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Immigration and Asylum

Scottish Parliament Oral Answer

Illegal Migration Bill

Joe FitzPatrick (SNP): Given this week's new proposals from the Tory Government on its approach to refugees and asylum seekers, does the First Minister share my concern about how that will impact on our ability to meet our responsibilities under the United Nations refugee convention and the European convention on human rights? Does she share my disgust at the spectacle of the leader of the United Kingdom Labour Party trying to outdo the Prime Minister on his anti-immigration rhetoric? ...

Reply from the First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Let us be clear. The UK Government's Illegal Migration Bill sets out a clear intention to remove the right to seek refugee protection in the United Kingdom. It is utterly shameful and immoral. I

can still remember a day when Labour would have opposed it tooth and nail in principle, rather than in the mealy-mouthed way in which it has been doing so. Here is what the UN refugee agency said: “This would be a clear breach of the Refugee Convention and would undermine a longstanding, humanitarian tradition of which the British people are rightly proud.”

All of us, without exception, should be appalled that the Home Secretary has introduced such a bill, which she knows does not comply with the Human Rights Act 1998 and which will add to the damage that has already been inflicted on the UK’s reputation as a place of refuge, its credibility with international partners and its ability to meet its responsibilities under the refugee convention and the ECHR. It is a bill that the Scottish Government does not and will never support, and nobody who has any concern for our fellow human beings should ever support such an appalling piece of draft legislation.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=15190&i=129545#ScotParlOR>

Scottish Parliament Written Answer

Refugees: Ukraine

Oliver Mundell (Conservative) [S6W-14899] To ask the Scottish Government what additional support the Scottish Qualifications Authority is providing to Ukrainian pupils in Scotland wishing to sit examinations, including with the translation of exam papers.

Reply from Shirley-Anne Somerville: The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) has confirmed that the approach for Ukrainian students sitting exams in Scotland is consistent with the approach that is taken for all candidates for whom English is an additional language. Any candidates undertaking SQA external assessments who have English as an additional language may be allowed the use of a bilingual dictionary and have a standard extra time allowance of 10 mins for each hour of any assessment, subject to teacher assessment of the candidate’s needs. The use of the dictionary, and any additional time requested for using the dictionary, should reflect the candidate’s way of working in teaching and learning.

This approach is consistent with that taken by awarding bodies across the rest of the UK.

More widely, Education Scotland has provided resources to help schools and teachers support Ukrainian children’s mental health and wellbeing and to meet their learning needs.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-14899>

Scottish Parliament Motion

Paul McLennan (SNP) [S6M-08160] **UK Government Rhetoric on Illegal Migration Bill** – That the Parliament condemns what it considers the cruel and threatening language of the UK Government’s communications surrounding the proposed Illegal Migration Bill; notes reports that the Home Secretary has no confidence that the Bill is compliant with the European Convention on Human Rights, and further notes the dangers of using what it sees as dehumanising rhetoric in relation to groups of vulnerable people, who, it believes, are taking significant risks to ensure their safety and that of their families.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-08160>

UK Parliament, Ministerial Statement

Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules

The Minister for Immigration (Robert Jenrick) [HCWS622] ... The Government's No. 1 priority is keeping the UK safe. In order to further strengthen our border security the Government are launching an electronic travel authorisation (ETA) scheme.

The ETA scheme will be implemented in a phased manner, on a nationality basis, over the next two years. Qatar, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia will be the first countries to benefit from the ETA scheme. The Home Office will provide further details about which country will be next to benefit from the ETA scheme in due course.

These rules explain how the UK's forthcoming ETA scheme will be administered. The rules set out: who is required to apply for and obtain an ETA prior to travelling to the United Kingdom; the form or manner in which an application for an ETA may be made, granted or refused and specifies the conditions which must be met before an application for an ETA may be granted. The rules also stipulate how long an ETA will be valid for, the conditions under which it may be varied or cancelled and any exceptions to the requirement to obtain one.

We are also implementing changes for Innovators which have previously been announced in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's document "UK Innovation Strategy: leading the future by creating it", published on 22 July 2021. The innovator founder route removes the £50,000 minimum funds requirement currently applied to those coming to the UK to establish an innovative business in order to make more flexible provision for those with a genuine proposal for an innovative business and sufficient funds to deliver it. The changes relax existing restrictions on innovators engaging in employment outside the running of their business, provided such secondary employment is in a skilled role, i.e., at least skilled to RQF Level 3.

The changes close the existing start-up route to new initial applications except where they are supported by endorsements issued before 13 April 2023. With the removal of the £50,000 minimum funds requirement for innovator founders, it is no longer necessary to retain a separate route for start-up entrepreneurs that do not have access to this level of funds. This means that applicants who would not meet the existing £50,000 requirement will be able to obtain permission for three years from the outset, rather than the one year granted to start-up route applicants under existing arrangements.

The salary requirements for skilled work immigration routes have been updated in line with the latest annual survey of hours and earnings (ASHE) data. To prevent exploitation of migrants, a minimum salary is set, based on the 25th percentile of average earnings for each job role, as per the most recent ASHE data. The skilled worker route base line minimum salary has also been increased.

Finally, more routes have been simplified in line with the recommendations of the Law Commission report "Simplifying the Immigration Rules", to which the Government responded on 25 March 2020. The changes to the Immigration Rules are being laid on 9 March 2023. The changes relating to the ETA and updates to employment requirements in work routes will come into effect on 12 April 2023. The new innovator founder route will come into effect on 13 April 2023.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-09/debates/23030926000012/StatementOfChangesInImmigrationRules>

UK Parliament, Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Illegal Migration Bill

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Suella Braverman): ... Two months

ago, the Prime Minister made a promise to the British people that anyone entering this country illegally will be detained and swiftly removed—no half measures. The Illegal Migration Bill will fulfil that promise. It will allow us to stop the boats that are bringing tens of thousands to our shores in flagrant breach of both our laws and the will of the British people.

The United Kingdom must always support the world's most vulnerable. Since 2015 we have given sanctuary to nearly half a million people, including 150,000 people from Hong Kong, 160,000 people from Ukraine and 25,000 Afghans fleeing the Taliban. Indeed, decades ago, my parents found security and opportunity in this country, for which my family are eternally grateful.

Crucially, these decisions are supported by the British people precisely because they are decisions made by the British people and their elected representatives, not by the people smugglers and other criminals who break into Britain on a daily basis. For a Government not to respond to the waves of illegal migrants breaching our borders would be to betray the will of the people we were elected to serve.

The small boats problem is part of a larger global migration crisis. In the coming years, developed countries will face unprecedented pressure from ever greater numbers of people leaving the developing world for places such as the United Kingdom. Unless we act today, the problem will be worse tomorrow, and the problem is already unsustainable. People are dying in the channel. The volume of illegal arrivals has overwhelmed our asylum system. The backlog has ballooned to over 160,000. The asylum system now costs the British taxpayer £3 billion a year. Since 2018, some 85,000 people have illegally entered the United Kingdom by small boat—45,000 of them in 2022 alone. All travelled through multiple safe countries in which they could and should have claimed asylum. Many came from safe countries, such as Albania, and almost all passed through France. The vast majority—74% in 2021—were adult males under the age of 40, rich enough to pay criminal gangs thousands of pounds for passage.

Upon arrival, most are accommodated in hotels across the country, costing the British taxpayer around £6 million a day. The risk remains that these individuals just disappear. And when we try to remove them, they turn our generous asylum laws against us to prevent removal. The need for reform is obvious and urgent.

This Government have not sat on their hands. Since this Prime Minister took office, recognising the necessity of joint solutions with France, we have signed a new deal that provides more technology and embeds British officers with French patrols. I hope Friday's Anglo-French summit will further deepen that co-operation.

We have created a new small boats operational command, with more than 700 new staff; doubled National Crime Agency funding to tackle smuggling gangs; increased enforcement raids by 50%; signed a deal with Albania, which has already enabled the return of hundreds of illegal arrivals; and are procuring accommodation, including on military land, to end the farce of accommodating migrants in hotels.

But let us be honest: it is still not enough. In the face of today's global migration crisis, yesterday's laws are simply not fit for purpose. So to anyone proposing de facto open borders through unlimited safe and legal routes as the alternative, let us be honest: there are 100 million people around the world who could qualify for protection under our current laws. Let us be clear: they are coming here. We have seen a 500% increase in small boat crossings in two years. This is the crucial point of this Bill. They will not stop coming here until the world knows that if you enter Britain illegally, you will be detained and swiftly removed—back to your country if it is safe, or to a safe third country, such as Rwanda.

That is precisely what this Bill will do. That is how we will stop the boats. This Bill enables the detention of illegal arrivals, without bail or judicial review within the first 28 days of detention, until they can be removed. It puts a duty on the Home Secretary to remove illegal entrants and will radically narrow the number of challenges and appeals that can suspend removal. Only those under 18, medically unfit to fly or at real risk of serious and

irreversible harm in the country we are removing them to—that is an exceedingly high bar—will be able to delay their removal. Any other claims will be heard remotely, after removal.

When our Modern Slavery Act 2015 passed, the impact assessment envisaged 3,500 referrals a year. Last year, 17,000 referrals took on average 543 days to consider. Modern slavery laws are being abused to block removals. That is why we granted more than 50% of asylum requests from citizens of a safe European country and NATO ally, Albania. That is why this Bill disqualifies illegal entrants from using modern slavery rules to prevent removal.

I will not address the Bill's full legal complexities today. ... Some of the nation's finest legal minds have been and continue to be involved in its development. But I must say this: rule 39 and the process that enabled the Strasbourg Court to block, at the last minute, flights to Rwanda, after our courts had refused injunctions, was deeply flawed. Our ability to control our borders cannot be held back by an opaque process, conducted late at night, with no chance to make our case or even appeal decisions. That is why we have initiated discussions in Strasbourg to ensure that its blocking orders meet a basic natural justice standard, one that prevents abuse of rule 39 to thwart removal; and it is why the Bill will set out the conditions for the UK's future compliance with such orders.

Other countries share our dilemma and will understand the justice of our position. Our approach is robust and novel, which is why we cannot make a definitive statement of compatibility under section 19(1)(a) of the Human Rights Act 1998. Of course, the UK will always seek to uphold international law, and I am confident that this Bill is compatible with international law. When we have stopped the boats, the Bill will introduce an annual cap, to be determined by Parliament, on the number of refugees the UK will resettle via safe and legal routes. This will ensure an orderly system, considering local authority capacity for housing, public services and support.

The British people are famously a fair and patient people. But their sense of fair play has been tested beyond its limits as they have seen the country taken for a ride. Their patience has run out. The law-abiding patriotic majority have said, "Enough is enough." This cannot and will not continue. Their Government—this Government—must act decisively, must act with determination, must act with compassion, and must act with proportion. Make no mistake: this Conservative Government—this Conservative Prime Minister—will act now to stop the boats. I commend the statement to the House.

Yvette Cooper (Labour): A record 45,000 people crossed the channel on dangerous small boats last year, up from just 280 four years ago. In that short time, the Government have allowed criminal gangs to take hold along the channel and along our border. At the same time, convictions of people smugglers have halved; Home Office asylum decisions have collapsed, down 40%; the backlog and costly, inappropriate hotel use have soared; removals of unsuccessful asylum seekers are down 80% on the last Labour Government; and legal family reunion visas for refugees are down 40%. ...

We need serious action to stop dangerous boat crossings, which are putting lives at risk and undermining border security. That is why Labour has put forward plans for a cross-border police unit, for fast-track decisions and returns to clear the backlog and end hotel use, and for a new agreement with France and other countries. Instead, today's statement is groundhog day. The Home Secretary has said: "Anyone who arrives illegally will be deemed inadmissible and either returned to the country they arrived from or a safe third country." ...

