

LUKE POLLARD MP
MINISTER FOR THE ARMED FORCES

10 July 2025

Dear Julian,

Thank you for attending the Adjournment debate for Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) on 5 June 2025. I truly welcome your and other colleagues' advocacy on behalf of the ARAP scheme and our applicants.

I am writing to you about two corrections that have been identified in my response to your, and Sir Iain Duncan Smith's, statements that were made during the debate.

1. The answer to your statement was

Sir Julian Lewis (New Forest East) (Con) – Hansard, Column 577

I know that the Minister sincerely cares about all of this, and I am sure that he really wants to do his best, however the key point being made by my hon. and right hon. and gallant Friends is that, if the criteria do not cater for a situation in which senior British military personnel give first-person testimony that somebody saved British lives by taking exceptionally courageous steps in our support, the criteria need to be adjusted. That is what should be done, as I hope he is going to tell us that it may have been adjusted for the Triples.

The Minister for the Armed Forces, Luke Pollard MP

I entirely understand where the right hon. Gentleman is going with that argument. Under the criteria in the scheme we inherited from the previous Government, which we have continued, we have made the decision, with the exception of the Triples, to keep the eligibility decisions the same. [...]

The correct answer is

*I entirely understand where the right hon. Gentleman is going with that argument. Under the criteria in the scheme we inherited from the previous Government, which we have continued, we have made the decision, **with the exception of how these criteria are applied to the Triples**, to keep the eligibility decisions the same. [...]*

2. The answer to Sir Iain Duncan Smith's statement was

Sir Iain Duncan Smith (Chingford and Woodford Green) (Con) - Hansard, Column 575

[...] I simply ask the Minister to pledge that he will do his utmost, that he will speak to the powers that be, and that he will bang on the door of No. 10 and demand that the Prime Minister take on this case and others personally. While we build up our armed forces, and look to have allies and people who will work with us, they will look back at how we treated those who came before and they will ask themselves, "Why do I serve with people who forget you when the deed is done?" I say to the Minister: let us not forget them. They are as brave and as important to us as the soldiers who were directly employed by us, who served us and who made sure that many were saved as a result.

The Minister for the Armed Forces, Luke Pollard MP

I very much appreciate the right hon. Member's advocacy for the individual involved, and his passion for Afghan resettlement in general. He is absolutely right to say that we owe an obligation to the people who served alongside UK forces. What we have done with the ARAP scheme is implement as a nation, under the last Government and this one, probably the most generous Afghan relocation scheme of any of the allies that served in Afghanistan, and we have drawn a set of eligibility criteria that—with the exception of the Triples, which I will come to in a moment—have broadly remained the same under this Government and the preceding Government. I hear the right hon. Gentleman's concerns about elements of that, which I will seek to address.

The correct answer is

*"I very much appreciate the right hon. Member's advocacy for the individual involved, and his passion for Afghan resettlement in general. He is absolutely right to say that we owe an obligation to the people who served alongside UK forces. What we have done with the ARAP scheme is implement as a nation, under the last Government and this one, probably the most generous Afghan relocation scheme of any of the allies that served in Afghanistan, and we have drawn a set of eligibility criteria that—**although we addressed how they are applied to the Triples**, which I will come to in a moment—have remained the same under this Government and the preceding Government. I hear the right hon. Gentleman's concerns about elements of that, which I will seek to address."*

My office has contacted Sir Iain Duncan Smith separately to inform him about the correction as well.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luke', written in a cursive style.

LUKE POLLARD MP