



Rt Hon Dame Karen Bradley DBE MP
Chair, Home Affairs Select Committee
House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA

1 July 2025

Dear Dame Karen,

IMMIGRATION RULES CHANGES

I am writing to inform you of changes to the Immigration Rules which are being laid today.

Changes to the Skilled Worker and other work routes as set out in the Immigration White Paper

These changes implement the first phase of reforms to work visas set out in the Immigration White Paper, “Restoring Control over the Immigration System”, published on 12 May 2025.

The key change is raising the threshold for Skilled Worker visas from occupations at Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) level 3 and above (approximately A-level skills) to occupations at RQF level 6 and above (mainly graduate professions).

Salary requirements for work visas are being raised in line with the latest Office for National Statistics data, ahead of an upcoming thorough review of salary requirements (including discounts) by the independent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC).

The Immigration Salary List (ISL) and a new Temporary Shortage List (TSL) provides time-limited access to the Skilled Worker route for occupations below the new RQF level 6 threshold, but with no ability for applicants to bring dependants. The ISL will be phased out in future and the TSL list will be reviewed by the MAC.

Skilled Worker entry clearance applications for care workers and senior care workers are being closed, while maintaining in-country switching applications for a transition period until 22 July 2028.

The changes include transitional arrangements, allowing existing Skilled Worker visa holders to continue to extend their visas, bring dependants, change employment and take supplementary employment in occupations below RQF level 6, while applying the new rules to applicants from overseas and those applying to switch from other routes.

Closure of the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) to new principal applications

Changes are being made to the ARAP, with support from the Ministry of Defence.

On 18 December 2024, the Minister for Armed Forces announced the Government's intention to reach a position in the future where our Afghan resettlement schemes can be closed. As per the changes to the Immigration Rules being laid today, the ARAP will be closed to new principal applications from 15:00 BST on 1 July 2025.

The ARAP was launched on 1 April 2021, as a demonstration of the UK's debt of gratitude to those who served for, with or alongside the UK military in Afghanistan. The ARAP provides support, including relocation to the UK, to those who made a positive substantive or meaningful contribution to the strategic aims and outcomes of the UK military's objectives. Since its creation, the ARAP has been open for four years and has seen 19,292 principals and their family members already relocated to the UK. The Ministry of Defence now consider the ARAP to have fulfilled its original purpose and consider that the majority of those who would be found eligible would have applied, and I support my Right Honourable friend's decision to close the policy to new principal applications.

Alongside the closure of ARAP, we will also be closing the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). This means that HMG will not launch any further pathways nor accept any further referrals. Over 12,800 people have been successfully resettled under the ACRS since 2021 and over half of these arrivals have been children and a quarter women.

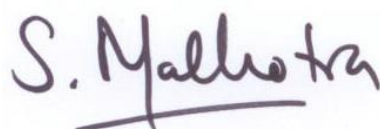
The Home Office will continue to consider those referrals made under the ACRS Separated Families pathway, but have not yet received a decision. This Government will honour our commitments to anyone found eligible, and to those who have already been found eligible for the ACRS but are not yet in the UK.

The changes to the Immigration Rules are being laid on 1 July 2025

For the changes relating to closure of the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) to new principal applications, for reasons put forward by the MoD to mitigate a spike in applications so that they can re-allocate critical defence resource currently assigned to servicing and case working the ARAP to other more urgent priorities, they will come into effect at 15:00 BST on 1 July 2025.

The changes relating to Changes to the Skilled Worker and other work routes as set out in the Immigration White Paper will come into effect on 22 July as detailed in the Statement of Changes, from 22 July 2025.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, reading 'S. Malhotra', with a horizontal line underneath.

Seema Malhotra MP
Minister for Migration & Citizenship