Only that was not this Home Secretary: it was the last one. And that was not about this Bill: it was about the last one, passed only a year ago and which did not work. As part of last year's Bill, the Home Office considered 18,000 people as inadmissible for the asylum system because they had travelled through safe third countries, but because it had no return agreements in place, just 21 of them were returned. That is 0.1%. The other 99.9% just carried on, often in hotels, at an extra cost of £500 million, and it did not deter anyone.

Even more boats arrived.

What is different this time? The Government still do not have any return agreements in place. The Home Secretary has admitted that Rwanda is “failing”, and even if it gets going it will take only a few hundred people. What will happen to the other 99% under the Bill? She says that she will detain them all, perhaps for 28 days. Can she tell us how many detention centres the Government will need in total and how much they will cost? Even if she does that, what will happen when people leave 28-day detention? Will she make people destitute, so that they just wander the streets in total chaos? They will include torture victims, Afghan interpreters and families with children. Or will she put them into indefinite taxpayer-funded accommodation? Never returned anywhere because the Government do not have agreements with Europe in place, never given sanctuary, never having their case resolved—just forever in asylum accommodation and hotels. She may not call it the asylum system, but thousands of people are still going to be in it.

What will the Bill mean for the promises we made to the Afghan interpreters who served our country but who were too late to make the last flight out of Kabul as the tyranny was closing in upon them? The Government told them to flee and find another way here, and they told us to tell people that as well. But the resettlement scheme is not helping them and, if they finally arrive in this country this afternoon, perhaps by travelling through Ireland to get here, they will only ever be illegal in the eyes of a Government who relied on the sacrifices they made for us.

If the Government were serious, they would be working internationally to get a proper new agreement in place with France and Europe, including return agreements, properly controlled and managed legal routes such as family reunion, and reform of resettlement. Instead, this Bill makes that harder, unilaterally choosing to decide no asylum cases at all, but expecting every other country to carry on.

If the Government were serious, they would be working with Labour on our plan for a major new cross-border policing unit to go after the criminal gangs. Instead, the deputy chairman of the Conservative party, the hon. Member for Ashfield (Lee Anderson) said yesterday that we should not go after the gangs because they have existed for “thousands of years”. That is the disgraceful Tory attitude that has let the gangs off of the hook and let them take hold. One smuggler told Sky News yesterday that three quarters of the smugglers live in Britain, but barely any of them are being prosecuted and the Government still have not found the hundreds of children missing from asylum hotels who have been picked up by criminal gangs.

The Government could be setting out a serious plan today. We would work with them on it, and so would everyone across the country. Instead, it is just more chaos. The Government say “no ifs, no buts”, but we all know that they will spend the next year if-ing and but-ing and looking for someone else to blame when it all goes wrong. Enough is enough. We cannot afford any more of this—slogans and not solutions, government by gimmick, ramping up the rhetoric on refugees and picking fights simply to have someone else to blame when things go wrong. This Bill is not a solution. It is a con that risks making the chaos worse. Britain deserves better than this chaos. Britain is better than this.

Reply from Suella Braverman: ... The British people want to stop the boats. It is one of the five promises the Prime Minister made to the British people, but stopping the boats did not even feature in the Leader of the Opposition’s five big missions. Is it because he does not care or because he does not know what to do? We all know why, and I think the British people know why: it is because, deep down, the Leader of the Opposition does not want to stop the boats and he thinks it is bigoted to say we have got too much illegal migration abusing our system. It is because Labour MPs would prefer to write letters stopping the removal of foreign national offenders. It is because the Labour party would prefer to vote against our measures to penalise foreign national offenders and to streamline our asylum system.

Those are the facts. Labour is against deterring people who would come here

illegally, against detaining people who come here illegally and against deporting people who are here illegally. That means that Labour is for this situation getting worse and worse. Perhaps that is fine for the Leader of the Opposition and most of those on the Labour Front Bench, but it is not their schools, their GPs or their public services, housing and hotels filling up with illegal migrants. ...

Tim Loughton (Conservative): ... When the Home Affairs Committee visited Calais recently we were told that, when the Rwanda scheme was announced, there was a big upsurge in migrants in France approaching authorities asking about staying in France, because there was a deterrent factor. That has not happened because the Rwanda scheme has not got off the ground. When she sees her counterparts in France on Friday, can we suggest that the French might like to join us in a joint Rwanda-type scheme, since they face the same problems? Can they do more? We have safe and legal routes to stop people getting in the boats: to arrest them and stop this illegal trade at source on their side of the channel.

Reply from Suella Braverman: ... Deterrence is the key theme running through these measures. We want to send the message loudly and clearly to people smugglers and people thinking about crossing the channel: do not do it. Do not hand over your life savings, do not get in to that flimsy dinghy and do not risk your life, because you will not be entitled to a life in the UK.

Stuart C McDonald (SNP): The SNP stands proudly behind the refugee convention and the European convention on human rights. We believe that all who seek asylum and refugee status deserve a fair hearing and we are 100% behind the clear statement from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that there is no such thing as an illegal asylum seeker.

Despite the dreary dog-whistle rhetoric, the Home Secretary's Bill will not lay a solitary finger on people smugglers or people traffickers, but it will cause serious and devastating harm to those who have already endured incredible suffering. Afghans let down by the Government's utterly failed relocation schemes will be locked up and offshored. People who have fled persecution in Syria, Eritrea or Iran will remain blocked from the asylum system. The policies that have seen hundreds of children go missing from hotels will be enshrined in her Bill. The world-leading modern slavery legislation piloted through by one of her predecessors is about to be ripped to pieces without a single shred of justification. That is what this appalling Bill looks set to deliver, and that is why we will oppose it every step of the way.

If every country followed the Home Secretary's example, the whole system of refugee protection around the world would fall to pieces. It is not just that system that will be trashed by this Bill, however, but the UK's reputation as a place of sanctuary. She spoke about an overwhelmed asylum system, but the only thing that has overwhelmed the asylum system is the Conservative party's incompetence and mismanagement. One of her own ministerial colleagues described the Rwanda plan as "ugly, likely to be counterproductive and of dubious legality", and that beautifully encapsulates what is in this Bill.

I have two questions for the Home Secretary. First, what happens if an Afghan arrival cannot be removed to Afghanistan, France, Rwanda or anywhere else? Will he or she eventually be admitted to the asylum system? If so, after how long? Secondly, when the Prime Minister meets President Macron, will he be telling him that the UK is prepared to leave the European convention on human rights?

Reply from Suella Braverman: A lot of passion and fury and fire—I only wish the Scottish Government would bring so much passion to their approach to accommodating asylum seekers, when Scotland currently takes one of the lowest numbers of asylum seekers in our United Kingdom. Our measures set out a comprehensive and coherent plan, combining fairness and compassion. ...

Diana Johnson (Labour): In the Home Affairs Committee report on channel crossings, which was published last summer, we found that small boats have not overwhelmed the

asylum system as the Home Secretary is claiming. The backlog has been allowed to grow since 2013, and is now at over 160,000. We said in that report: "Poor resourcing, by successive governments, of staff and technology in the Asylum Operations function in the Home Office, has been a significant factor in this collapse."

Our report also found that the Government should deal with the backlog, expand safe and legal routes and negotiate a returns policy with the EU. Can the Home Secretary tell the House what progress has been made on expanding safe and legal routes and on a returns policy with the EU?

Reply from Suella Braverman: I think it is clear for everyone to see that our asylum system has been overwhelmed by unprecedented numbers of people arriving here and by the very high numbers being processed currently. We have made good progress, both with the EU and with our counterparts in France, and that is why I am very much looking forward to the Anglo-French summit this Friday, which our Prime Minister will be leading with the French President, to discuss this issue in more detail. ...

To read this very long question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-07/debates/87B621A3-050D-4B27-A655-2EDD4AAE6481/IllegalMigrationBill>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/23102/documents/180406/default/>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Afghanistan

The following three questions all received the same answer

Refugees: Afghanistan

Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op) [156257] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 20 February 2023 to Question 143853 on Refugees: Afghanistan, what procedures are in place for unaccompanied children from Afghanistan to (a) make themselves known to and (b) seek support from the relevant authorities in the UK.

Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op) [156258] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what provisions are in place to provide emotional support for Afghan children who were separated from their families during the evacuation of Kabul and arrived in the UK (a) unaccompanied and (b) with other family members.

Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op) [156259] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what procedures are in place to support Afghan children who were separated from their families during the evacuation of Kabul and arrived in the UK (a) unaccompanied and (b) with other family members.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Following the evacuation of Kabul any children who we became aware of in the UK, that were not with their parents, have been dealt with on a case-by-case basis. When this has happened, we work in close collaboration with social services and the relevant local authority.

The safety and welfare of those who are resettling or relocating in the UK is of paramount importance to us as such we have comprehensive and robust safeguarding processes in place for those under our care.

The Government has been, and continues to, provide a warm welcome to Afghans arriving in the UK, providing accommodation, food, integration support, English lessons, and healthcare. All children who were evacuated under Op Pitting are now in school, and children who have joined us since then are either in school or being placed in schools. This means they are subject to the same statutory rights as any school child in the UK and the relevant support packages or services.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-01/156257>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-01/156258>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-01/156259>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-09/143853>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Seema Malhotra (Labour Co-op) [156972] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 28 February 2023 to Question 150499 on Refugees: Afghanistan, whether interviews remain part of security checks for Afghan refugees arriving through safe and legal routes; and what assessment her Department has made of the importance of interviews in ensuring a consistent level of security checks.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: All individuals applying to resettle in the UK undergo security checks and may be required to undertake an interview when additional checks, such as the need to establish their identity, are required. This includes those applying under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme. Further information on this is set out in the [GOV.UK guidance](#).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-02/156972>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-22/150499>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Refugees: Afghanistan

Luke Pollard (Labour Co-op) [152300] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of implementing a family reunion scheme for Afghans on similar terms to the Ukraine Family Scheme.

Luke Pollard (Labour Co-op) [152301] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many family members of Afghans who came to the UK under priority one of the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme have arrived in the UK.

Luke Pollard (Labour Co-op) [152303] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for permission to (a) enter and (b) remain in the UK made by family members of Afghan citizens who have arrived in the UK under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (i) have been (A) received, (B) granted and (C) refused and (ii) are still awaiting a decision by her Department.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: We are unable to provide the data requested for family members of those relocated under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP). However, the latest [quarterly Immigration Statistics publications](#) show that, as of 23rd February 2023, 11,212 people have been relocated to the UK under the ARAP so far.

The Government remains committed to providing protection for vulnerable and at-risk people fleeing Afghanistan. The situation is very complex and presents significant challenges, including how those who are eligible for resettlement in the UK can leave the country. This includes eligible immediate family members of those being resettled under both the ARAP and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS).

The Government's family reunion policy allows those recognised as refugees or granted humanitarian protection in the UK to sponsor family members, provided they formed part of a family unit prior to the refugee sponsor's departure to seek protection.

Those who are not offered resettlement under the ACRS or ARAP will need to apply

to come to the UK under our existing economic or family migration rules.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-24/152300>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-24/152301>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-24/152303>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Information about the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Afghanistan: Refugees

Drew Hendry (SNP) [156187] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department have made of the potential merits of establishing a process to review unsuccessful Additional Family Member decisions within the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy when additional evidence is made available by applicants.

Reply from James Heapey: The Ministry of Defence does recognise the potential merits of a reviews process for unsuccessful Additional Family Members applications in association with the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme.

We are currently considering these and will provide an update in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-01/156187>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Refugees: Afghanistan

Luke Pollard (Labour Co-op) [152302] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of Afghan citizens who have arrived in the UK since August 2021 have been allocated (a) permanent housing, (b) non-hotel based temporary accommodation and (c) hotel-based accommodation.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: We have been working at pace, alongside c.350 local authorities across the UK, to support Afghan families into homes of their own, so that they can settle into their local communities, feel safe and independent and rebuild their lives in the UK.

