

# Support for those arriving from Afghanistan

Work is underway across the whole of government to ensure the Afghans who stood side by side with the UK in conflict, their families and those at highest risk who have been evacuated, are supported as they now rebuild their lives in the UK. Further information on the UK governments [Operation Warm Welcome](#) can be found on GOV UK.

We are also very aware of the large number of UK nationals who were also evacuated from Afghanistan in connection with the collapse of the Afghan government on 15 August 2021, who needed to leave Afghanistan suddenly.

Those arriving in the UK from Afghanistan, either as part of the repatriation efforts, or under one of the relocation and resettlement schemes have arrived under difficult circumstances. In response to this, departments have legislated to exempt those arriving from Afghanistan from the usual residency tests which restrict access certain benefits for new arrivals to the UK, including Universal Credit.

## **Individuals arriving from Afghanistan under a relocation or resettlement scheme**

The Home Office has put in place schemes to relocate individuals from Afghanistan. These include:

- the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Programme and Afghan Locally Employed Staff scheme for those who worked alongside UK forces in Afghanistan
- the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme for those considered at risk in Afghanistan

Further information on the [relocation and resettlement schemes](#) can be found on GOV UK.

The changes ensure that individuals arriving under one of the relocation and resettlement schemes are exempt from the residency tests for:

- DWP means-tested benefits, including Universal Credit and Housing Benefit
- disability and carer benefits
- child Benefit
- homelessness assistance
- social housing

This means that individuals who arrive under one of the Afghan relocation and resettlement schemes will meet the residency requirements, and be able to access these benefits and services when they arrive in the UK. An exception to this is the provision for immediate eligibility for housing assistance in

Wales, where this will be the case from mid-October 2021.

The Department for Work and Pensions is providing tailored support through our Jobcentre Plus work coaches to help those on these schemes access the support available for them.

## **Other individuals who have recently arrived in the UK from Afghanistan, including UK nationals**

DWP, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have also legislated to ensure we can provide support for those arriving in the UK from Afghanistan as quickly as possible. Those arriving in the UK from Afghanistan in connection with the recent collapse of the Afghan government will be exempt from the residency tests for:

- DWP means-tested benefits, including Universal Credit and Housing Benefit
- Child Benefit
- Homelessness assistance
- Social housing

This means that individuals will be able to access these benefits and services when they arrive in the UK, where they meet all other eligibility requirements.

This applies to UK nationals, those arriving under an Afghan relocation and resettlement scheme, and anyone else with a qualifying immigration status who left Afghanistan, in connection with the collapse of the Afghan government on 15 August 2021.

Those who have arrived from Afghanistan should contact their local [Jobcentre Plus](#) to see what help is available for them.

## **Further support DWP is providing**

DWP are working with other government departments to provide support to help Afghan nationals integrate into the UK, using our network of Work Coaches to provide tailored support. Personalised employment support will be offered to all those arriving from Afghanistan through our network of local job centres.

DWP is committed to supporting Afghan nationals who are looking to rebuild their lives in the UK, while being sensitive to the trauma these groups have experienced. DWP will adopt a supportive and flexible approach, ensuring that we are mindful of the complex needs and recent experiences of those arriving under the Home Office relocation and resettlement schemes.

We are offering individual, step by step, clear guidance on benefit applications and routes into work. For example, English language classes will also be made available through Jobcentre Plus.

We will continue to look at how best to support people during this time.

## **Individuals still in Afghanistan**

Individuals who are currently still in Afghanistan and unable to return to the UK should check the [guidance](#) from the FCD0.

If you are currently in receipt of a benefit and unable to return to the UK, then you should contact your [Work Coach](#), the relevant [disability benefit helpline](#), or the relevant [Local Authority](#) for housing benefit.

DWP will look to take a flexible and understanding approach where individuals are currently unable to return to the UK from Afghanistan.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0115 965 8781

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