



### **Q&A: Service Family Accommodation (SFA) properties for Afghan families**

**Q: How many Service Family Accommodation (SFA) properties in total have the MoD offered?**

- In total, the MoD have offered 550 SFA properties. These are largely 2, 3 and 4-bedroom properties and only for ARAP families.

**Q: Are Service Family Accommodation (SFA) properties only for ARAP or can they be used for ACRS and British nationals?**

- At present the properties are only for the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP). The Secretary of State for Defence directed that SFA properties were to be offered up as a surge capacity to enable ARAP families with a Defence connection, to leave bridging accommodation. The Defence connection serves the purposes of security, established Defence affiliations, and the welfare needs of both ARAP families and our service families living in Defence estate communities.

**Q: We need housing with 4+ bedrooms to accommodate large families, can MoD help provide larger properties?**

- MoD carries out 13,000-16,000 service family moves each year. The majority of properties are 2 and 3-bedroom but larger properties have been requested by councils to match the family size of the cohort.
- The MOD has a limited stock of 4 bed houses with the vast majority of the stock being made up of 3 bed properties and there is a high demand for larger houses by Service families. Where it has been possible 4 bed properties have been offered but the scope of this is limited by regional and local demand.

**Q: Are we able to split families and accommodate them in smaller Service Family Accommodation (SFA) properties which are in the area?**

- Yes, this is possible. It would mean that the family are close together and can be integrated into the same community.
- There are areas with 26, 11 and 10 x 3-beds available so it provides opportunities for people to be settled close together.

**Q: Can Government arrange for MoD properties to be used for Afghan families?**

- MoD need to have an agreed number of properties available for service families and cannot offer these properties unless they are part of the MoD offer. Some properties are currently held as vacant to meet emerging requirements, this is why some properties will only be available on a short, 12 month lease.

- If you require a longer lease term to be made available, please put the request through and MoD will try to accommodate, but there are no guarantees.

**Q. Can Local Authorities still express an interest in leasing MoD properties for Afghan ARAP families?**

- The tranche 3 offer of up to 450 properties (including a number of 4 beds) is still open to local authorities to express their interest. You are encouraged to register interest with your Home Office Contact Officer and Strategic Migration Partnership, who will make enquiries with the MOD as to the properties available in your area. See the Annex below for your relevant Strategic Migration Partnership contact details, If there are properties available, you will be provided with details and an MoD contact to enable direct engagement on lease arrangements.
- All MoD properties are offered on a full repairing and insuring lease, at a rent of £5,000 per annum. The properties are 'outside the wire' and provide good accommodation in residential areas occupied by service families. The rent payable is below the level of the private sector and MOD will work with you to accommodate lease terms beyond the initial 12 months, that is offered on a case-by-case basis. Local authorities have asked for leases between 2- and 5-year terms and these have been granted where possible. If requested, as the lease approaches expiry the MOD can look to see if it is possible to extend the lease.
- The lease is a standard form and has been agreed by a number of local authorities already so there shouldn't be a need for protracted legal negotiations. MOD are flexible in allowing the lease to be agreed in advance so that Home Office know that a property is ready. Once a family is matched then the formalities of signing the lease can be completed and the rent will only begin once the family is moved in so that there is no financial exposure for the local authority.
- Once leases are agreed, properties should be offered to the Home Office on a Property Offer Form in the usual way for matching.

**Q: Can empty MoD properties be used to house Afghan families on a temporary basis, whilst waiting for properties in a local authority area to become available?**

- Only the properties identified by the MOD can be used for temporary accommodation, within the agreed lease timings. The property can be given back to MoD at any time within the lease agreement. However, if a longer lease is needed, that must be agreed in advance with MoD.

**Q: How long are the leases on released MoD properties?**

- The leases are for an initial 12 months; this can be terminated at any point with one months' notice. The extension of the lease can be negotiated with MOD, up to a maximum of 5 years, on a case-by-case basis.
- If you require a longer lease term to be made available, please put the request through and MoD will try to accommodate, but there are no guarantees.

**Q: Will the Government find further temporary accommodation once the lease has expired or where it can no longer be extended?**

- It will be the local authority's duty to house the Afghan family following expiry of the lease.
- MoD allow for negotiations to be held close to the expiry date to determine if the lease can be extended.

**Q: What is Operation New Hope?**

- Operation New Hope is a MoD specific offer to Afghans with a confirmed services connection who have requested that they wish to remain in contact with MoD. Operation New Hope puts these people in contact with MoD's charitable partners for pastoral support.

**Q: How will local authorities know which MoD properties are still available?**

- Where a council has expressed an interest in leasing MOD properties for ARAP families, the Home Office has provided details of the properties available in their area. Councils can check which properties are available by contacting the MOD contact provided by the Home Office.

**Q: Can properties be matched to new arrivals from Afghanistan before they reach the UK?**

- Home Office, alongside MoD, are piloting this in the North West and if successful, will explore widening to other areas which also include MoD housing.

**Annex: Strategic Migration Partnership contact details**

REGION	SMP LEAD	EMAIL ADDRESS
South East	Roy Millard	<a href="mailto:RoyMillard@secouncils.gov.uk">RoyMillard@secouncils.gov.uk</a>
South West	Kelly-Anne Philips	<a href="mailto:kelly-anne.phillips@swcouncils.gov.uk">kelly-anne.phillips@swcouncils.gov.uk</a>
London	Mark Winterburn	<a href="mailto:Mark.Winterburn@london.gov.uk">Mark.Winterburn@london.gov.uk</a>
East of England	Gosia Strona	<a href="mailto:Malgorzata.Strona@eelga.gov.uk">Malgorzata.Strona@eelga.gov.uk</a>
East Midlands	Brein Fisher	<a href="mailto:Brein.Fisher@emcouncils.gov.uk">Brein.Fisher@emcouncils.gov.uk</a>
West Midlands	Dally Panesar	<a href="mailto:Dally.Panesar@wolverhampton.gov.uk">Dally.Panesar@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>
Yorkshire and Humber	David Brown	<a href="mailto:David.2.Brown@migrationyorkshire.org">David.2.Brown@migrationyorkshire.org</a>
North East	Janine Hartley	<a href="mailto:Janine_Hartley@middlesbrough.gov.uk">Janine_Hartley@middlesbrough.gov.uk</a>
North West	Katie Jones	<a href="mailto:katie.jones@manchester.gov.uk">katie.jones@manchester.gov.uk</a>
Scotland	Andrew Morrison	<a href="mailto:andrew@cosla.gov.uk">andrew@cosla.gov.uk</a>
Wales	Anne Hubbard	<a href="mailto:anne.hubbard@wlga.gov.uk">anne.hubbard@wlga.gov.uk</a>