The recent update to the published '[Afghan Resettlement: Operational Data](#)', shows that, as of 23rd February 2023, 8,565 people have moved into a home, and a further 590 people have been matched to a home and are waiting to move in. This does not include families who have made their own accommodation arrangements.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-24/152302>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers: Other Immigration and Asylum

The following two questions both received the same answer

Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla: Choirs

Patrick Grady (SNP) [156183] To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether participants in the Coronation Choir at Windsor Castle on 7th May 2023 will be required to hold (a) British Citizenship, (b) the right to work in the UK or (c) leave to remain in the UK.

Patrick Grady (SNP) 156184] TTo ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether members of refugee community choirs who are seeking asylum in the UK but have not yet had their applications decided will be permitted to take part in the Coronation Choir at Windsor Castle on 7 May 2023.

Reply from Stuart Andrew: On Sunday, 7th May 2023, a special Coronation Concert will take place at Windsor Castle. Produced, staged and broadcast live by the BBC and BBC Studios, the Coronation Concert will bring global music icons and contemporary stars together in celebration of the historic occasion.

Alongside the stars of the concert, the show will also see an exclusive appearance from The Coronation Choir. This diverse group will be created by the BBC from the nation's community choirs and amateur singers from across the United Kingdom, such as Refugee choirs, NHS choirs, LGBTQ+ singing groups and deaf signing choirs.

The BBC has not yet taken decisions on exactly which choirs will participate. They still plan to have a refugee choir but all applications need to be assessed in the round.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-01/156183>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-01/156184>

Visas: British Nationality

Stephen Farry (Alliance) [154009] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether financial exemptions are in place for low-income families when applying for a visa for a parent of a British national.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Where the applicant is a parent of a child under 18, paragraph GEN 3.1 of Appendix FM to the Immigration Rules enables permission to be granted where an applicant does not meet the financial requirements and where there are exceptional circumstances which could mean a refusal would breach Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Appendix FM also contains an exemption from the minimum income requirement for those applying for a spouse, child or parent visa, where the sponsor is in receipt of certain benefits. Instead, they need to show that they can meet the adequate maintenance requirement, as set out in paragraph 12B of Appendix FM-SE to the Immigration Rules.

The list of relevant benefits can be found in Appendix FM-SE to the Immigration Rules (Appendix FM-SE). Guidance on the adequate maintenance requirement is available online here:

[Appendix FM Section 1.7A Adequate maintenance and accommodation.](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-27/154009>

Refugees: English Language

Seema Malhotra (Labour Co-op) [157640] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March 2023 to Question 153774, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of resuming its investigation into an early intensive language offer for refugees, following the conclusion of the Integration Fund.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: We recognise that the ability to speak English is key to helping refugees integrate into life in England and become self-sufficient. That is why the Refugee Employability Programme includes English language training to enhance the support provided to refugees arriving through safe and legal routes. We expect this service to start later this year.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/refugee-employability-programme/refugee-employability-programme-policy-statement>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-03/157640>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-27/153774>

Refugees: English Language

Seema Malhotra (Labour Co-op) [157641] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made a recent assessment of the potential impact of English lessons on the ability of refugees residing in hotels to integrate into the local community.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: Councils with bridging hotels in their area have been commissioned by the Home Office to deliver hotel wraparound support to people on the Afghan resettlement schemes. As part of the wraparound support, Local Authorities should provide English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) support for residents to support integration and enable guests to move on to permanent accommodation and settle into new communities, access jobs and services.

Local Authorities who resettle families will also receive £850 for English language provision for adults requiring this support. This funding is available to Local Authorities who resettle families under the 3-year ACRS/ARAP scheme with effect from 1 September 2021.

Those over the age of 19 will have immediate access to funding through the Department for Education's Adult Education Budget and be eligible for fully funded ESOL courses.

Additionally, DLUHC is supporting the Home Office to develop an integration package for the Afghan families, which includes a further 12-month support package for English (ESOL) of £850 per adult.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-03/157641>

Refugees: Mental Illness

Tobias Ellwood (Conservative) [156936] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is taking steps to help mitigate the risks posed to local people by asylum seekers with severe mental health issues ...

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The rise in the number of small boat crossings has placed significant pressures on local authorities and the asylum system.

We take the safety and welfare of those in our care seriously and the Home Office has robust safeguarding procedures in place to ensure those in our accommodation are as safe and supported as possible as we seek urgent placements with a local authority.

Our providers are aware of the requirement to ensure that all service users are able to register with a local GP. During the induction process, which is carried out in multiple languages via the use of a translation service, the medical registration process is explained to all residents. This information is also displayed throughout the hotel. Staff at the hotel will support all residents to register with a GP practice. This extends to arranging appointments and transport to and from appointments if that is required. In the event of a medical situation that requires immediate attention, staff support by contacting 111 or 999 in an emergency.

Anyone granted asylum, temporary protection or humanitarian protection under the Immigration Rules of section 3 of the Immigration Act 1971 is recognised as a refugee and able to access all health care services, including mental health care services, exempt from charges.

We are committed to work to improve the mental health of refugees and asylum seekers, including through work with representatives from DHSC, National Health Service, Devolved Administrations and Non-Governmental Organisations to consider approaches to mental health support. The Government will also continue

to use our safeguarding networks to identify the most vulnerable users of the asylum system and engage with the appropriate statutory agencies to provide the support they need.

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities has produced a Migrant Health Guide, which is a free-to-use, online resource designed to support primary care practitioners in caring for patients who have come to the UK from overseas. It includes information on asylum seekers entitlement to the NHS, guidance for assessing new patients, tailored health information specific to over 100 countries of origin and guidance on a range of communicable and non-communicable diseases and health issues.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-02/156936>

The Guide referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migrant-health-guide>

Asylum: Correspondence

Seema Malhotra (Labour Co-op) [156971] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 9 February 2023 to Question 140250 on Asylum: Correspondence, how many notices of intent were sent in 2022; and what estimate her Department has made of the number of such notices that will be issued in 2023.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of individuals issued a notice of intent and can be found online at [How many people do we grant protection to?](#)

The Government is committed to tackling the ruthless criminal gangs who facilitate illegal immigration, risk lives and damage communities by smuggling people into the UK. The Government will be bringing forward legislation to make it unambiguously clear that, if you enter the UK illegally, you should not be able to remain here. Instead, you will be detained and promptly returned either to your home country or to a safe country where your asylum claim will be considered.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-02/156971>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-06/140250>

Asylum

Seema Malhotra (Labour Co-op) [160288] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information her Department holds on how many people have claimed asylum after arriving in land-based vehicles in each of the last 12 months.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The Home Office publishes data on asylum in the '[Immigration System Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on asylum applications can be found in table Asy_D01 of the '[asylum and resettlement detailed datasets](#)'. Information on how to use the datasets can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbooks. The latest data relate to the year ending December 2022. Data for the year ending March 2023 will be published on 25 May 2023. Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

This data is not available broken down by method of entry. The Home Office publishes statistics on detected irregular arrivals to the UK in the '[Irregular Migration to the UK statistics](#)' report. Data on detected irregular arrivals by method of entry are published in table Irr_D01 of the '[Irregular migration to the UK detailed dataset](#)' with the latest data up to the end of December 2022. However, data on how many irregular arrivals claim asylum is only published for small boat arrivals.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-07/160288>

The following four questions all received the same answer

Asylum: Questionnaires

Claire Hanna (SDLP) [155250] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has had recent discussions with stakeholder groups on proposals to use asylum questionnaires in place of face-to-face interviews.

Claire Hanna (SDLP) [155251] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the impact of the use of questionnaires in place of face to face interviews to assess asylum applications on applicants.

Claire Hanna (SDLP) [155252] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an equality impact assessment on the proposal to introduce questionnaires in place of face-to-face interviews to assess asylum applications.

Claire Hanna (SDLP) [155253] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to implement the use of questionnaires in place of face-to-face interviews to assess asylum applications.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: On 13 December 2022, the Prime Minister pledged to clear the backlog of the 92,601 initial asylum 'legacy' claims. These relate to historical asylum claims made before 28 June 2022.

Policy guidance on this was published on 23 February 2023 ([Streamlined asylum processing](#)). Asylum claim questionnaires were sent to legacy claimants from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Syria and Yemen. These countries have been included in the streamlined asylum process on the basis of their high-grant rate of 95% or higher and over 100 grants in the year-ending September 2022 of protection status (refugee status or humanitarian protection). All asylum seekers will have already undergone a screening interview on arrival, as well as face-to-face security checks in which they will provide biometric information and their identity. Where there is insufficient information or any doubt about the information provided in the questionnaire or a caseworker has further questions including about someone's nationality, a caseworker should arrange a follow-up asylum interview.

The policy is compliant with our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty and an Equality Impact Assessment was drafted as part of the policy development process. We are committed to continue working with stakeholders going forward to improve the asylum system for all.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-28/155250>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-28/155251>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-28/155252>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-28/155253>

The Prime Minister's statement, referred to above, can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-13/debates/DB61C374-16B5-411C-9A29-CC3DCA119EB3/IllegalImmigration>

The following eight questions all received the same answer

Asylum: Applications

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [155175] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason claimants who need to complete the asylum claim questionnaire have been given 20 working days to respond to that form.

Asylum: Questionnaires

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [155176] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the guidance on streamlined asylum processing published on 23 February 2023, what estimate her Department has made of the number of recipients of the asylum questionnaire who will be unable to respond to that questionnaire within 20

working days.

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [155177] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential barriers to claimants of returning the asylum questionnaire for streamlined asylum processing within 20 working days.

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [155178] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what provisions are in place for those asylum seekers unable to read or write English and who may be unable to access an immigration advisor within the 20-day time frame for submitting an asylum claim questionnaire.

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [155179] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the guidance entitled Streamlined asylum processing published on 23 February, for what reason her Department has chosen to publish the asylum claim questionnaire in English only.

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [155180] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department takes to ensure asylum applicants receive the asylum claim questionnaire.

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [155181] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's definition is of a reasonable explanation for not returning an asylum claim questionnaire within 20 working days.

Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op) [155182] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum claim questionnaires her Department plans to send to claimants in each month from February 2023 to December 2023.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: On 13 December 2022, the Prime Minister pledged to clear the backlog of the 92,601 initial asylum 'legacy' claims – this relates to historical asylum claims made before 28 June 2022.

The Streamlined Asylum Process is one way in which we will clear the backlog and policy guidance on this was published on 23 February 2023 ([Streamlined asylum processing](#)). On the same day, questionnaires began to be sent out to legacy claimants from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Syria and Yemen to their most recently recorded correspondence address. These countries have been included in the streamlined asylum process on the basis of their high-grant rate of 95% or higher and over 100 grants in the year-ending September 2022 of protection status (refugee status or humanitarian protection). All questionnaires should be dispatched to eligible claimants by the end of March 2023. Claimants must inform the Home Office of any changes to their contact details, to ensure that they continue to receive all relevant communications regarding their claim.

The asylum claim questionnaires are in English as is generally the case for immigration paperwork across the Department. If necessary, claimants can utilise legal representatives, Non-Government Organisations and other support networks to help them respond to the questionnaire. For those who are unable to return the questionnaire within 20 working days, a reminder will be sent to the claimant allowing a further 10-working days to complete and return it to the Home Office. A further extension can be requested where the timeframe cannot be met, for example because the claimant has serious medical conditions which is impacting their ability to respond to the questionnaire.

The intention of these questionnaires is to enable claimants to provide any further information about their claims after their initial screening interview which, in turn, could lead to a positive decision being taken without an additional interview.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-28/155175>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-28/155176>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-28/155177>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-28/155178>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-28/155179>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-28/155180>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-28/155181>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-28/155182>

The statement referred to above, can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-13/debates/DB61C374-16B5-411C-9A29-CC3DCA119EB3/IllegalImmigration>

Asylum: Children

Beth Winter (Labour) [153960] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Immigration of 24 January 2023, Official Report, column 861, whether the additional funding for local authorities to support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children may be used to fund (a) host family, (b) social work and (c) other forms of support.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The additional funding for local authorities to support Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) is part of a pilot scheme that was announced on 16 December 22. The pilot ran from 16 December 22 to 28 February 23. The additional funding intends to repurpose the money currently used to pay for hotels housing UASC and empower local authorities to invest in infrastructure helping to build placement capacity. The funding is not prescriptive – it can be used by local authorities to invest where it provides the greatest benefit to the unaccompanied children in their care, therefore, it is for the local authority to determine where this funding is best spent.

