

**THE RT HON DR ANDREW MURRISON**  
Minister for Defence People and Families

Ref: 17909

14 June 2024

Dear Stewart,

An error has been identified in the Parliamentary Question response provided to you on 22 March 2024 to Question number 17909.

**The answer given was as follows:**

**11 March 2024**

Stewart Malcolm McDonald (Glasgow South) (SNP)

*To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the ARAP eligibility standard operating procedure was first changed to give the relevant Other Government Department the power to reject a member of the Afghan (a) CF 333 and (b) ATF 444 unit applying to the scheme. (UIN17909)*

Minister for Armed Forces (James Heappey)

*There is no ARAP eligibility standard operating procedure that provides a relevant Other Government Department with the power to reject an application.*

*When considering Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme applications under Category 4, Ministry of Defence (MoD) caseworkers seek input into decision-making from other parts of the MoD, Other Government Departments and governmental bodies, where they are likely to hold useful information relating to an individual's application.*

*Every individual application is considered on a case-by-case basis in line with our published ARAP criteria, including applications considered under Category 4.*

The correct answer is:

Minister for Defence People and Families (Andrew Murrison)

***The previous Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) referred to in the question covering Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme (ARAP) eligibility decision making processes under Category 4, has been revised as it did not accurately reflect how processes are intended to work.***

***This was determined following an internal review that highlighted instances of inconsistent application of the ARAP criteria to a tranche of applications from applicants with links to former Afghan specialist units. The MOD subsequently announced it would review these decisions where the applicant had been found ineligible. That review remains underway and where a decision is overturned the applicant is being informed.***

***Prior to commencing the review, the MOD updated its SOP to ensure the intent of the process was both accurately documented and robustly implemented.***

***Previously, where these cases were referred under Category 4 to other government departments (OGDs) or organisations, MOD required that they provide our caseworkers with an assessment of whether they would sponsor an application. MOD caseworkers used this assessment to determine whether or not to proceed with a case in line with the previous erroneous SOP. The new SOP determines that where applications considered as part of the review are referred for input, OGD and other organisations' input is limited to providing specialist background knowledge and assisting with identifying individuals who can support applications.***

***All final eligibility recommendations are made by MOD caseworkers, endorsed by MOD Senior Civil Servants - who were not part of previous decisions - and then submitted to ministers who make the final decision.***

A copy of this letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Murrison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'M'.

THE RT HON DR ANDREW MURRISON