to understand what support and resources you need. If we can do anything to help you in delivering this core priority, our departments stand ready, so please do let us know.

Your primary points of contact are Lieutenant Colonel Sam Hibbs on 07775 587356 or Sam.Hibbs367@mod.gov.uk and Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence Ashbridge on 07771 835075 or Lawrence.Ashbridge224@mod.gov.uk. You will likely know them well as the Joint Regional Liaison Officer (JRLO) through whom we connect with your Local Resilience Forum. They are at your disposal to assist wherever necessary.

Thank you, again, for your continued support.

*And thank you also for sending such a helpful team to engage with us last Friday. Yours ever.*

  
RT HON JAMES HEAPPEY MP



FELICITY BUCHAN MP