The funding consists of a lump sum payment of £15,000 that accompanies the transfer of each unaccompanied asylum-seeking child to a Local Authority placement. To qualify for this funding the children must be transferred from a dedicated UASC hotel run by the Home Office or from the Kent Reception and Safe Care Service (RSCS). The pilot ran until the 28 February, and we are currently evaluating the impact, including developing case studies of best practice in how the funds have been used.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-27/153960>

The oral contribution referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-01-24/debates/290AF292-5D7E-411C-8FB8-A6E0F288365C/UnaccompaniedAsylum-SeekingChildren#contribution-E8916573-F7D6-4539-BB5A-664FF47B77D8>

Information about the pilot scheme referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/unaccompanied-asylum-seeking-children-uasc-grant-instructions/uasc-funding-instructions-to-local-authorities-2021-to-2022-accessible-version>

Asylum: Children

Seema Malhotra (Labour Co-op) [155129] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 26 January 2023 to Question 129806 on Asylum: Children, if she will provide an indicative timescale for making an assessment of the potential merits of establishing an inquiry into missing asylum-seeking unaccompanied minors

Reply from Robert Jenrick: When a young person goes missing the 'missing persons protocol' is followed and led by our directly engaged social workers. The MARS (Missing After Reasonable Steps) protocol is followed for any looked after child who goes missing from a care setting, including the unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) hotels. When used correctly, similar protocols within police forces have safely reduced the number of missing episodes from placements by 36%.

The Home Office and Department for Education (DfE) have established a UASC taskforce which was convened in November 2022 which has been meeting regularly. This multiagency taskforce includes representatives for the Home Office, DfE, Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC), the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ACDS) and the Local Government Association (LGA) to consider strategic and tactical solutions to the management of UASC. It is co-chaired by DfE Permanent Secretary, Susan Acland-Hood and Home Office Second Permanent Secretary, Patricia Hayes.

The Home Office will continue to address risks of young people going missing and work with partners to locate them if they do.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-28/155129>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-23/129806>

Asylum: Children

Seema Malhotra (Labour Co-op) [156968] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 26 January 2023 to Question 129806 on Asylum: Children, whether she plans to launch an inquiry into missing unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: When any young person goes missing the 'missing persons protocol' is followed and led by our directly engaged social workers. A multi-agency, missing persons protocol is mobilised involving the police and the local authority, who have a shared statutory responsibility to safeguard all children including missing migrant children in order to establish their whereabouts and to ensure that they are safe.

The MARS (Missing After Reasonable Steps) protocol is followed for any looked after child who goes missing from a care setting, including the unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) hotels.

The Home Office and Department for Education (DfE) have established a UASC taskforce which was convened in November 2022 which has been meeting regularly. This multiagency taskforce includes representatives for the Home Office, DfE, Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC), the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ACDS) and the Local Government Association (LGA) to consider strategic and tactical solutions to the management of UASC. It is co-chaired by DfE Permanent Secretary, Susan Acland-Hood and Home Office Second Permanent Secretary, Patricia Hayes.

The Home Office will continue to address risks of young people going missing and work with partners to locate them if they do.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-02/156968>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-23/129806>

Asylum: Children

Caroline Lucas (green) [149437] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to page 10 of the National Transfer Scheme Protocol for Unaccompanied

Asylum Seeking Children, Version 4.0, what proportion of transfers under the National Transfer Scheme of unaccompanied asylum seeking children not in the care of a local authority are taking place within five working days of a referral.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: [There are] pressures on local authority care placements for young people. Out of necessity, and with the best interests of the child in mind, we have had no alternative but to temporarily use hotels to give unaccompanied children a roof over their heads whilst local authority accommodation is found.

1,727 transfers from hotels took place from 24 August 2022 to 27 February 2023, of which 886 (51.3%) transferred within 5 working days. The time it takes for a local authority to identify a placement varies and has meant some young people experiencing delays in transferring. Delays may also occur where a child refuses to transfer to the placement.

The National Transfer Scheme (NTS) transferred 4,187 children to local authorities with children's services between 1 July 2021 and 31 December 2022. This is more than a fourfold increase in number of children transferred compared to the same period in previous years. In order to expand the scheme further, we are providing local authorities with children's services with an additional £15,000 for every eligible young person they take into their care from a dedicated UASC hotel by the end of February 2023.

The safety and wellbeing of those in our care is our primary concern. Robust safeguarding and welfare procedures are in place to ensure all children and minors are safe and supported as we seek urgent placements with a local authority. This includes support workers being onsite in the hotels 24 hours a day, supported by nurses and social workers. UASC are not detained and are free to leave the accommodation. All contingency sites have security staff and providers liaise closely with local police to ensure the welfare and safety of vulnerable residents.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-21/149437>

The Protocol referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102578/National_Transfer_Scheme_NTS_Protocol_for_unaccompanied_a_sylum_seeking_children_UASC.pdf

Asylum: Temporary Accommodation

Anthony Browne (Conservative) [153970] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the criteria used by her Department to assess the cost of providing contingency accommodation for asylum seekers.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The rise in the number of small boat crossings has placed significant pressures on local authorities and the asylum system.

The Home Office is accommodating more than 37,000 asylum seekers in hotels at a cost of £5.6 million a day. The Home Office is working tirelessly, alongside other government departments, to reduce the Government's dependency on hotels for contingency accommodation through a package of long-term and short-term measures.

All local authority areas in England, Scotland and Wales became an asylum dispersal area by default in April 2022. This is increasing the number of suitable properties that can be procured for destitute asylum seekers across the UK, ensuring a fair spread across the country and reducing our reliance on hotels. We also intend to bring forward a range of alternative sites at reduced cost to hotels.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-27/153970>

Asylum: Children

Beth Winter (Labour) [153958] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department,

how many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children were housed in hotels in the UK in each of the last 12 months; what the average length of stay was for those children; and how many and what proportion of those children went missing in the same period.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The rise in the number of small boat crossings has placed significant pressures on local authority care placements for young people. Out of necessity, and with the best interests of the child in mind, we have had no alternative but to temporarily use hotels to give unaccompanied children a roof over their heads whilst local authority accommodation is found.

The Home Office takes the wellbeing, welfare and security of children and minors in our care extremely seriously. Robust safeguarding procedures are in place to ensure all children and minors are safe and supported as we seek urgent placements with local authorities.

The National Transfer scheme (NTS) transferred 3,148 children to local authorities with children's services between 1 July 2021 and 30 September 2022, which is over four times the number of transfers on the year before. To further expand the scheme, we are providing local authorities with children's services with an additional £15,000 for every eligible young person they take into their care from a dedicated UASC hotel, or the Reception and Safe Care Service in Kent, by the end of February 2023.

When any young person goes missing the 'missing persons protocol' is followed and led by our directly engaged social workers. A multi-agency, missing persons protocol is mobilised involving the police and the local authority, who have a shared statutory responsibility to safeguard all children including missing migrant children in order to establish their whereabouts and to ensure that they are safe.

The MARS (Missing After Reasonable Steps) protocol is followed for any looked after child who goes missing from a care setting, including the UASC hotels.

The average length of stay for those who arrived during this period was 19.85 days. Of these 3,832 young people as of 28.02.23 there have been 410 missing episodes from the UASC Hotels, the number subsequently located on 224 occasions. Therefore 186 of these young people are still missing.

The safety and wellbeing of those in our care is our primary concern. Robust safeguarding and welfare procedures are in place to ensure all children and minors are safe and supported as we seek urgent placements with a local authority. This includes support workers being onsite in the hotels 24 hours a day, supported by nurses and social workers. UASC are not detained and are free to leave the accommodation. All contingency sites have security staff and providers liaise closely with local police to ensure the welfare and safety of vulnerable residents.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-27/153958>

Asylum: Children

Beth Winter (Labour) [153959] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Immigration of 24 January 2023, Official Report, column 859, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of her Department's safeguarding of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children housed in hotels.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The rise in the number of small boat crossings has placed significant pressures on local authority care placements for young people. Out of necessity, and with the best interests of the child in mind, we have had no alternative but to temporarily use hotels to give unaccompanied children a roof over their heads whilst local authority accommodation is found.

The safety and wellbeing of those in our care is our primary concern. Robust safeguarding and welfare procedures are in place to ensure all children and minors are safe and supported as we seek urgent placements with a local authority. This

includes support workers being onsite in the hotels 24 hours a day, including nurses and social workers. All contingency sites have security staff on site and providers liaise closely with local police to ensure the welfare and safety of vulnerable residents.

Records are kept and monitored of children leaving and returning to the hotel. Support workers will accompany children off site on activities and social excursions, or where specific vulnerabilities are identified. All sites have security staff to ensure the safety and welfare of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to protect all children, regardless of where they go missing from. In the concerning occasion when any child goes missing, regardless of their status, they work closely with other local agencies, including the police, to urgently establish their whereabouts and ensure they are safe.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-27/153959>

The oral contribution referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-01-24/debates/290AF292-5D7E-411C-8FB8-A6E0F288365C/UnaccompaniedAsylum-SeekingChildren#contribution-F7D611BF-4603-4B80-A0CB-DADC77E0C461>

Asylum: Children

Beth Winter (Labour) [153961] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Immigration of 24 January 2023, Official Report, column 859, what recent progress she has made on ending the use of hotels for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The rise in the number of small boat crossings has placed significant pressures on local authority care placements for young people. Out of necessity, and with the best interests of the child in mind, we have had no alternative but to temporarily use hotels to give some unaccompanied children a roof over their heads whilst local authority accommodation is found.

We take the safety and welfare of those in our care seriously and the Home Office has robust safeguarding procedures in place to ensure those in our accommodation are as safe and supported as possible as we seek urgent placements with a local authority.

The National Transfer scheme (NTS) transferred 3,148 children to local authorities with children's services between 1 July 2021 and 30 September 2022. We are providing local authorities with children's services with an additional £15,000 for every eligible young person they take into their care from a dedicated UASC hotel, or the Reception and Safe Care Service in Kent, by the end of February 2023.

We are providing local authorities with children's services with £15,000 for every eligible young person they take into their care from a dedicated UASC hotel, or the Reception and Safe Care Service in Kent, by the end of February 2023.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-27/153961>

The oral contribution referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-01-24/debates/290AF292-5D7E-411C-8FB8-A6E0F288365C/UnaccompaniedAsylum-SeekingChildren#contribution-F7D611BF-4603-4B80-A0CB-DADC77E0C461>

The following three questions all received the same answer

Asylum: Children

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [156231] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers under the age of 18 who were staying in hotels procured by her Department have gone missing since 1 July 2022.

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [156232] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home

Department, what steps she has taken to help ensure that unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors are adequately protected from potential abduction whilst staying in hotels procured by her Department.

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [156233] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of asylum-seeking minors placed in hotels procured by her Department and declared missing in the last 18 months have subsequently been traced.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The rise in the number of small boat crossings has placed significant pressures on local authority care placements for young people. The Home Office takes the wellbeing, welfare and security of children and minors in our care extremely seriously. Robust safeguarding procedures are in place to ensure all children and minors are safe and supported as we seek urgent placements with local authorities.

The National Transfer scheme (NTS) transferred 3,148 children to local authorities with children's services between 1 July 2021 and 30 September 2022, which is over four times the number of transfers on the year before. To further expand the scheme, we are providing local authorities with children's services with an additional £15,000 for every eligible young person they take into their care from a dedicated UASC hotel, or the Reception and Safe Care Service in Kent, by the end of February 2023.

