



Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

[REDACTED]

24 August 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing in response to your letter of 20 August, outlining the newly established Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and the update on the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP).

Wales stands ready to support both of these schemes and as a Nation of Sanctuary we are very willing to do all we can to support those fleeing Afghanistan. I agree with you that we should go “much further” to meet the humanitarian challenges both in Afghanistan and for those seeking sanctuary in this country. In common with other parts of the UK, people in Wales of Afghan origin have expressed the gravest concerns for the safety of family members loved ones. We must ensure that every possible effort is being made to keep the evacuation corridors open for as long as possible. I should also like to use this opportunity to place on record the Welsh Government’s sincere gratitude and thanks for the outstanding service of our military and civilian personnel who continue to work bravely in desperate circumstances in Afghanistan.

In order for the Welsh Government and local authorities to play our full role it will be helpful to have early clarity on a number of issues:

1. What is the anticipated flow of arrivals into the UK and emergency reception plans over the coming weeks and what efforts are being made to enhance the capabilities of organisations able to offer specialist assistance where necessary (for example, to women, girls, the LGBTQ+ community and religious minorities)?;
2. Will the terms and funding provided under the ACRS mirror the successful Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme?;
3. Will the Welsh Government receive appropriate consequential funding to enable full health, education, and integration support for Afghan arrivals?;
4. Is the UK Government’s intention to ensure an expedited Community Sponsorship model is part of the answer to ensure we can resettle as many families as possible?;
5. Will you grant immediate Indefinite Leave to Remain to all arrivals and waive UK citizenship fees under these schemes?

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

In addition, will you encourage the Home Office to deal directly with the Welsh Government to consider urgently a proposal from the Urdd ("the Urdd" is a Welsh youth movement with an excellent residential asset in Cardiff Bay, just next the Senedd) to accommodate 25 families in their residential centre?

You will recognise that the most effective approach to resettlement support for Afghan arrivals will come from effective co-operation across the United Kingdom. I noted and welcomed your agreement in the House of Commons debate to a Four Nations Summit and I would welcome an early date for this meeting. There is a great deal to discuss and effective alignment and information-sharing will enable all of us to respond efficiently to the challenges we face.

In supporting the scheme for settling those fleeing from Afghanistan I should emphasise that the Welsh Government believes the UK Government should think again about the proposals put forward in the Nationality and Borders Bill which, we believe, would create a two tier system between asylum seekers, depending on their route of entry into the UK. This, we believe, cannot be helpful.

I have copied this letter to the Home Secretary and Communities Secretary, my counterparts in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and the Secretary of State for Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

MARK DRAKEFORD