

Rt Hon Alun Cairns MP  
Vale of Glamorgan



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

[REDACTED]  
St. Athan  
[REDACTED]

20<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Dear Resident,

I am aware there are several rumours in St Athan about the future use of the MoD base. Rumours about a 'refugee camp' are wrong, and I am writing to clarify the situation.

You may be aware that the UK pledged to support Afghan families that worked with and helped the UK Armed Forces serving in Afghanistan. These included intelligence officers, interpreters and other services essential to our troops in a conflict zone. When the Taliban regained control of the country, the safety of these people and their families was and continues to be at risk. In response, the government established the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) to bring them to the UK. Such families have been welcomed to the UK since the conflict, but recent political changes in the region have meant that more need to be protected and supported.

Therefore, the MoD and the Welsh Government have agreed that up to 40 families will be housed for a short number of weeks in the accommodation blocks within the camp. They will be supported with interpreters, health screening and other essential needs within the block, before being permanently housed elsewhere across the United Kingdom. When a family is resettled elsewhere, another may arrive to be supported similarly. The Welsh Government has extended the lease of the MoD base until the end of the year, when we would expect the facilities to be closed.

Fourteen families have come to live locally under the ARAP scheme over the last year or so. Along with the Royal British Legion, the Community Council and others, we met the families a short time ago to better understand how they had settled. We were all moved by their stories and touched by their commitment to the UK. A number are in employment and contributing to our community and they have received the warmest of welcomes. We are all grateful for their service to our forces and the response they have received locally.

I wanted you to receive this update as soon as possible and hope that this letter answers any concerns. I have raised the matter with the Prime Minister and am in constant touch with the MoD. If there are any points you wish me to bring to their attention, please let me know.

Thank you for your consideration, and I hope that you will support the ARAP families in the same way that they supported our armed forces while serving in Afghanistan.

Kind regards,

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Vale of Glamorgan

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