When any young person goes missing the 'missing persons protocol' is followed and led by our directly engaged social workers. A multi-agency, missing persons protocol is mobilised involving the police and the local authority, who have a shared statutory responsibility to safeguard all children including missing migrant children in order to establish their whereabouts and to ensure that they are safe.

The MARS (Missing After Reasonable Steps) protocol is followed for any looked after child who goes missing from a care setting, including the UASC hotels.

The information below sets out numbers of young people who went missing from the hotels housing unaccompanied children:

- The last 18 months of 01.09.21 – 28.02.23 there were 444 missing episodes and on 253 of these occasions the young person was subsequently located.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-01/156231>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-01/156232>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-01/156233>

Migrants: Detainees

Diana Johnson (Labour) [155060] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people are (a) held in immigration detention and (b) detained under immigration powers in prison.

Reply from Robert Jenrick: The Home Office publishes statistics on people in immigration detention in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. The number of people in detention at the end of each quarter are in table Det_D02 of the '[Detention detailed datasets](#)', where the data can be broken down by current place of detention. The latest data relate to as at the end of December 2022.

Data as at the end of March 2023 will be published on 25 May 2023.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-28/155060>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Oral Answers

Illegal Migration Bill

The Home Secretary's Statement in the House of Commons was read in the House of Lords.

Lord Coaker (Labour): ... We have record backlogs, claimants waiting sometimes years for claims to be sorted, children lost, and claimants bundled into hotels with no or little local consultation. Last year, a record 45,000 people crossed the channel on small boats, up from four years ago, as convictions for people smugglers have halved. It is a public policy failure.

Just last year, the Nationality and Borders Act was passed. The Home Secretary said: "Anyone who arrives illegally will be deemed inadmissible and either returned to the country they arrived from or a safe country."

Can the Minister update us on how that is going? How can it work with no return agreements and the shocking Rwanda plan, as it should be, stuck in the courts? Last year's Act led to 18,000 people deemed inadmissible because they travelled through safe countries. Without the return agreements, which the Minister never mentioned, can he confirm that just 21 were returned—or if he prefers, 0.1%. The other 99.9% were placed in shocking hotels, or similar, at the cost of £500 million and more boats arriving. It is chaos—chaos with shocking human consequences and potential rises in community tensions.

What is different this time? Where are the return agreements? Where are all those to be detained for 28 days going to be housed? What happens after the 28 days? Let us remember, among those people, there will be torture victims, those fleeing war and persecution, Afghan interpreters and families with children. It is chaos, unworkable, but it gets the Government the cheap headlines they crave—even if it means potentially excluding victims of modern slavery or trafficking. Where are the safe and legal routes that many in this Chamber have been asking for? To take one example, what route exists under the existing rules or under this Bill for Afghan interpreters who fled Afghanistan, and were told by the Government to flee Afghanistan, to avoid capture by the Taliban?

Let us put in place an alternative, one that will no doubt be mocked by those seeking sensationalism. This would include: giving asylum caseworkers the support and help they need to speed up the process, rather than criticising them in emails; putting in place proper new agreements with France, Europe and others, including returns; properly controlled and managed legal routes, such as family reunion and reform of resettlement. What is wrong with competent and sensible public authority? What about the plan to tackle gangs by establishing a cross-border policing unit—why has that not happened? Have we got to the point where, as a people smuggler told Sky News yesterday, three-quarters of the smugglers live in the UK? Is that right? What is the figure? What are the Government doing to arrest and prosecute them?

All of this is being done in a Bill that drives a coach and horses through international law, leading to a potential withdrawal from the ECHR. What does the Minister think one of its architects, Winston Churchill, would think of that? How does the Minister justify the unbelievable statement about the ECHR on the front of the Bill? I have never read something like this on a Bill before: "I am unable to make a statement that, in my view, the provisions of the Illegal Migration Bill are compatible with the Convention rights, but the Government nevertheless wishes the House to proceed with the Bill."

That is written on the front of the Bill. It is unbelievable that a British Government should put on the front of a Bill that they should ignore international law and the legal system in this country. This is an absolutely disgraceful disregard for international law.

What will other countries think of us? Are we as a country not about upholding the principle of respecting international law? Is that not one of the things that we campaign for across the world? Of course, we have a difficult issue to deal with around small boats, and we

have outlined, as I just did, some sensible ways forward. But it cannot be right to seek to solve this issue through strategies rather than solutions, or by gimmicks, quick headlines and recycling harmful rhetoric. The Bill is not a solution and is not in the finest traditions of our country, which we are all so proud of. It risks making the chaos worse. Is it not true that the only people to blame for that will be the Government themselves, but the people who will suffer are those seeking asylum from horror and tyranny?

Baroness Ludford (Liberal Democrat): ... I came across an article that said: "The longer the queue, the worse the administrative confusion, the greater the incentive is for racketeers to target their efforts on Britain. There is a direct link between Government incompetence in managing asylum cases and the surge in applications to stay here." This was written in 2000 by William Hague, then the leader of the Conservative Party and now of course the noble Lord, Lord Hague of Richmond. He was criticising the then Labour Government, but, in the ministerial letter we received, referring to plans to "clear the legacy initial decision asylum backlog by the end of 2023", there was a complete failure to acknowledge that this legacy was created by a Tory-run Home Office, which has never got a grip over the last 13 years. Nearly 100,000 people have been waiting for a decision on their asylum claim for over six months—that is four times the number in 2019. We need a minimum service level in the Home Office.

We all want to see an end to dangerous channel crossings, but the Bill and the hullabaloo surrounding it are just more of the same gimmicky gesture politics, not the practical and sustainable solution that is actually needed. The Bill is not only unworkable but illegal and immoral. It treats people as criminals simply for seeking refuge. In the article I quoted from, the noble Lord, Lord Hague, said: "We believe Britain has a moral as well as a legal duty to welcome here people who are fleeing for their lives."

That "we" was the Conservative Party 23 years ago. No wonder that even some Tory MPs are now upset at the xenophobic and dehumanising rhetoric and intentions to breach the refugee convention and the European Convention on Human Rights.

In her enthusiasm to make the demonisation of refugees an election selling point, the Home Secretary appears to have broken the Ministerial Code: a fundraising email sent in her name to Conservative Party supporters disgracefully tarred civil servants as part of an "activist blob" that has "blocked" the Government from trying to stop the small boat crossings.

Why is the Bill needed, when the ink is barely dry on the Nationality and Borders Act 2022, which was supposed to be the magic solution that would stop the boats? This plan will punish the victims of persecution and human trafficking, but it will do nothing to stop the evil criminal gangs who profit from these small boat crossings. Not only are the majority of men, women and children who cross the channel doing so because they are desperate to escape war, conflict and persecution; most of them are in fact granted the protection they need. Four out of 10 people arriving on boats last year were from just five countries, with an asylum grant rate of over 80%—the Home Office recently decided to fast-track applications from a similar list of countries. How does the plan to deem inadmissible any claims from people who arrive on small boats from countries such as Afghanistan or Syria accord with these facts?

The only way to stop these dangerous crossings is to create safe and legal routes. The Government talk about such routes, but where and what are they? Will the Government commit to granting humanitarian visas to people needing to flee? We are told that the Bill will introduce an annual cap on the number of refugees whom the UK will accept, but how would that work? If the next person arriving is escaping the terrible cruelty of the Taliban or the appalling regime in Iran, will they just be refused? The number of family reunion visas issued in the year to September last year was more than a third down on 2019, so safe routes are in fact being constricted. Will the Minister assure me that the Government will commit to supporting my Refugees (Family Reunion) Bill, which recently passed this House, when it progresses through the other place?

Instead of locking up asylum seekers or forcing them to stay in hotels, will the Government commit to ending their absurd ban on asylum seekers working after they have been waiting months for their claims to be processed? If so, they could pay their way.

We are expected to proceed with a Bill of which the Government themselves say there is more than a 50% chance that it is incompatible with the ECHR. Quite how they can say they “remain confident that this Bill is compatible with international law”, when simultaneously believing that it is only 50% likely to be, is a mystery. How can a law actually designed to circumvent human rights possibly be fit for purpose? Lastly, speaking of human rights, can I ask for a list of countries to which people would not be returned?

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: My Lords, it is clear that the need for reform is obvious and urgent. The problem in the channel has grown over the last two years. Since 2018, 85,000 illegally entered the UK by small boat—45,000 of them in 2022 alone. Many of them came from safe countries, such as Albania, and all travelled through multiple safe countries, in which they could and should have claimed asylum. The vast majority, 74% in 2021, were adult males under 40, rich enough to pay criminal gangs thousands of pounds for passage. ...

The noble Lord, Lord Coaker, asked me whether the Nationality and Borders Act was not a complete answer. I can reassure him that it was never said that that Act would be a silver bullet. This Bill builds on that Act, which laid the foundations of our approach but, because the situation has got worse, we now need to go further. The Nationality and Borders Act was about changing how we processed asylum claims in the current system to streamline it and reduce late and spurious claims. It made progress, and it is right that we did that, but this is different. We are now going to move these cases out of the system entirely, so they are heard elsewhere in a safe country. Illegal entry will no longer be a route to making a claim to settle in the UK—it is only by making it clear that if you come here illegally you will not have the ability to stay here that we will stop the boats. That is a measure of compassion, because it will stop people embarking on dangerous journeys across the channel. Furthermore, as the noble Baroness, Lady Ludford, has suggested that creating safe and legal routes is the answer, I can reply to her that it is no answer. If Parliament set a cap of, say, 30,000 that it was going to take by means of the safe and legal routes that already exist, all that would happen is that the demand would remain from those who do not fall within the cap, and the criminal gangs would still be there to feed that demand. ...

To read this very long question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-03-08/debates/44FF4E27-404E-454A-A77A-B2E4BC6D6AC9/IllegalMigrationBill>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer: Channel Migrants

Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Baroness Hoey (Non-affiliated) [HL5752] To ask His Majesty's Government how many small boats used by illegal immigrants crossing the channel have been seized in the past two years; in what way those boats have been disposed of; and what assessment they have made of their origins and patterns involved in their purchase.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: All small boats used for illegal crossings vessels are seized by Border Force, assessed for evidential value, and are held by Border Force until completion of any criminal investigation activities.

The boats are disposed of by Border Force's approved contractors and, where appropriate, any suitable materials are recycled. Although the Home Office does research the origins of migrant vessels it would be inappropriate to go into the

findings of those enquiries.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-21/hl5752>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer: Afghanistan

Refugees: Afghanistan

Lord Kamall (Conservative) [HL5684] To ask His Majesty's Government what legal asylum or immigration routes there are for Afghan academics who worked with visiting British academics under the Development Partnerships in Higher Education (DeLPHE) scheme, and who have subsequently been threatened by the Taliban regime, but have had their application to come to the UK under Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) rejected.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidwirth: The UK has made one of the largest commitments to support Afghanistan of any country and, so far, we have brought around 23,000 people affected by the situation in Afghanistan to safety. This includes more than 6,300 vulnerable Afghan nationals through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS).

This is one of the most ambitious resettlement schemes in our country's history and we are proud to offer a safe and legal route to those affected by events in Afghanistan.

Those who are not offered resettlement under the ACRS or ARAP including Afghan academics will need to apply to come to the UK under our existing economic or family migration rules. Further information can be found on the website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration>

Whilst the UK has made a generous resettlement commitment, we must bear in mind the capacity of the UK to resettle people is not unlimited and therefore difficult decisions about who will be prioritised for resettlement have to be made.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-20/hl5684>

Information about the Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

Information about the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answers: Other Immigration and Asylum

Refugees: Resettlement

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench) [5830] To ask His Majesty's Government why the UK Resettlement Scheme is not accepting new submissions from the United Nations Refugee Agency.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidwirth: According to the latest data (December 2022), 2,023 refugees have been resettled through the UKRS since it began.

The government continues to prioritise those who have been referred by the UNHCR and who are already awaiting resettlement.

The numbers resettled in a particular period will depend on a range of factors including the availability of suitable accommodation and care packages in the UK. We are managing the flows based on need and in support of the wellbeing of the people and communities involved.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-23/hl5830>

Refugees: Resettlement

The Lord Bishop of Durham [HL5647] To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to consult with local authorities on an annual quota for refugee resettlement; and when they anticipate the first of these annual quotas will be brought before Parliament.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: As the Prime Minister set out in his statement to Parliament on 13 December 2022; We will work with UNHCR to identify those most in need so the UK remains a safe haven for the most vulnerable. And that we will introduce an annual quota on the numbers, set by Parliament in consultation with local authorities to determine our capacity, and amendable in the face of humanitarian emergencies.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-20/hl5647>

The statement referred to above, can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-13/debates/DB61C374-16B5-411C-9A29-CC3DCA119EB3/IllegalImmigration>

Refugees: Resettlement

Baroness Harris of Richmond (Liberal Democrat) [HL5662] To ask His Majesty's Government under what criteria migrants or refugees would be moved from an area once they have been satisfactorily settled in that area.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: Accommodation is offered on a no-choice basis across the United Kingdom and there are established mechanisms in place, via Migrant Help and Support Casework, if individuals have a specific, acute need to be accommodated in a particular area.

Accommodation providers may need to move individuals if the property they are currently occupying is no longer suitable or must be handed back to the owner when contract with the landlord expires. However we limit the amount of moves that can take place through our contract.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-20/hl5662>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Asylum

Lord Scriven (Liberal Democrat) [HL5803] To ask His Majesty's Government how many people have arrived in the UK in the last two years seeking asylum; how many of those seeking asylum arrived by small boats; and of those who arrived by small boats, how many (1) waited, or (2) are waiting, for over six months to have a decision made on their asylum application.

Lord Scriven (Liberal Democrat) [HL5804] To ask His Majesty's Government how many individuals who arrived in the UK by small boats in the last two years have had a decision on their application for asylum; and of those that have had a decision, how many were granted asylum.

Reply from Lord Murray of blidworth: The Home Office publishes statistics on small boat arrivals to the UK in the 'Irregular migration to the UK statistics' report and on asylum applications in the 'Immigration System Statistics Quarterly Release' on gov.uk.

The latest data on the asylum outcomes of small boat arrivals is published in the 'Irregular migration to the UK, year ending December 2022' release. Data on all asylum applications is published in table Asy_D01 of the asylum and resettlement datasets.

The Home Office does not publish the duration time of asylum-seeking small boat arrivals awaiting a decision. However, data on all asylum applications awaiting a decision is published in table Asy_D03 of the asylum and resettlement datasets.

[Immigration Statistics](#)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-22/hl5803>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-22/hl5804>

Asylum: Applications

Lord Jackson of Peterborough (Conservative) [HL5840] To ask His Majesty's Government what recent evidential basis they have used when adopting a policy of not interviewing potential asylum seekers from (1) Afghanistan, (2) Eritrea, (3) Syria, (4) Yemen, and (5) Libya, in order to reduce the backlog of applications.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: On 13 December 2022, the Prime Minister pledged to clear the backlog of the 92,601 initial asylum 'legacy' claims – this relates to historical asylum claims made before 28 June 2022.

The Streamlined Asylum Process is one way in which we will clear the backlog and policy guidance on this was published on 23 February 2023 ([Streamlined asylum processing](#)). On the same day, questionnaires began to be sent out to legacy claimants from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Syria and Yemen to their most recently recorded correspondence address. These countries have been included in the streamlined asylum process on the basis of their high-grant rate of 95% or higher and over 100 grants in the year-ending September 2022 of protection status (refugee status or humanitarian protection). All questionnaires should be dispatched to eligible claimants by the end of March 2023. Claimants must inform the Home Office of any changes to their contact details, to ensure that they continue to receive all relevant communications regarding their claim.

The asylum claim questionnaires are in English as is generally the case for immigration paperwork across the Department. If necessary, claimants can utilise legal representatives, Non-Government Organisations and other support networks to help them respond to the questionnaire. For those who are unable to return the questionnaire within 20 working days, a reminder will be sent to the claimant allowing a further 10-working days to complete and return it to the Home Office. A further extension can be requested where the timeframe cannot be met, for example because the claimant has serious medical conditions which is impacting their ability to respond to the questionnaire.

The intention of these questionnaires is to enable claimants to provide any further information about their claims after their initial screening interview upon arrival. This, in turn, could lead to a positive decision being taken without an additional interview.

All individuals will have already undergone a screening interview, including criminal checks and will have their biometrics, such as their fingerprints, taken before they can be considered for a grant of protection status.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-23/hl5840>

The Prime Minister's statement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-on-illegal-migration-13-december-2022>

Asylum: Children

Lord Scriven (Liberal Democrat) [HL5805] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Murray of Blidworth on 21 February (HL5629), whether they now plan to make an assessment of organised criminal gangs targeting unaccompanied children seeking asylum and being accommodated in hotels, given the statement by Greater Manchester Police that they have intelligence confirming the hotel networks used to house asylum seekers are targeted by organised criminal gangs, and that children are put to work selling drugs within weeks of arriving in the UK.

Reply from Lord Murray of Blidworth: The safety and wellbeing of those in our care is our primary concern. We have robust safeguarding procedures in place to

ensure all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) in emergency interim hotels are safe and supported whilst we seek urgent placements with a local authority. Young people are supported by team leaders and support workers who are on site 24 hours a day. Further care is provided in hotels by teams of specialist social workers and nurses

We have no power to detain UASC in hotels and we know some do go missing. Many of those who have gone missing are subsequently traced and located. Children's movements in and out of hotels are monitored and recorded and they are accompanied by support workers when attending organised activities and social excursions off-site, or where specific vulnerabilities are identified

When any young person goes missing the 'missing persons protocol' is followed and led by our directly engaged social workers. A multi-agency, missing persons protocol is mobilised involving the police and the local authority, who have a shared statutory responsibility to safeguard all children, including missing migrant children, in order to establish their whereabouts and to ensure that they are safe.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-22/hl5805>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-09/hl5629>

Home Affairs Committee

Evidence session: Work of the Home Office: Windrush

<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/12800/html/>

Press Releases

Ground-breaking new laws to stop the boats

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ground-breaking-new-laws-to-stop-the-boats>

Prime Minister agrees unprecedented measures to tackle illegal migration alongside France

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-agrees-unprecedented-measures-to-tackle-illegal-migration-alongside-france>

Over 320 foreign criminals and immigration offenders returned

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/over-320-foreign-criminals-and-immigration-offenders-returned>

New Publications

Prime Minister's statement on the Stop the Boats Bill: 7 March 2023

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-on-the-stop-the-boats-bill-7-march-2023>

Home Secretary statement on the Illegal Immigration Bill

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/home-secretary-statement-on-the-illegal-immigration-bill>

Modern slavery referrals for people detained for return after arriving in the UK on small boats

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modern-slavery-referrals-for-people-detained-for-return-after-arriving-in-the-uk-on-small-boats/modern-slavery-referrals-for-people-detained-for-return-after-arriving-in-the-uk-on-small-boats>

Windrush Compensation Scheme data: January 2023

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1140285/WCS_Data - January 2023.ods](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1140285/WCS_Data_-_January_2023.ods)

Updated: Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme: Visa data by country, upper and lower tier local authority

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-visa-data-by-country-upper-and-lower-tier-local-authority>

Updated: Migrants detected crossing the English Channel in small boats – last 7 days

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/migrants-detected-crossing-the-english-channel-in-small-boats/migrants-detected-crossing-the-english-channel-in-small-boats-last-7-days>

News: Channel Migrants

Channel migrants face lifetime ban on returning to UK

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-64848101>

Small boats: New law to stop illegal Channel crossings set out

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-64875591>

Sunak says he is up for the fight on illegal Channel crossings

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-64881908>

Rishi Sunak's small boats plans 'push boundaries of international law'

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/rishi-sunaks-small-boats-plans-push-boundaries-of-international-law-4053321>

Sunak small boats plan will 'push boundaries of international law', says Braverman

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/small-boats-channel-sunak-braverman-law-b2295510.html>

Refugee plan pushes limits of international law, says Suella Braverman

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-64871193>

Suella Braverman vows to 'push boundaries of international law' to stop migrants

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/03/06/suella-braverman-vows-push-boundaries-international-law-stop/>

Stopping small boats is 'priority' for British people, says Rishi Sunak

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-64884435>

Suella Braverman: Civil servants demand apology over small boats email

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-64890882>

Sunak and Macron summit: UK to give £500m to help France curb small boat crossings
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-64916446>

France to be paid £200m to stop boats 'at source'
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/france-to-be-paid-200m-to-stop-boats-at-source-7m085kd5t>

Rishi Sunak says paying France to stop small boats crossing Channel is a 'sensible investment'
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rishi-sunak-macron-small-boats-deal-b2298097.html>

UK to help fund immigration detention centre in France, says Rishi Sunak
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/mar/10/uk-fund-immigration-detention-centre-france-rishi-sunak>

Suella Braverman condemned for suggesting 100 million migrants could come to UK
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/suella-braverman-asylum-small-boats-inflammatory-b2295776.html>

New UK asylum bill would be in 'clear breach' of international law: UNHCR
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/03/1134312>

Rishi Sunak's plan to stop small-boat crossings breaks international law, UN says
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/rishi-sunak-channel-crossing-bill-law-un-b2295975.html>

Resettlement expansion no substitute for right to seek asylum, UNHCR tells UK
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/mar/08/resettlement-expansion-no-substitute-for-right-to-seek-asylum-unhcr-tells-uk>

Equality and Human Rights Commission statement following the announcement of the Illegal Migration Bill
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/statement-following-announcement-illegal-migration-bill>

European court at odds with British values, says Suella Braverman
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-64907772>

Rishi Sunak faces clash with EU on 'unlawful' asylum plans
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/mar/08/eu-commissioner-warns-uk-migration-bill-breaches-international-law>

Suella Braverman small boats plan could breach human rights law
<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/23368885.suella-braverman-small-boats-plan-breach-human-rights-law/>

Does Suella Braverman's migration bill breach the Human Rights Act?
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/suella-braverman-migration-bill-explained-kdf7sbrjw>

Plan for lifetime ban for Channel migrants is unworkable, say charities
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-64848101>

Scottish Refugee Council response to the Home Office's anti-refugee legislation
<https://scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/our-response-to-the-home-offices-anti-refugee-legislation/>

Church urges UK Government to reconsider asylum seekers' bill
<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/news/2023/articles/church-urges-uk-government-to-reconsider-small-boats-bill>

Primus: 'Stop the Boats' bill is cruel and shameful
<https://www.scotland.anglican.org/primus-stop-the-boats-bill-is-cruel-and-shameful/>

Suella Braverman's small boats crackdown is performative cruelty at its worst
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/mar/07/suella-braverman-small-boats-crackdown-illegal-migrants-uk>

Small boats: The Illegal Immigration Bill - explained
<https://www.heraldsotland.com/politics/23369006.small-boats-illegal-immigration-bill---explained/>

Asylum seekers: Will this migrant bill become a reality?
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-64882930>

Rishi Sunak: Why PM will not find it easy to stop boat crossings
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-64890888>

Rishi Sunak's plan to tackle Channel migrants: Stopping the Boats
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-times-view-on-rishi-sunaks-plan-to-tackle-channel-migrants-stopping-the-boats-vmdlvt2pp>

Illegal Migration Bill: Once UK turned away Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazis. Have we not learned from this shameful betrayal of humanity?
<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/illegal-migration-bill-once-uk-turned-away-jewish-refugees-fleeing-the-nazis-have-we-not-learned-from-this-shameful-betrayal-of-humanity-scotsman-comment-4054572>

Stopping Channel crossings not public's main priority, polling suggests
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/nhs-suella-braverman-government-prime-minister-ipsos-b2298580.html>

'Cruel' Migration Bill will 'traumatise, not deter' asylum seekers, refugees say
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/refugees-government-suella-braverman-afghanistan-bill-b2297970.html>

BBC 'speaking frankly' with Gary Lineker over tweet comparing UK asylum policy to 1930s Germany
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-64883655>

Gary Lineker stands by his immigration policy remarks
<https://www.theguardian.com/football/2023/mar/09/gary-lineker-says-he-stands-by-remarks-about-immigration-policy-bbc>

Lineker to avoid BBC suspension as Braverman says 'Nazi' comparison offended her because husband is Jewish
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/gary-lineker-tweet-immigrants-bbc-b2297244.html>

Gary Lineker tweet 'diminishes' tragedy of Holocaust - Suella Braverman
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-politics-64901182>

Suella Braverman: Gary Lineker's tweets 'diminish' Holocaust victims and descendants
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/03/09/suella-braverman-gary-lineker-bbc-comments-holocaust-diminish/>

News: Other Immigration and Asylum

Illegal immigration measures are fuelling 'xenophobia and racism', says Labour MP
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/03/07/illegal-immigration-measures-fuelling-xenophobia-racism-says/>

Home Office to find extra £2 billion to fund hotel rooms for asylum seekers
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/03/09/home-office-find-extra-2-billion-fund-hotel-rooms-asylum-seekers/>

Asylum-seeker hotels for children 'a supermarket for gangs'
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-64866523>

'We have lived in a hotel for eight months due to the war'
<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-scotland-64842374>

Refugees like myself want to contribute to UK society, but we aren't allowed to
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/mar/06/refugees-like-myself-want-to-contribute-to-uk-society-but-we-arent-allowed-to>

Work from 30 refugee and migrant artists from around the world to be showcased in Edinburgh
<https://www.scotsman.com/whats-on/arts-and-entertainment/work-from-30-refugee-and-migrant-artists-from-around-the-world-to-be-showcased-in-edinburgh-4060147>

TOP

Community Relations

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

The following three questions all received the same answer

Muslims

Ruth Jones (Labour) [153982] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has taken recent steps with the Welsh Government to raise awareness of the contribution made by the Muslim community in (a) Newport West, (b) Wales and (c) UK.

Jews

Ruth Jones (Labour) [153983] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has taken recent steps with the Welsh Government to raise awareness of the contribution made by the Jewish community in (a) Newport West, (b) Wales and (c) the UK.

Sikhs

Ruth Jones (Labour) [153984] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing

and Communities, what recent steps he has taken, including with the Welsh Government, to raise awareness of the role of the Sikh Community in (a) Newport West constituency, (b) Wales and (c) the UK.

Reply from Dehenna Davison: Faith and Belief is a devolved matter. This department engages regularly with the Welsh Government on a variety of matters Nationally, we recognise the contribution our faith and belief groups make. We remain committed to celebrating and promoting their contribution across the whole of the UK. ...

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-27/153982>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-27/153983>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-27/153984>

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Equality

New Publication

The Ethnicity of Missing People: Findings from police and local authority data, 2021-22

https://www.missingpeople.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Missing_Ethnicity-report.pdf

News

New research shows patterns in the experiences of minority ethnic groups reported missing

<https://www.missingpeople.org.uk/new-research-ethnicity-report>

Missing black and Asian people less likely to be found by police, report finds

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/mar/07/race-disparities-in-missing-person-cases-revealed>

Race and Poverty - Minority Ethnic Children Still on the Margins

<https://www.crer.org.uk/blog/race-and-poverty>

Equality and diversity 'take precedence over religious belief', NHS trust says

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/03/11/equality-diversity-take-precedence-religious-belief-nhs-trust/>

TOP

Racism, Religious Hatred, and Discrimination

Scottish Parliament Written Answer

Racially Motivated Bullying: Policies and Recording in Scotland's Schools

Pam Gosal (Conservative) [S6W-15161] To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights report, Racially Motivated

Bullying: Policies and Recording in Scotland's Schools, published in November 2022, which found that, in 2020-21, 61% of schools did not record any incidents of bullying using the SEEMiS Bullying and Equalities module, and 83% of schools did not record any incidents of racially motivated bullying.

Reply from Shirley-Anne Somerville: Bullying or racism of any kind is unacceptable and must be addressed quickly and effectively whenever it arises. Schools need to be clear on the distinctions between bullying and other forms of prejudice such as racism.

It is for schools and local authorities to decide what action should be taken depending on the individual circumstances of challenging behaviour. We expect schools and authorities to record and monitor all incidents of bullying and racism in schools.

On 23 February 2023, HM Inspectors of Education published their report of the thematic inspection we commissioned on the national approach to recording and monitoring bullying incidents in schools.

There are positive findings in the report that we should build on. However, we acknowledge that there is also room for improvement and we are taking immediate action to ensure schools and school staff have the right support in place to prevent and respond to bullying.

We are also working with a wide range of anti-racism organisations to further strengthen resources and approaches to prevent and respond to racist incidents through the Anti-Racism in Education Programme Board.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-15161>

The CRER report referred to above can be read at

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/615c1bee105b4f55a98326d0/t/638601471d0e3c4bebfc3f8b/1669726556305/CRER+Racially+Motivated+Bullying+e-use.pdf>

The HMIE report referred to above can be read at

[https://education.gov.scot/media/yffms1dx/nt-approaches to recording and monitoring incidents of bullying in schools.pdf](https://education.gov.scot/media/yffms1dx/nt-approaches%20to%20recording%20and%20monitoring%20incidents%20of%20bullying%20in%20schools.pdf)

UK Parliament Debate

Racial Discrimination in Schools

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-08/debates/8815EE99-2F55-497F-A46E-871B4A000B0D/RacialDiscriminationInSchools>

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Discrimination

Alex Norris (Labour Co-op) [153942] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help tackle (a) discrimination on the basis of (i) race and (ii) religion and (b) the impact of that discrimination on victims.

Reply from Tom Tugendhat: The Government is committed to tackling all forms of discrimination, including that based on race and religion, which has no place in our society. We can achieve this by tackling discriminatory behaviour where it might exist and adopting policies that build trust and promote fairness.

We have one of the strongest legislative frameworks in the world to protect communities from hostility, violence, and bigotry, and to deal with the perpetrators of hate crime.

Inclusive Britain was published by the Cabinet Office, in response to the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities in March 2022. It sets out their action plan to tackle negative disparities, promote unity and build a fairer Britain for all. The Government Equalities Office lead on discrimination policy, including the Equalities Act 2010, which legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-27/153942>

Inclusive Britain, Referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-britain-action-plan-government-response-to-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities/inclusive-britain-government-response-to-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities>

The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities report, referred to above, can be read at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974507/20210331 - CRED Report - FINAL - Web Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974507/20210331_-_CRED_Report_-_FINAL_-_Web_Accessible.pdf)

The following two questions both received the same answer

Police: Racial Discrimination

Bell Ribeiro-Addy (Labour) [157697] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to Inquest's report entitled I can't breathe: Race, death & British policing, published on 20 February 2023, whether she has made an assessment of the potential implications for her policies of the findings in that report.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy (Labour) [157698] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to Inquest's report entitled I can't breathe: Racist, death and British Policing, published on 20 February 2023, whether she has made an assessment of the implications for her policies of the finding that Black people are seven times more likely to die than White people in cases where restraint is used by the police.

Reply from Chris Philp: Government is clear that all police use of force must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary and no-one should experience use of force based on their race or ethnicity.

Where a decision to use force is taken, officers are accountable through the law for their actions.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-03/157697>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-03/157698>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.inquest.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=edfc7c01-e7bb-4a17-9c33-8628905460e6>

Press Releases

UN observes first International Day against Islamophobia

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/03/1134462>

Misogyny law consultation

<https://www.gov.scot/news/misogyny-law-consultation/>

News

Tough childhood and police beating made me a lawyer

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-64914462>

How the small town of Erskine became a flashpoint for racial hate

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/23380039.small-town-erskine-became-flashpoint-racial-hate/>

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Other Scottish Parliament and Government

Scottish Parliament Motions

Foyso Choudhury (Labour) [S6M-08139] Ramadan Mubarak – That the Parliament notes the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, beginning around 22 March 2023 and lasting between 29 and 30 days, depending on the moon sighting; understands that Ramadan is observed worldwide as a period of fasting, prayer, and reflection; notes the Muslim focus on charity and charitable giving during this holy month; calls for the tolerance and free practice of peaceful religious observance around the world, and wishes the Muslim community in Scotland, and across the world, a blessed month of Ramadan.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-08139>

Jackson Carlaw (Conservative) [S6M-08107] Jewish Blind Society (Scotland) – That the Parliament praises the outstanding work of the Jewish Blind Society (Scotland); understands that the key objective of the society is to enhance the quality of life for individuals who have a visual, physical or age-related impairment and people who are living with a chronic illness; notes that the Jewish Blind Society (Scotland) was initially set up to provide care, entertainment and outings for members of the Jewish Community who are living with a visual impairment; understands that its range of activities has expanded over time because healthcare improvements with eye surgery and treatments mean that there is a reduced number of people for the group to support directly, with the society now raising funds for organisations such as Jewish Care Scotland and Chai Cancer Care to help them deliver services to people in need; further understands that, as part of the joint working with Jewish Care Scotland, the Jewish Blind Society (Scotland) is playing an important role in making individuals aware of financial support grants, where they meet the eligibility criteria, and establishing strong referral pathways for people to submit applications, and believes that the Jewish Blind Society (Scotland) has been providing vital support for more than half a century and is based at the Walton Community Care Centre in Giffnock.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-08107>

New Publication

Social isolation and loneliness: Recovering our Connections 2023 to 2026

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/recovering-connections-2023-2026/>

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Other UK Parliament and Government

UK Parliament, House of Commons Written Answers

Education: Ethnic Groups

Stephen Morgan (Labour) [152296] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether

she plans to adopt the 18-plus-one ethnic data recording system used in the census across all education (a) services and (b) providers.

Reply from Nick Gibb: The Department follows the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and Government Statistical Service harmonised standards for collecting and/or presenting statistics. Detail on these codes and information on how the codes were chosen is available at:

<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/style-guide/ethnic-groups>

The ONS lead cross government work to harmonise data, including on ethnicity. The Department continues to be part of that work and will look to introduce any recommendations. Information on harmonisation of data is available at:

<https://analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/gss-harmonisation-team-workplan/#ethnicity>

The Department publishes the data code sets that are accepted in data that must be returned to the Department as part of the Common Basic Data Set (CBDS). This is accessible at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-basic-data-set-cbds-database>

The CBDS is used by developers of school management information systems and incorporated into their products. The CBDS lists what are now the 19-plus-one ethnic code sets along with a more granular list of options. These options allow data subjects to select an ethnicity that most closely matches their ethnicity. Guidance instructs schools and Local Authorities that they should not ascribe ethnicity to an individual. Instead, it must come from the parent, guardian, or person themselves.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-24/152296>

UK Parliament, House of Lords Written Answer

Faith Schools

Lord Warner (Crossbench) [HL5960] To ask His Majesty's Government what progress Ofsted has made on the (1) registration, (2) regulation and (3) inspection of religious schools such as (a) madrassas, (b) yeshivas, and (c) Sunday schools where concerns have been raised about the appropriateness of the material being taught to children at such places; and what powers Ofsted has to take action, as necessary.

Reply from Baroness Barran: Out-of-school settings, such as supplementary religious schools, are not regulated under education or childcare law and are therefore not required to register with the department or Ofsted. However, the department remains committed to ensuring that children are safeguarded across all education settings and are working closely with key safeguarding partners, sector representatives, and parent groups to develop proposals for how we might further enhance safeguarding in this sector. The department will look to consult on such proposals later this year. We will be publishing updated safeguarding guidance for providers and parents, as well as a new e-learning package aimed at strengthening providers' understanding of the arrangements they should have in place to keep children safe.

Any education setting which makes full-time provision to five or more pupils of compulsory school age (or one or more such pupils who is looked after or has an education, health and care plan), is not maintained by a local authority and is not a non-maintained special school is required to register with the department as an independent school. It is a criminal offence to conduct an educational setting which meets the definition of an independent school if this is not registered with my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education.

The government has been working proactively since 2016 to identify, investigate

and, where appropriate, prosecute those operating unregistered independent schools. Between 1 January 2016 and 31 August 2022, Ofsted issued warning notices to 132 settings that may be operating as unregistered schools (this includes all settings including those with a secular or faith ethos). Of those settings, 81 changed their operation to comply with legislation, 21 closed and 16 registered. There have been six successful prosecutions against those operating unregistered schools and there are several ongoing investigations.

If safeguarding concerns are raised about a specific setting, we expect local authorities to intervene, as they are legally responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in their areas, regardless of the educational setting they attend.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-02-27/hl5960>

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Cost of Living

Scottish Government Website

Help during the cost of living crisis

Most households are concerned about the cost of living, with worries about issues such as rent and mortgages, food and utility bills, energy costs, and debt.

In response, the Scottish Government has launched a new website that provides information to help people access support with

- Energy and Bills
- Benefits and Income
- Children and Families
- Debt and Money
- Health and Wellbeing

Your local council might be able to help if you need urgent help with money, food or fuel – contact the council for information.

<https://costofliving.campaign.gov.scot/>

News

Rising cost of living puts human rights at risk in Scotland, warns Commission

<https://www.scottishhumanrights.com/news/rising-cost-of-living-puts-human-rights-at-risk-in-scotland-warns-commission/>

Budget 2023: 'My energy bills have doubled to £3,000 in a year'

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-64874571>

One in seven skipping meals in UK due to rising cost of living, survey finds

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/cost-of-living-uk-people-skipping-meals-b2295440.html>

Women are the shock absorbers of the cost of living crisis. They need our help

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/international-womens-day-angela-rayner-menopause-b2295722.html>

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Other New Publication

Incorporating International Human Rights: The right to cultural life in Scotland

<https://hrcscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Final-The-right-to-cultural-life-in-Scotland-March-2023-1.pdf>

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Other News

Row over pupils who damaged Koran raises free speech concerns – Braverman

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-secretary-department-for-education-koran-suella-braverman-muslims-b2294057.html>

Suella Braverman: We do not have blasphemy laws in Great Britain

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/suella-braverman-we-do-not-have-blasphemy-laws-in-great-britain-9ps9lj8r5>

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Bills in Progress ** new or updated this week

Scottish Parliament

**** Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill**

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/charities-regulation-and-administration-scotland-bill>

Note of Informal Engagement Session, Social Justice and Social Security Committee

https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/committees/social-justice-and-social-security-committee/charities-bill/summary-of-discussions_informal-cra-event_1-march-2023.pdf

Stage 1 evidence session, Social Justice and Social Security Committee

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/SJSS-02-03-2023?meeting=14185&iob=128481>

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill>

UK Parliament

Asylum Seekers (Accommodation Eviction Procedures) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3257>

Asylum Seekers (Permission to Work) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3263>

Asylum Seekers (Permission to Work) (No.2) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3304>

Bill of Rights Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3227>

Housing Standards (Refugees and Asylum Seekers) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3264>

Human Trafficking (Child Protection) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3248>

Human Trafficking (Sentencing) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3249>

Illegal Immigration (Offences) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3282>

**** Illegal Migration Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3429>

Bill as introduced

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0262/220262.pdf>

Explanatory Notes

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0262/en/220262en.pdf>

Delegated Powers Memorandum

[https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0262/Delegated Powers Memo Illegal Migration Bill-070323.pdf](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0262/Delegated%20Powers%20Memo%20Illegal%20Migration%20Bill-070323.pdf)

European Convention on Human Rights Memorandum

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0262/ECHR%20memo%20Illegal%20Migration%20Bill%20FINAL.pdf>

First Reading, House of Commons

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-07/debates/3A3BFE17-9930-47FA-AE14-1D0D3E6BB35B/ScienceAndTechnologyFramework#contribution-33369AF4-68DA-44B8-9166-AEE759D4A348>

Ministerial Statement and Q&A: House of Commons

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-07/debates/87B621A3-050D-4B27-A655-2EDD4AAE6481/IllegalMigrationBill>

Ministerial Statement and Q&A: House of Lords

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-03-08/debates/44FF4E27-404E-454A-A77A-B2E4BC6D6AC9/IllegalMigrationBill>

House of Commons Library Briefing: Illegal Migration Bill 2022-23

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9747/CBP-9747.pdf>

Letter from the Scottish Government to the UK Government

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/illegal-migration-bill-letter-to-uk-government/>

**** Online Safety Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137>

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/49991/documents/3115>

Refugees (Family Reunion) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3164>

Scotland (Self-Determination) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3413>

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Consultations

** new or updated this week

**** closes this week!**

Access to information rights in Scotland (closing date 14 March 2023)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/access-information-rights-scotland-consultation/>

**** closes this week!**

Electoral reform (closing date 15 March 2023)

<https://consult.gov.scot/constitution-and-cabinet/electoral-reform/>

How the current refugee and asylum system affects refugees' integration into wider UK society (31 March 2023)

<https://refugeeintegrationuk.com/call-for-evidence/>

Adult Disability Payment: Review of the mobility component (closing date 25 April 2023)

<https://consult.gov.scot/social-security/adult-disability-payment-review/>

**** Reforming the criminal law to address misogyny** (closing date: 2 June 2023)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/reforming-criminal-law-address-misogyny-scottish-government-consultation/>

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Job Opportunities

[Click here](#) to find out about job opportunities.

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Funding Opportunities

** new or updated this week

Supporting New Scots Fund

Application deadline 26 March 2023

The Supporting New Scots Fund, led by the Scottish Government, Scottish Refugee Council, and other organisations, aims to help people seeking safety feel at home in their new communities and reduce their risk of poverty. This round of grants will focus on two of the highest priority areas for refugee integration: English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Employability. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/mwt569jk>

**** Social Isolation and Loneliness Fund 2023 – 2026**

Application deadline 31 March 2023

Scottish Government funding to support projects and organisations to facilitate progress towards the priorities of [A Connected Scotland](#) (2018) strategy, and contribute to the recovery and reduction in societal harm associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, and mitigate the impact of the ongoing cost of living crisis. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/3b8j98xa>

Ethnic Minority Development Fund

Application deadline 3 April 2023

National Lottery/CEMVO funding of between £500 and £20,000 for projects that bring ethnic minority people together and build strong relationships across communities, help more ethnic minority people to be the best they can be, or improve places and spaces that matter to ethnic minority communities. For information and to apply see <https://cemvoscotland.org.uk/emdf/>

People's Postcode Trust

*There will be three opportunities to apply for funding in 2023 but **each will only be open for 24 hours**. Applications can be submitted from:*

10am on 3 April 2023

10am on 3 July 2023

10 am on 2 October 2023

*Application forms will go live at the above dates and times and must be **started and submitted** within the submission window. In the meantime, a copy of the application questions can be downloaded in order to help you prepare your submission.*

National Lottery funding of between £500 and £25,000 for projects on a wide range of themes including supporting marginalised groups and tackling inequality. Funding priorities include communities experiencing racial inequity, people with disabilities, and the LGBT+ Community. For information and to apply see

<https://www.postcodetrust.org.uk/apply-for-a-grant/>

and

https://www.postcodetrust.org.uk/media/2724/3_ppt_fundingguide_2023.pdf

Cost-of-Living Support Scotland

Application deadline not stated

National Lottery funding from £10,001 to £75,000 for projects to help support individuals, families and communities currently experiencing hardship as a result of the cost-of-living increases. The programme aims to fund activity that reduces the impact of, or prevents financial insecurity so that people have more resilience and are more able to identify ways to deal with the impact of increased cost of living in their lives, are able to shape activity in their community to address the increased cost-of-living, and have more access to support and services that will help them to deal with the increased cost of living. For information and to apply see

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/cost-of-living-support-fund>

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Events, Conferences, and Training

**** new or updated this week**

**** this week!**

Refugee Week UK Conference

15 March 2023 (online, 10.30–12.30)

Refugee Week UK conference to find out all you need to know about putting your own activity on the theme of “Compassion”, and to learn about the history of Refugee Week. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/4wj7eute>

**** Ethnic Minority Development Fund - Information Session**

21 March 2023 (online, 5.00–6.00)

22 March 2023 (online, 2.30–3.30)

The Ethnic Minority Development Fund (EMDF) is available to any ethnic minority-led third-sector organisations in Scotland. This session will enable ethnic minority-led third-sector organisations to learn more about the EMDF and have the opportunity to ask questions. For information about the 21 March event see <https://tinyurl.com/2xvdv3jd> and about the 22 March event see <https://tinyurl.com/y27jicej>

Journeying with New Scots – Building community with refugees & asylum seekers

25 March 2023 (Stirling, 10.00–3.30)

Faith Impact Forum event to share joint experiences, expand our learning and strengthen our ties in a shared concern for the deep longing to be seen, heard, and accepted. For information see <https://tinyurl.com/2p89wzr3>

The Big Help Out

8 May 2023 (UK-wide)

The Big Help Out will be a national day of volunteering on the Bank Holiday Monday of the King's Coronation weekend. For information see <https://thebighelpout.org.uk/> or contact margaret.starkie@volunteerscotland.org.uk

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Useful Links

Scottish Parliament <http://www.parliament.scot/>

Scottish Government <https://www.gov.scot/>

UK Parliament <http://www.parliament.uk/>

GovUK (links to UK Government Departments) <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations>

One Scotland <http://onescotland.org/>

Scottish Refugee Council <http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk>

Refugee Survival Trust <https://www.rst.org.uk/>

Freedom from Torture <https://www.freedomfromtorture.org/>

Interfaith Scotland <https://interfaithscotland.org/>

Equality and Human Rights Commission <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en>

Equality Advisory Support Service <http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/>

Scottish Human Rights Commission <http://www.scottishhumanrights.com/>

ACAS <http://www.acas.org.uk/>

SCVO <https://scvo.org.uk/>

Volunteer Scotland <https://www.volunteerscotland.net/>

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) <https://www.oscr.org.uk/>

Scottish Fundraising Standards Panel <https://www.goodfundraising.scot/>

Disclosure Scotland <https://www.mygov.scot/disclosure-types>

Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services
<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/disclosure-services/>

BBC News <https://www.bbc.com/news>

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SCoJeC
Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities

Representing, connecting, and supporting Jewish people in Scotland



The **Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC)** is the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland. It advances public understanding about the Jewish religion, culture and community, and also works in partnership with other organisations to promote good relations and understanding among community groups and to promote equality. (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438) <https://www.scojec.org/>

BEMIS
Empowering Scotland's Ethnic and
Cultural Minority Communities

BEMIS is the Scottish national Ethnic Minorities led umbrella body, supporting, empowering, and building the capacity of minority third sector community organisations. As a strategic partner with Government, it is proactive in influencing the development of race equality policy in Scotland, and helps develop and progress multicultural Scotland, active citizenship, democracy, and Human Rights Education at the Scottish, UK, and European levels. (Scottish Charity, no. SC027692) <http://www.bemis.org.uk/>



The **Scottish Government** is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and social justice for all those who live in Scotland. **One Scotland** is the Scottish Government campaign designed to tackle racism. It aims to raise awareness of racist attitudes, highlight its negative impact and recognise the valuable contributions that other cultures have made to our society – and make Scotland no place for racism. <http://www.gov.scot/>

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